



Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

One 2<sup>nd</sup> Street N Suite 232  
Fargo, North Dakota 58102-4807  
Phone: 701.532.5100  
Website: www.fmmetrocog.org  
Email: metrocog@fmmetrocog.org



CASS CLAY  
**FOOD**  
PARTNERS

### 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

September 10, 2025 10:30 am – 12:05 pm

**Location: Metro COG Conference Room**

[Click here to join the meeting online](#)

Meeting ID: 856 4057 2488

Passcode: 521092

- 10:30 am      1. Welcome
  - a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda
  - b. Review & Action on Minutes from March 12, 2025 (**Attachment 1**)
- 10:35 am      2. Commission Introductions – Chair Nesemeier
- 10:40 am      3. Celebration of SNAP-Ed Panel – Noelle Harden (**Attachment 2**)
- 11:10 am      4. Steering Committee Update – Noelle Harden
- 11:30 am      5. Cass Clay Connect – Adam Altenburg (**Attachment 3**)
- 11:45 am      6. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Nesemeier (**Attachment 4**)
- 11:50 am      7. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Nesemeier
- 11:55 am      8. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps
  - a. Next Steering Committee Meeting – September 22, 2025, 1:00 pm  
Metro COG – 1 2<sup>nd</sup> Street N Suite 232, Fargo
  - b. Next Commission Meeting – November 12, 2025, 10:30 am
- 12:00 pm      9. Adjournment

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Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Angela Brumbaugh at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at [www.cassclayfoodpartners.org](http://www.cassclayfoodpartners.org) and Metro COG's website at [www.fmmetrocog.org](http://www.fmmetrocog.org).

A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

# Attachment 1

**54<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
May 14, 2025  
Metro COG Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair  
Tim Flakoll, Cass County Commission  
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission  
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission  
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)  
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council  
John Strand, Fargo City Commission  
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member  
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member  
Carin Engler, At-Large Member  
Jeff York, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council  
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

**Others Present:**

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Jillian Patrie, U of M Extension  
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank  
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning  
Eric Hegg, Global Refuge  
Chelsi Bormann, West Fargo Eats  
Ron Ellingson, Peace Lutheran Church Food Pantry  
Shania Alder, REACH  
Chandler Esslinger, FM Coalition to End Homelessness  
Patrick Hollister, PartnerShip 4 Health  
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments  
Karissa Pavek, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

**1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda**

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 12, 2025**

A motion to approve the minutes for March 2025 was made by Ms. Zundel and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**2. Commission Introductions**

Chair Nesemeier led the Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions.

### **3. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable**

Chair Nesemeier asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share comments on news and updates from their communities.

### **4. Cass Clay Connect**

Ms. Harden and Mr. Altenburg a new agenda item, the Cass Clay Connect. Ms. Harden explained that this was a new item that featured news and updates from the steering committee. Items that were shared included:

- Food Access: Links to the Great Plains Food Bank Food Assistance Map and FM area community garden and farmers market lists
- Urban Agriculture: Information on the 2025 One Vegetable One Community, including public events in Moorhead, Barnesville, and Hawley
- Outreach and Education: U of M Extension would be hosting Gardening Field Days at Probstfield Farm from May to August
- Economic Development: Nova Eatery and Supper Club opens in downtown Fargo, updates on North Dakota's cottage food law, and insights from farmers and NDSU Extension on the impacts of tariffs on local farmers
- Food Infrastructure: Subscription options available through the Red River Harvest Cooperative and information on impacts of federal funding cuts to the North Central Regional Food Business Center and other food system projects in the area

Mr. Krabbenhoft expressed his desire for the Commission to address several items discussed, including tariff impacts and impacts on federal funding cuts on SNAP-Ed and other programs. Mr. Flakoll indicated that Commission members have the option to opt in or opt out of being signatories, if desired.

A motion for the steering committee to create a draft letter to state officials addressing federal funding cuts to food programs, including data on local impacts on child nutrition, was made by Mr. Krabbenhoft and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

### **5. Food Access 101**

Ms. Tweet provided a brief informational overview of food access from the Great Plains Food Bank. She stated that the Great Plains Food Bank has three goals: ending hunger today by filling immediate needs, ending hunger tomorrow by tackling the root causes of hunger, and ending hunger for good by constructing a future where hunger doesn't exist. She informed the Commission that the Great Plains Food Bank operates nine programs to recover and distribute food, with over 2,000 volunteers and 200 partner food pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens in North Dakota and Clay County. She stated that more than 100,000 individuals are served each year. In 2024, 5.5 million pounds of food were distributed, which helped to prepare 4.6 million meals and 289,000 congregate meals. Additionally, 9.8 percent of individuals in the Great Plains Food Bank service area were food insecure, with 9.5 percent of individuals in Cass County and 11.7 percent of individuals in Clay County being food insecure.

