Organizations interested in Partnership with Second Harvest Heartland must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Have and maintain 501c3 status with the Internal Revenue Service or meet the criteria of a religious organization as defined by the IRS [https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/churches-religious-organizations/churches-defined](https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/churches-religious-organizations/churches-defined) and incorporated for the purpose of serving the ill, the needy, or infants. Evidence of status must be provided to SHH. The Agency cannot be a private foundation or a municipality. 501c3 is not the same as state sales tax exemption. Mosques, synagogues, churches and other religious organizations generally meet this qualification as a religious organization. If you have questions about your tax-exempt status contact the IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities Customer Account Services at 877.829.5500

2. Must not distribute food/products in exchange for money, property or services, i.e. client cannot be charged a fee or asked for a donation for the food, food cannot be sold as a fundraiser, etc.

3. A majority of the program’s beneficiaries are low income (according to Federal Poverty Guidelines [https://familiesusa.org/product/federal-poverty-guidelines](https://familiesusa.org/product/federal-poverty-guidelines)) or in crisis. This percentage should be determined by self-declaration on client intake forms or annual client surveys.

4. In the interest of keeping clients healthy and safe agencies must maintain adequate cold and dry storage space to ensure the integrity of the food/product until it is used and/or distributed. Food storage and service cannot be located in a staff/volunteer’s personal residence.

5. Will have at least one staff or volunteer complete Food Safety training approved by Second Harvest Heartland and will share best practices on Food Safety with other staff and volunteers. Food safety requirements vary by type of program you can find more information here: [http://agencies.2harvest.org/resources/foodsafety/](http://agencies.2harvest.org/resources/foodsafety/). Other trainings such as Civil Rights Training and Agency Orientation must also be completed.

6. Will have an active Board of Directors and will strive to abide by the standards for governance stated in Principles and Practices for NonProfit Excellence from the MN Council of Non-Profits.

7. As part of our consideration for partnership we include an organization’s history, track record, the media they publish and their evaluation by other third-party groups such as local health departments. USDA, Charity Navigator, and the Southern Poverty Law Group among others. Partnership with SHH requires that organizations will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistant program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA.

8. Will not use food programs to foster or advance religious or political views by expecting clients to participate in political or religious events or activities in order to receive food.

9. Will provide a specific and continuous food programming to the community in the form of meals or groceries to clients. In general, continuous programming means actively serving food 9-12 months of the year with exception for summer produce distributions. Meal programs should provide services at least once per week. Food Shelves and grocery distributions should provide service at least once per month. Preference will be given to programs with service hours that best accommodate client schedules such as more frequent weekly hours, and/or hosting evening or weekend hours. Preference will also be given to programs that have been in operation for 6 months or more.

10. A probationary period of 6 months applies to new partners. Those that fail to consistently meet one or more of Second Harvest’s partnership requirements as outlined in this pre-qualifier or the Partnership Agreement may have partnership revoked by Second Harvest.