



## Healthy Choices Healthy Lives

FoodWise in **St. Croix 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.



### St. Croix County Landscape

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

**23%**

of children in schools were eligible for free or reduced price meals.<sup>^</sup>



**5%**

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 St. Croix County, FoodWise partners with after-school programs, 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 **134 learners** around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including early care and education centers, housing sites, and food pantries.

Partnered with **7 food pantries and 6 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 Somerset Community Food Pantry to establish a Safe and Healthy Food Pantry where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

<sup>^</sup>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



2024 was the third year of providing the Teen Cuisine curriculum at the YMCA summer school program in the St. Croix Central School District. Middle school students come in with a wide range of kitchen knowledge and abilities, and all are excited to learn!

- In these lessons, students learn a variety of nutrition concepts like reading food labels and healthy breakfast habits as well as cooking techniques like knife skills and using a stovetop.
- Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages improved from 38% of students reporting three or more per week prior to FoodWise sessions to 25% after the lessons.
- Consumption of vegetables improved from 23% of students reporting eating vegetables two or more times per day prior to FoodWise sessions to 50% after the lessons.

## Connect With Us

[Stcroix.Extension.wisc.edu](https://Stcroix.Extension.wisc.edu)

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