Minnesota Food Shelf Program

The Minnesota Department of Human Services works with Hunger Solutions Minnesota to distribute food to more than 300 food shelves throughout the state. These local food shelves provide food to individuals and families suffering from hunger as they work to become economically self-sufficient.

Program impact

- Food shelves in Minnesota distributed 87 million pounds of food in 2019, up 9% from 2018.
- Families made more than 3.6 million visits to Minnesota food shelves in 2019.
- Approximately 46.5% of those served in 2019 were senior citizens and children under the age of 18, an increase of 7% from 2018.

Program funding

- The Minnesota Food Shelf Program is supported by a state appropriation of more than $3.3 million for the 2017-19 biennium. Hunger Solutions Minnesota allocates funds to food shelves based on the number of individuals served.
- Minnesota Food Shelf Program funds went to 293 food shelves in 2019, up 7% from 2018, for a total of $1.5 million.
- Food shelves use funds to purchase nutritious food and to pay for general operating and administrative costs.

Food shelf use trends

- While many individuals served by food shelves are employed, they are unable to purchase a sufficient amount of nutritionally balanced food. As people move from public assistance to work, food shelf use often continues.
- From 2013 to 2019, the number of food shelf visits by seniors increased 50%, making them the fastest-growing group of food shelf users. High housing costs, prescription drug costs and increased food costs are cited as reasons for increased reliance on emergency food resources.
- An individual visiting a food shelf in Minnesota receives about 24 pounds of nutritionally balanced food per visit.
Program eligibility

Food shelves receiving Minnesota Food Shelf Program funds also distribute The Emergency Food Assistance Program commodity food. Households with incomes that are at or below 300% of the federal poverty guideline are eligible for food. No identification, verification of income or address is required to receive service.

Help

Those who are in need of food shelf assistance or more information can contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services’ Office of Economic Opportunity at 651-431-4939, or Hunger Solutions Minnesota’s Food Helpline toll free at 888-711-1151.

For accessible formats of this information or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-3809, or use your preferred relay service. ADA1 (1-18)