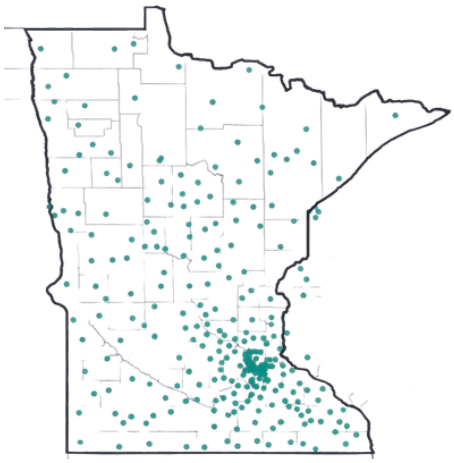
Annual Report

Fiscal year: July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

Serving food shelves across Minnesota and Western WI



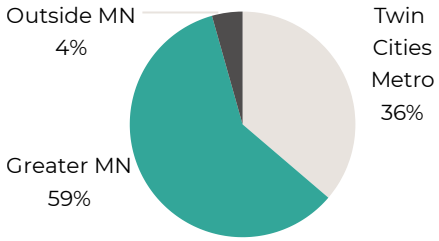
Our Mission: FFEN supports food shelves to optimize operations and effectively serve each community, building a more connected and equitable hunger relief system.

Our Vision: A hunger relief system trusted to predictably offer fresh, familiar food options and a dignified experience in all communities.

Together, we partnered with 411 food shelves supporting:

4,564,480

food shelf visits **annually**



Strategic Food Sourcing Report and Consultation

Without clear tools to track spending by food type and category, food shelves must manage tight budgets without knowing if their dollars are achieving the greatest impact.

FFEN's semi-annual food sourcing "health check" provides an exclusive budget analysis to help food shelves maximize resources, prioritize fresh food and expand access.

137

food shelves received customized, benchmarked reports and individual consultations

96%

shared the data with board, staff, volunteers, and donors

53%

changed purchasing/budget practices using the report

" FFEN breaks it down and provides insight on where we can cut back in our purchasing, where we should spend more and where we could prioritize differently. "

-Kelly Erp, Prairie Five

Kelly's story:

Fresh Focus, Smarter Spending: Food Shelf Reimagines Service

When Jodi Donley started at the St. Peter Area Food Shelf, she understood the importance of dignity and welcome because she'd been a shopper. She, and the team, wanted to increase variety and fresh food at the site while sustainably budgeting.

FFEN provided data and guidance on food purchasing and sourcing and, with recommendations, the food shelf:

- **Cut costs by 30%**, creating a more sustainable budget
- **Doubled the amount of produce, protein and dairy** - increasing foods shoppers say are most important.

" The FFEN report for me was where it all started. That's when I began to understand what we really needed to work on. "

- Jodi Donley, St. Peter Area Food Shelf

Jodi's story:

FFEN Essentials: Onboarding & Peer Learning Sessions

Food shelves are complex and many leaders enter the role with little experience or peer support. One-third are new to their role in the last three years.

FFEN Essentials provides regular training, onboarding, and cohorts so leaders can connect, share best practices and strengthen food access.

138
food shelf leaders attending best practice sessions

42
hours of training provided

" It was honestly one of the more impactful professional development experiences I've had. It brought together people who are doing work in a field that is relatively uncharted. "
- Rachael Mills, Metro State University

Rachael's story

Tailored Consultation & Resources

Food shelf leaders often work in isolation, one-third are volunteers and are primarily focused on meeting daily community needs.

FFEN serves as a trusted third-party expert in food shelf operations, offering one-on-one guidance when and how food shelves need it.

31
real-time problem solving sessions to explore food shelf challenges and opportunities

20
practical tools used in the field and available on-demand

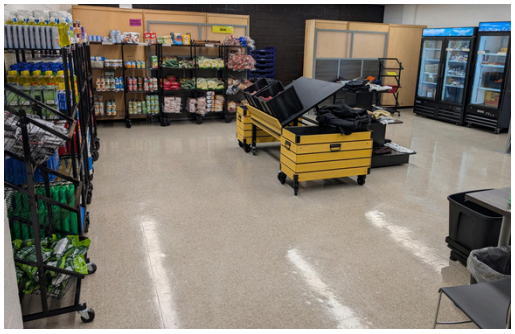
26
on-site projects to increase fresh food, optimize operations and enhance shopper experience

" The biggest benefit was having the validation, advice, and support from FFEN. I was new to non-profit ...and they not only made this project possible for us, they made me a better leader. "
- Sharon Abel, Groveland Food Shelf

Sharon's story

Professionals lend their expertise to strengthen food shelves

Mustang Market at Southwest Minnesota State University was expanding from a tiny corner of an office to a new space.



FFEN staff, volunteer Project Manager Laura McComish and volunteer Layout Designer Susan Feyerisen reviewed the space, collected student and staff feedback, made recommendations and drafted floor plans for consideration.

Now, the market offers fresh and frozen foods as well as pantry staples and people are welcome to shop the shelves.

