ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

The Challenge of Demand, The Opportunity for Change

The Open Door Food Pantry
Eagan, Minnesota

Facing Challenges, Finding Opportunities

The Open Door provides food to the community through a welcoming, grocery store-like model, highlighting fresh produce alongside grocery staples. But growing demand has shoppers waiting 7 to 8 weeks between appointments, making it difficult to respond to urgent food needs. While the organization offers multiple pop-up pantries and a drive-up service, many shoppers didn't know about these alternate options.

To respond to the demand, The Open Door reached out to FFEN to gather feedback from shoppers that could help guide improvements.

Food Shelf Service Overview

16,000+
monthly pantry visits

28+
pop-up pantries monthly

63%
of all food offered is fresh

FFEN Project Support

FFEN worked alongside The Open Door to scope the project and provide no-cost implementation support, including:

1 Development

Question development for surveys and focus groups.

2 Facilitation

Facilitation and note-taking for focus group sessions.

3 Analysis

Analysis of survey responses and focus group data into recommendations.

Project Investments

24
FFEN consulting hours

240
shoppers surveyed

15
focus group participants

$375
participant stipends

Voices From the Aisles

Feedback gathered from online surveys and focus groups shared important insights to inform communication and program changes.

Shoppers told us:

- 90% satisfaction rate; 82% prefer the grocery-store model
- Food lasts 1–2 weeks and they need more frequent visits
- Nearly 50% unaware of additional programs, especially Spanish-speaking shoppers
- Want more protein and produce food choices
- Concern over potentially expired items

> **"Just so grateful that Open Door exists. Sometimes we run out of money, and this helps."**
>
> – Food Shelf Shopper

From Challenge to Change: Immediate Improvements

- Implement bilingual signage & materials consistently
- Expand frozen and shelf-stable food offerings
- Provide education on "best by" vs. expiration dates

Next Steps

- Explore Saturday and additional weekday hours
- Create a food shelf shopper advisory committee
- Multilingual staff member available on all shifts

Future Plans & Priorities

- Improve food shelf appointment system flexibility
- Increase staffing for expanded service hours
- Offer multi-lingual food literacy workshops

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