

COMMUNITY NEEDS REPORT



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Health and Well Being Programming Sheboygan County Extension

On June 12, 2025, Sheboygan County hosted a Community Needs Forum with participation from representatives and partners across local community organizations. Attendees engaged in facilitated discussions around current goals, challenges, existing and needed resources, underserved audiences, and opportunities for collaboration. The purpose of this report is to highlight community-identified needs relevant to the Health and Well Being Institute (HWB), and to demonstrate how programming from Sheboygan County Extension is addressing these gaps.

Forum Discussion Summary

The forum's discussion at the HWB table focused on **expanding access to nutritious food**, addressing the *root causes of hunger*, and building **wraparound support systems** that tie together food, housing, mental health, and agency coordination. There's also a notable push toward **sustainable practices**, deeper **cross-sector partnerships**, and more **inclusive outreach**, especially to marginalized and underserved groups like seniors, rural residents, and English Second Language (ESL) individuals.

Identified Community Needs & Gaps

- **Beyond Food Access: Nutrition & Sustainability**
 - Interest in addressing the root causes of hunger and food insecurity.
 - Push to include *nutrition education, community food planting, and environmentally mindful practices*.
- **Existing Food & Wellness Resources**
 - Many local supports exist (CSAs, Food Bank, Nourish, Meals on Wheels, hospitals, farmer's markets), but **agencies often lack coordination**.
 - 211 and county coalitions are in place but can be underutilized or siloed.
- **Gaps in Services & Workforce Barriers**
 - High need for **case managers**, wraparound support, and easier access to **mental health, housing, and childcare**.
 - Nonprofits struggle to **attract and retain staff** due to low wages and vacancies.
- **Hard-to-Reach Populations**
 - Seniors, ESL speakers, homeless individuals, rural residents, and students face consistent barriers.

- Apprehension due to immigration status, language, or lack of transportation limits engagement.
- **Stronger Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships**
 - Agencies want to partner with hospitals, schools, and businesses more effectively but face **staff turnover and communication breakdowns**.
 - Interest in shared tools like “Wire” or Gateway WI to support continuity and referrals (<https://pps.wisconsin.gov/>)
- **Public Awareness & Education**
 - Need for more **marketing and outreach** to ensure residents understand and access available services.
 - Desire to educate **college students and the wider public** on community resources.

*Suggestion to align these efforts with **Sheboygan’s Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)**.

EXTENSION ALIGNMENT

Dear valued FoodWise program partner,

For over 30 years UW–Madison Extension has been providing local nutrition education throughout our state that has been funded by the federal SNAP-Ed grant program. Our FoodWise educators have been a cornerstone of Extension’s mission to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsin residents. FoodWise reaches over 133,000 people with nutrition education and community-based strategies to support healthy eating and active lifestyles – partnering with schools, food pantries, farmers markets, and community centers to engage children, families, and seniors. Despite extensive advocacy efforts by Extension, UW–Madison’s University Relations, and partners such as the Wisconsin Counties Association, the congressional budget reconciliation bill signed into law on July 4 eliminated all SNAP-Ed funding effective September 30, 2025.

FoodWise is one of six SNAP-Ed implementing agencies in the state, and Extension is currently navigating the difficult process of winding down our SNAP-Ed-funded programming including a layoff notice process for affected employees. We will continue FoodWise programming through September 30, 2025. We will also be exploring all possible pathways to sustain some of the program’s capacity through alternative funding sources, including leveraging our infrastructure, expertise, and remaining EFNEP funding.

This is not just a loss of funding – it is a loss of services that have been vital to communities across Wisconsin. FoodWise’s staff of more than 90 educators across the state have directly helped families with limited incomes make a healthier choice for their future. The impact will be

felt in schools, food pantries, and community centers where our educators have helped families make healthier choices and stretch limited food dollars.

FoodWise has always been about more than just nutrition education. It's about empowering communities to thrive. We know that SNAP-Ed makes Wisconsin healthier. We are proud of the work we have done and the lives we have changed for the better. Thank you for supporting our staff, our programs and our mission.

Extension's commitment to your community remains and we will continue to bring university resources to residents in your area across our program areas. Please reach out to FoodWise Coordinator, Amanda Miller (amanda.m.miller@wisc.edu) or the local Area Extension Director, Jayna Hintz (jayna.hintz@wisc.edu) with your questions.

Thank you for all of the years of partnership and service to the Sheboygan community!