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### UMN Morris Benson Center for Community Partnerships Launches Food Assessment of Stevens County

Communications and Marketing

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**MORRIS**

**UMN Morris Benson Center for Community Partnerships Launches Food Assessment of Stevens County**

*A food security task force is asking residents to complete a short survey about food access*

A team of researchers at the University of Minnesota Morris is conducting a food assessment for Stevens County, Minnesota. The survey is meant to help the team to better understand whether people have enough food, how people access food, and what barriers there may be to food access in Stevens County.

In the twelve years since the last food assessment of the Morris area was conducted, much has changed in the community including demographics, the Covid-19 pandemic, recent inflation, and the end of the Morris Healthy Eating Project. A food security task force established through the University of Minnesota Morris Benson Center for Community Partnerships identified this as an opportunity to conduct a new community food needs and assets assessment for all of Stevens County.

The food assessment team includes UMN Morris Associate Professor of Environmental Studies Ed Brands, AmeriCorps VISTA member Danny Kenyon '21, Morris Academic Partnership participant Allison Koos '24, and Center for Small Towns interns Torin Klebba '22 and Lily Sugimura '22.

“Our team is pleased to be working with local partners including representatives from Horizon Public Health, Stevens County Food Shelf, Stevens County Human Services, and the West Central Research and Outreach Center in order to better understand food needs and assets in the county,” said faculty project leader Ed Brands. “We very much look forward to learning about residents’ food-related experiences and ideas.”

Major parts of the project include a survey of county residents to find out more about where and how residents access food, any barriers there may be to accessing food, and suggestions residents may have for improving access to or quality of food. The team is also tracking food prices at local grocery stores and compiling a list of available food resources in the county.

The survey is completely voluntary and anonymous and takes approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Anyone over the age of 18 who would like to complete the survey (English version), is invited to click on or copy and paste this link below into your Internet browser:

<https://bit.ly/SCFS-engl> A Spanish version is also available <https://bit.ly/SCFS-span>

Project findings should help better understand food availability and accessibility, needs, habits, and prices in Stevens County and assist in taking the next steps to improve our local food

system. A complete report including survey results will be available to the community in summer 2022.

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