### **6. Food Pantry Experience Panel**

Mr. Beil led a panel discussion with area food pantry professionals, including Chelsi Bormann of West Fargo Eats, Ron Ellingson of Peace Lutheran Church Food Pantry, and Shania Alder of REACH. Each shared information on the operations of their food pantries, intake processes, the variety of food and on-food items available, and the different ways clients can receive their food.

## **7. Homelessness and Hunger**

Chandler Esslinger, Director of the FM Coalition to End Homelessness, provided the Commission with information regarding homelessness and hunger in the FM area.

Ms. Esslinger stated that 1,050 people are homeless on any given night in the community, a five percent increase since 2023. She explained that this includes people who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those whose residence is a shelter or transitional housing program, those living in unstable and non-permanent situations, and those forced to stay temporarily with family members because they have no other place to stay. She informed the Commission on the five pillars of the homelessness response system, including: outreach and coordinated entry, emergency shelters, supportive housing and rapid rehousing, affordable housing and stabilization, and homelessness prevention and diversion. She also provided information on a newly formed Cass Clay Interagency Council on Homelessness that is intended to offer a regional framework rooted in state and federal best practices in ending homelessness.

## **8. Public Comment Opportunity**

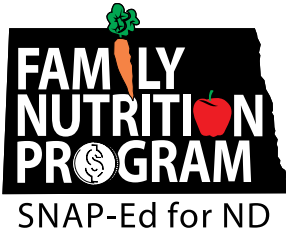
Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

Mr. Altenburg informed the Commission that Janice Tweet, current chair of the steering committee, has accepted a new position and would be stepping down from her role. Commissioners and steering committee members thanked Ms. Tweet for her work and dedication to the Cass Clay Food Partners.

## **9. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps**

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on September 10. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be May 27 at Metro COG and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend. She also noted that the next Food Action Network monthly newsletter would be emailed on June 6 and that people could visit the Cass Clay Food Partners Facebook page to sign up to receive those.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 11:57 AM.



# FY24 SNAP-Ed Impacts

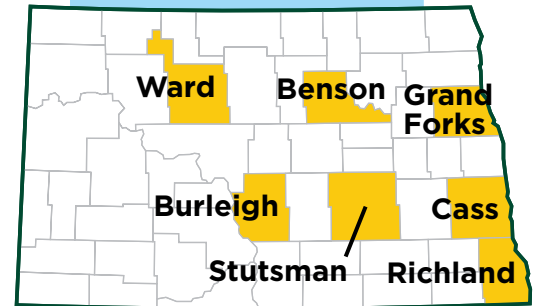
**About our program:** The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) serves as North Dakota's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). This program supports SNAP recipients and eligible individuals of all ages through various settings, including qualifying schools, local social service agencies and partner organizations that serve the target population.



**FNP played a key role** in promoting healthier lifestyles by helping participants:

- Increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Engage in more physical activity
- Stretch their food dollars in a healthful way

## Counties With FNP Agents



FNP's outreach efforts support **policy, systems and environmental** (PSE) changes, fostering environments that encourage healthy choices and active living among participants.

**2,401** adult participants

**2,098** youth participants

## CREATING CHANGE

**37%** of youth participants reported no soda consumption in the previous week

**18%** of adults increased their vegetable intake

**30%** of participants' meal planning improved

**62%** of participants made a list prior to grocery shopping

**15%** of adult participants increased the number of days they engaged in physical activity

**12%** of youth who reported being sedentary for an hour or less increased by 12%

**59%** of adults cook dinner at home five or more days per week

**63%** frequently engage in practices that stretch their food dollar to save money

PSE Impacted More Than  
**3,300** North Dakotans



**NDSU** EXTENSION

North Dakota State University, Fargo N.D.

County commissions, North Dakota State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, [ndsuoaa@ndsu.edu](mailto:ndsuoaa@ndsu.edu). This publication will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities upon request, 701-231-7881.

# SNAP-Ed Makes Minnesota Healthier



SNAP-Ed staff provide nutrition education to Minnesotans of all ages, empowering them to stretch their food dollars, eat healthy and be physically active. We also work with community partners to make movement and nutritious food more accessible to low-income families at daycare and childcare centers, parks, community gardens, schools, clinics, grocery stores, food banks, farmers markets and more.

