ffen Essentials

Beyond the Brown Bag

Hunger Relief Trends & Insights

2026

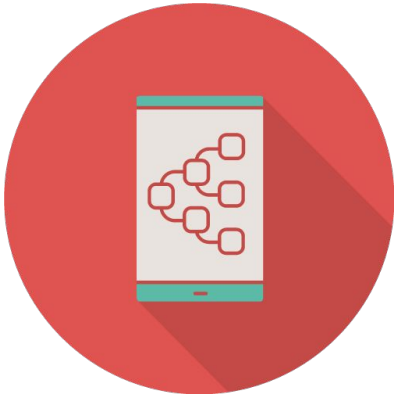
Beyond the Brown Bag

Presenters:

- Kate Burggraff, FFEN Executive Director
- Katie Bull, FFEN Director of Programs
- Andrea Gressman, FFEN Food Shelf Consultant

Agenda:

- Hunger relief system overview
- Historical trends impacting food shelves
- Annual food shelf calendar
- Organizational nonprofit resources



FFEN Overview

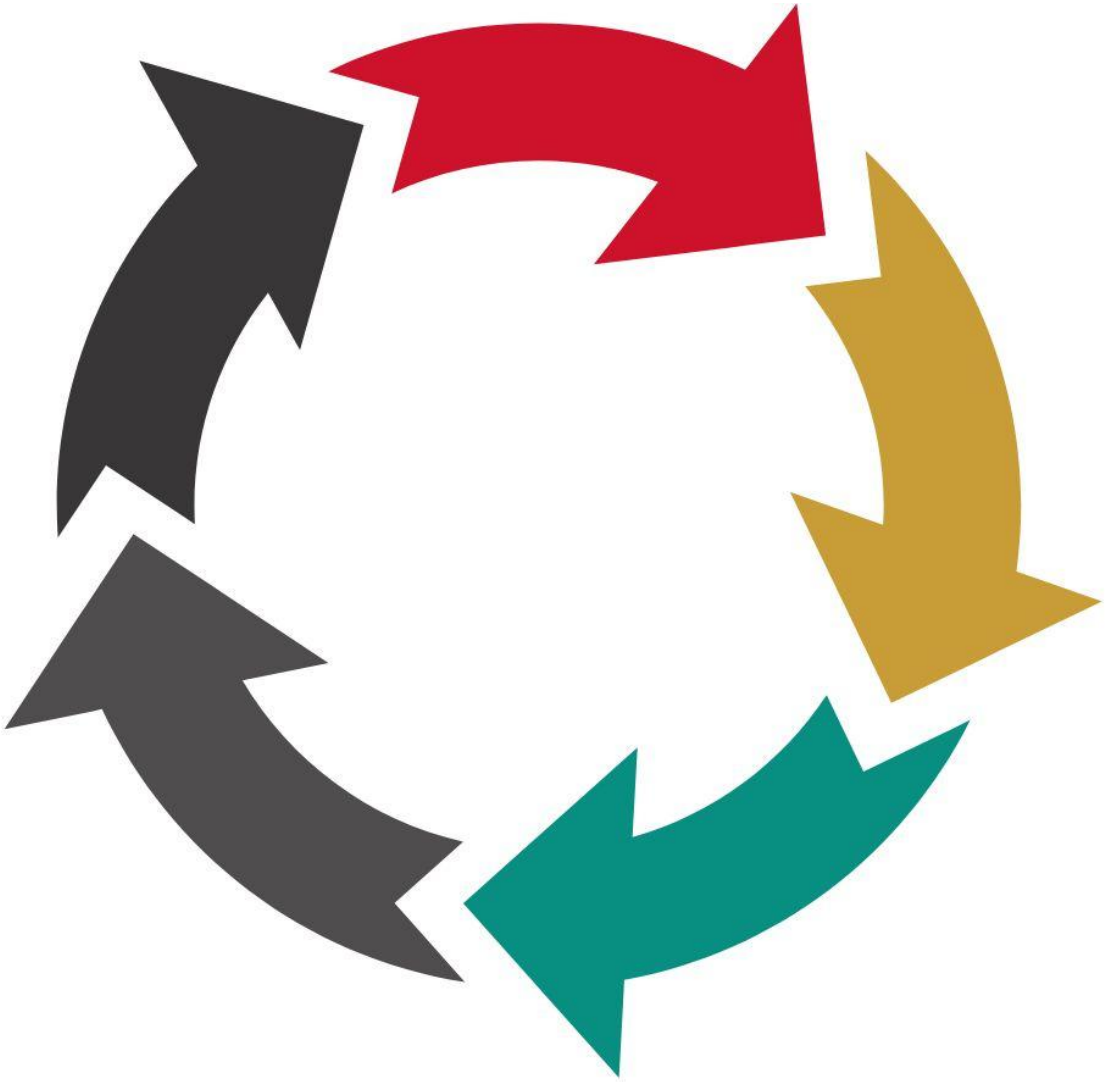
Free consultant for MN and Western WI food shelves

