



May 9, 2025

I am Rick Gaupo, President of Marion Polk Food Share, and it has been such an honor to serve the community in this capacity for over 13 years.

Thank you to Senators Patterson, Thatcher, and Weber, and Representatives Mannix, Scharf, Andersen, Lewis, and Diehl for being chief sponsors of this project.

Our Request –

We're here to request \$6 million to leverage a \$27-million-dollar project for a new food bank warehouse and Meals on Wheels kitchen.

Need and Importance –

The need is high, with more pantry visits than ever before. In 2020, we were averaging 10,000 unique pantry visits per month. In the first quarter of 2025, we were averaging 17-to-18,000 unique visits per month to the pantries in our two-county area.

The Food Share's Meals on Wheels program is currently serving about 1,000 seniors per day. Food banking is more important than ever as we are the safety net for housing, nutrition, senior health, and disaster preparedness.

Current Building → New Building –

We moved into our current building in 2005 – at that time, we were delivering around 4 million pounds of food, most of which was shelf-stable. We had not yet taken on the Meals on Wheels program.



Now we are delivering double that amount – more than 9 million pounds per year and over 55% of it moves through our cold storage.

This new facility will allow us to double our capacity for delivering food to the community.

Meals on Wheels has grown since the Food Share took on the program 10+ years ago. Now the program is serving about 1,000 meals per day, and this number will only continue to grow over time.

We now have to work around the limitations of our current building, making it more challenging to serve our community.

We have an opportunity, with your support, to purchase a larger building which will allow us to increase efficiency, increase donor and volunteer engagement, and serve the community for the next 30+ years.

Conclusion –

The state's \$6 million is leveraging a \$27-million-dollar project. This is only possible with your support. With your help, the Food Share can move to our forever home where we can continue serving families, children, and seniors in our local communities, making an impact for generations to come.