Decision Memo

# To:

Senior Leadership

# From:

[Your Division/Team Name]

# Date:

[Insert Date]

# Subject:

Adoption of FIRST Dynamic System for Food Insecurity Risk Tracking

# Action Requested

Approval to adopt and implement the Food Insecurity Risk Score Tracker (FIRST) Dynamic System as the standard tool for monitoring community food insecurity risks, guiding outreach, and supporting program planning.

# Background

The FIRST system was developed to integrate multiple data streams (unemployment, evictions, school attendance, utility shutoffs, free/reduced lunch data, and food demand indicators) into a single risk score.

- Converts complex data into a traffic light signal (Green/Amber/Red) that clearly communicates community conditions.

- Tracks family movement between three categories: Stable, At-Risk, and Assisted.

- Simulates 'what-if' scenarios (e.g., adding more outreach, increasing benefit uptake, or eviction spikes) to anticipate changes and plan responses.

This upgrade transforms FIRST from a static dashboard into a dynamic forecasting tool that helps frontline workers and managers act earlier.

# Equity Impact

- Families of color, immigrant households, and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.

- Real-time risk tracking identifies widening disparities and guides equitable resource allocation.

- County-level customization ensures local conditions are properly weighted.

# Reason for Approval

- Provides early-warning signals to prevent families from falling into crisis.

- Simplifies communication with visual tools (thermometer, traffic light, buckets).

- Strengthens program accountability by connecting interventions to measurable changes.

- Supports evidence-based policy and cross-agency coordination.

# Effective Date and End Date

- Pilot start: [Insert Date – e.g., January 2026]

- Evaluation check-in: 6 months after implementation

- Full integration: within 12 months, pending evaluation results

# Fiscal Impact

- Startup costs: Minimal, using existing data pipelines and Streamlit dashboards.

- Training: One-day training sessions for frontline staff and managers.

- Ongoing costs: Maintenance of data feeds, cloud hosting (~$X per year).

- Offset savings: Earlier interventions reduce crisis spending on emergency food, shelter, and health costs.

# IT Impact

- Built in Python/Streamlit, deployable on agency servers or cloud.

- Compatible with existing data sources (CSV/SQL).

- Secure access managed through agency logins.

- Flexible design allows integration into state data warehouses.

# Internal Review

This memo has been reviewed by [Insert names — e.g., Program Director, IT Lead, Evaluation Lead] and is recommended for approval.

# Recommendation

Approve the adoption of the FIRST Dynamic System for statewide rollout, beginning with a pilot in high-need counties (e.g., Hennepin, Ramsey) and scaling to additional counties as capacity grows.