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UCare Foundation opens 2023 grant application cycle with \$2 million investment pool

To address urgent needs, three grants awarded to food programs alleviating hunger in urban and rural Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS, Mar. 22, 2023 — The [UCare Foundation](#) kicks off its 2023 grant application cycle with \$75,000 grants each to [The Camden Collective](#) in North Minneapolis, [Keystone Community Services](#) in Ramsey County and [Second Harvest-North Central Food Bank](#) in north central Minnesota. Community food distribution events will include opportunities to help impacted community members with Medicaid redetermination. [Minnesota's food nonprofits are preparing for record demand as federal aid subsides](#). With reductions in SNAP benefits, depleted food shelf inventory and rising cost of groceries, many seniors, adults and families across the state are struggling to access affordable, nutritious food.

These three food resource grants kick off the UCare Foundation 2023 application cycle, which has a pool of \$2 million available to fund programs addressing four key [priorities](#) – 1) mental health, 2) chronic condition care, 3) preventive health and 4) health equity.

“As a community-based health plan, UCare is deeply invested in supporting programs that help our most vulnerable members,” says Ghita Worcester, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs and Chief Growth Officer. “The UCare Foundation 2023 grant cycle focuses on pressing health disparities we see in Minnesota. Our goal is to increase community members’ access to mental health services, preventive and chronic disease care, and social drivers such as housing, food and employment.”

To be considered for a UCare Foundation grant, organizations must be a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, or a public/governmental agency located in Minnesota. Tribal nations are eligible. Funding consideration will be given to requests of up to \$50,000 for quality initiatives, mental health and preventive health projects – and for requests of up to \$100,000 for health equity projects. The application period closes end of day on Monday, May 1, 2023. More information is available [here](#).

Food Insecurity Grants in Underserved Communities

The three initial UCare Foundation grants have the potential to make an immediate difference in communities impacted by hunger and poverty.

Camden Collective in North Minneapolis

Due to the recent reduction in emergency SNAP benefits and the closing of the North Minneapolis Aldi, local residents lack access to low-cost, healthy food options. UCare's \$75,000 grant enables the [Camden Collective](#) to be open an additional night to increase the number of families served each week by at least 50 families. The community is 34% Spanish-speaking with a mix of newcomers, established immigrant families and families of mixed immigration status. The funding also enables monthly opportunities for health organizations to offer services onsite, such as an immunization clinic or help with Medicaid redetermination.

Keystone Community Services in Ramsey County

[Keystone's](#) UCare Foundation grant will be used to support its Basic Needs Programs, which improve access to fresh, healthy food for vulnerable populations in St. Paul and surrounding communities. The \$75,000 grant will enhance offerings in food shelves, food mobiles visiting 27 sites each month, 18 community-based produce distributions, and home delivery for 300 seniors and people with disabilities each month. Keystone will also use funding to open a new Community Food Center in late 2023.

Second Harvest-North Central Food Bank in North Central Minnesota

This program operates a [Pop-up Pantry](#) with 15-18 events per month where nutritious food is distributed to underserved and marginalized communities in 7 north central counties including parts of the Leech Lake Native Nation. The Foundation funding will directly increase the capacity of the program to provide nutritious food to rural and isolated communities, serving approximately 14,000 households and 34,000 individuals per month. More than one million pounds of food will be distributed through about 150 pop-up pantries in 20 communities.

About UCare

[UCare](#) is an independent, nonprofit health plan providing health care and administrative services to 650,000 members throughout Minnesota and parts of western Wisconsin. UCare partners with health care providers, counties, and community organizations to create and deliver Medicare, Medicaid and Individual & Family health plans.

The health plan addresses health care disparities and care access issues through a broad array of community initiatives. UCare has received Top Workplaces honors from the Star Tribune for 13 consecutive years since the rankings began in 2010.

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