

VISTA Living Tips

www.mnliteracy.org/vista



Minnesota Literacy Council AmeriCorps*VISTA

MORE INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED @MNLITERACY.ORG/VISTA THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE!

FOOD SUPPORT

Food Assistance Programs (formerly Food Stamps): call the MN Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151, Monday through Friday from 8:30-4:30. Multilingual phone assistance is available. Here you can:

- Get screened for eligibility and find assistance in completing the application for Food Support.
- Locate food resources in your community, whether it be a food shelf and/or hot meal site.
- Find referrals for other public food programs that you may be eligible for, like WIC (Women, Infants and Children) or MAC (Mothers and Children).

Minnesota Department of Human Services website: <http://mn.gov/dhs/>

- Find basic information regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other Food Assistance programs, as well as how to apply for the assistance you need in your county.
- Under the tab “People We Serve” and then “Adults,” click on the “Economic Supports” tab, and then click on “Food and Nutrition Assistance”.
- On the right-hand side of the page, the “Related Pages” and “Related Links” share more resources for food banks, MN food support programs, and understanding your rights to these benefits.

HOW TO EAT CHEAPLY AND WELL

Farmers’ Markets: Many farmers’ markets now accept EBT (your food assistance card)! In fact, some even will match the first \$5 of your purchase using EBT with a gift of \$5 worth of tokens for produce. So you can get \$10 worth of food for \$5—and \$10 at the Farmers’ Market, in season, will allow you to leave with more vegetables than you can eat alone... so invite some friends and VISTAs over! Look at an example of how to use your EBT card at the farmers’ market here: <http://www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com/about/ebt>

The Minneapolis Farmers’ Market: www.mplsfarmersmarket.com

All St. Paul Farmers’ Markets: www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com

Greater Minnesota Farmers’ Markets:

- Austin: <http://www.localharvest.org/austin-area-farmers-market-M6318>
- Morris: <http://www.morrisareafarmersmarket.com/>
- Faribault: <http://www.greentowns.com/initiative/farmers-market/faribault>
- Northfield: <http://www.local-farmers-markets.com/market/2590/northfield>
- Listing of all MN farmers’ markets: <http://www3.mda.state.mn.us/mngrown>

Midtown Global Market: www.midtowntglobalmarket.org (Minneapolis: Chicago Avenue and Lake St.)

This bustling food and craft marketplace offers ethnic foods from across the globe, an organic produce vendor, crafts, coffee shops, happy hours with free appetizers, free dance and yoga lessons, and free Wi-Fi. It is accessible by bus, car or bike (via the Midtown Greenway). A great place to spend the day exploring!

Co-Ops: Many are EBT friendly! Whether you’re looking for local farm-raised chicken and eggs, milk, and grass-fed beef, or ethically Fair Traded bananas, you’re likely to get the best deals at local co-ops. Sure, the cost may be a bit higher, but compared to how much you would pay elsewhere, the prices can’t be beat. Buy in bulk.

- Seward Co-Op (East Minneapolis): www.seward.coop
- The Wedge (Uptown Minneapolis): www.wedge.coop

- Hampden Park Co-Op (St. Paul): www.hampdenparkcoop.com
- Mississippi Market (St. Paul): <http://msmarket.coop>
- Just Food Co-Op (Northfield): <http://justfood.coop/>
- Pomme de Terre Food Co-Op (Morris): <http://www.pdtfoods.org/>
- Good Food Store Co-Op (Rochester): <https://www.ncga.coop/>
- Listing of Other Co-Ops, all over MN: www.coopdirectory.org

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Metro Transit: www.metrotransit.com

Frequent Rider Bus Passes: Ride a lot? Buy a monthly pass and save money.

Bike + Bus: Take your bike on the bus, using the outside bike rack, or on the light rail, using the racks inside.

