

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Finance,

The Food Security Initiative was developed in early 2020 at the onset of the pandemic to ensure food insecure residents in rural, urban, and Tribal Nations were able to receive relief from hunger. Through this initiative, which was temporarily funded with CARES Act and ARPA dollars, Feeding Wisconsin acted as a passthrough entity to purchase local Wisconsin commodities and distribute them statewide.



Unfortunately, food insecurity remains an issue for **7.2% of Wisconsinites**, including **12.6% of Wisconsin children**. Regional food banks and pantries are experiencing a **30-45% increase in demand**, and are anticipating a surge in need as extra COVID **FoodShare benefits will end in early 2023**.

Feeding Wisconsin supports an investment of \$20 Million over the 2023-2025 biennium to connect Feeding Wisconsin's network of food banks and pantries with Wisconsin producers to continue to provide Wisconsin grown food to families experiencing food insecurity.

A state funded food bank purchasing program would increase the capacity of food banks and pantries to procure, store, and distribute nutrient-dense locally grown food to low-income Wisconsinites who need it. This program would also allow for flexibility and local decision making over the types of food needed by local communities and in the local operation of food distribution organizations (allowing for choice shopping models as well as pre-boxed foods). Increased access to nutritious food can help reduce healthcare costs associated with food insecurity.



We hope that you will support a Food Bank Food Purchasing Program as one of your own 2023-2025 budget priorities. We truly believe this program can be a win-win for Wisconsin producers and your local food banks and pantries, as we continue our work getting Wisconsin products onto the tables of Wisconsinites experiencing food insecurity.

Sincerely,

Michelle Orge, Executive Director
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Jordan Lamb, Legislative Counsel
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See the table on back for the % of food insecure people in your district →

Feeding Wisconsin is the state association supporting the member food banks with an annual operating budget of \$580K passing through additional funds to food banks across the state. The Feeding Wisconsin food banks collectively bring in millions of pounds of food per month.

District	Food Insecurity Rate
Rep. Born (39)	10%
Senator Marklein (17)	10%
Rep. Katsma (26)	11%
Senator Stroebel (20)	9%
Senator Felzkowski (12)	11%
Senator Ballweg (14)	10%
Senator Testin (24)	12%
Senator Wimberger (30)	13%
Senator L. Johnson (6)	31%
Senator Roys (26)	14%
Rep. Zimmerman (30)	9%
Rep. Rodriguez (21)	11%
Rep. Kurtz (50)	11%
Rep. Dallman (41)	11%
Rep. Goyke (18)	31%
Rep. McGuire (64)	13%

\$8.9M
funds have passed through Feeding Wisconsin this year

\$10M = 32,500,000 meals
 6,993,006.99 lbs of dairy
 1,886,792.45 lbs of meat/fish/poultry
 9,090,909.09 lbs of eggs
 8,403,361.35 lbs of fresh fruit/veg

Avg. 3%
total food waste

More than 2/3's+
of waste is diverted to non-landfill options (compost, animal feed, etc.)

WI food bank budgets range from **\$8M - \$72M**

- **50% or more** is from value of donated food
- **6% (or lower)** admin expenses

For more information on Feeding Wisconsin scan here or visit www.feedingwi.org

