

Food Storage Capacity Grant Initiative

Below is a brief summary of Food Storage Capacity grants awarded to non-profit food banks, food pantries and other non-profit organizations providing and distributing food to food insecure Iowans.

The DNR received, reviewed and awarded 35 grants totaling \$204,034.94 to eligible applicants across the State of Iowa. Funding was limited to the purchase of Energy Star refrigerators, Energy Star freezers and shelving. These eligible items make it possible to accept additional food donations and to properly store additional perishable and non-perishable food items for longer periods. The increase in food storage capacity allows for well-rounded, nutritious meals for a greater number of Iowans.

Prior to witnessing the impacts of COVID-19, statistics show that 1 out of every 10 Iowans, or more, experience food insecurity. The definition of food insecurity as used by the Food Bank of Iowa: food insecurity is the lack of reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. According to Feeding America, food insecurity rates are anticipated to increase across the country and project an overall 15% increase of food insecurity of Iowans. For Iowa children, the increase of food insecurity is expected to increase to 24% to 26%.

Food insecurity could be sporadic and related to employment, unexpected bills, car repairs, health care costs, etc. Food insecurity can also be on-going for many persons such as the elderly, and persons with disabilities and for persons on a fixed income. Individual food pantries may need to limit the amount of food a person may receive or the frequency in which food may be obtained. Food storage capacity expansion addresses these limitations as well as reducing the amount of edible food being landfilled.

Brief Project Award Summaries

1. **South Central Calhoun School District - Rockwell City**- Award \$1,200 for chest freezer and refrigerator
 - Elementary school hosts a food pantry to all families within the school district
 - Current cold storage limits ability to accept donations and leads to unnecessary waste in the hot lunch program
 - Currently serve an average of 25 families and 75 individuals per month.
 - Limited meat, milk, eggs and produce can be accepted due to limited cold storage. These items are distributed in the first couple of weeks of each month. Additional cold storage would make these items available to more people throughout the month
2. **St. Patrick Parish - Epworth** – Award \$1,495.86 for refrigerator
 - Serve on average 145 people hot meals on-site per week and some home delivered meals are also provided. Meal site leftovers are prepared for at home consumption.
 - Additional cold storage will allow for additional meals to be prepared for on-site and at-home consumption
3. **All Cultures Equal – Webster City** – Award \$1,763 for a side by side refrigerator/freezer
 - Serve approximately 100 families per month
 - Lack of cold storage results in declining donation offers made and accepted.
 - Expanded cold storage will allow accepting additional donation offers and provision of a variety of nutritious and balanced food items.

4. **Coralville Community Food Pantry - Coralville** – Award \$8,000 for commercial freezer & commercial refrigerator
 - Provides food and personal care products to over 3,000 residents of Coralville and Tiffin weekly
 - 250 – 300 households served weekly
 - Expanded cold storage will allow an additional 1,000+ pounds of perishable proteins and produce to be distributed weekly.
5. **Food Bank of Iowa – Des Moines** - \$10,000 for additional cold storage at school pantries, focus is SE Iowa schools
 - Will provide mini grants to existing school partners and new school partners in southeast Iowa
 - Goal is to add 10 to 20 new school based food pantries.
 - Goal to increase people served by 25% and amount of food distributed by 50%
6. **CRV Food Pantry – Cedar Rapids** – \$1,330 for a refrigerator
 - Food pantry serves low income, seniors and disabled persons
 - Currently serves approximately 650 pounds per month to 65 residents
 - New cold storage will allow accepting perishable food items to offer a balanced, nutritious selection for residents
7. **Dubuque Food Pantry - Dubuque** - \$10,000 for a walk-in cooler
 - Expanded cold storage will allow accepting additional fruits and vegetables and other food items requiring cold storage
 - Allows for additional types food items offered and extends availability throughout the month
 - Serves 1,000 personas and 400 families monthly
8. **Keosauqua Community Food Bank- Keosauqua** - \$7,000 for a fridge, freezer, shelving
 - Cold storage units will improve energy efficiency while extending shelf life of perishable food items and reducing spoilage. Shelving will keep food items off the floor.
 - Serves more than 200 individuals monthly and have added a twice per month weekend food distribution program for qualifying school children
9. **Catherine McAuley Center - Cedar Rapids** - \$10,000 for a display fridge and freezer where customers can select their items, shelving and commercial fridge for back storage area
 - During FY2020, experienced a 49% increase in people served/64% increase in households served. Food Pantry was accessed nearly 2,700 times in FY2020.
 - Expanded cold storage will allow accepting and distributing additional fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and eggs.
 - Glass front fridge and freezer allows customers to view items and for staff to take inventories without having to repeatedly open the door.
10. **Southeast Linn Community Center- Lisbon**- \$3,000 for a commercial refrigerator
 - Additional cold storage needed to accept donation offers currently turned down.
 - Community garden grown produce for the pantry has increased anticipating over 1,000 pounds of fresh produce needing storage this year.
 - 23% increase in pantry usage in the first month after COVID arrived
 - Nearly 10% of the community population accesses the food pantry
11. **Presbyterian Pantry at Westminster – Waterloo** - \$3,038 for shelving units, 2 freezers and 1 fridge
 - Local Food Bank asked grantee to open a new neighborhood pantry to provide greater access to individuals and families seeking healthy food items.
 - Outreach on-going to various food donation sources including farmers market, grocery stores, small dairy, etc.
 - USDA meat is offered frozen and freezer space to accept for distribution is needed.

