

# Cultivating Wellness: Addressing Food Insecurity Through Workplace Gardens

## Anoka County SHIP Success Story

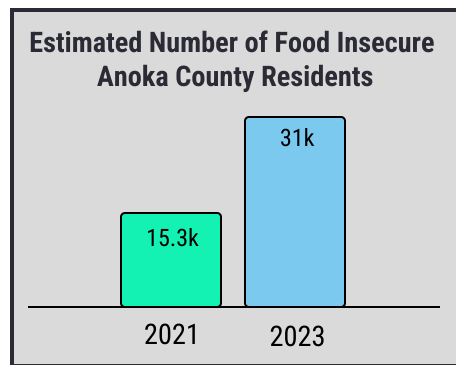
### Project Partner: APG Cash Drawer

Anoka County is home to APG Cash Drawer's global corporate headquarters. APG provides point-of-sale and cash management solutions to customers and industries worldwide. While the reach of APG's services spans the globe, they still make sure to prioritize the health of their employees who keep the business running right here at home. Read how APG's workplace garden helps their employees combat food insecurity below!

### Food Insecurity in Anoka County

Christie Hyer, APG's Regulatory and Compliance Manager, noted how the rising cost of food has hit the community hard over the past few years - contributing to an increase in the number of food insecure county residents.

**Feeding America** defines food insecurity as when a household cannot access enough food due to lack of money or other essential resources. In Anoka County, the number of food insecure residents doubled in just two



Source: Feeding America. (n.d.). *Food Insecurity among the Overall Population in Anoka County.* <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/minnesota/county/anoka>

years 2021 to 2023. To minimize the impacts of food insecurity, APG employees came up with the idea of creating a workplace garden to increase access to healthy foods in the workplace.

### Workplace Garden & SHIP Support

APG's workplace garden started in May 2024 with support from the SHIP grant. The garden was popular among employees until a family of woodchucks moved into the garden and began eating plants, deterring

and discouraging APG staff from using the garden. In the winter of 2025, SHIP staff checked in to see how the garden was going and were told about the woodchuck issue. SHIP consulted with the **University of Minnesota Extension's Master Gardener** program to provide APG with tips to prevent woodchucks from getting into the garden. With this guidance and employee interest in revitalizing the garden, Hyer applied for a second SHIP grant and received funding for fencing and mesh netting to help keep the woodchucks out, as well as 10 raised garden beds, soil, seeds, and garden benches to support an expansion of the workplace garden.

The revitalization and expansion of APG's workplace garden has been a huge hit among their 96 employees. Reducing food insecurity hasn't been the only benefit of the garden: enjoying breaks outside, being active while working in the garden, and increased social connection have also been reported by APG employees. SHIP is proud to partner with APG and collectively advance the goal of increasing access to healthy foods for all Anoka County residents.

**SHIP can support workplace wellness initiatives like this at your organization too! Email us at [SHIP@anokacountymn.gov](mailto:SHIP@anokacountymn.gov) to learn more.**

**"It's great having access to fresh produce in the workplace. Staff have gotten to try so many new kinds of produce through the garden."**



**"The garden has come up during meetings, and staff have been sharing gardening tips with each other."**



**"It has been wonderful having the garden, especially for younger employees as they get to learn about gardening."**