ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

Feeding Community, Fueling Change

La Crescent Food Shelf
La Crescent, Minnesota

Listening Before Leading: La Crescent Food Shelf Gathers Input

The La Crescent Food Shelf has faced rising demand, compounded by higher food prices, limited space and staffing, and inconsistent inventory—highlighting the need for more information.

The staff reached out to FFEN to gather insights from shoppers to gauge demand for culturally relevant foods and foods for those with dietary needs. They also wanted to provide consistent communication regarding policies and offerings and identify opportunities to improve access, operations and the variety of food, focusing on equity and availability throughout the week.

Food Shelf Service Overview

200+
households served

1x
a week food access

64%
of all food offered is fresh

FFEN Project Support

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

1 Coordination
The coordination of one-on-one interviews with shoppers.

2 Survey Distribution
Creating and distributing surveys to shoppers.

3 Analysis
Analyzing survey and interview response themes to create recommendations.

Project Investments

16
FFEN consulting hours

39
shoppers surveyed

15
one-on-one interviews

$375
participant stipends

Voices From the Aisles

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

We learned:

- Weekly access is essential for families
- High demand for meat, fresh vegetables, and dairy
- Shoppers are concerned with inconsistent supply, unclear signage, and limits on popular items
- Need for non-food items like toilet paper, hygiene products, and diapers

> **"The food helps—but it's how the staff treats me and my family keeps me coming back."**
> – Food Shelf Shopper

From Challenge to Change: Immediate Improvements

- Provide more milk, eggs, meat, and fresh produce
- Adjust restock timing to improve equity and improve consistency with food availability throughout the week
- Installed new signage

Future Recomendations & Next Steps

- Leaders use feedback to guide outreach.
- Board aligned on shopper-centered values.
- Assess layout and hours to serve more shoppers.
- Explore added service hours or appointments.
- Build partnerships for hygiene items.

FFEN
FFEN.org
612-524-9360
programs@FFEN.org

La Crescent
hcp.lacrescenthcp.org/home
507-895-1115
lacrescentfoodshelf@gmail.com