



Aitkin County Public Health

PartnerSHIP News!

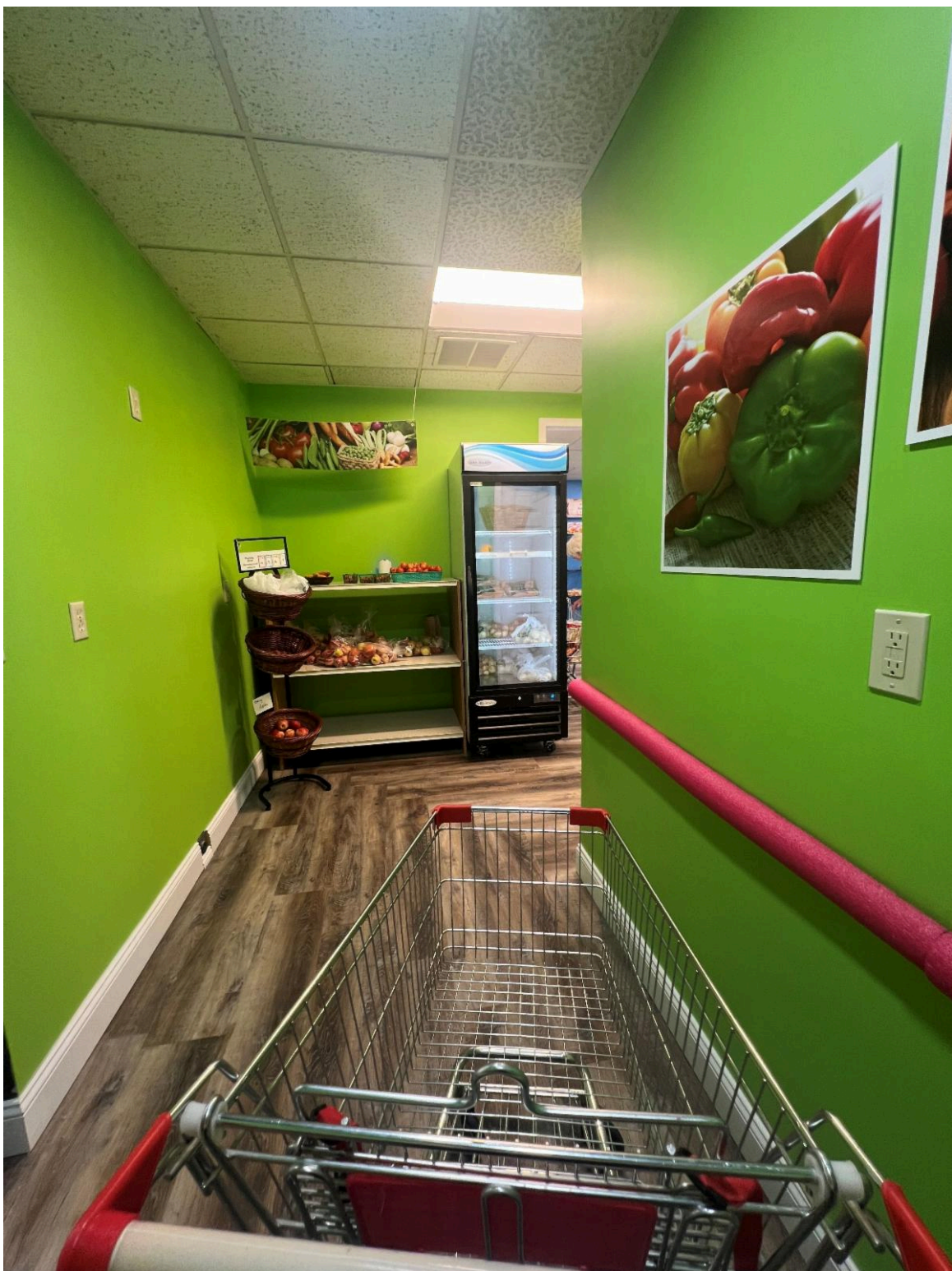
September 2025

[Aitkin County
SHIP Website](#)

[Resources](#)

[Northeast SHIP Website](#)

[View as a web page!](#)



Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching, Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties make up Northeast SHIP

Stay updated with the latest news and events from the northland, the Northeast Minnesota Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP). Read about our health initiatives, community success stories, and upcoming events promoting healthy living in the region.

