ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

The Challenge of Demand, The Opportunity for Change

Groveland Emergency Food Shelf
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Evolving to Meet Growing Needs

Groveland responds to over 4,200 visits a month, double its pre-pandemic volume.

The food shelf had long lines and struggled to keep the shelves full, resulting in inconsistent food availability. There were concerns about clear signage, food equity among shoppers and the number of people accessing the site daily for daily food support because the nearest daily community meal is 3.5 miles away. Due to limited space, and a complex food delivery schedule, there was a lot of congestion in the food distribution area. Sharon Abel, the site's executive director, reached out to FFEN to consider solutions.

Food Shelf Service Overview

4,200+
monthly pantry visits

55%
rescued grocery food

71%
of all food offered is fresh

FFEN Project Support

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

1 Customer Interviews

Conducting 11 shopper interviews, including some with interpreters.

2 Survey Distribution

Coordinating 8 paper surveys.

3 Analysis

Analysis of interview and survey response themes to create recommendations.

Project Investments

33

FFEN consulting hours

19

shoppers surveyed

$450

participant stipends

Voices From the Aisles

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

We learned:

- Long lines led to overcrowding, conflicts, and the use of placeholders (like bags), creating tension
- Shoppers want to access meat first to plan meals
- Consistent food availability throughout the day is key and reduces pressure to arrive early
- Clear multi-lingual signage could guide shoppers on choices and eliminate confusion

"The biggest benefit was having the validation, advice, and support from FFEN. I was new to non-profit when I started working with FFEN and they not only made this project possible for us, they made me a better leader."

– Sharon Abel, Executive Director

From Challenge to Change: Immediate Improvements

- Groveland is engaged with FFEN's Process Improvement Consultation service to re-design their layout for greater efficiency and consistently offer access to fresh food, supported by multi-lingual signage.

Future Recomendations & Next Steps

- Build partnerships for non-food items and expand produce rescue
- Explore line management solutions
- Add Spanish-speaking staff/volunteers
- Streamline volunteer roles
- Create an emergency section for daily-use shoppers

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