In 2024:

**5,673** SNAP-Ed participants reported increased physical activity; and

**756** partners worked with SNAP-Ed to create community-level changes that help

**173,702** Minnesotans across the state make healthy living the easy choice.

*“The walking program was transformative. I experienced improvements in my physical and mental health. Connecting with nature gave me clarity and renewed energy.”*

– SNAP-ED Walking in Nature program participant



## SNAP-Ed Delivers Results

After participating in a direct SNAP-Education program:

**56%** of youth increased their healthy eating behaviors

**84%** of adults increased their healthy eating behaviors

**45%** of adults reported eating more fruits and vegetables in a day

**35%** of adults increased the number of days they did physical activity

**63%** made small changes in physical activity 3 or more days a week

*“Seeing the looks on people’s faces when they try new foods, learn how to ride a bike or watch birds — that’s what this program is all about; new experiences, new joy.”*

– Luan To,  
Metro Men and Fathers program participant



*“For me it has inspired me a lot. I want to educate my children from an early age to learn how to eat healthy and take care of their immune system.”*

– Rosa,  
Health and Nutrition program participant



## Background

The Minnesota SNAP-Ed program runs through the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

The implementing agencies include:

- University of Minnesota Extension
- Bois Forte Band of Chippewa
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Red Lake Nation
- White Earth Nation

## SNAP-Ed Builds Healthier Communities

Drawing on their deep, embedded relationships with Minnesota communities, our expert SNAP-Ed staff develop innovative ways to reach families. They translate evidence-based insights into tailored programs and initiatives, such as:

- Growing the **halal food supply chain** in St. Cloud, making culturally appropriate foods available and affordable
- Hosting **joyful double-dutch SNAP-Ed programming** for Black youth in Brooklyn Center
- Mobilizing partnerships and **Garden in a Box**, a hands-on community garden program that engages families in conversations on health, financial planning, parenting, and nutrition

## 76 SuperShelves

The SuperShelf is a complete transformation of food shelf operations: expanding stocked items, designing layouts to resemble grocery stores, retraining volunteers, and shifting language from “clients” to “shoppers.” In 2024, SuperShelves served 57,000 people in 42 Minnesota counties and certified 18 new sites, bringing the total to 76.



## Military Veterans Lead Peers to Walk Towards Wellness

Extension staff partnered with the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Central Minnesota Warrior to Citizen group to tailor the “Walk with Ease” program to military participants. The peer leaders bring veterans and military service members together to walk, build community and strengthen body, mind and spirit.



## USDA’s GusNIP Veggie RX Grant

Extension partnered with the U of M Arboretum, Carver and Scott County, and other local partners to offer produce prescriptions (Veggie RX) for patients with diet-related health conditions. The 100 participants picked up these locally grown vegetables at two clinic sites for 16 weeks in the summer of 2024. SNAP educators were on hand to answer questions and provide nutrition and cooking education.



## Economic Impact of U of M Extension SNAP-Ed

The elimination of the SNAP-Ed program would result in implementing agencies losing staff and program capacity. University of Minnesota Extension’s SNAP-Ed \$7.25 million award for FY25 pays for 70 SNAP educators. The loss of these programs and educators would be felt by SNAP participants and communities across the entire state, including farmers who grow and sell fresh fruits and vegetables at markets that accept SNAP benefits.

# SNAP-Ed IMPACT REPORT 2024

**MINNESOTA**  
Supplemental  
Nutrition Assistance  
Program - Education  
**SNAP-Ed**

## ABOUT SNAP-Ed

### WHO WE ARE

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Office of Economic Opportunity works in partnership with grantees from **8 Tribal Nations** in Minnesota and the **University of Minnesota Extension** to deliver SNAP-Ed programming. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### WHAT WE DO

SNAP-Ed partners play a critical role in helping SNAP eligible community members lead healthier lives on a limited budget, cook healthy meals, and stay physically healthy.

- ✓ Evidence-based nutrition and health direct education
- ✓ Policy, systems, and environmental change initiatives
- ✓ Culturally centered, community led programming
- ✓ Social marketing to promote healthy eating and exercise
- ✓ Multi-level collaborations and partnerships

## SNAP-Ed WORKS

### ADULT PARTICIPANTS\*

**84%** reported at least one positive change in healthy eating practices.

**56%** reported at least one positive change in physical activity practices.

\*participating in Extension programs.

**70%**

of children ate more fruit and vegetables\*.

\*After participating in Lower Sioux Indian Community programs.

**26%**

of Minnesota households with children are food insecure.

of Minnesota households with children are food insecure.

