HEALTHIER FOODS REMAIN A PRIORITY AND THESE FOODS ARE NOT ALWAYS AVAILABLE

TOP 5 FOODS CLIENTS WANT AT EACH VISIT

1. meat, poultry, fish
2. fresh fruits & vegetables
3. dairy
4. eggs
5. cooking & baking

PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS THAT SAID THESE ITEMS WERE ALWAYS AVAILABLE EACH VISIT.

- Meat, poultry, fish: 68%
- Fresh fruits & vegetables: 51%
- Dairy: 57%
- Eggs: 54%
- Cooking & baking: 43%

CLIENTS WANT & NEED HEALTHIER FOODS TO FEED THEIR FAMILIES

- 93% said they would like to provide more fruits & veggies for their family.
- 96% said they know how to prepare many fruits & veggies.
- 60% of food shelf clients reported getting HALF or MORE of their total fruits and vegetables from the food shelf in the last 6 months.*

*19% missing response.

The food shelf offers fresh fruits and vegetables that I would not normally buy due to cost. It helps me save money that we can put towards other expenses—utilities, heat, fuel oil, etc. It helps put food on my table.

-Food Shelf Client
**2019 MINNESOTA FOOD SHELF SURVEY**

**WHAT CLIENTS TOLD US**

**CLIENT EXPERIENCE AT THE FOOD SHELF MATTERS**

**TOP 5 EXPERIENCES CLIENTS VALUE**

1. **I can choose my own food**
2. **Staff/Volunteers greet me; make me feel welcome**
3. **Selection process is easy**
4. **Plenty of different food options**
5. **Food looks fresh & appealing**

**PERCENTAGE OF CLIENTS THAT SAID THESE EXPERIENCES ALWAYS OCCURRED EACH VISIT.**

- Choose my own food: 83%
- Staff/volunteers greet me; feel welcome: 91%
- Selection process is easy: 85%
- Plenty of food options: 63%
- Food looks fresh/appealing: 59%

**92% SAID THEIR FOOD SHELF PROVIDED CHOICE-BASED FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

(Exclusive can choose their own food off the shelf.)

*My anxiety goes way down when I come to the food shelf. The people make me feel welcomed.*

- Food Shelf Client

**CLIENTS RELY ON FOOD SHELVES FOR A LARGE PORTION OF THEIR FOOD OVER LONG PERIODS OF TIME**

- 76% visited their food shelf once a month or more.
- 73% have been using the food shelf for 1 year or more.
- 55% of clients said they got HALF or MORE of ALL their food from the food shelf in the last 6 months.*

**Yet, 69% STILL REMAIN FOOD INSECURE.**

- Worried food would run out and/or;
- Food didn’t last and didn’t have money to buy more.

Brought to you by Hunger Solutions Minnesota, MN Dept of Human Services, & SuperShelf
2019 MINNESOTA FOOD SHELF SURVEY

WHAT CLIENTS TOLD US

CLIENTS FACE HIGH FOOD INSECURITY, EVEN WITH OTHER SUPPORT

50% used SNAP/EBT in the past 12 months.

ADDITIONALLY,
15% used school meals
12% used multiple food shelves
10% used WIC
9% used NAPS

CLIENTS MAKE BUDGET TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN FOOD AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS

In the past year, clients said they had to choose between FOOD and...

Utilities 42%, Transportation 29%, Housing 28%, Medical care/Meds 19%, Education 4%

CLIENTS ARE AT A HIGH RISK FOR CHRONIC DISEASE

Has a doctor ever told you or someone in your household they...

47% Have high blood pressure
41% Should lose weight
33% Have high cholesterol
32% Have diabetes

67% Responded YES to one or more health condition.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

RACE/ETHNICITY*

66% White
8% African Am/Black
6% Latinx/Hispanic
6% Multiple races
5% Native American
2% Other races (includes AK Native, Native HI/Pac. Islander)
1% African (e.g. Somali, Ethiopian, Liberian, Eritrean, etc.)
1% Asian

(*5% preferred not to answer.)

GENDER

70% Female
29% Male
1% Transgender or gender nonconforming

AGE

45% of households include children
33% of households include seniors
**MINNESOTA FOOD SHELF SURVEY**

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Healthy foods, including fresh fruits and veggies, continue to be in demand and clients know how to prepare them.

The “Top 5” foods clients want are often available, but not frequently enough; there is still more work to be done to provide it reliably.

A good client experience is about more than just providing food, it also means providing services in a positive and dignified manner.

Despite the great work happening in the hunger relief sector, clients still face significant food insecurity & need to make budget trade-offs between food & other basic needs.

**Hunger Sector CALLS TO ACTION**

Prioritize sourcing of “Top 5” foods at the food bank & food shelf level and aim to have them always available to create consistency for both clients and agencies.

Build a culture of customer service into food shelf service models so that clients feel welcome and their experience is dignified.

**Public CALLS TO ACTION**

Help your local food shelf feed the community by donating money, volunteering, or donating “Top 5” and other healthier food options.

Readers should note that these data were collected prior to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic and do not reflect the potential impacts of COVID-19 on food shelf clients in 2020. Evidence from national data suggests that food insecurity has increased since the start of the pandemic.*


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**CLIENT QUOTES**

The food shelf is important to me because...

"... It puts food in the house for my children so it helps me make it a little less stressful."

"...It enables us to have healthy meals more frequently than we would otherwise be able to."

"...Without it I wouldn't eat. I love the fruits and veggies that you have and baking needs!"

"...It is a place I can get help and people don't judge me."

"...I do not receive enough SNAP for even one week. I just slide by with using the combination of SNAP, food shelf and family to get through the month every month."
"...Without the food shelf my family would go hungry at times. I have relied on many food shelf programs for almost 10 years."

"...It provides the healthiest part of my diet, and I've become a much better cook since coming here."

"...I feel happy to talk to people and they listen and don't judge me for taking food. They tell me "take more"."

"...It's important to me because you have a place to go to where there is no judgment. Because after you take care of all of your household expenses, sometimes you just need a little help."

"...It helps me fill in the gaps between pay day to feed 3 kids. Everyone is helpful and make you feel comfortable and not ashamed."

"...Food insecurity is real. I appreciate choosing my own food. I truly appreciate the many many kind volunteers."

"...It serves as a bridge between hardships and my kids don't have to experience my struggles."

"...I love this food shelf. I can pick my food, there is good options and healthy food for my kids."

"...After I pay rent, utilities and prescriptions there isn't much left for food. I am diabetic, wear a pump, and use insulin. Doesn't leave much for luxury items like food."