ffen Essentials

Prioritizing Foods

For Greater Impact

November 2025

Welcome & Logistics

Presenters:

- Katie Bull, FFEN Director of Programs
- Andrea Gressman, FFEN Consultant
- Susie West, University of Minnesota Extension

Agenda:

- Welcome & Opening Poll
- Understand why prioritization matters
- Practice using FFEN's Food Sourcing Prioritization Tool
- Leave with a draft prioritization plan & practical next steps
- Q & A

FFEN Overview

Foundation for Essential Needs (FFEN)

- Statewide Nonprofit
- Free Consultant for Minnesota Food Shelves
  - Food sourcing and shopper data insights for impactful programming and budgeting
  - Onboarding and training for effective food shelf leadership and succession planning
  - Tailored project-based consultation

Thriving communities require strong and stable food shelves, able to respond effectively and efficiently to the unique needs of local neighbors

Poll Question #1

How does your food shelf currently decide which foods to purchase or prioritize?

a) Based on availability

b) Based on nutrition

c) Based on shopper requests

d) Based on budget/cost

e) Based on what our volunteers say we need

Poll Question #2

Do you feel you have a clear plan or process in place that guides your sourcing decisions?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Unsure

Why Prioritization Matters?

Prioritization affects:

Why Prioritization Matters?

Benefits of Prioritization:

Sourcing by Category

Alternative Strategies

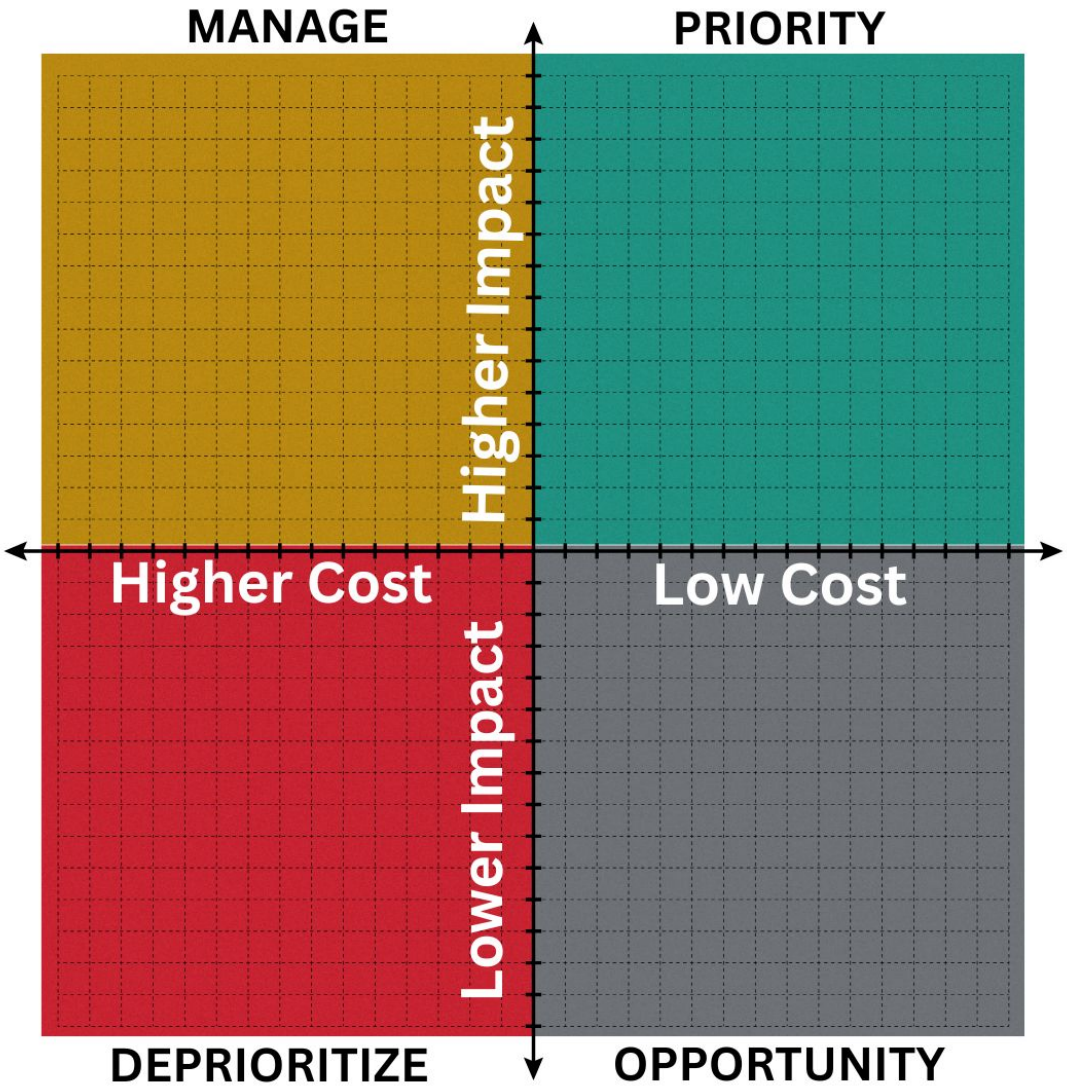
Ideas to consider:

- Targeted Food Drives
- Local Partnerships
- Local Wholesale Purchasing
- Community Growers
- New Retail Rescue Partnerships
- Cultural Food Partnerships
- Enhance Existing Efforts

Flexibility is Key

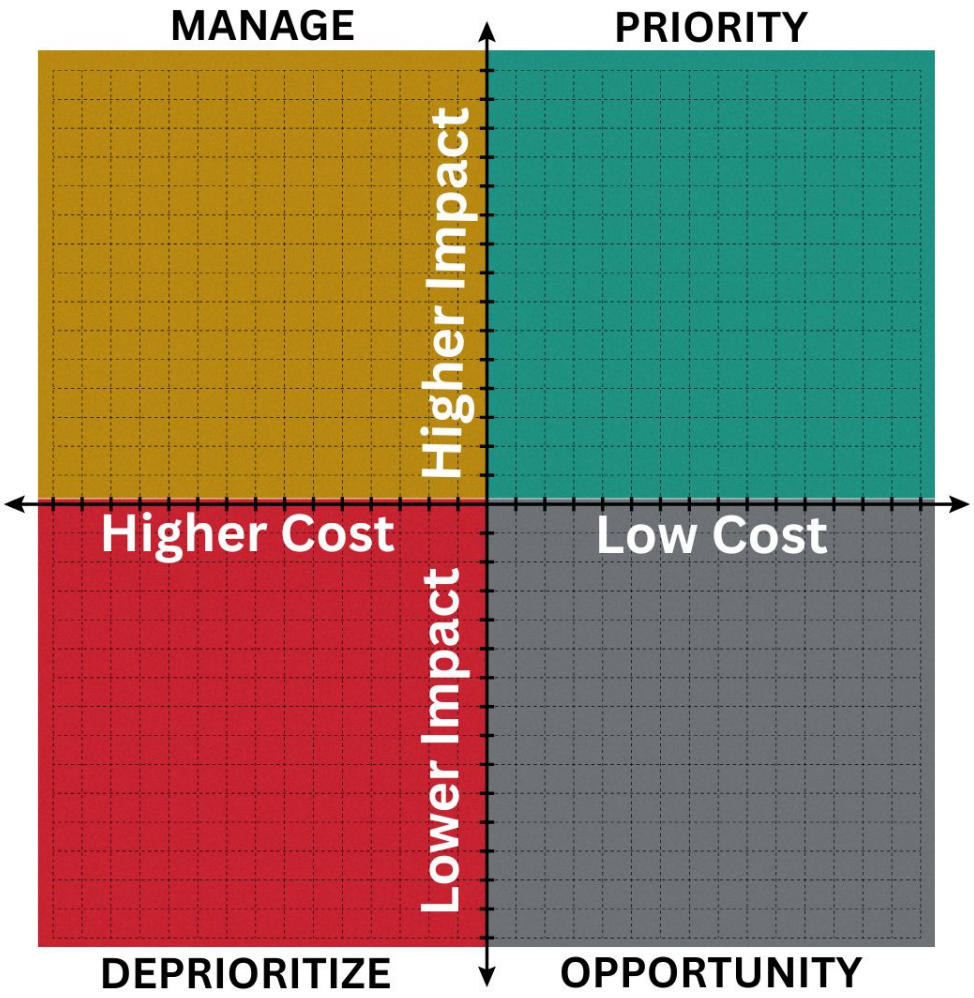
Nutritional & Versatile Food Shelf Items

