

# Shorter Work Week

Metro Caring’s mission is two-fold: to meet people’s immediate needs for nutritious food while building a movement to end hunger at its root. To foster creative and innovative solutions to our community’s long-term challenges and support our staff’s well-being, we are launching a shorter work week pilot. For six months, we will trial a 4-day, 32-hour work week to evaluate if a shorter work week improves our well-being, productivity, and creativity.

Research from 4 Day Week Global has shown **3 out of 4 employees are happier** and less stressed with 4-day weeks, and **63% of businesses found it easier to attract and retain talent.**

## Ending hunger requires creative, innovative solutions.

Metro Caring has served our community since 1974, meeting people’s immediate everyday needs for fresh, nutritious foods. As we approach our 50th anniversary, we are keenly aware that hunger remains a prominent challenge in our state, one that has grown in recent years due to COVID-19, the rising cost of living, and inflated food prices. While we continue to do our part to expand access to healthy food, we also face the reality that after 50 years, the lack of government investment, skyrocketing cost of housing, and unlivable wages make it impossible for us to meet everyone’s needs every day. That’s why we’re focused on new ideas and innovative solutions to challenge the status quo, reinvent our local food system, and undo centuries of racism that have left generations of families wondering where their next meal will come from. **We have to think outside the box to change the trajectory of the next 50 years.**

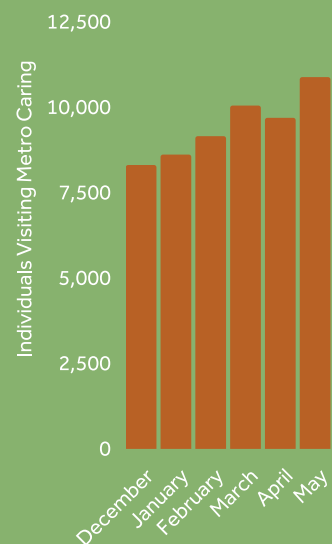
## Our movement needs strong, dedicated leaders.

Over half of nonprofit leaders felt “used up” at the end of the workday, according to a 2021 study from DDI. For many of us, this work is personal, and the emotional demand weighs heavy on our lives. Turnover rates are high in our sector (19% compared to the industry average of 12%), and studies estimate losing an employee can cost the organization 1.5- to 2-times the employee’s salary. We need skilled employees, creative thinkers, and people with lived experience to lead our movement. While we can’t always compete with corporate pay scales, we can offer our employees a healthier way of balancing their personal and professional lives with competitive benefits, thriving wages, and a shorter work week. By leading our sector in piloting a 4-day work week, we hope to attract more talented and experienced staff.



## Need for Food Is Rising

Handing out more and more food isn’t shortening the line. Even more than three years after COVID-19, need in our community continues to rise. We need different approaches to sustainably establish food security in our city and state.



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### Strengthening our commitment to community.

As with all our work at Metro Caring, we make decisions with our community. After surveying shoppers in our Fresh Foods Market, we found that opening for more evening shifts would better meet our community's needs than being open on Fridays. Additionally, more volunteers are readily available for evening shifts than during the day Fridays. Low volunteer turnout often results in staff members having to jump in to cover roles, a practice that is unsustainable, unproductive, and a direct cause of staff exhaustion and burnout. In contrast, our current Tuesday evening shift is often so full we don't have enough roles for all the volunteers that show up. By shifting our open hours to more evening shifts, we believe we will improve the shopping and volunteer experience while reducing stress on staff.

### Evaluating the Pilot

We value data-informed decision-making to improve our work. Staff surveys presented before, during, and near the end of the 6-month pilot will evaluate well-being, productivity, and work-life balance. Metro Caring is also participating in a global survey with [4 Day Week Global](#) to share data on our pilot with other organizations as part of our commitment to be leaders in the anti-hunger movement and nonprofit sector.

### Transition Plan

Our 4-day work week pilot begins August 1 and runs for 6 months. All full-time employees will work Monday through Thursday, with the exception of special events, which employees will use flex time to compensate for, as usual.

The Fresh Foods Market will close Fridays, extend morning hours to open 30 minutes earlier, and add evening shifts. At the start of the trial, one evening shift will be added on Mondays. After building capacity for evening volunteers and staff, evening hours will be added on Wednesdays. These new hours will increase the number of available Fresh Foods Market appointments and open hours for walk-ins from our current offerings.

Front-line staff will stagger hours on days with evening shifts, just as they do now for Tuesday evenings, so no staff will work over an 8-hour day.

### New Fresh Foods Market Hours

Monday	9-11:30am   12:30-3pm   <b>6-7:30pm</b>
Tuesday	9-11:30am   12:30-3pm   6-7:30pm
Wednesday	9-11:30am   12:30-3pm   <b>6-7:30pm</b>
Thursday	9-11:30am   12:30-3pm

*\*Green denotes expanded hours. Wednesday evening hours will be added later in the pilot.*



"In the past 4 years, my position has been filled by four different people. After chatting with my predecessors, it's clear to me that they loved the work, yet found it unsustainable. When I took this role, one of my main objectives was to make the Food Access program more sustainable long term. I chose to join the staff-led initiative to shorten our work week, because I believe it will create a healthier work-life balance so that folks who are dedicated and passionate about their work can thrive in the nonprofit sector long term."

**Cory Scrivner, Food Access Manager**