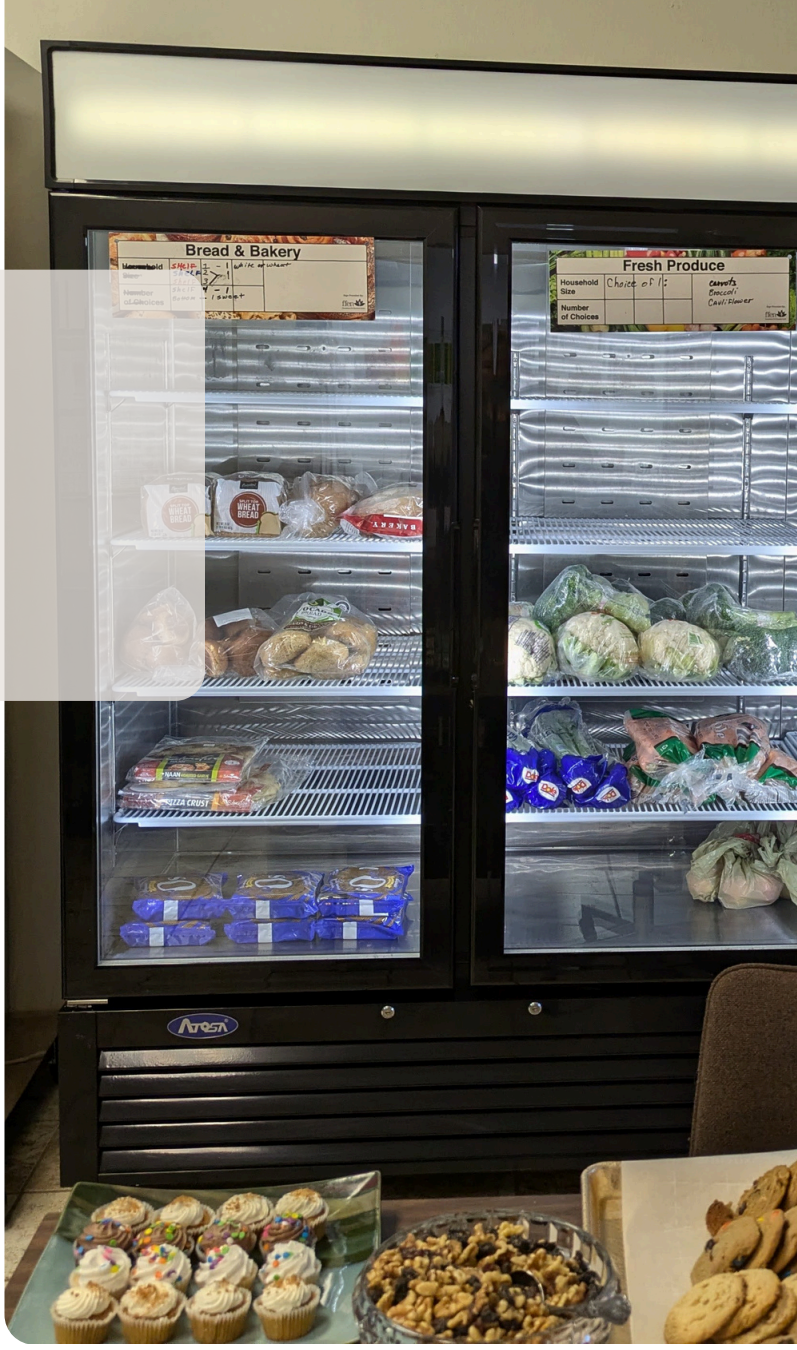
ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

Feeding Community, Fueling Change

Garrison Area Caregivers Food Shelf
Garrison, Minnesota



Community Voices Help Shape the Future in Garrison

This volunteer-run food shelf serves people from eight different counties. Transportation barriers have shoppers relying on ride-shares, bicycles and four-wheelers to access food. As demand increases, the food shelf reached out to FFEN to gather feedback on how the site is meeting needs, especially of those looking for gluten-free food, culturally-relevant food and food for people with health conditions. The project also aimed to increase volunteers and provide transparency about operations and the need for funding.

Food Shelf Service Overview

400+
monthly pantry visits

2x
increase in visits last year

25
volunteers

FFEN Project Support

FFEN worked alongside staff at Garrison to provide implementation support at no-cost including:

1 Coordination

Coordinated and held a community open house.

2 Survey Distribution

Created and distributed surveys to shoppers.

3 Analysis

Analyzed communications and survey feedback to form recommendations.

Project Investments

26
FFEN consulting hours

30
shoppers surveyed

22
open house attendees

Voices From the Aisles

Feedback gathered from shoppers provided important insights to inform communication and program changes.

We learned:

- Shoppers value meat, eggs, and fresh produce and consider them the most important foods
- There's interest in diabetic-friendly, gluten-free, and lactose-free options
- Shoppers would like to see more food available
- Interest in additional hours/emergency access
- Shoppers appreciate cleanliness and being known by name

"We create a loving atmosphere that keeps our shoppers coming back on a monthly basis. The volunteers do a great job in stocking our shelves with food and other items staying within budget."

– Food Shelf Supporter

From Challenge to Change: Immediate Improvements

- Offer high-demand items like meat, eggs, and produce
- Expand and label dietary-friendly options
- Provide simple recipes or nutrition tips

Next Steps

- Build partnerships with local donors/producers
- Reevaluate how food is organized for more flexibility
- Expand hours with help of volunteers

Future Plans & Priorities

- Add a volunteer coordinator position to recruit seasonal residents, students, and local groups as volunteers

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Garrison Food Shelf
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