Minnesota Food Shelf Program

The Minnesota Department of Human Services works with Hunger Solutions Minnesota to distribute food to nearly 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. Many Minnesotans with low incomes rely on both food shelves and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to put healthy food on their tables.

Program impact

- Food shelves in Minnesota distributed 80 million pounds of food in 2018.
- More than 50% of the households using food shelves were families with children.
- Families made more than 3.4 million visits to Minnesota food shelves in 2018.
- Approximately 46% of those served in 2018 were senior citizens and children under the age of 18.
- A typical family visiting a food shelf in Minnesota receives about 66 pounds of nutritionally balanced food per visit. Generally, this is about a one-week supply of food.
- Food shelves that are granted Minnesota Food Shelf Program funds also distribute The Emergency Food Assistance Program foods, which provides an important and free supplemental food source.

Program funding

- The Minnesota Food Shelf Program is supported by a state appropriation of more than $3.3 million for the 2018-19 biennium. Hunger Solutions Minnesota allocates funds to food shelves based on the number of individuals served.
- 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 2018, the number of food shelf visits by senior citizens increased 50%, making senior citizens 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.
In 2017, Hunger Solutions Minnesota and SuperShelf developed a Statewide Food Shelf Client Survey to better understand the need of food shelf participants in Minnesota. Of the 4,250 food shelf participants who responded (53% rural and 47% urban):

- 42% reported using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- 77% reported visiting their food shelf once a month or more
- 67% reported that they are still food insecure; participants reported worrying about and running out of food, and not having money to buy more food.

**Program eligibility**

Food shelves that receive Minnesota Food Shelf Program funds are available to all who identify themselves as being in need. No income verification, identification or proof of address is required.

**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](https://www2.dhs.state.mn.us/OEOP/) at 651-431-6309, or [Hunger Solutions Minnesota’s](https://www.hungersolutionsmn.org/) 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)