



## **Strategic Plan 2018 - 2020\***

### **Harvesters' Vision**

*We envision a time when everyone in our community will have access to enough nutritious food to maintain a healthy lifestyle.*

### **Harvesters' Mission**

*Harvesters—The Community Food Network feeds hungry people today and works to end hunger tomorrow.*

As approved by Harvesters' Board of Directors on January 20, 2017.

\*This plan has been extended through June of 2022.



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## Strategic Planning Team

### Board Members:

- John George, Board Chair
- Julie Salmon, Board Member, Facilitator
- Kimberly Svaty, Board Member
- Jeff Pedersen, Board Member
- Wynne Dillon, Board Member

### Directors and Officers:

- Valerie Nicholson –Watson, President & CEO
- Joanna Sebelien, Chief Resource Officer
- Steve Davis, Chief Operating Officer
- Angela Holcomb, Human Resources
- Kristi Hettrick, Fund Development
- Kevin Martin, Operations
- Jerry Parrish, Kansas Distribution Center
- Jessica Kejr, Program Services
- Mike Wedel, Acquisition
- Noreen Zahner, Quality Assurance
- Paula Pratt, Community Engagement
- Robin Potts, Finance
- Sarah Biles, Communications



## CEO Narrative

### **The Need**

The United States Census Bureau heralded good news in September 2016 when it announced the country's poverty rate was down and median income rose a whopping 5.2 percent in 2015 to \$56,516 - up from \$53,718 in 2014. Along with the increased median income came news that the country's poverty rate fell to 13.5 percent, representing a drop of 1.2 percent.

While this is good news for most, and especially for individuals and families negatively affected during the 2008 economic recession, median income is still below what it was in 2007, and 45 million Americans still live in poverty.

We know that poverty is one of the leading indicators of food insecurity, which is having enough food today but not knowing if there will be food tomorrow or enough food for everyone in the household.

In Harvesters—The Community Food Network's 26-county service area of Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri one in seven people are food insecure. That equates to 383,750 people who may not have enough food to live a healthy, active lifestyle. Young children experience food insecurity more profoundly. For persons under the age of 18, one in five are at risk of hunger. That is 19.8 percent or 122,570 children in our service area experiencing food insecurity.

Despite some improvement in the economy, the need for food assistance remains high. Coupled with the knowledge that rising home rental rates (Kansas City experienced an 8.5 percent year-over-year rate increase) and utility costs represent additional pressure on overtaxed financial resources; that food deserts, where there is lack of access to grocery stores, exist in most all of the 26 counties served by Harvesters; that good nutrition is linked to good health; that children and adults with appropriate food intake do better at school and work and seniors who have access to good nutritious meals are able to live independently longer, food assistance provided by Harvesters and its partnering member agencies is as important as it has ever been.

### **Feed: Acquire a diverse mix of nutritious food and household products that are distributed through accessible, efficient and safe distribution methods.**

Getting good food to where it is needed most has long been the Harvesters motto. What we are experiencing as the organization matures is the evolution of our definition of "good food". We now think and speak of the food we provide in terms of nutrition and health. The community is

beginning to emphasize good nutrition as essential to good health and even beginning to espouse “food as medicine” and basic food security as a human right.

As a food bank, Harvesters is working to be a part of the community health movement, recognizing that the quality and nutritional value of the food we distribute matters. Our new mantra is “Harvesters distributes healthy, nutritious food to where it is needed most.”

We know there is a growing trend toward healthy eating, as evidenced by a 20 percent growth in fresh produce consumption in the decade between 2003 and 2013. This comes at a time when the realization that over 161 billion pounds of produce never makes it to market is being addressed through new relationships with farmers that enable Harvesters and all food banks in the Feeding America network to access what has become our most readily available, nutritious food source.

The emphasis on quality, however, is not at the peril of quantity as the need for food assistance remains high and Harvesters and our network of partner agencies remain the community's leader in hunger relief through a plan to provide more than 135 million meals by the year 2020.

**Partner: Maximize existing and new partnerships to optimize capacity to reduce food insecurity and promote client stability.**

Our mission states that “Harvesters feeds people today and works to end hunger tomorrow. Operationally, after 37 years, the organization is preparing to commit more resources toward collaborations designed to help stabilize families and in the long-run “shorten the line” by helping to reduce the need for hunger relief.

The question, then, is how do we work to end hunger? Following Feeding America's lead, we have aligned the organization with the thought that collaborating with entities that provide services designed to help stabilize the lives of children, seniors and families will better enable them to move beyond food insecurity. And for those who remain food insecure, Harvesters and our network of member agencies will be on hand to fill the meal gap created when personal resources and government assistance are inadequate for people to have access to enough nutritious food to lead healthy, active lives.