<https://www.northeastship.org/news>

Check out the Northeast SHIP Website!

(formally called Healthy Northland)

<https://www.northeastship.org/>



FIND FOOD Aitkin County

Featured Recipe of the Month!

Celebrate fall flavors with this hearty and healthy Pumpkin Flax Granola! Packed with the warm taste of pumpkin and the nutritional boost of flax seeds, it's perfect for breakfast, a snack, or topping your favorite yogurt. Crunchy, flavorful, and naturally wholesome —this granola will keep you fueled all day long.



PUMPKIN FLAX GRANOLA

Pumpkin Flax Granola

Crunchy, nutty, and lightly spiced, this pumpkin flax granola blends rolled oats, pumpkin seeds, flax, and walnuts with warm cinnamon, honey, and maple syrup for a wholesome, golden-baked snack or breakfast topper.

Ingredients

- 3 cups **rolled oats**
- ¾ cup **pumpkin seeds** (shelled)
- ¼ cup **flax seeds**
- ½ cup **chopped walnuts**
- 1 teaspoon **cinnamon** (or pumpkin spice)
- ½ teaspoon **salt**
- ¼ cup **coconut oil** (slightly melted)
- ½ cup **honey**
- 1/4 cup **maple syrup**
- 1 teaspoon **vanilla**

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F
 2. In a large mixing bowl, mix the dry ingredients together.
 3. Add the melted coconut oil and coat the dry ingredients evenly.
 4. Add in the remaining liquid ingredients.
 5. Mix until evenly coated.
 6. Lay the granola flat on a baking pan lined with parchment paper.
 7. Bake for 30 minutes, rotating the granola every 10 minutes.
 8. Let cool for 10 minutes.
 9. Serve and enjoy or store for later!
- Store this granola in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks at room temperature or 4-5 weeks in the refrigerator.



Sharing Stories, Strengthening Connections!

Find Food Aitkin County Network Community Food Assessment

Good food brings people together! That's exactly what Aitkin County Public Health and the Find Food Aitkin County Network are hoping to do through a new Community Food Assessment. We are proud to be one of only two counties in Minnesota selected to receive technical assistance from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health, to help guide this important work.

This project is all about listening to our neighbors, learning from their experiences, and finding ways to make healthy food more accessible for everyone in our county. We know that each person's story matters, whether it's about growing food, shopping locally, or simply putting dinner on the table.

One of the most exciting parts of this effort is our "100 Cups of Coffee" project. Over a cup of coffee (or tea!), community members share their real-life experiences with food, what's working well and what feels hard. These conversations help us see the bigger picture of food in Aitkin County, one story at a time.

The insights we gather will help guide how we spend our time and resources, build new partnerships, or grow stronger ones, and even support grant writing to fund projects that make a real difference in our community. This could include initiatives like supporting local farmers, strengthening food shelves and meal programs, or perhaps creating school food pantries to ensure kids have access to nutritious meals both at school and at home.

Most importantly, this project is about building stronger connections - between neighbors, organizations, and the many people who care deeply about nourishing our community. By listening to each other and working together, we all gain a better understanding of how our food system affects our health, our local economy, and the well-being of everyone in Aitkin County. Even if we aren't struggling to put food on the table, these insights help us all think about the food we eat, where it comes from, and how we can support each other.

Together, we can build a stronger, healthier, more connected Aitkin County, one conversation, one cup of coffee, and one shared story at a time.

Scan the QR code or Text 218-839-1549 to send a message to Public Health to schedule a date and time you'd like to share your story! Help us get to 100 conversations.