### AMONG MINNESOTANS,

**35%** consume less than 1 fruit per day.

**21%** consume less than 1 vegetable per day.

## SNAP-Ed GRANTEES

### Tribal Nations

8

### Land Grant University

1



Cansa'yapi  
**Lower Sioux Indian Community**



Gaa-waabaabiganikaag  
**White Earth Nation**



Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag  
**Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**



Gichi-Onigaming  
**Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**



Misi-zaaga'iganiing  
**Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe**



Miskwaagamiwi  
Zaagaiganing  
**Red Lake Nation**



Nah-gah-chi-wa-nong  
**Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa**



Zagaakwaandagowiniwag  
**Bois Forte Band of Chippewa**



The state of Minnesota honors Tribal sovereignty and partners with Tribal Nations to implement SNAP-Ed programming. Each community identifies and addresses the specific needs in their communities.

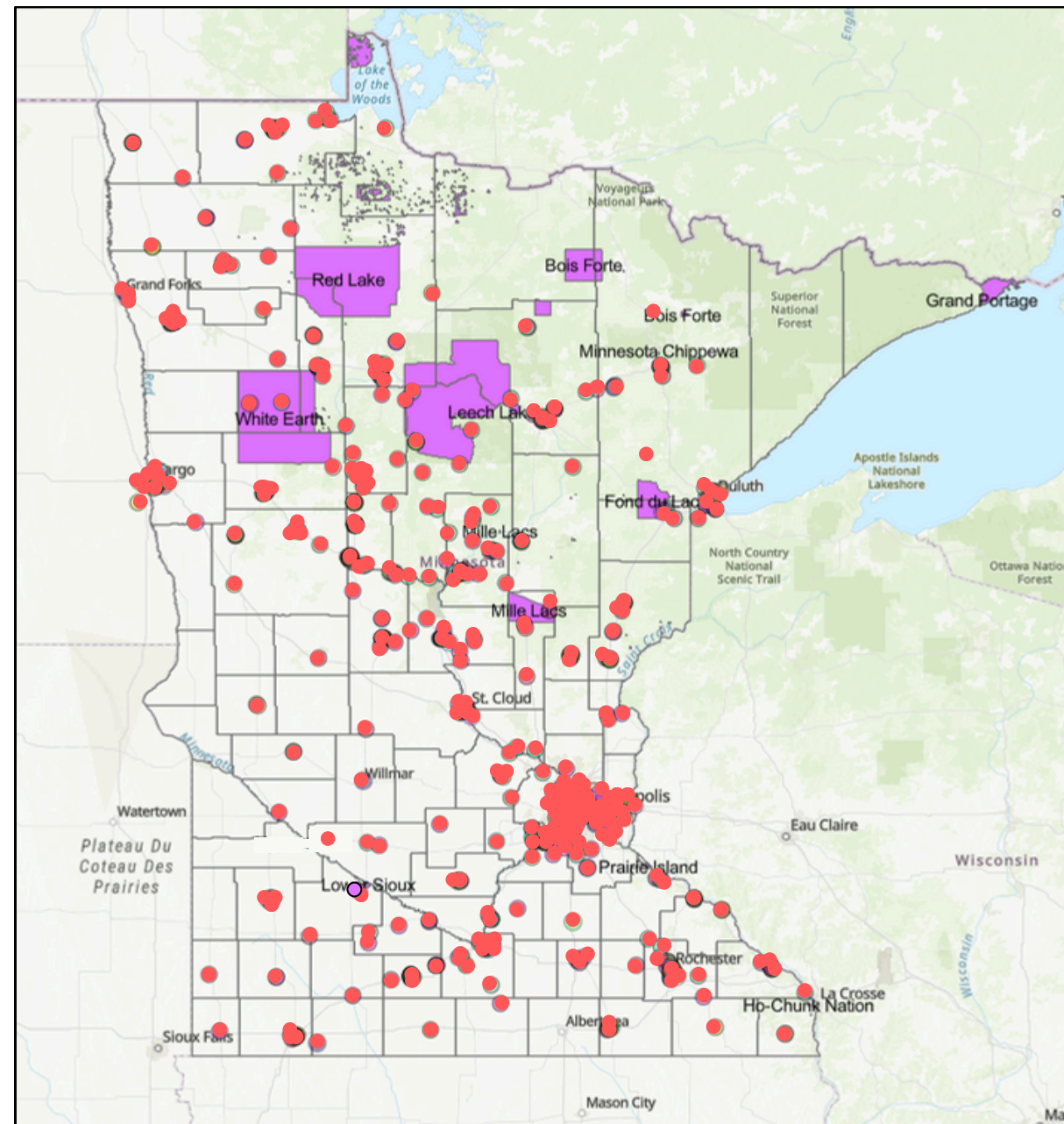


**825**  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In 2024, SNAP-Ed partnered in some of the following community settings:

- 126** SCHOOL-BASED SITES
- 107** FOOD BANKS & PANTRIES
- 92** HEALTH CARE SITES
- 81** FOUNDATION, NONPROFIT, PHILANTHROPY PARTNERSHIPS
- 77** GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS
- 62** COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
- 54** EARLY CHILD CARE SITES
- 31** SMALL LOCAL BUSINESSES
- 29** AGRICULTURAL SITES & FARMERS MARKETS
- +** PLUS MANY MORE!