While this will in part require creation of new and different partnerships, Harvesters relies heavily on our existing network of partner agencies. We are re-defining our working relationship with our member agencies as we jointly work to retool a system created to distribute shelf stable product now faced with an intractable change in available food types and associated operating needs. Together, we will work to develop innovative new distribution models to provide greater amounts of produce, dairy and protein.

**Advocate: Educate, engage and influence stakeholders to take positive action to reduce hunger and food insecurity.**

Providing for people who are food-insecure requires that we continually build awareness about the persistence of hunger in our community, and we expand and strengthen community engagement in giving voice, time, money and food in support of hunger relief. Issues such as decreasing food waste, recognizing the environmental impact of food waste, focusing on the health

implications of a healthy diet, creating an even more diverse community engagement, and engaging young people are all opportunities to strengthen our engagement and mobilization efforts.

It also require that we develop ways to help food-insecure people tell their stories in their own voices so decision makers understand the impact of charitable efforts and the federal nutrition programs and the dire consequences if such assistance is not available at meaningful levels.

We will also work to better equip our agency partners to promote healthy food choices and to help their clients understand the impact of food and nutrition on their well-being.

**Operate: Utilize organizational excellence in all areas of business and stakeholder operations to further the brand, mission, sustainability and overall success of the organization.**

Operationally, the organization's beacon will be a spirit of excellence through stewardship, compliance, staff competency, effectiveness and efficiency. We will position ourselves to be agile and responsive to emerging opportunities, early adopters of technology, a competitive employer, and strategic in our planning through financial stability, staff and leadership development, and overall organizational health that includes infrastructure investment, disaster preparedness and risk management.

As we move forward, what is certain about Harvesters–The Community Food Network is that we will **Feed** people in need by safely providing the healthiest food available; we will **Partner** with new and existing organizations to provide services that help stabilize families economically and health wise; we will **Advocate** for programs and legislation that recognize and help meet the needs of food insecure people; and we will **Operate** our organization in a spirit of excellence, guided by our mission and the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, working toward the day when everyone in our community will have access to enough nutritious food to maintain a healthy lifestyle.



## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

Harvesters has strong brand recognition, community support and positive community perception. (B2, C1, C2)

Harvesters has a diverse resource base of support for food, funds and a long-term well respected volunteer program. We provide donors and volunteers with an understanding of the difference they make through their efforts. There are unique opportunities to host large volunteer groups of 100+ and the potential to expand and engage the community in multiple ways. (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1)

Harvesters is an effective and efficient organization with integrated planning, goal setting, budgeting and fundraising processes. It has an operating reserve of \$3 million. It is data driven, leverages technology and incorporates measurements in evaluating progress to goals and efficiencies. It has accurate data to enable efficiencies and cost savings. It has low administrative and fundraising costs. (C1, D1, D2, D3)

Harvesters' staff is competent, committed and diverse. A low turnover rate and a quality work environment enhances organization stability and ability to develop staff capacity and continuity of leadership. (D2)

Harvesters is agile and responsive to emerging opportunities. It is an early adopter of new technologies and trends. (B2, D3)

Harvesters hunger network of partner agencies, programs and collaborations is large, strong, stable, reliable and broad across 26 counties in two states. (A1, B1, C1)

The board is effective in governance and building community linkages. Service on Harvesters Board is viewed as very desirable. (C1, D2)

### Weaknesses

The numbers of children, seniors and families facing hunger remains high. Harvesters is challenged to efficiently meet the continued need for food assistance with available resources. (A1, B1, B2, C1, C2)

The continued and ever changing mix of food products available challenges Harvesters' ability and stresses the capital resources available to acquire, store and distribute food. (B2, A1, A2)

Our transportation and distribution infrastructure is aging and at capacity. (A1)

Our agency distribution model faces challenges in operations and the ability and resources to accept, store and distribute the changing mix of food available at the capacity needed. (A1)

The size and diversity of our member network is not fully leveraged to provide a common voice/message around hunger. (C1, C2, B1)

In an increasingly competitive employment market we are challenged to recruit and maintain adequate and skilled staff levels to meet the program, distribution, technology, administrative and support needs of the organization. (D2)

Our operating reserve at less than 3 months of operating expense has not grown in proportion to the organization's growth. (D1)

While our resource areas individually are strong, there is increasing need to build, build on and cultivate relationships across all areas. (C1)

We have limited opportunity for growth for on-site engagement with volunteers. We face challenges to match volunteers and production needs and continue to assure a quality experience for volunteers. (C1)

We have limited partnerships with organizations that provide complimentary services that address both food insecurity and promote client stability. (B2)

## **Opportunities**

As the economy strengthens and interest in health and nutrition increases, there is opportunity to change the conversation from "crisis" to healthy communities and positive outcomes. There is opportunity to engage our partner member agencies in different ways, grow current and new partnerships, programs and clients across Harvesters' service area and advocate for programs and policies that alleviate hunger and food insecurity. (B1, B2, C1, C2)