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR STORY!

100 Cups of Coffee

LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Aitkin County

FIND FOOD
Aitkin County

INTERESTED?



Scan the QR code or Text 218-839-1549 to send a message to Public Health to schedule a date and time you'd like to share your story!

Every person in our community has a **connection to food** – whether it's growing it, buying it, cooking it, sharing it, or sometimes struggling to get it.

Why Join & What to Expect?

- Share your personal experiences about getting food in Aitkin County.
- Your voice included in a larger picture of how our community eats, grows, and shares food.
- Enjoy a cup of coffee!

Together, 100 cups = 100 stories = a stronger Aitkin County.

Transforming Food Access

McGregor Food Shelf Earns SuperShelf Status

[The McGregor Area Food Shelf](#) had been a cornerstone of support for families in Aitkin County, but with the shelf set to close in July, the community faced the loss of this vital resource. Hearing the call for help, a new champion stepped forward — Lynne Jacobs, with Grace Lutheran Church of Big Sandy — who led the way in transforming the food shelf into a welcoming, dignified space for all. Under her leadership, the McGregor Area Food Shelf not only found new life in a fresh location but also achieved the prestigious SuperShelf certification from the University of Minnesota Extension, becoming the second SuperShelf in Aitkin County and the 96th in the state of Minnesota.



The Vision for Change

With growing demand for food assistance, the McGregor Area Food Shelf saw an opportunity to transform the way it serves the community. The move to a new location provided the perfect chance to redesign the space, rethink operations, and enhance the overall experience for visitors. The focus was clear: create a welcoming, organized, and health-forward environment where clients could choose foods in a dignified and supportive setting.



The SuperShelf Transformation

The University of Minnesota Extension's SuperShelf program guides food shelves in creating shopper-centered, nutritious, and client-focused spaces. Key elements include:

- A grocery-style layout that promotes choice and accessibility
- Prioritizing fresh, minimally processed, and nutrient-rich foods
- Clear signage to help clients navigate the space with ease
- Policies and procedures that ensure sustainability and consistency



By embracing these principles, the McGregor Area Food Shelf reorganized its inventory, upgraded its layout, trained staff and volunteers, and implemented client-focused practices that emphasize respect, choice, and nutrition. The certification has not only recognized the food shelf's transformation but has also set a new standard for food access in the region, demonstrating how a community resource can evolve to better meet the needs of those it serves.

Looking Forward

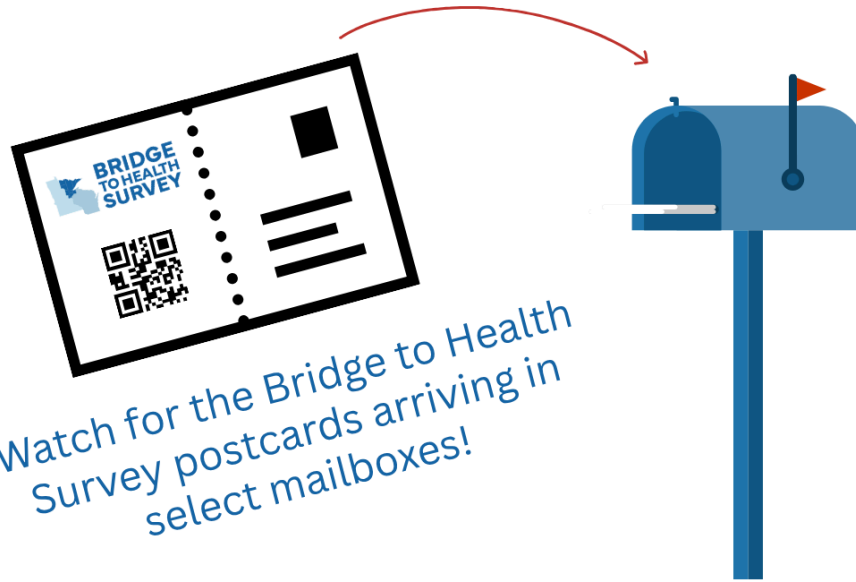
Certification is just the beginning. With a strong foundation in place, the McGregor Area Food Shelf is positioned to continue expanding healthy food access, gathering client feedback, and adapting to the community's changing needs — all while serving as a model for other food shelves in Minnesota and beyond.

