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.

Accessing More Purchased Food for Food Shelves

If your food shelf needs to access additional food and has funds available to make purchases, this document provides guidance on how to approach your regional food bank and local retailers. We've also included a starting list of additional vendors for your consideration.

Accessing Additional Food from your Regional Food Bank

- Share additional food sourcing needs with your regional food bank. Food banks do not have this information unless you share it with them to help inform their purchasing.
- When possible, quantify the amount of food needed weekly/monthly and the price your food shelf can afford.
- Be specific in sharing when additional deliveries from your regional food bank would be beneficial and the frequency that your food shelf would prefer.

Purchasing Food outside the Regional Food Bank

- When possible, look for opportunities to partner locally with retailers in your community to purchase foods.
- Options to explore:
    - Local grocery stores - ask about delivery or curbside pickup options
    - Discount retailers like Dollar Tree or Dollar General
    - KwikTrip or other convenience stores
    - Local farmers, growers, processors
- Identify food items your food shelf might order consistently from local retailers and, when possible, start conversations proactively to identify ways to best work together so orders can align with their systems. This can set you up for a win-win opportunity that could lead to better pricing for your food shelf.

Resources are developed with input and insights from local food shelf leaders and reviewed regularly. Additional feedback on tools can be shared with programs@ffen.org. (Last updated: 10/1/2026)

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Additional Food Vendor Resources for Food Shelves

Food Vendor Name	Type of Food Available	Region Served	Contact	Additional Notes
CIS Wholesale	Dry goods	Entire state of MN; will deliver	Mitch Porter 763-488-6900 mitch@ciswholesale.com	Delivery requires a minimum of 1 pallet, but product can be mixed
Coop Partners Warehouse (CPW)	Produce, dairy, dry goods	Upper Midwest	Jaime or Kim at 651-644-7000	
BIX Produce	Produce, dairy, nuts	MN, ND, Iowa - Check website for specific zip codes	Steve Pagel, Sales Director spagel@bixproduce.com	
Sysco	Produce, protein, dairy, eggs, dry goods & frozen foods	Statewide - Centers in Twin Cities, St. Cloud & Fargo	Contact closest location: https://www.sysco.com/contact/Our-Locations	Be aware of pack size; items are often sized for meal programs
Upper Lakes Foods	Protein, dairy, bakery	Facilities in Cloquet & Northfield	https://upperlakesfoods.com/contact/	
US Foods	Protein, dairy, baking & cooking supplies	Distribution center in Plymouth	https://www.usfoods.com/become-a-customer.html	Be aware of pack size; often sized for meal programs

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Costco	Wide variety of items	Locations throughout MN		Annual membership fee (about $70)
Sam's Club	Wide variety of items	Locations throughout MN		Annual membership fee of about $50/year ($15 for first year)
Amazon	Non-perishable foods	Delivery available		Set up a Wish List to share with your donors
Restaurant Depot	Produce, protein, dairy, dry goods	Twin Cities Metro - locations in Brooklyn Center and St. Paul		Most locations require membership, but it is free
The Good Acre	Locally grown, organic produce, protein	Twin Cities Metro, mostly	Micah Helle micah@thegoodacre.org	Nonprofit; Mission alignment
JB Meats	Protein	Based in St. Michael	https://www.jbgroup.com/become-a-customer	Requires credit application to start process; 500 lb minimum order
HDI Wholesale	Health & Hygiene/ Diapers & Wipes	Based out of WI	Sandi Blok sandi@hdiwholesale.com	

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