ffen
Foundation For Essential Needs

Foundation for Essential Needs (FFEN) is a non-profit providing operations support and resources to food shelves.
For more information, visit www.ffen.org.

Exploring Data Collection Systems?

Discover what your peers are choosing - and why.
FFEN is here to help you get the information you need to make smart decisions for your food shelf. To support that goal, we gathered input from 31 MN and ND food shelf leaders to learn which food shelf data-collection systems they use and how those systems support day-to-day operations. We're sharing these insights (collected Dec. 5, 2025 to Jan. 31, 2026) to help you better understand the options currently being used in the field. **This resource is intended to share what food shelves are using today, and highlight available options - it is not an endorsement or recommendation of any specific system.**

Food shelves were asked which systems they use, associated costs, commonly used features, whether they would recommend their platform, and whether they are willing to connect with peers.

How to Use This Resource:

- **Page One:** Compare common data collection platforms used by food shelves.
- **Page Two:** See how food shelves are using these platforms in real life.
- **Page Three:** Reach out to the listed food shelves to learn from their experience.

Platform Name	**% of Responses** **Not shown:** other platforms with under 2 responses	**Favorability** (% likely or very likely to recommend)	**Cost**
Link2Feed link2feed.com	19%	33%	Up to $450 per year Free for Channel One partners
Look2 Consulting look2consulting.com	6%	100%	Free (Minimal fee for optional tech support)
Neighbor Intake/ Service Insights (only available to Second Harvest Northland partners at this time)	16%	80%	Free for Second Harvest Northland partners
Pantry Saver pantrysaver.org	23%	71%	Up to $1,020 per year
PantrySoft pantrysoft.com	10%	100%	Up to $2,200 per year

Choosing the Right Platform: Features that Mattered Most to Food Shelves

Every food shelf is different, and their technology needs vary based on distribution model, reporting requirements, and operational capacity. These are some of the most and least used features at peer food shelves to help you decide what might work best for your organization.

Most commonly used

- **Client check-in / check-out** – Registers households and tracks visits
- **Connected to scale** – Captures pounds distributed automatically
- **Custom reporting** – Supports required reporting for food banks and donors, and provides data to strengthen grant applications.

Used when applicable

- **Connected to the food bank system** – Automatically uploads data for monthly reporting required by the food bank
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) tracking** – Used by food shelves participating in CSFP

Used by some food shelves

- **Appointment scheduling** – Supports scheduled distribution models
- **Volunteer scheduling** – Manages volunteer shifts

Less common

- **Online ordering** – Allows shoppers to place orders in advance for pickup or alternative distribution options such as delivery or food lockers.
- **Food donation tracking** – Separately tracks donated food from retail rescue partners and community donors

Note: Platform features vary. The examples shown illustrate how food shelves use their systems to meet local needs and priorities. Refer to the platform website for a list of available features.

Peer Connection

The food shelf leaders listed below are willing to answer questions about their experience using these platforms. Reach out to learn more about set-up, day-to-day use, and the lessons they've learned.

Platform Name	Peer Contacts
Link2Feed link2feed.com	**Amy Tix** Hastings Family Service| amytix@hastingsfamilyservice.org | 651-437-7134 **Amy Schafer** Red Wing Food Shelf | rwfoodshelf@gmail.com | 651-388-9302 **Erin Haag** Welcome Pantry | Erin@unitedwayfc.org
Look2 Consulting look2consulting.com	**Cara Anderson** Hugo Good Neighbors Food Shelf | coordinator@hugofoodshelf.org | 651-528-6224 or 651-319-1369 (cell) **Kim Powell** Basic Needs Food Market | operations@basicneedsmn.org | 651-321-2040
Neighbor Intake/ Service Insights	**Tammy Larsen** Lakes Area Food Shelf | director@lakesareafoodshelf.org | 218-568-8474 **Sharon Vipond** Battle Lake Emergency Food Shelf | sasvipond@gmail.com | 218-770-5893 **Susie Ilstrup** |Garrison Area Caregivers | dorothysrainbo@yahoo.com 612-644-2620 **Peggy Bauman** Laporte Community Food Shelf | peg.bauman@yahoo.com | 612-270-5579 **Jennifer Folkema** Princeton Pantry | princetonpantrymn@gmail.com | 320-980-6553
Pantry Saver pantrysaver.org	**Roger Raschke** Pipestone County Food Shelf | rraschke27@outlook.com | 507-215-5552 **Heather Kliewer** CAER Food Shelf | heather.kliewer@caerfoodshelf.org | 763-441-1020 **Bernice Wimmer** Outreach Food Shelf | outreachfoodshelf@gmail.com | 320-815-5186
PantrySoft pantrysoft.com	**Erik Vollen** | Catholic Charities St. Cloud | eric.vollen@ccstcloud.org 320-229-4564 **Zach Roberts** | Community Pathways | zach@communitypathwayssc.org 507-837-9825

Still not sure which food shelf data collection system is right for you? Sign up for a call on FFEN's Resource Hub to receive live, virtual, one-on-one support to discuss the unique needs and challenges at your food shelf. Go to: www.ffen.org/resource-hub today!

This resource is intended to support learning and peer connection by sharing how food shelves are currently using data collection platforms. If you have updates, corrections, or questions, please contact ***programs@ffen.org****. (Last updated: 2/25/2026)*