Through thoughtful redesign, dedication, and community support, the McGregor Area Food Shelf has shown what is possible when vision meets action — transforming not just food access, but the experience of receiving it.

Please join us in congratulating Lynne Jacobs and all of her dedicated volunteers for their incredible work in making this transformation possible. Their dedication, energy, and commitment have not only transformed the McGregor Area Food Shelf but have turned it into a beacon of healthy food access and community care. This accomplishment is a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when people come together with passion and purpose.



Are you are a resident in Aitkin, Carlton,
Cook, Douglas (WI), Itasca, Kanabec,
Koochiching, Lake, or St. Louis County?



**BRIDGE
TO HEALTH
SURVEY**

bridgetohealthsurvey.com

This is your SHIP

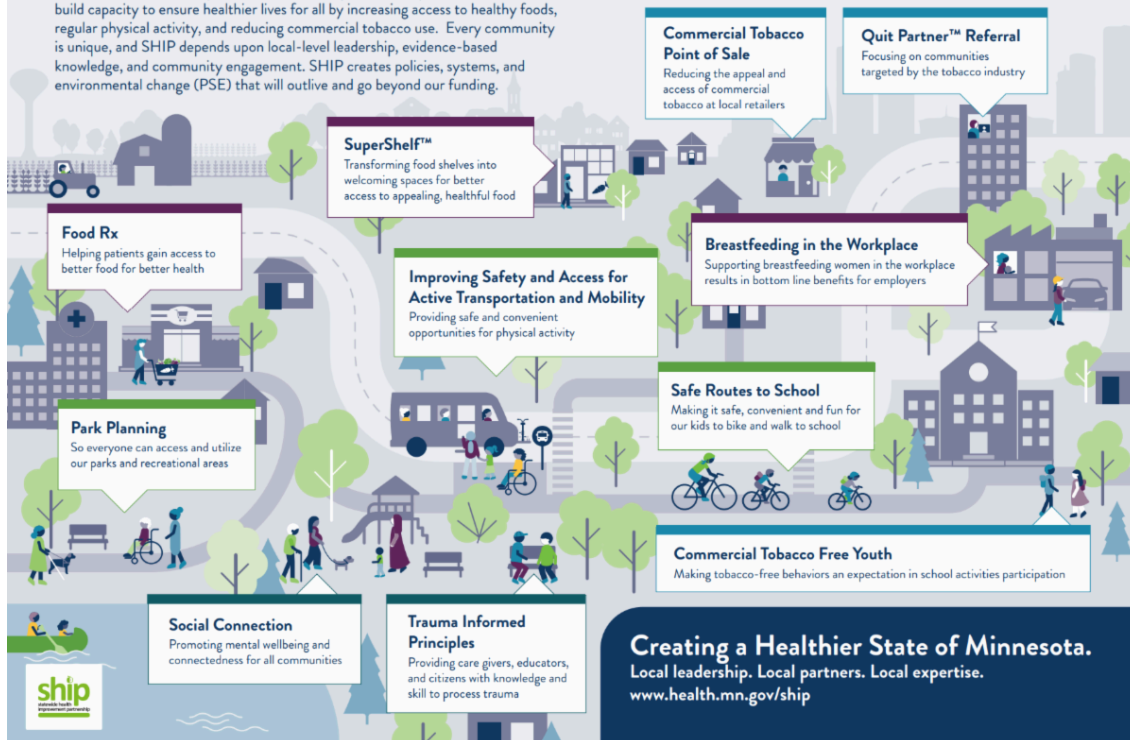
The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) helps local communities build capacity to ensure healthier lives for all by increasing access to healthy foods, regular physical activity, and reducing commercial tobacco use. Every community is unique, and SHIP depends upon local-level leadership, evidence-based knowledge, and community engagement. SHIP creates policies, systems, and environmental change (PSE) that will outlive and go beyond our funding.

