



Healthy Choices Healthy Lives

FoodWise in **Polk County** is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



Polk County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

43%

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals.[^]



9%

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*



Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Polk County, FoodWise partners with schools, Head Start programs, housing sites, and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Community

Impacts in 2024

Engaged with **464 learners** around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including early care and education centers, K-12 school settings, housing sites, and food pantries.

Partnered with **9 food pantries and 11 community partner organizations** to build an emergency food network, reaching community members with printed food resource lists in English and Spanish to promote access to adequate food.

Continued to work with Amery Area Food Pantry to establish a Safe and Healthy Food Pantry where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

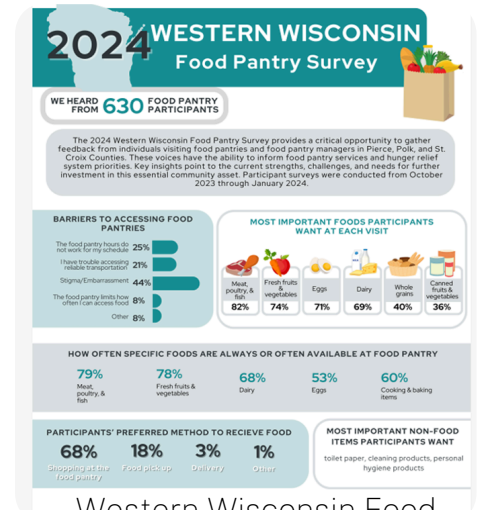
[^]Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

*WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

Inspiring Collaborations

A survey specific to western Wisconsin was administered to gather feedback from individuals visiting food pantries and food pantry managers in Pierce, Polk, and Saint Croix Counties in FY24. Food pantry participant voices have the ability to inform food pantry services and hunger relief system priorities. Key findings from the survey include:

- 68% of survey respondents' preferred method to receive food is to shop at the food pantry. 65% of pantries offer this method.
- The most important foods that participants want to receive on each visit are meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, and dairy. Managers report that the availability of these items can be limited from the food bank.
- 92% of participants feel welcomed and accepted by pantry staff and volunteers. However, stigma and embarrassment are the biggest barriers for people to use a pantry.



Western Wisconsin Food Pantry Survey Results
630 Food Pantry Participants

Multi-level Program Efforts



Frederic School District routinely qualifies for FoodWise programming with a free and reduced lunch eligibility rate over 50%. FoodWise has been providing nutrition education to 1st, 3rd, and 5th grades for a number of years and in 2024 added education at Roots and Branches, the childcare center within the school. In 2024, there was an interest in adding free produce for a children's program at the Frederic Farmers' Market. Katie Bartko, FoodWise Coordinator, connected Frederic Elementary and St. Croix Valley Food Bank. The food bank was able to supply produce from the Wisconsin Local Food Purchase Assistance Program to the school at no cost to the school. The school distributed bags of produce weekly to 20 families throughout the summer.

"We made a homemade chicken salad with the fresh lettuce and veggies. We are so thankful for the delicious produce given every week!"

-Program Participant

Connect With Us

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