## SNAP-Ed REACH



Extension SNAP-Ed  
 Tribal Nation SNAP-Ed

The work of SNAP-Ed is both effective and deep throughout the state, reaching a wide audience. Partners are encouraged to develop programs that fit the needs of those they serve through evidence-based curricula, influenced by local knowledge and expertise. Programs promote nutrition education, food access, physical activity, and healthy ways of living.

## DIRECT EDUCATION REACH



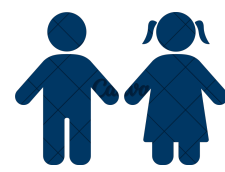
**19,448**

**INDIVIDUALS**  
reached through direct-education programs and social marketing initiatives.



**2,644**

**CLASSES OFFERED**  
as direct education.



**4,610**

**CHILDREN <18 YRS OF AGE**  
reached through direct education.



## PSE INITIATIVES REACH

**Policy, systems, and environmental change (PSE)** initiatives focus on improving community health and well-being, making healthy choices easier and more accessible. PSE change goes beyond individual education and aims to create conditions that support healthy behaviors at a broader, systemic level, recognizing that individuals' choices are often influenced by their environment, social structures, and policies.

Examples of PSE strategies and programs in 2024 include:

- FOOD SAFETY POLICIES**
- HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICIES IN WORKSITES AND SCHOOLS**
- FREE WATER ACCESS IN PUBLIC SETTINGS**
- APPEAL & DISPLAY OF HEALTHY FOODS IN FOOD SHELVES**
- POINT-OF-DECISION PROMPTS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY CHOICES**
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICIES**

**+PLUS MANY MORE!**

**405**  
**PSE CHANGES**  
across Minnesota enacted at  
**158**  
**SITES,**  
reaching over  
**1.7 million**  
**PEOPLE**

**7.2 million**  
**IMPRESSIONS**  
on people interacting with PSE changes and social marketing\*.

\*Includes commercial marketing combined with public health approaches in order to achieve significant, large-scale public benefits. Methods include advertising, mass communications such as interactive websites, social media or earned media, and formative research and pilot testing.



CASS CLAY  
**FOOD**  
PARTNERS

## **Cass Clay Connect: September 2025**

*Food System Kudos and News from the Cass*

### **Food Access**

- [Great Plains Food Bank Cass and Clay County Food Assistance Partners, List and Map](#)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Hunger & Health Summit scheduled for October 30 ([Cass Clay Hunger Coalition](#))

### **Urban Agriculture**

- Backyard chicken policy updates in Fargo and Horace
- Community garden updates (Growing Together/Village West)

### **Outreach and Education**

- The SNAP-Ed program was defunded in July, affecting local health educators at [NDSU](#) and [U of M Extension](#)
- Future Farmers of America makes a comeback at Moorhead High after 43 years ([FM Extra](#))
- The Longest Table event scheduled for September 18

### **Economic Development**

- New restaurants in the FM area
- Termination of Regional Food Business Centers Programs ([Civil Eats](#))
- From Field to Feast: Fargo Area Farm Tour scheduled for September 18 ([FARRMS](#))

### **Food Infrastructure**

- Minnesota Department of Agriculture Farm to School and Early Care Grants
- Pilot project to test rural grocery and local food hub model in Minot advances ([Minot Daily News](#))



**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Heather Nesemeier, Chair  
**Date:** September 3, 2025  
**Re:** *Public Comment Opportunity*

The public comment opportunity is an open forum for the public to provide comments about specific items on this meeting's agenda, as well as any other issues that may pertain to food systems policies or programs. Members of the public may also submit comments online through the comment form link sent out with the meeting's agenda and packet. People may sign up to receive notices about the Cass Clay Food Commission at <http://fmmetrocog.org/get-involved>.

Comments to the Cass Clay Food Commission will be limited to two minutes per individual or at the discretion of the Commission Chair.

**Requested Action:**  
**None.**