MN Moves

MN Eats

MN Breathes

MN Well-being

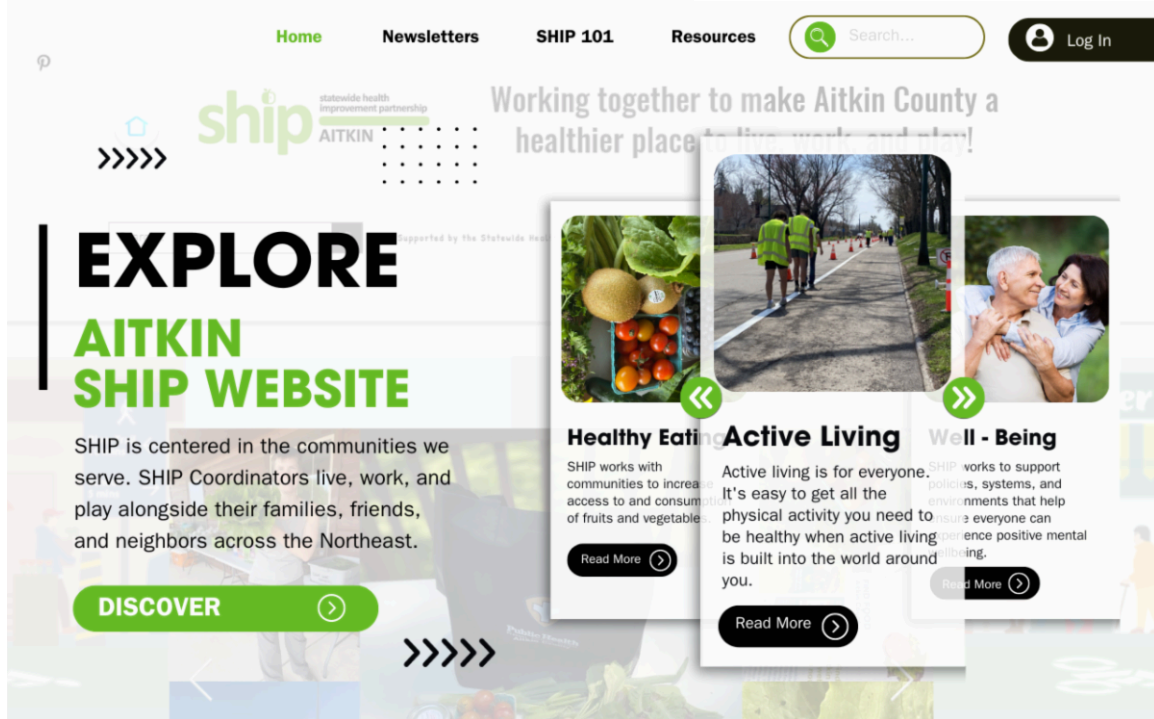


SHIP STORY MAP

The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) creates wellness across Minnesota's communities through community-driven, evidence-based, and equity-focused programs that tackle the root causes of chronic diseases.

The image above and the link below will take you to the storymap to explore work across Minnesota.

[We are SHIP](#)



<https://www.aitkincountyship.org/>

Have An Event Coming Up?

Don't forget Aitkin County Public Health has a Mother and Infant Rest Area Canopy that is available for everyone to check out. This pop-up canopy provides a private space for mothers to nurse their little one/s. You can check out the canopy and supplies via the [Aitkin County SHIP website](https://www.aitkincountyship.org/).



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Message

Statewide Health Improvement Partnership

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www.aitkincountyship.org



204 First Street NW, Aitkin, MN, 56431



Public Health
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MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY

from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm



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