

# Dane County Exec. Parisi: To create \$2 million emergency grant program to increase food supplies for local pantries

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi announced the county is creating a brand new emergency grant program to try and help local food pantries that are seeing record demand given recent spikes in grocery prices. Some local pantries have been running short on food in recent weeks and are now regularly reporting long lines of people looking for help feeding their families.

“The high cost of food is impacting more people in our community than ever before,” County Executive Joe Parisi said. “A trip to the grocery store is not what it used to be and the result of that is more families in need of emergency food supplies, including the elderly and people of color in our community. Local food pantries are working around the clock to meet this new demand but they need more help,” Parisi added.

This new emergency food assistance program will involve two main expenditures. The first is a \$2 million dollar grant program for local non-profit food pantries. To be eligible, an organization must be a charitable, tax exempt organization with a 501(c) (3) non-profit designation focused on alleviating food insecurity. The second part of the new initiative is up to \$98,500 to help the Badger Prairie Needs Network (BPNN) purchase a truck to transport surplus food from places like Epic and the new Costco store in Verona.

“Supply chain and logistic impediments can make or break emergency food relief organizations like BPNN,” said Tracy Burton, BPNN Food Pantry Director. “The

addition of a box truck to safely transport pallets of donated food from retail and corporate partners to our Verona facility will make all the difference in our ability to support thousands of local families struggling with food insecurity. Dane County's investment in this vehicle will pay dividends for years to come."

Since March of 2020, the Dane County community has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has caused financial stress to many individuals and households and has caused economic dislocation due to losses of employment. More recently, inflationary pressures in the general economy and supply chain changes have caused increased food insecurity in Dane County. Increases in the price of gasoline, food, and rent have caused economic stress in many households. This stress has dramatically increased demand at local food pantries. These economic forces have also increased the cost for local pantries to secure food to meet the demand.

Dane County's emergency food supply grant program will be funded with a portion of its American Rescue Plan allocation. A resolution establishing this \$2 million grant program will be introduced at tonight's Dane County Board meeting. It is expected to be approved in the coming weeks.