Food is available. While the mix continually changes from shelf stable to perishable, the changes provide opportunities to develop new and non-traditional distribution models. Increasing awareness around the issue of reducing food waste, the environmental impacts and health provide education and food sourcing opportunities. (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2)

Demographic changes across Harvesters' service area in terms of geographic, racial and ethnic composition, age and family types provide increased opportunity for diverse community engagement and enhancing a culture of philanthropy. (C1, C2)

The rising interest in civic engagement and volunteerism among active retirees and young professionals creates a broad pool of potential volunteers. Options for community engagement increase with the development of new technologies and online platforms for connecting interested food donors, fund donors, and individuals with hunger, Harvesters' programs and calls to action. Virtual volunteering, micro volunteering or short periods of time to volunteer, all social networking and food donor/agency matching are growth opportunities. (C1)

As more corporations develop focused community engagement strategies there are increased opportunities for Harvesters to build and strengthen corporate “business solution” leadership partnerships across all industry sectors and resource areas. (C1, D1)

Harvesters’ ability to continue to grow multi-year planning and budgeting, team building, staff training and development, succession planning, agency capacity and community engagement will strengthen an already strong reputation, brand recognition and confidence in the organization’s ability to steward resources to meet the need now and in the future. (C1, D1, D2, D3)

There are opportunities to leverage the power of State Association and Feeding America networks, resources and purchasing power.

## **Threats**

Food is an international commodity. We face competition from the food industry that seeks to reduce waste and non-saleable product. Increasingly, food is sold on the secondary market and overseas. Food is imported from around the world. There are challenges with food safety and food recalls. Changes in the food mix available requires more and different resources to acquire, store and distribute new and plentiful food types available. (A1)

While the community provides a diverse base of volunteers, financial donations, food donations and other support we also face challenges in all these areas. Donor fatigue, growing wealth disparity, decline of the middle class, an uneven economic recovery and the public’s perception that the need has declined threaten Harvesters ability to engage the community. (A1, C1, D1)

Our political process, systems and discourse is fragmented and divided making it difficult to agree on problems and solutions to problems. Partisan gaps grow and are largest around social safety net programs and particularly around the issue of government responsibility to take care of people who need help. Federal budget issues have the potential to significantly reduce and/or eliminate federal nutrition and safety net programs, charitable deductions, and programs like AmeriCorps. (A1, C2, D1)

Increasing numbers of clients are facing rising utility and rents. There are increasing numbers of “food deserts” and population shifts to metropolitan areas. These economic and demographic dynamics coupled with increasing freight, employment costs and a shrinking and /or specialized talent pool undermine Harvesters’ ability to provide emergency service throughout our service area. (B1, B2, C1 C2)

The pace of change and advances in technology, social media, news media, competition for hiring in competitive fields, (such as IT and transportation) data security, generational and demographic shifts have implications for future leadership, organizational cultures and structure, systems and risks. (C1, D2, D3)



## **Strategic Imperatives Defined**

### **Strategic Imperative A: FEED**

Acquire a diverse mix of nutritious food and household products that are distributed through accessible, efficient and safe distribution methods.

### **Strategic Imperative B: PARTNER**

Maximize existing and new partnerships to optimize capacity to reduce food insecurity and promote client stability.

### **Strategic Imperative C: ADVOCATE**

Educate, engage and influence stakeholders to take positive action to reduce hunger and food insecurity.

### **Strategic Imperative D: OPERATE**

Utilize organizational excellence in all areas of business and stakeholder operations to further the brand, mission, sustainability and overall success of the organization.



## **Strategic Imperatives, Goals and Strategies**

### **Strategic Imperative A: FEED**

**Acquire a diverse mix of nutritious food and household products that are distributed through accessible, efficient and safe distribution methods.**

#### **Goal A1: Reduce the Meal Gap**

**Provide 135,345,709 meals by 2020 to reduce the meal gap of those who are food insecure.**

- Proposed Metrics: Estimated annualized targets:
  - FY 2018 – 43,524,303
  - FY 2019 – 45,083,953
  - FY 2020 – 46,737,453
- Strategy: Acquire food and household product.
- Strategy: Research, develop and implement new distribution models and pipelines.
- Strategy: Maximize access to government nutrition programs (SNAP, afterschool, summer feeding programs etc.).
- Strategy: Invest in resources necessary to support acquisition, distribution plans and programs.

*Note: With this strategic plan, the goal continues to provide meals. Converting pounds to meals is based on a meal calculation of 1.2 lb. = 1 meal per USDA and SNAP meal equivalency calculations (per Feeding America)*

#### **Goal A2: Quality product**

**Optimize the acquisition and distribution of desirable and nutritious food and household products.**

- Proposed Metrics: 85 Percent of all food acquired will fall within the Very Desirable and Most Desirable categories.
- Strategy: Increase non co-op, web orderable, shelf stable product 100,000 pounds by 2020.
- Strategy: Meet Feeding Americas nutritional food standards.