Biking: Use www.mapmyride.com to calculate the length of your trip, and consult [Minneapolis bike maps](#) and [St. Paul bike maps](#) to plan your ride. If you are looking to purchase or repair a bicycle, check out:

- Minneapolis bike auction: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/police/about/police_about_auctions
- Twin Cities bike shops: www.biketcbc.org/bikeshops/index.html

Guaranteed Ride Home: If you ride the bus, you can sign up for a program to get two vouchers (up to \$25) to use for cab fare every six months. You pay upfront, get a receipt from the cabby, and then mail it in with the voucher to get a check. Sign up here: www.metrotransit.org/riderPrograms/grh.asp

Carpooling: Check out the VISTA roster and talk with any VISTAs who might live or work near you. Carpooling to work, social and networking events, and trainings is always a great money-saving option!

Ridesharing: Check out www.ERIDESHARE.com, or rent a car by the hour through www.hourcar.org.

EDUCATION

Goodwill Community Foundation: <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/topics> Free, online courses and tutorials on everything from technology and social media to career exploration and professional development.

Exco: <http://excotc.org/> A free, online Experimental Community Education project based in the Twin Cities, with a wide variety of classes available, all taught by other individuals. All types of classes (academic, bike repair, cooking, language, etc.) and you could even teach your own course!

Community Education programs: Find cheap classes on cooking, yoga, photography, etc.

Minneapolis: www.mplscommunityed.com

St. Paul: <http://commed.spps.org/>

Austin: <https://www.austin.k12.mn.us/clc/default.aspx>

Morris: <http://www.morriscommed.org/>

Northfield: <http://nfld.k12.mn.us/communityservices/>

Faribault: <http://www.ci.faribault.mn.us/parks/communityedprograms>

DEALS AND FREE STUFF

Steals and Deals: The Star Tribune shares “Steals and Deals” online, in the Lifestyle section. It tells you where sales are, includes offers for half-priced gift cards, and shares money-saving tips for the Twin Cities!

City Pages: www.citypages.com/bestOf A “Best of the Twin Cities” list with savings ideas.

Freecycle: <http://www.freecycle.com> An online community where people give away and trade things.

TC Free Market: <http://www.twincitiesfreemarket.org> A listing service for residents who want to give or get free reusable goods for the home, garage and garden.

Thrifty Hipster: www.thriftyhipster.com Receive an email newsletter with giveaways and free event listings.

Craigslist: <http://www.craigslist.org/> Lots of recent college grads and service members in Minnesota means lots of people looking to buy and sell home goods, furniture, art, etc. often for very cheap.

MOVIE THEATERS

Riverview Theater (Minneapolis): www.riverviewtheater.com

Second-run movies \$3, \$2 Tuesdays @ 3800 42nd Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55406, (612) 729-7369

St. Anthony Main (Minneapolis): <http://www.stanthonymaintheatre.com/times.html>

\$5 tickets on Tuesdays @ SE 115 Main Street, Minneapolis, MN 55414, (612) 331-4723

University of MN Student Center (St. Paul): www.spsc.umn.edu

Free film showings, along with concerts, etc. @ 2017 Buford Avenue, St. Paul MN 55108

Woodbury Theatre (East St. Paul): <http://www.woodburytheatre.com/>

\$4 tickets before 6pm and \$6 after 6pm @ 1470 Queens Drive, Woodbury, MN 55125, (651) 731-0606

Hopkins Cinema 6 (Hopkins): www.manntheatresmn.com/theater.php?ID=11

\$2.50 anytime, \$2.00 on Tuesdays @ 1118 Main Street, Hopkins MN 55343, (952) 931-7992

Roseville AMC (Roseville): www.amctheatres.com/Rosedale/

\$5 tickets before noon. Shows all of the recent hits, plus IMAX and 3-D films.

CineMagic7 (Austin): <http://www.cinemagictheatres.com/theatres/4>

\$6.25 matinee and lots of specials on snacks @ 1302 18th Ave NW, Austin MN 55912, (507) 433-9191

Morris Theatre Co-Operative (Morris): <http://www.morristheatre.net/>

Showing current films @ 12 E 6th Street, Morris MN 56267, (320) 589-2200

Northwoods Cinema 10 (Owatonna): <http://www.cectheatres.com/theatres/index.cfm?tid=70>

\$6.50 tickets before 6pm @ 300 Allan Avenue, Owatonna, MN 55060, (507) 451-1410

INEXPENSIVE FUN ON THE TOWN

Visit your local public library and check out free passes to museums and galleries!