Impact-Cost Evaluation Tool

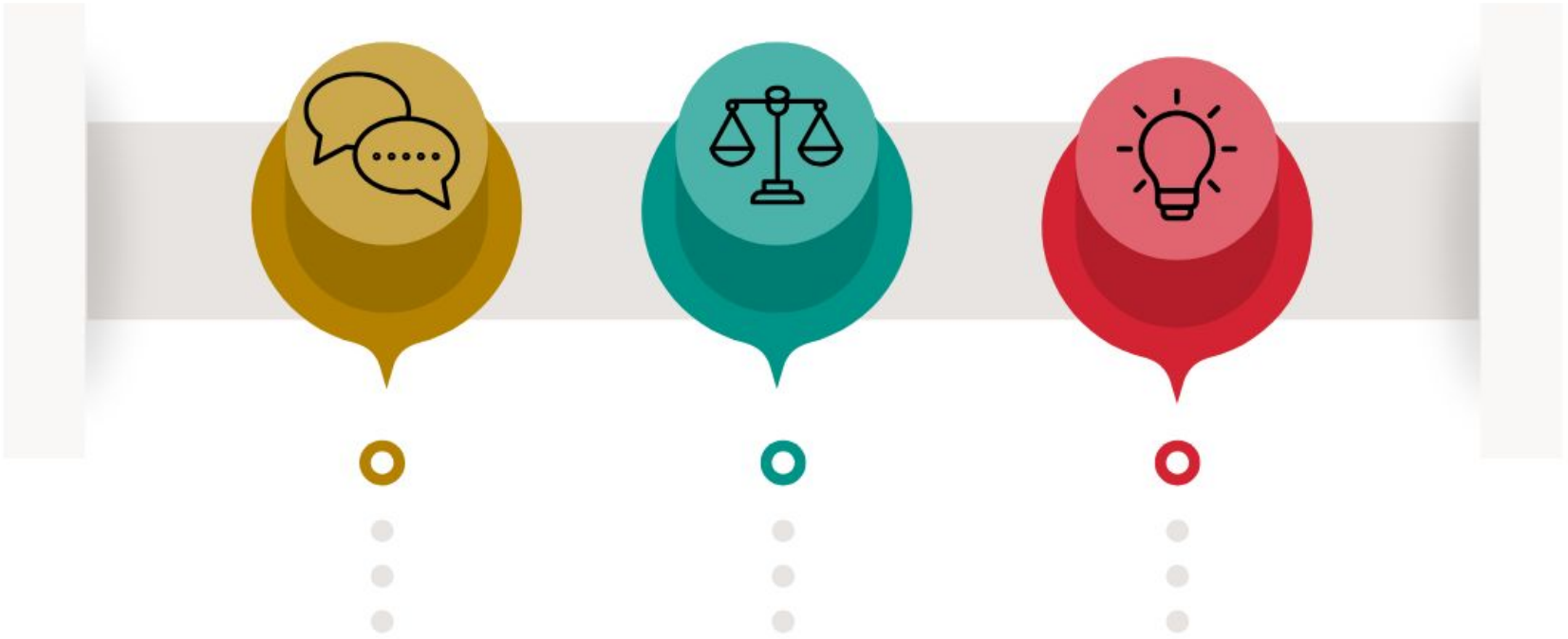


Breakout Session #1

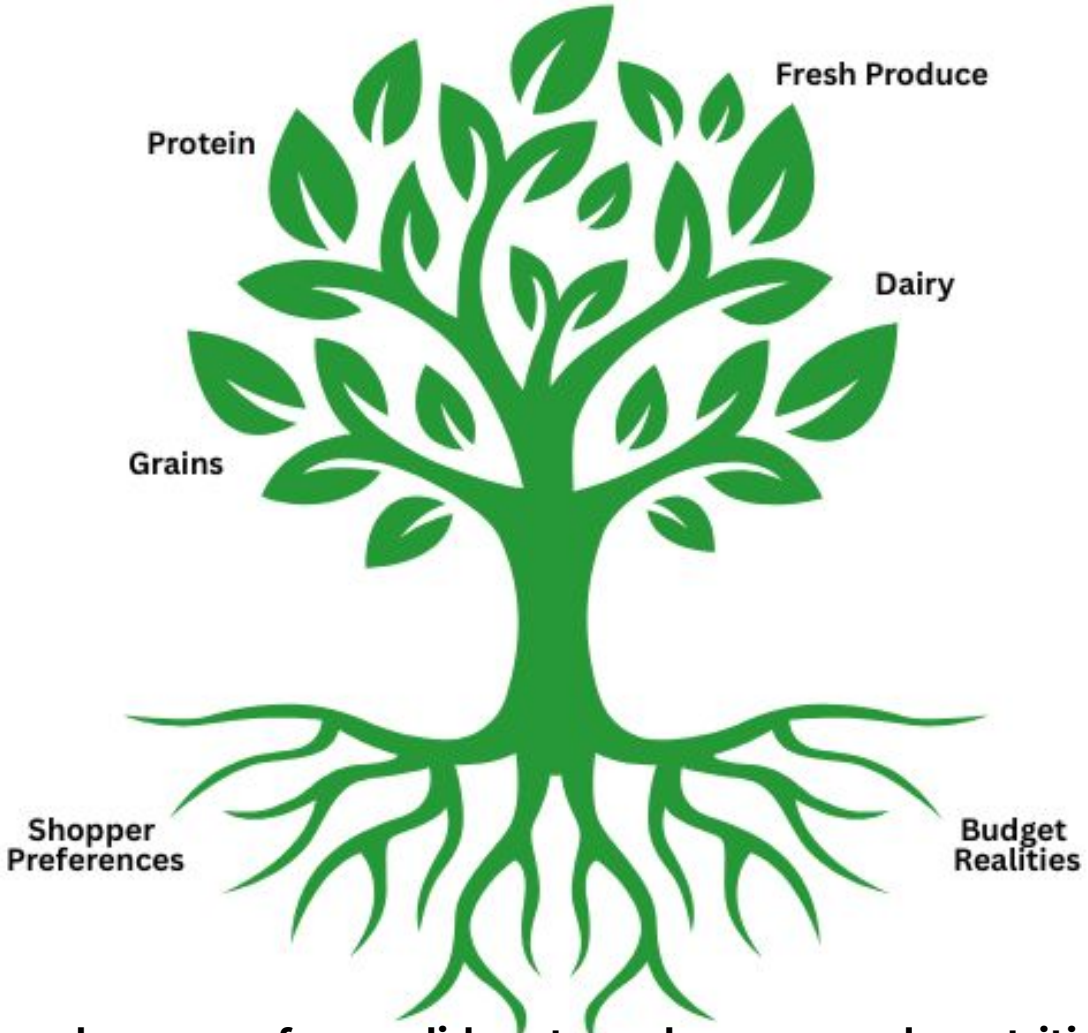
1. Review your mock scenario
2. Evaluate cost impact
3. Rate shopper impact
4. Plot each item
5. Discuss & adjust



From Practice to Insight



From Practice to Planning



Strong sourcing plans grow from solid roots — shopper needs, nutrition, and cost.

