

Rapid Response Support for Dakota County Food Shelves

In Fall 2025, Dakota County Public Health’s Health Promotion team launched its first-ever Rapid Response Mini-Grant Initiative to support 10 local hunger relief organizations. The idea emerged during a period of heightened concern, when potential reductions to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding threatened to increase food insecurity across the county. As demand for hunger relief services grew, community organizations faced urgent needs.

A FAST AND FOCUSED FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Funding was provided to organizations operating existing hunger relief initiatives using Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grant funds scheduled to expire at the end of October 2025.

Through a brief application and review process, ten organizations were selected to receive up to \$5,000 each to support items identified as priority needs.

INVESTING IN CAPACITY AND SAFETY

The mini-grants supported essential equipment that directly improves food access, safety, and efficiency.



Purchases included:

- Freezers and refrigerators
- Metal racks for coolers
- Shelving
- Pallet jack
- Wagon carts and bins
- Sturdy signage and posters
- Anti-fatigue mats for volunteers
- Insulated food transport containers

Health Promotion awarded nearly:

\$40,000 SHIP FUNDS

within a two-month period ensuring support reached programs as quickly as possible

RECIPIENT ORGANIZATIONS:

- School District 191 Community Pantry
- Neighbors, Inc.
- Hastings Family Services
- Augustana Lutheran Church
- The Open Door
- Holiday Acres
- 360 Communities food shelf sites
(Rosemount, Apple Valley, Lakeville and Farmington)



ALIGNED WITH COMMUNITY HEALTH PRIORITIES

SHIP aims to create lasting community-level change that supports healthy food access, active living, mental well-being, and commercial tobacco prevention. Strengthening hunger relief infrastructure is a core strategy within Dakota County's Community Health Improvement Plan and directly supports residents facing food insecurity.



STRONG PARTNERSHIPS, MEANINGFUL IMPACT

Health Promotion staff and local food shelf partners were thrilled to collaborate on this rapid, high-impact initiative to strengthen hunger relief efforts across Dakota County.



VOICES FROM MINI-GRANT RECIPIENTS

“This new cart with bins allows staff and volunteers to keep heavy produce containers on the cart, reducing lifting and making our mobile distributions much more efficient. It’s a huge safety win for everyone involved!” – *Hastings Family Service*

“Thanks to this partnership and investment, we can now accept and preserve more nutritious options for our community expanding access and reducing waste.” – *Neighbors, Inc.*

“We already received our refrigerator and it’s the most AMAZING gift! We could not be more thankful.”

– *Holiday Acres Food Shelf Coordinator*

“This opportunity highlighted how expanded capacity is not only a logistical improvement but a critical part of being responsive during times of crisis.” – *Neighbors, Inc.*

“On behalf of all of us here at Shepherd of the Valley, thank you for this generous grant. This will allow our food shelf to store more food and feed more people. We are grateful!”

– *Apple Valley Food Shelf staff*

Supported by the Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Partnership and Dakota County Public Health Department.



Dakota County
Public Health