12. **La Luz Hispana - Hampton** - \$5,398.60 – for a freezer and fridge
 - Originally started as a meal site for English as a second language students and to youth attending their afterschool and summer programming, partnering with Food Bank of Iowa.
 - Accelerated opening a food pantry with the onset of COVID.
 - Specializing in food items for the large Hispanic population
 - Cold storage needed to accept dairy, eggs, and produced that is being offered.
13. **Hawkeye Community College Waterloo** - \$4,474.56 for a freezer, fridge and shelving
 - Adding cold storage will provide students access to foods not currently available at the pantry (dairy, eggs, fruits, vegetables, etc.)
 - Since COVID – use of the pantry has increased, pantry expansion is expected to impact up to 900 person annually
14. **St. Vincent de Paul – Dubuque** - \$5,000 for 2 refrigerator merchandisers
 - Experienced a 30% increase in the number of people served on a monthly basis (650 people) since March 2020.
 - Refrigerators will be used to improve efficiencies and provide perishable food items throughout the month
15. **St. Mark’s United Methodist – Cedar Rapids** - \$4,408 for a two-door reach-in freezer
 - 34% of customers are African refugees (461 household members) requiring food items that are not processed food and no pork. Other customers (513 household members) prefer processed “heat and eat” items.
 - Due to limited cold storage space, food item orders can only be made 3 days in advance. Additional storage space will provide well-balanced food items for their diverse customers
16. **Church of God - Marion** - \$10,000 for two large refrigerators
 - Weekly serving 144 households/448 persons
 - Turn down food requiring cold storage and lose food to spoilage
 - Will allow them to replace smaller, inefficient refrigerators that are scattered throughout the church and increase overall capacity
17. **Olivet Neighborhood Mission- Cedar Rapids** - \$4,000 for a freezer merchandiser
 - Serve 3,100 unduplicated households monthly
 - Operate both a food pantry where staples are available to households qualifying for TEFAP assistance and a kitchen pantry for others in need of food assistance
 - Freezer will allow greater storage and additional food types to be rescued and distributed
18. **Opportunity Living - Lake City** - \$10,000 for a walk-in cooler
 - Facility serves 9 residential homes in a 3 county area for clients with disabilities
 - Additional food items available will allow the cooks in the residential settings to better plan meals and perishables will stay fresher longer
 - Cold storage limitations impact the types of foods used in preparing client meals and snacks.
19. **Olin Food Pantry - Olin**- \$2,000 for a refrigerator and freezer
 - Serve approximately 100 people per month
 - Replacing current cold storage with energy efficient units will improve operational efficiencies and allow for additional perishable food items to be offered
20. **Eat Greater Des Moines - Des Moines**- \$10,000 for freezers, refrigerators and shelving
 - Mission is to unite the community by providing quality food access for all by building connections to strengthen the area’s food system.
 - Through our food rescue work, one of the main challenges for recipient partners has been access to equipment, like refrigerators and freezers, to store food safely for their clients.
 - Conducted a survey on needs for individual food bank partners and will coordinate cold storage funding with these partners to meet their cold storage needs.

