



HARVEST

Our Mission

Fighting hunger, feeding hope: Second Harvest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships.

Who We Are

Second Harvest (then the Spokane Food Bank) was founded in 1971 as a central warehouse for a handful of emergency food pantries. Since then, Second Harvest has grown into a streamlined warehouse operation that provides food to partner charities serving 21 counties in Eastern Washington and five counties in North Idaho—just over 51,000 square miles.

To better serve the region, Second Harvest opened a Tri-Cities distribution center in 1997. The branch warehouse allows expanded collaboration with businesses and nonprofit organizations throughout the more remote regions of Second Harvest's service area.

Second Harvest distributes more than 1.5 million pounds of donated food each month to neighborhood food banks and meal centers in the Inland Northwest. Over almost 40 years, Second Harvest has secured, warehoused and distributed more than 216 million pounds of food for people in need.

How We Work

Second Harvest is a charitable food distribution center that provides the food donations it secures from the food industry and community to more than 250 charities and programs in the region. Second Harvest's main warehouse and administrative offices in Spokane (85,000 square feet) house commercial coolers and freezers, and grocery salvage and food drive sorting areas. A fleet of refrigerated vehicles is used for food pick-up and delivery.

Second Harvest's network includes food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, group homes, senior centers, youth programs and rehabilitation centers that would see their limited budgets rapidly deplete if they had to purchase food through retail channels. With access to high quality food from Second Harvest to feed their clients, these agencies are able to focus their budgets on their own core services.

Faces of Hunger

According to regional data from Hunger in America 2010, the largest national survey on domestic hunger:

- 194,000 people throughout the Inland Northwest are served by Second Harvest's network annually.
- 38 percent (about 74,000) are children.
- 5 percent (about 10,000) are seniors.
- 42 percent of households include at least one employed adult.
- 67 percent of households report income below the federal poverty level.
- 32 percent of households have at least one member in poor health.



Second Harvest's food helps to fill the nutritional gap for people in poverty, the working poor, elderly and disabled people on very low fixed incomes, and children and families in temporary crisis. Money these families do not have to spend on groceries can be used for everyday needs like rent, utility bills, prescriptions, children's clothing, and gas for a car to get to school or work. Welfare reforms have put many low-income people on a path to return to work, but barriers like minimum wage employment, ongoing corporate layoffs, rising energy costs, high fuel prices and a shortage of low-income housing keep them from becoming self-sufficient.

Their circumstances may differ, but the common thread for emergency food clients is their struggle to put food on the table for their families. A mother of five shares her day-to-day challenge of caring for her 11-year-old son, who is a brittle diabetic. "We have had to hire a nurse to watch him at school. Her charge is \$45 an hour. It is difficult to pay medical bills and care for the four other children at home," she says.

Another emergency food client, a mother of seven, is unable to make ends meet despite holding multiple jobs. "My husband is disabled. I am working, but the money I get from one job is not enough. Right now I have four part-time jobs," she says.

Fresh Food Distribution

Second Harvest's food resources are changing. Greater efficiencies in the food industry mean fewer surplus or unmarketable shelf-stable products available for donation. As a result, Second Harvest is capitalizing on the availability of fresh produce and other perishable products in its agriculturally rich region. In addition, Second Harvest launched Grocery Rescue in the spring of 2004 to encourage donations of unmarketable but edible food at the grocery store level. The food, including items like fresh produce, dairy products, bakery items and meat, would otherwise go to waste. With participation from several grocery chains, Second Harvest dedicates trucking to a Grocery Rescue route in the Spokane area. Second Harvest's Grocery Rescue Partner Program connects retailers directly with partner agencies, many of them in outlying communities.

More than half of the food Second Harvest distributed last year was perishable. It is anticipated that fresh food will grow to 70 to 80 percent of Second Harvest's total distribution. Accepting fresh food donations comes with challenges, such as additional operating costs and safe handling issues, but these staples add considerable nutritional value to Second Harvest's product mix.

Second Harvest more than doubled its cold storage to accommodate increasing fresh food donations. The cooler and freezer project, which added nearly 100,000 cubic feet of commercial refrigerated storage, was funded in large part by a \$300,000 state capital budget appropriation in 2006.

Second Harvest's Mobile Food Bank gets nutritious fresh foods into the hands of impoverished families living in rural and urban communities throughout the Inland Northwest. Mobile Food Bank distributions are scheduled in cooperation with partner agencies, especially those lacking adequate refrigeration to safely distribute perishable donations. Second Harvest uses its refrigerated fleet to truck in the product and volunteers help distribute the food to hundreds of families and seniors who would otherwise be unable to afford many of the nutritious items. Mobile food banking is a key strategy for getting nutritious fresh food and other groceries directly to where they are needed most.

An Efficient Organization

The food industry donates the bulk of Second Harvest's inventory (close to 80 percent last year). Community contributions pay for transporting, warehousing and distributing this food to agency partners. Factor in more than 2,000 generous volunteers and Second Harvest is able to turn every \$1 donated into six pounds of food (about four meals) for people in need.

Ranked by budget (including the value of donated goods and services), Second Harvest is one of the largest social-service nonprofits in Spokane (Spokane Journal of Business Book of Lists).