Provides data, training, and consulting for effective and efficient food shelf operations

- 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

Independent Partner to navigate a changing hunger relief landscape

Hunger Relief Ecosystem



Hunger Relief Ecosystem

Food Bank

ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

Food Shelf

Community

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

HUNGER SOLUTIONS
Winning Minnesota's Food Fight
the food group

SuperShelf

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Important Acronyms

TEFAP: The Emergency Food Assistance Program

- USDA foods program provided via community programs

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- Previously “food stamps”; MN Food Helpline can help screen

MN DCYF, OEO: Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Office of Economic Opportunity

- State department responsible for oversight of federal and state community food programs and funding for Minnesota

MFSP: Minnesota Food Shelf Program

- Annual non-competitive grant funding for eligible orgs

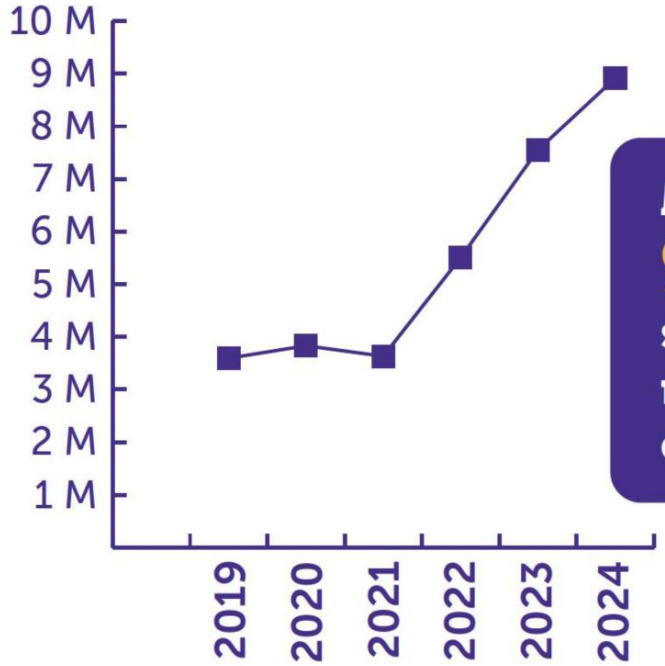
Resources for Hunger Relief Partners

Four Food Shelf Trends

Once, used for emergencies	→	Now, used for ongoing, budget-relieving support
Decision making driven by volunteers	→	Focus on what is important to food shelf shoppers
Pre-packed bags of food (cans/boxes)	→	Grocery style choice (fresh, culturally connected)
Informal, self-organized efforts	→	More complex and formal non-profit structures

Ongoing Food Support

Minnesotans Made 8,914,000 Visits to Food Shelves in 2024



Minnesotans made nearly 9 million visits to food shelves in 2024, shattering records for the fourth consecutive year.

That's 1.4 million more visits than in 2023.

Minnesotans made 2.5x more visits in 2024 than pre-pandemic 2019.

