



**County Of Dane**  
Office Of The County Executive

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## **Dane County, Badger Prairie Needs Network Highlight Impact of Food Distribution Partnership as 2020 Comes to a Close**

*Over 1 Million Pounds of Food Distributed in 2020, More Than 500% Increase in New Households as Pandemic Carries into 2021*

As 2020 comes to a close, Dane County and Badger Prairie Needs Network (BPNN) are highlighting the impact their food distribution partnership has had in helping those facing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic. BPNN pivoted to curbside service in just days back in March, when COVID-19 was first declared as a national emergency. The organization dropped service area boundaries in order to help all food-insecure households in Dane County and doubled the visits allowed, resulting in a 500% increase in new households and assistance to more than 24,600 individuals this year.

In 2019, BPNN distributed over 755,000 pounds of food and helped feed an average of 1,200 individuals each month—translating to more than 630,000 meals and cumulatively over 14,200 individuals served. In 2020, this number climbed to 24,600 individuals and over 1 million pounds of food distributed.

“Badger Prairie Needs Network has gone above and beyond to support the Dane County community and help those struggling to put food on the table during this trying time,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “A huge thank you goes out to Marcia Kasieta and BPNN’s staff and volunteers for their commitment to serve those in need. Their efforts and investments have strengthened our emergency food distribution system during the pandemic.”

Last month, County Executive Joe Parisi joined BPNN to announce the opening of its expanded cold storage unit to help meet COVID-19 emergency food needs. The \$765,000 expansion at BPNN included 1,000 square feet of additional cold storage, a loading dock for contact-free receiving from food banks, and an outdoor canopy to protect volunteers and guests from harsh winter weather and ensure continuity of emergency food distribution operations. The entire project was in direct response to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dane County put \$320,887 toward BPNN’s cold storage unit expansion, which is now helping BPNN serve as both a short- and long-term perishable food storage hub—critical for the region’s food pantry system. The expansion is bolstering food delivery and food storage capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BPNN first moved to Verona in 2015, when Dane County leased the former Badger Prairie Health Center Administration building to the organization for its work to support families in the Verona area. County Executive Parisi included \$160,000 in his 2019 budget to help fund a facility expansion intended to improve the physical environment and allow BPNN to continue to grow.

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