



Why Does DMARC Need to Move?

DMARC's mission is working together to meet basic human needs for the greater Des Moines community.

Today, this mission is focused on meeting the needs of people living with food insecurity. Established in 1976 and celebrating its 45th anniversary this year, the DMARC Food Pantry Network is the largest food pantry network in the state of Iowa. It is comprised of 14 permanently placed food pantries, two mobile food pantries that serve 31 locations throughout Polk County and one "Refuel Station," a mobile food pantry focused on assisting children in partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa. DMARC provides **at no cost** both the food and the logistics necessary to support food pantry network operations at a scale that is equivalent to feeding the entire city of Clive for one year.

Since its inception, the DMARC Food Pantry Network has seen a steady increase in use. In fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008), individuals visited DMARC food pantries 104,280 times. **In fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020), individuals visited DMARC food pantries 214,055 times, an increase of 105%!** In calendar year 2020, the DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted a record 58,707 unique individuals. It is also important to note that prior to the pandemic, DMARC was experiencing monthly double-digit increases in food pantry usage when compared to the same months of the previous year.

To meet this ongoing and increased need, DMARC has maximized its available storage, both at its current headquarters, located at 1435 Mulberry Street in Des Moines, and an additional donated warehouse, located at 1300 Scott Street in Des Moines. This additional space is located in a City of Des Moines facility and has allowed DMARC to purchase larger quantities of food with deeper discounts, supporting its efforts to meet the ever-growing need. Unfortunately, DMARC is now at capacity and the current spaces available are simply inadequate to meet the pace of need.

The only answer is to find a new facility for DMARC. *And one has been found - the former Iowa Medicaid Enterprise building at 100 Army Post Road in Des Moines, a perfect fit for DMARC's current and future operations.*

There are several benefits to moving to a larger facility:

It will maximize efficiencies by consolidating warehouse operations.

Today, DMARC has two warehouses – one at its main location and a second warehouse on Scott Street. Both are necessary to store all of the food being distributed across the Network; but the Scott street location is critical for DMARC ability to maximize its buying power as it allows for the bulk purchases. It also allows DMARC the ability to accept large donations. But sadly, even with this space, today there are times when DMARC must turn away some donations which could both save money and feed more people who need help. Having two spaces, however, has drawbacks. Logistically, managing distribution from two buildings is both challenging and inefficient. But most concerning is that today even with this extra space neither facility has adequate storage to store the food needed to meet the growing need. DMARC's new facility will have this space, including space for adequate cooler and freezer storage which is critical to our ability to provide perishable, frozen and fresh produce, an essential element of providing healthier food options for those DMARC assists.

It will provide more opportunities to host volunteers, groups and organizations.

Plans for the new facility will provide space to host volunteers, groups and organizations. This is important as it will provide space for DMARC volunteers to not only process food more efficiently, but it also provides space to explain the importance of DMARC's role within the emergency food system and how important the contributions of food and funds are. Space will also be available for community outreach, allowing space for educational experiences such as hunger simulations and data visualization dashboard presentations about the usage of the food pantry network. This supports DMARC's efforts to dispel common misconceptions about those who face food insecurity, supporting DMARC advocacy efforts.

It will provide for growth and additional partnerships.

Plans for the new facility not only include office space for the entire DMARC staff, but also a community meeting space for DMARC's partners and other groups and organizations. There will be open space on site for another organization or business to lease, one that could benefit from a co-location with DMARC. This also provides DMARC space for future potential expansion.

It will provide more resources to those in need.

DMARC plans to operate a permanent food pantry on location. This will assist people already utilizing DMARC's services through current mobile pantry sites as well as making services accessible to others, as these mobile pantry sites can be redirected to new locations, assisting others in need.

What's the status of the campaign?

DMARC's capital campaign feasibility study was completed this past fall (2020) with overwhelmingly positive results. DMARC has now launched the quiet phase of its capital campaign and is in the process of raising funds for the new facility and beginning the next chapter for DMARC. Your help – as a volunteer or contributor - will help DMARC continue to serve as a safety net for people in the greater Des Moines community experiencing food insecurity, in an efficient and respectful manner.

DMARC New Site and Conceptual Image

At present, DMARC has a purchase agreement and its current building is for sale. DMARC's new location will need to be remodeled with roughly half the space reserved for warehouse-style storage and distribution operations.



DMARC welcomes your help!

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