21. **Hunger Free Dallas County - Perry-** \$10,000 for freezers, refrigerators and shelving
 - Mission is to unite the community by providing quality food access for all by building connections to strengthen the area's food system.
 - Through our food rescue work, one of the main challenges for recipient partners has been access to equipment, like refrigerators and freezers, to store food safely for their clients.
 - Conducted a survey on needs for individual food provider partners and will coordinate cold storage funding with these partners to meet their cold storage needs.
22. **Area Substance Abuse Council - Cedar Rapids-** \$10,000 refrigerators
 - Refrigerators will be placed at three residential treatment centers
 - Increased cold storage will increase/improve the ability to order additional produce to have enough available between placing food orders
 - Will begin partnering directly with local meat producers to obtain additional meat for distribution
23. **Churches of Marion – Marion –** \$4,000 for two refrigerators and one freezer
 - Cold storage will increase donation acceptance and distribution of additional produce, milk, fruits, vegetables, etc. to satisfy demand.
 - In the last twelve months, have averaged 81 families and 310 individuals per week.
24. **Salvation Army of Ames and Story County – Ames -** \$5,192 for a refrigerator and freezer
 - First six months of FY20 served 11,010 duplicated individuals / 3,463 households
 - Over 140,000 pounds of food has been received and purchased for distribution to food distribution partners in Story County.
 - Adequate cold storage is needed to store perishables for longer periods to ensure healthy food items are available throughout the month.
25. **Open Hands Pantry, North Fayette Valley Ministers Assoc. – West Union -** \$5,326 for a refrigerator and chest freezer
 - In March 2020, the number of households served increased to 160 for the month. Over the next three months the number of households served continues to increase
 - Food is obtained through the Northeast Iowa Food Bank but with additional cold storage will be able to obtain food from several local outlets, dairies and Luther College Farms.
26. **A-C Food Pantry – Casey -** \$6,000 for a refrigerator, freezer and shelving
 - Establishing a satellite pantry in the town of Adair to assist individuals obtain food without ready access to transportation to the existing pantry in the City of Casey.
 - Storage needs are critical to accepting for distribution a variety of nutritious food items.
27. **Greene County Christian Action Resource Center – Jefferson -** \$3,500 for a commercial freezer
 - Commercial freezer will allow consolidation of frozen food items currently stored in numerous locations. This will improve access to food items, energy efficiency and reliability.
 - Currently serve 100 families per month and are experiencing a consistent weekly increase in the number of people served
28. **Bellevue Bread Basket – Bellevue –** \$1,100 for one upright freezer
 - Food pantry currently serving 35+ families a month
 - A freezer will allow for additional quantity and types of food items available
29. **Faith Temple United Pentecostal Church – Dubuque -** \$8,471 for a walk-in freezer
 - Smaller food pantry serving 30+ people monthly
 - Lack of cold storage reduces the amount of food available to provide individuals and families in total and per visit to the pantry
 - Shelving needs are being paid by the applicant.

30. **New Opportunities Inc. – Carroll** - \$7,756 for five refrigerators and shelving
- Operates five pantries (Audubon, Calhoun Carroll, Guthrie and Sac Counties). A refrigerator will be provided to each County Food Pantry. Sac County Food Pantry will also receive shelving, providing the space needed to store and easily access dry goods and canned goods.
 - In the first six (6) months of 2020 have served 1,158 households.
 - The additional cold storage will allow for increased access to food donations, including obtaining food from local sources and reduce the chance of spoilage
31. **Domestic Violence Intervention Program – Iowa City** - \$8,176.92 for a commercial refrigerator and freezer
- Serves as a primary home shelter for victims/survivors of violent partners
 - In addition, produce is currently stored at room temperature and subject to spoiling that cold storage would prevent
 - Shelter has received a 28% increase in calls for assistance since March 2020
32. **NE Iowa Community Action Corp - Decorah** - \$5,845 for a commercial refrigerator and shelving
- Operate food pantries in four counties (Allamakee, Bremer, Chickasaw and Winneshiek Counties)
 - Refrigerators will be placed at food pantries in Bremer and Winneshiek Counties.
 - Refrigerators will allow the food pantries to accept available milk, eggs and fresh produce from the local Food Bank able to provide more nutritionally balanced food items.
 - Shelving will be placed at each food pantry site, providing better inventory control and access to food items.
33. **Decorah Community Food Pantry – Decorah** - \$8,300 for two additional freezers
- Current capacity is insufficient to store enough locally sourced meat to last throughout the month
 - Operationally additional cold storage will assist efficient preparation of food distribution packages.
 - Goals is to increase the number of clients served by 5%. Currently serve an average of 443 clients over the last 6 months.
34. **IC Compassion – Iowa City** - \$7,360 for an upright freezer and a double commercial refrigerator
- Applicant primarily serves immigrant families with a variety of services (learning English, workshops, job assistance, etc.
 - Need is to expand the food pantry to adequately serve clients and others persons in seeking food assistance with balanced, nutritious food items.
 - Witnessed a substantial increase in the number of clients visiting the food pantry since the onset of COVID 19
 - Goal is for a 100% increase in the amount of perishable food items accepted and distributed
35. **The Ruth Project – Iowa Falls** - \$1,000 for a freezer
- Serve 100 to 140 families per month
 - With adequate cold storage will be able to obtain locally sourced meat donations on a monthly basis of 500 pounds
 - Capacity limits forces results in the pantry running out of meat by the 3rd week of the monthly cycle
 - Goal is to provide 30 additional families with meat items over a full month