

The Components

The Area: The “Driftless Region” in Southwest Wisconsin consists of hills and valleys conducive to growing vegetables. This area has one of the highest concentrations of organic farmers in the country (more than 220 organic farms.)

Partner Farms: Farmers in the region sell quality “seconds” produce to CHS for food pantries at below wholesale rates (*“Seconds” refers to produce not meeting stringent retail standards, but still containing 100% of the nutritional value*). This additional market opportunity for as much as 50% of each crop, contributes substantially to farmers’ business capacity.

Sourcing Produce: 1) **Buying Seconds:** In 2014 CHS purchased 160,715 lbs. of produce (at an average of \$.15/lb.) from 30 farmers. In 2015 CHS purchased 209,311 lbs. of produce (at an average of \$.11/lb.) from 50 farmers. 2) **Receiving Donations:** Organic Valley, farmers markets and other retail and wholesale distributors provide donations of excess produce for distribution to food pantries. Over 75,000 lbs. were donated in 2015. 3) **Farm Harvesting:** CHS coordinates volunteers and paid workers with varying abilities to harvest leftover produce from fields of partner farms in the region.

The Food Distribution Hub: The Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua, WI is a 100,000 sq. ft. renovated manufacturing facility that is now a multi-tenant food aggregation, processing and distribution center. CHS fits well into this facility, where it receives, stores and ships bulk produce to local food pantries and regional food banks.

Partner Food Pantries & Food Banks: CHS distributes to two food banks serving 70,000 people who rely on food pantries in 18 Wisconsin counties. CHS delivers directly to 13 food pantries within 30 miles. CHS also provides pantries with educational support for healthy eating including, food cooking and sampling demos, workshops for pantry staff and take-home recipe cards for consumers.

What You Can Do

If you are a business, organization or individual: Dedicating funding to CHS allows food pantries and meal sites the opportunity to deliver the highest nutritional food to those in need, while also improving the livelihood of small farmers.

Contact info: To help CHS reach its goals for 2016 and beyond, please contact: Daniel Chotzen, Operations Coordinator at daniel@community-hunger-solutions.org or (608) 606-1910. There are many volunteer opportunities available. You may also give a tax-deductible contribution at: www.community-hunger-solutions.org.

Thank You!