Search for the best happy hour deals at: www.dailyhappyhour.com

Walker Art Center (Minneapolis): www.walkerart.org Free gallery admission on Thursdays from 5-9 pm, as well as the first Saturday of each month.

Minneapolis Institute of Arts: www.artsmia.org Free admission except for occasional special exhibits.

Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum (Minneapolis): www.weisman.umn.edu Free admission.

The Goldstein: A Museum of Design (St. Paul): <http://goldstein.design.umn.edu/> Free admission.

Minnesota History Center (St. Paul): www.mnhs.org Free admission every Tuesday from 5-8pm.

Bell Museum of Natural History (Minneapolis): www.bellmuseum.org Free on Sundays.

Science Museum of Minnesota (St. Paul): www.smm.org Discount tickets are available, using your EBT card or student ID. Check for qualifications.

University of Minnesota (Minneapolis and St. Paul): Cheap/free galleries and museums, cultural and arts performances, dialogues and workshops open to the public. www1.umn.edu/twincities/arts-culture

Minnesota Orchestra (St. Paul): www.minnesotaorchestra.org Student, discount, and rush tickets.

ACME Comedy Company (Minneapolis): <http://www.acmecomedycorpany.com> Free for you and five friends during the month of your birthday on a T-TH; \$5 T-TH with a college ID.

Brave New Workshop (Minneapolis): <http://theatre.bravenewworkshop.com> \$5 for late night improv.

Como Zoo and Botanical Gardens (St. Paul): www.comozooconservatory.org Free Admission.

Saints Baseball (St. Paul): saintsbaserball.com Super cheap tickets, lots of extra activities and events.

Twins Baseball (Minneapolis): minnesota.twins.mlb.com Watch for discounted tickets and deals.

Twin Cities Brewery Tours: Check out:

- **Summit Brewery** www.summitbrewing.com
- **Surly Brewery:** www.surlybrewing.com
- **Grain Belt Brewery:** www.grainbelt.com/contact.php

Spam Museum (Austin): <http://www.spam.com> Free, interactive, and completely awesome.

Jay C. Hormel Nature Center (Austin): <http://www.hormelnaturecenter.org> Trails open to the public.

Jesse James Bowling Lanes (Northfield): <http://jessejameslanes.com> Super cheap bowling, shoe rental, and food and drink deals on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights.

Nerstrand-Big Woods State Park (Northfield): http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks Public and free hiking trails, wilderness areas, volleyball courts and camping facilities.

TOOLS FOR BUDGETING AND TRACKING EXPENSES

Mint.com: A free and secure online financial planning tool that allows you to:

- Connect multiple bank accounts with its budgeting and tracking tool, which automatically categorizes all of your spending into the categories which you establish (for example: income, groceries, gas, leisure, savings).
- Stop book-keeping by hand. The automatic categorization tool breaks down every expense into specific spending notes. For example, if you buy a bunch of things at Target, Mint automatically splits your single purchase into the appropriate categories of groceries, clothes, home goods, etc. If you stop at an ATM, Mint will separate the amount you withdrew from the added ATM fee (and track what you're spending on fees).
- Set personal spending and saving goals, and track your progress online or with monthly email statements.
- Track balances and payment schedules of loans, debt, and investments.
- Set up alerts and reminders before bills are due, when accounts get low, or before you go over budget.
- See how your spending decisions will affect how much you have left at the end of the month of the year.
- View easy-to-understand graphs and representations of your priorities, expenses, and budgeting decisions.

VISTA Campus: an AmeriCorps VISTA website that includes the following tools:

- **Budget Calculator:** a free, basic calculator to track your stipend amounts and monthly living expenses.
- More general tips for living on the VISTA stipend.
- Resources and information on using your Education Award effectively, and understanding the benefits available to you through the AmeriCorps VISTA program.