2022 Statewide Survey

2022 MINNESOTA FOOD SHELF SURVEY

MOST IMPORTANT FOODS

Fresh fruits and vegetables

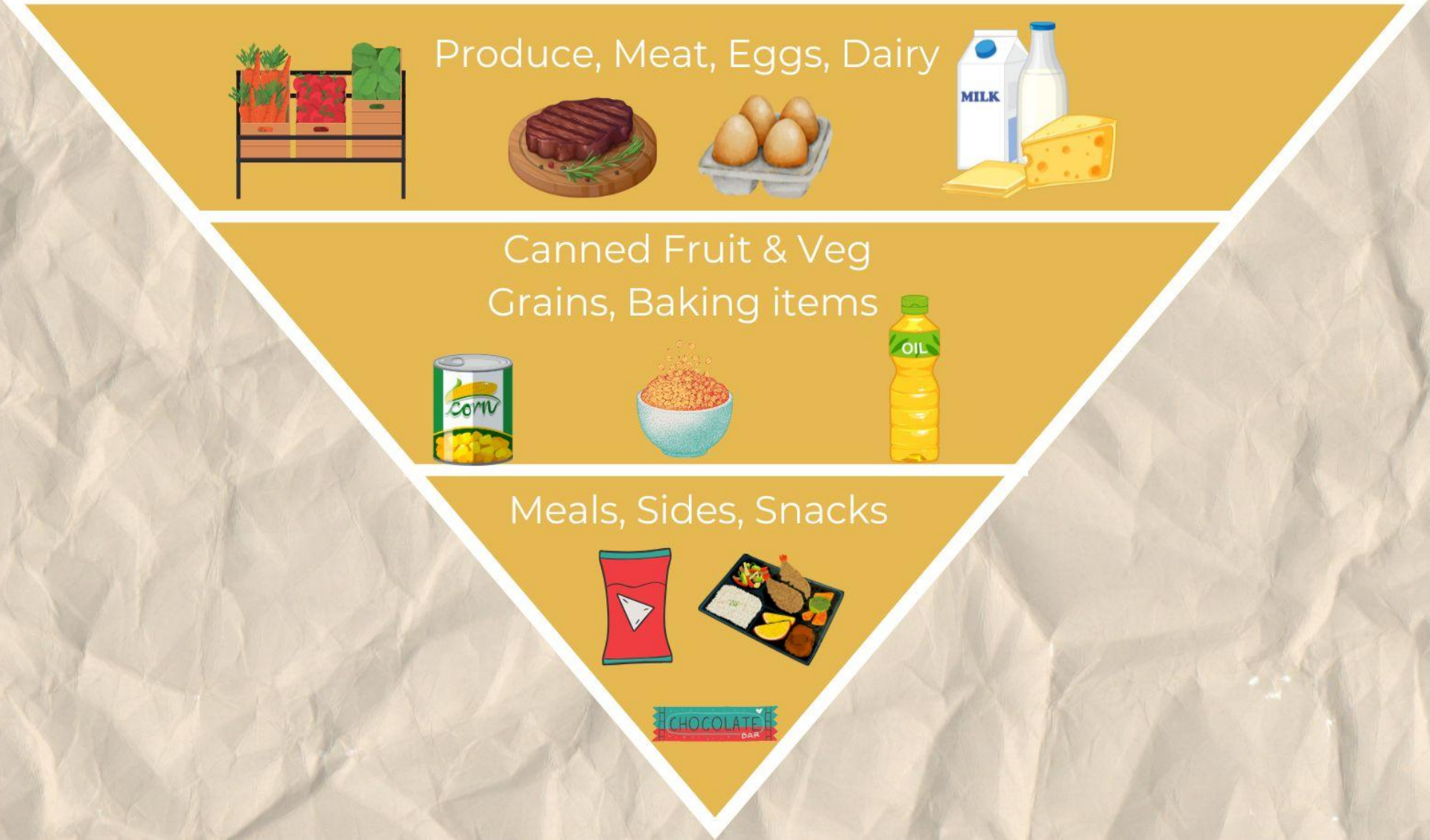
Meat, poultry, and fish

Dairy

Eggs

To learn more, visit
https://www.supershelfmn.org/minnesota-statewide-survey

Prioritizing Foods for Shopper Focused Mix



Breakout Options

Choose which breakout space works best for you and your organization:

1. Work independently
2. Work with your team
3. Work with a FFEN team member
4. Work with your peers

One Takeaway

What's one thing you're going to do differently in your food sourcing strategy after today?

Follow-up Poll Question #1

How does your food shelf currently decide which foods to purchase or prioritize?

a) Based on availability

b) Based on nutrition

c) Based on shopper requests

d) Based on budget/cost

e) Based on what our volunteers say we need

Follow up Poll Question #2

After participating in this session, how confident do you feel about having a clear plan or process to guide your sourcing decisions?

a) Very confident — I have a clear process in mind
b) Somewhat confident — I have a good starting point
c) Unsure — I need more time or support to develop my plan
d) Not yet — I plan to reach out for additional guidance

Resources

- Impact-Cost Evaluation Tool
- Food Sourcing Prioritization Tool
- Nutritional and Versatile Food Options
- Targeted Food Drive Guide
- Accessing more Purchased Food

FFEN's Food Sourcing Analysis (FSA) Report

Need help with food sourcing?

- LOOKING FOR WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FOOD SHELF BUDGET?
- USING THE SAME FOOD ORDERING SHEET THAT YOU HAVE FOR YEARS?
- STRUGGLING TO BRING IN FOODS YOU'D LIKE TO BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN?

Foundation for Essential Needs (FFEN) has a solution for you! **Sign up for a Strategic Food Sourcing Analysis Report and Consultation** and let us do the heavy lifting!

This no-cost analysis comes with a one-hour custom consultation to give you time to talk through potential solutions to your food shelf's biggest pain points.

This analysis gives you the data you need to inform ordering choices at your food shelf and stretch your buying power.

Email us to secure your report today!
programs@ffen.org

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Foundation For Essential Needs

FFEN Essentials

Your Partner in Onboarding

New trainings to support you and your team

Beyond the Brown Bag: Hunger Relief Trends & Insights

Deepen your understanding of hunger relief and develop shopper-focused programs by exploring the definition of food insecurity, differences between food banks and food shelves, trends in hunger relief, and key resources for nonprofits.

- Available virtually the second Tuesday of each month (11:30am-1pm CST)
- Recommended for new Food Shelf Leaders, Board Members, Volunteers.

Fresh Food First: Optimizing Food Shelf Operations

Gain advanced insights and strategies to develop sustainable, shopper-focused distribution programs, explore food sourcing and distribution methods with practical tools, learn best practices for managing fresh foods to minimize waste.

- Available virtually the fourth Tuesday of each month (11:30am-1pm CST)
- Recommended for Staff and Volunteers leading daily food shelf operations.

Resource Hub Sessions

UMN Extension

SuperShelf

TRANSFORMING FOOD SHELVES TO BRING GOOD FOOD TO ALL

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Questions?

Thank You!