



Feeding Children

The Need Second Harvest's service area includes 26 counties in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. In Washington, 432,000 children are on SNAP. According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap, the child food insecurity rate for Second Harvest's mostly rural service area is 21.1%. That is approximately 92,600 children facing hunger (or one in five) in the Inland Northwest.

According to No Kid Hungry (national nonprofit that works to end child hunger in America) research shows that children who do not receive proper nutrition are more likely to struggle in school, suffer from increased health issues and are less likely to finish high school or earn a college degree. These children will grow into adults who are less likely to earn a livable wage and continue the cycle of poverty and hunger. Childhood hunger also heightens the risk of making impulsive decisions that can lead to early pregnancy, incarceration and other life-altering events. This is why it is of the utmost importance to address hunger early in life.

Our Response To respond to the increasing hunger among children and teens in the Inland Northwest, Second Harvest provides food to local food banks and targeted assistance to children in the community. Recipients from food banks are largely children and families.

Second Harvest also conducts numerous programs that specifically target to reach children and youth in the area. The Mobile Market distributes to youth centers and public schools serving a high percentage of children qualifying for free and reduced meals. Second Harvest fills a truck with fresh produce and other groceries that will help fill the nutritional gap for students from low-income households.

Bite2Go is a program sponsored through schools where hungry children are provided with food kits for over the weekend when they do not have access to subsidized school meals. Second Harvest guarantees the Bite2Go kits include a good mix of healthy, kid-friendly, easy-to-open, single-serving, nonperishable food items for over the weekend. Shelf-stable milk, juice, cereal, entrees and snacks are just a few of the nutritious food items that can be found in the kits. Every Friday, staff members and volunteers at participating schools put the packages of food discreetly in the backpacks of students in need.



Bite2Go helped fill the weekend food gap for significantly more students in need in Spokane County last school year. More than 3,300 children were helped each week through Bite2Go. That's thanks to the tremendous generosity of sponsors, including churches, businesses, clubs and individuals.



Feeding Families

The Need During times of economic downturn, families often find themselves in a pinch. Second Harvest's service area includes 26 counties in Eastern Washington and North Idaho. According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap research, the food insecurity rate for Second Harvest's mostly rural service area is 12.7 percent. That is approximately 225,150 individuals and families facing hunger in the Inland Northwest.

According to a study conducted by Feeding America, 34 percent of low-income families reported challenges affording basic necessities. Of this margin, 82 percent showed the household had low food security and were unable to afford an adequate food supply for all household members. Families make up a large fraction of food bank clients.

Our Response Second Harvest partners with more than 250 food banks and meal centers throughout the Inland Northwest to distribute food to individuals and families in need.

Second Harvest offers a wide array of programs to help feed families in need. Programs like the Mobile Market work to carry thousands of pounds of food to families in need in both urban and rural areas. The Mobile Market targets specific areas of extreme poverty. The distributions are held at varying sites to allow for effective accessibility to each family situation. Sites include food banks, churches, community centers, senior centers, and schools. Second Harvest also goes a step further by offering classes to teach parents how to prepare meals using healthy and inexpensive ingredients through The Kitchen program.

Food provided by Second Harvest and partner agencies fill the food need for families so they can use their limited income to afford other essentials without the need to worry about cutting back on food. This relief can assist with families working to stabilize their lives.

Second Harvest partners with charities that build strong, healthy, and self-sufficient families, so when families turn to food banks that are able to find encouragement beyond just nourishment they need for their families. Providing free food allows families more opportunity to succeed and thrive.



Vernicia is a married mother of four children. It has been an expensive summer for the family because of high utility bills. Vernicia is taking community college classes to earn a degree in social work. The family turned to a Second Harvest partner food pantry recently to get some food supplies to help with meals for the kids. Vernicia was grateful for the fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, milk and cereal they received to supplement what they purchase.



Feeding Seniors

The Need Second Harvest's surveys of emergency food clients in Spokane County found an increasing percentage of clients are seniors age 55 and older. In Washington, 11.7% of seniors face food insecurity (National Foundation to End Senior Hunger). According to Meals on Wheels, 145,707 seniors in Washington are threatened by hunger. 114,000 seniors are on SNAP in the state.