## **Strategic Imperative B: PARTNER**

**Maximize existing and new partnerships to optimize capacity to reduce food insecurity and promote client stability.**

**Goal B1: Encourage and engage network partner agencies and programs to support high performance, increase capacity, and construct competency throughout the network.**

- Strategy: Invest in existing partner agencies. Provide tools, support and education to implement program changes, encourage healthy choices and increase capacity.
- Strategy: Engage partnering agencies and clients in nutrition education to promote client health and stability.
- Strategy: Measure the number of agencies engaging in partnerships with Harvesters that implement program changes, encourage healthy choices, provide nutrition education and increase capacity. Baseline established in year one. Targets defined for years two and three.

**Goal B2: Position Harvesters as a leader on hunger and healthy communities.**

- Strategy: Prepare a research-based “collaborating for clients” plan for implementation in year two.

## **Strategic Imperative C: ADVOCATE**

**Educate, engage and influence stakeholders to take positive action to reduce hunger and food insecurity.**

**Goal C1: Raise awareness of the scope and impact of hunger, the role of Harvesters, its member agency network, clients and supporters in addressing hunger, and inspire people to take action.**

- Strategy: Employ emerging and current technologies and communications vehicles to message to the public about the issue of hunger and Harvesters' engagement opportunities to learn, give food, time and money to hunger relief.
- Strategy: Provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn, give food, time, money and voice.
- Strategy: Revise the Positive Community Perception Index (PCPI) to become PCPI 2.0 and to be in effect for life of the plan (FY18-FY20). Baseline established in year one. Targets defined for years two and three.

**Goal C2: Give voice to the issue of hunger. Advocate for public policy and government nutrition programs that address hunger and food insecurity.**

- Strategy: Strengthen Harvesters' effectiveness in hunger advocacy and public policy through education, ongoing communications and interactions with stakeholders that raise awareness of the scope and impact of hunger and ways to address the problem.
- Strategy: Engage Harvesters, its member agency network, clients and supporters in the legislative process on hunger issues.
- Strategy: Provide opportunities for stakeholders to give voice.
- Strategy: Revise Public Policy Mobilization Index (PPMI to become PPMI 2.0) and to be effective for life of the plan (FY18-FY20). Baseline established in year one. Targets defined for years 2 and 3.

## **Strategic Imperative D: OPERATE**

**Utilize organizational excellence in all areas of business and stakeholder operations to further the brand, mission, sustainability, and overall success of the organization.**

**Goal D1: Financial Stability. Generate \$60.5 million in financial resources by 2020 to enable Harvesters to accomplish our mission and safeguard organizational stability.**

- Strategy: Secure contributions, grants, and revenues in support of Harvesters' board approved plans for operations, capital investment, and reserves.
- Proposed Metrics: Estimated annual targets:
  - FY18: Support \$17.5M (inclusive of \$2M capital support for Topeka); revenues \$3.0M
  - FY19: Support \$16.5M; revenues \$3.0M
  - FY20: Support \$17.0M; revenues \$3.0M
- Strategy: Generate operating surpluses sufficient to designate \$500,000 in funds to reserves.

**Goal D2: Institutionalize leadership development of Harvesters' staff and Board for the purpose of continuous improvement, high quality customer service and operational excellence standards that align with the values of the organization.**

- Strategy: Develop a formal employee leadership, engagement and enrichment program.
- Strategy: Demonstrate unwavering commitment to stewardship and customer service in all organizational day to day interactions.
- Strategy: Develop a Board development and engagement index to be effective for the life of the strategic plan. Baseline established in year one. Targets defined for years two and three.
- Strategy: Develop and implement organizational initiatives in response to results from the annual Feeding America Employee Engagement Survey. By 2020 score will exceed FA national average.

**Goal D3: Operational Health. Sustain Harvesters' culture of being a highly sound, transparent, and compliant organization, and continually invest in Harvesters' supporting infrastructure to ensure our long-term viability.**

- Strategy: Update Harvesters' Disaster Plan and report progress annually.
- Strategy: Update Harvesters' Risk Management Plan and report progress annually.
- Strategy: Invest in infrastructure resources to effectively support operational health and sustainability. Develop an organizational health index.\* Baseline established in year one. Targets defined for years two and three.

\*Organizational health index – Includes those key business and compliance items that are “red flag indicators”; these are items where negative results could compromise Harvesters' ability to operate successfully. Included are: annual audit results, AIB compliance, network downtime, Feeding America compliance, government program audit results, and findings from regulatory bodies.