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With a \$15,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), the Emergency Foodshelf Network (EFN) is expanding its Mobile Foodshelf outreach this year to deliver an additional 73,000 pounds of food to low-income communities in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. In total, EFN will distribute 226,000 pounds of food to low-income Minnesotans this year.

The grant from DHS will enable Emergency Foodshelf Network to increase the number of sites it reaches, add fresh produce and milk products in foodshelf packages, print and distribute Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and nutrition education materials, and support staff involved in SNAP community outreach.

"The Emergency Foodshelf Network does great work connecting Minnesotans with nutritious food," said Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson, "We want to leverage that by supporting and expanding those efforts to reach more people."

The Mobile Foodshelf currently operates a monthly distribution to 17 low-income housing complexes in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, providing over 750 pounds of food per site per month for a total of 153,000 pounds per year. With the additional funds from DHS, the foodshelf will add nine sites to its distribution areas and issue an additional 73,000 pounds of food—for a total of 226,000 pounds of food per year—to recipients. It will also provide additional resources and referrals to residents on state and federal food programs, including SNAP. New distribution sites include the Garden Terrace Apartments in Little Canada, Seal Hi-Rise in St. Paul, and Cleveland Hi-Rise in St. Paul. The Emergency Foodshelf Network will identify the sites next month.

"We are so grateful for the support from our partners at DHS in helping to expand our outreach to food-insecure Minnesotans," said Emily Eddy White, Emergency Foodshelf Network program manager. "The many individuals this program is designed to serve are forced to make sacrifices due to limited mobility or a lack of reliable transportation. Our ultimate goal is to remove these barriers by providing food directly to their homes. Expanding this program will allow us to bring much needed, healthy and nutritious food directly to the community."

Many residents rely on the monthly delivery from the Mobile Foodshelf, which eliminates the barriers to traditional food shelves, including a lack of transportation.

The \$15,000 grant is funded through the state's portion of a federal bonus for increasing SNAP access for eligible residents. The state's portion – 25 percent of the \$1.2 million bonus – will go

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toward four initiatives to put healthy food on the table for low-income Minnesotans: the Summer Backpack Program, which provides backpacks filled with healthy food and nutritional information to children age 18 and younger; a grocery store initiative to give SNAP participants coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables; outreach to raise awareness and encourage SNAP participation in the Latino and Hmong communities; and this initiative. The remaining 75 percent of the federal bonus went to counties for their work with SNAP participants.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for those who are hungry to get the healthy food they need," said Jesson. "This effort through the Emergency Foodshelf Network is one way to ensure Minnesotans can put nutritious food on their tables each night."