According to Feeding America, 63 percent of households with senior citizens find themselves having trouble affording groceries and medical care. Elderly people lacking proper nutrition run the risk of developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. As the current baby-boomer generation ages, the number of these seniors facing hunger is expected to increase. This raise will continue until 2025 when the youngest baby boomers will turn 60. Only approximately 42 percent of eligible seniors are enrolled and receiving SNAP benefits. Seniors living at home have a higher risk of hunger due to health conditions and lack of food management skills. It is also common for seniors to lack social support and transportation; and they are more likely to experience a disability or physical limitations that impact their ability to attain and prepare food.

Our Response Second Harvest supplies easily accessible food assistance for elderly men and women of low incomes. This is crucial to supporting them in their effort to maintain their independence and quality of life. Second Harvest is committed to providing food to help maintain and improve the health of people through the Inland Northwest. Seniors have unique needs, Second Harvest partners with social service agencies to supply food distribution programs targeted specifically for senior citizens in the service area.

The Mobile Market program provides means for Second Harvest to target hunger among populations where existing programs are not readily accessible. The Mobile Market has varying distribution sites to allow the most effective accessibility to each person's situations. Among these sites includes senior centers. Second Harvest's Mobile Market also makes regular visits to subsidized senior housing. In addition, The Kitchen at Second Harvest provides senior citizens with cooking classes in a state-of-the-art kitchen. These classes help older adults learn new cooking skills and also encourage socialization. Trained instructors teach seniors how to prepare basic, nutritious meals.



Christina, 65, scrapes by on a very low fixed income. A disability forced her to retire earlier than she would have liked after working for seven years in elementary education in Spokane. She lives alone in a house she owns, but grocery shopping still frequently presents a challenge. The resources offered by Second Harvest assist her immensely. "This gives me a variety that I don't have otherwise," Christina said. "It's a blessing for me. It gives me something to celebrate."



Healthy Eating

The Need Hunger and poor nutrition contribute to health problems for people of all ages. Food insecurity can also be a factor in obesity as low-income households find easier access to highly processed, calorie-rich products as these food items tend to be cheaper. Often health is sacrificed to poverty. According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap research, the food insecurity rate for Second Harvest's mostly rural service area is 12.7 percent.

As the cost of produce rises, less low-income households are eating enough nutritious fruits and vegetables. In fact, it is common among low-income households to not eat any produce on a regular basis or only eat one serving a day. This can lead to nutrient-deficient diets and can cause numerous detrimental health conditions. The poverty level is 14.1 percent in Washington. According to Feeding America, food insecurity can increase risk to certain health issues. Over half of the households served have at least one household member living with high blood pressure, heart disease, or obesity. Children at risk of hunger are also likely to have their health impacted and struggle in school.

Our Response Second Harvest distributes food that is healthy and fresh to people in need. Previously, Second Harvest carried mostly nonperishable food items, but over the years, food donations have shifted to fresh products. Today, more than half of donated food is fresh fruits and vegetables, and other perishable products. Last year, 11,445,105 pounds of produce was distributed by Second Harvest.

Second Harvest distributes 24,697,973 meals to people struggling with hunger each year. The programs offered by Second Harvest make this all possible. The Mobile Market increases the distribution of healthy, fresh foods to high-need areas. With the use of refrigerated trucks to distribute healthy fresh produce and other perishables, the Mobile Market breaks down barriers so that partner food banks can get nutritious fresh products to the vulnerable children, families and seniors they serve. Even though people and families can be given fresh produce, they are not always entirely sure how to prepare the food. The Kitchen program provides classes to teach individuals how to prepare meals using healthy and inexpensive ingredients. For the upcoming years, Second Harvest plans to continue to increase distribution of fresh food and other perishable products. This will make it possible for hungry people within the Inland Northwest to have nutritious food choices that improves their health and well-being.



The 1 millionth serving of beef was distributed to a family in need during the monthly Mobile Market. "It's meaningful that we recognize this milestone here, where the first Beef Counts donations reached the community," said local rancher Justin Waddington. "When we can provide a beef roast along with these other donated ingredients, we are empowering families to put a balanced, protein rich meal on the table." In addition to beef roasts, families in need receive other fresh food items such as potatoes, apples, onions, and bread products.