Food shelf data is collected by The Food Group in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Family.

https://www.thefoodgroupmn.org/news/hunger-data/

Ongoing Food Support

Ongoing Food Support

RELIABLE ACCESS WHEN BUDGETS TIGHTEN

EASING FINANCIAL STRAIN:

72% **CHOOSE BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER EXPENSES**

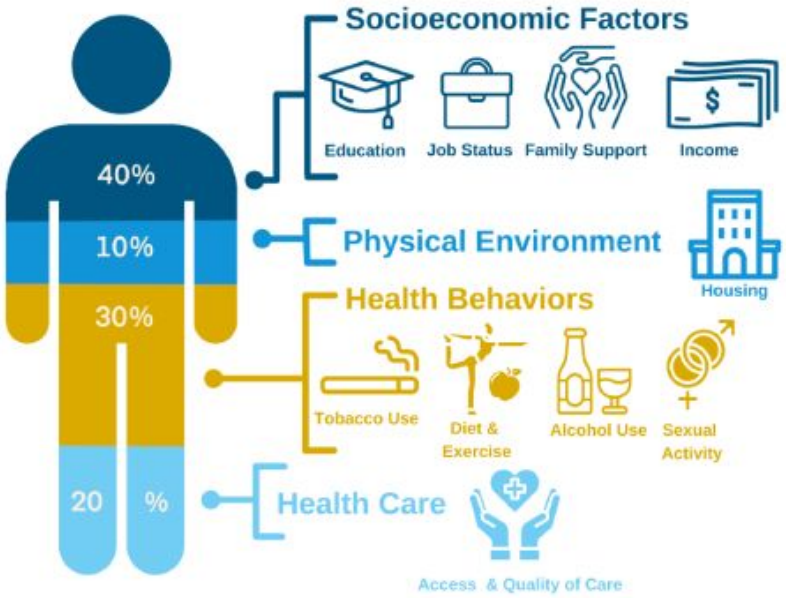
Shoppers choose between food and these expenses most frequently:

- Utilities - 38%
- Housing - 29%
- Transportation - 25%
- Medical - 20%

University of Minnesota Extension · ffen Foundation For Essential Needs · Department of Children, Youth, and Families · the food group · SuperShelf

For more information, visit https://www.supershelfmn.org/minnesota-statewide-survey,

Ongoing Food Support



Social determinants of health: Non-medical factors that affect health outcomes.

Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true

Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.

- ☐ Often true
- ☐ Sometimes true
- ☐ Never true

Shopper Centric

Shifting languages and processes:

- What words are used to describe individuals accessing food?
- Who had the loudest voice in decision making?
- Who is asked first for input?
- How static are giver vs receiver roles?

Shopper Centric

Grocery Style Choice

Before:

After:

Fresh, Full and Abundant

Culturally Connected

Resources from University of MN Extension:
https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/campusfoodshelf/featured-foods/cultural-foods

Minnesota Compass: https://www.mncompass.org/

More Complex, Formal

Food shelf leaders and volunteers are navigating more complex operations.

Food Safety:
New and different foods.
Sorting, storing and moving perishables.

Loyal volunteers who need training as operations change

Organizational Planning:
Funding, staffing and budgeting so the food shelf can continue to provide support well into the future

Managing relationships and streams of food:
Food Bank
Community donations
Food rescue from stores
Prioritizing time for TEFAP

Significantly increased demand for food

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Hunger Relief Calendar

Q1: January - March	Jan/Feb: Often lighter food demand due to tax refunds March Campaign - Food & Fund Drive
Q2: April - June	Increased food demand for families with kids home from school
Q3: July - September	July: New TEFAP forms and OYH Summer Challenge Local fresh produce in abundance
Q4: October - December	Nov: Give to the Max Day & Year-end Giving Nov/Dec: Increased food demand during the holidays; Holiday programming?

Nonprofit Support

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

- Statewide Association for Nonprofits

Propel Nonprofits

- Finance and Board Governance

MAVA: MN Alliance for Volunteer Advancement

- Volunteer management resource

GiveMN

- Fundraising resources for nonprofits and schools

Food Shelf Support

Supershelf - University of Minnesota Extension

- Program for food shelf design focused on healthy food and dignified service

Minnesota Food Shelf Survey

- Results from food shelf manager & shopper surveys

The Food Group

- Administers annual MFSP funds for food shelves
- Leads Partners to End Hunger (PEH) Advocacy efforts: Sign up to receive action alerts

Your Regional Food Bank

FFEN Services

All services are offered at no-cost to food shelves:

- **Strategic Food Sourcing Report & Consultations**
  - Email programs@ffen.org to sign up
- **FFEN Essentials: Onboarding Sessions**
  - Visit ffen.org/education
- **FFEN Resource Hub**
  - Visit ffen.org/resource-hub
- **Process Improvement Consultation**

FFEN Services One-Pager

Thank You!