" I was excited to turn to the experts, FFEN truly made sure everyone had a seat at the table. Everything from beginning to end, this project would not have been successful without FFEN. "
- Joyce Tofte, Mustang Market

Joyce's story

Thank you to our donors

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Foundation For Essential Needs

We are deeply grateful to the donors who stand with us in addressing food insecurity. Your support strengthens food shelves and helps communities across Minnesota and Western Wisconsin access fresh, healthy food.

Fiscal year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Individuals:

Adam Hjerpe
Adriano Batista
Alexis Bylander
Alyssa Rebensdorf & Kirk Wythers
Amy Podlesak
Amy Wimmer
Andrea Banducci
Andy & Julie Turnbull
Anita Pagey
Anita Terry & Kevin Harding
Ann Kirby
Anna Bosak
Anonymous
Art Raedeke
Becky Erickson
Ben & Andrea Knoll
Benjamin Fisher
Betsy Kloiber
Bill Buenzli
Bill Clancy
Bob Paulson
Bobbie Johnson
Bradley Agee
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C. Curtis Dunnavan Fund
Camille Verzal
Carla Kohler
Carmen Volkart Bringgold & Bruce Volkart
Catherine Erickson
Catherine Romanzi
Cathy Hogan
Charlie Bruber
Cheryl Troxel
Chris Burggraff
Christine Kain
Christine Page
Claudia Nochebuena
Courtney Rebensdorf
Dale & Kristi Mensch
Dana Olsen
Danielle Kjar
Dave & Beth Knes
Dave Moss
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Deb & Tim Krieg
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Heidi Schachtman
Heidi Schultz
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Hernan Rojas & Elizabeth Lunn
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Jane Young
Jane Zimmerman
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Jeff Reed
Jenny Moore
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John Rojas
John & Cathy Santini
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Joseph Maiers
Juli Stensland
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Kate Nilan Uding
Katelyn & Rob Niznik
Katherine & Torey Winter
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Kris Wirtanen
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Kristin Stream
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Megan Blomberg
Megan Daman
Meghan Hannon
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Michael Ressen
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Mike Bingham
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Mike & Anne Ryan
Mollie Roden
Molly Adams
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Nancy Williams
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Noah Lauricella
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Taylor Day
Thomas & Stephanie Gunderson
Tom & Darby Hills
Tonia Brinston
Vikas Singhal

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Hugh J Andersen Foundation
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Medica
Medtronic
Pantry Saver
RBC Wealth Management
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Target
The Robins Family Foundation
Thrivent Financial
Travelers
University of St. Thomas
Wells Area Food Shelf

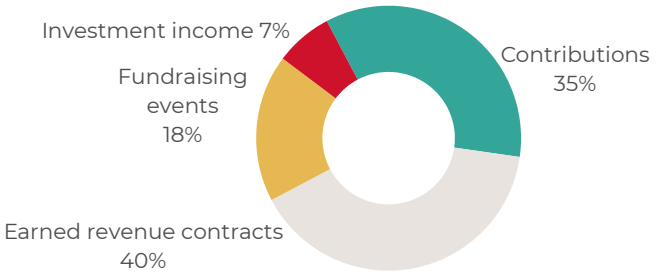
- We have made every effort to ensure accuracy and ask that you contact us with any concerns. (612) 217-4611

Your Donations in Action

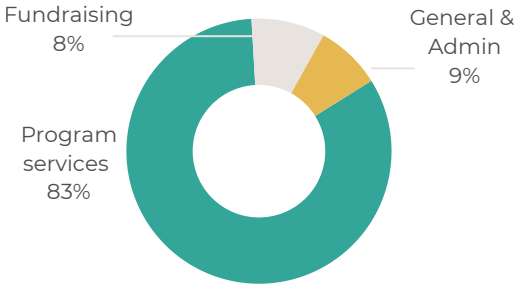
Transparent finances. Responsible stewardship. **Real impact.**

83¢ of every $1 goes directly to programs

FY 2025 Revenue $554,020



FY 2025 Expenses $527,923



FFEN is committed to fiscal health and socially responsible investments. Our organization has earned the "Meet Standards" seal from the Charities Review Council.

To see a full statement of FFEN's expenses, IRS 990, staff and Board of Directors go to: www.ffen.org/reports-990/ or, scan the QR Code.

How Your Investment Multiplies Impact

FFEN matches food shelves with volunteers to drive project improvements. This year, 57 skilled volunteers including engineers, LEAN experts, interior designers and project managers volunteered their professional services to strengthen food shelves.
Their time was equal to almost 1 full-time equivalent employee and is valued at nearly FFEN's annual budget.

1,948
hours of volunteer time

$428,560
value of skilled volunteer time

2025 Minnesota Food Shelf Survey

9,759
food shelf shopper voices captured

318
food shelf managers participated

The voices of food shelf shoppers and managers guide FFEN's work, shape food shelves and hunger relief priorities in Minnesota. When those most impacted lead the conversation, changes are meaningful.

FFEN played the lead implementing role in overseeing the 2025 Minnesota Food Shelf Manager Survey and the Minnesota Food Shelf Shopper Survey. Together, these surveys provide a snapshot of the challenges and successes in the sector.

BROUGHT TO YOU IN COLLABORATION BY:

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

See survey results