

# OPENING DOORS TO FOOD SECURITY

A capital campaign to support the  
Keystone Community Food Center



# Together, we can open doors to ensure everyone has food on their tables.

**WITH YOUR SUPPORT,** Keystone will open an urgently needed Community Food Center in St. Paul. This new center will help more neighbors throughout Ramsey County access food, support and connection.

## A Trusted Community Resource

Founded in 1939, Keystone Community Services is a large multi-service nonprofit that operates extensive youth, basic needs and senior programs in St. Paul. For over 80 years, we have been embedded in neighborhoods across Ramsey County, helping low-income people striving for stability, teens seeking workforce opportunities, youth pursuing school success and seniors desiring independence, dignity, and connection. In 2022, Keystone will assist more than 40,000 people. Of our participants, approximately 74% identify as people of color and 97% qualify as low-income.



## History of Nourishing Neighbors

Keystone first began providing food shelf services in 1975 and is one of the longest-running food shelf providers serving the area. Our first food shelf was in the lower level of the Merriam Park Community Center, and 45 households were supported during that first year of operation. In 1982, 40 years ago, Keystone supported 621 households with food shelf services.

**Today, Keystone supports over 150 households each day** with food shelf services. Over the last 45 years, faith communities, local businesses and neighbors have been key partners to ensure everyone in our community has access to food support!

## Hunger in our Community Today

Hunger is an unfortunate reality for many of our neighbors. High housing costs, unexpected car repairs, employment loss or under-employment, unforeseen illness and medical bills and rising costs that outpace household income all stress people's ability to afford quality food. When someone's household income and expenses do not align, they lack consistent access to affordable, healthy food and carry the burdens of both hunger and worry.

With a reliable source of food, individuals and families remain stable and can move forward with their goals. Having enough food ensures that children can learn, adults can be productive at home and work and older adults have the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.



"I am so grateful for Keystone and the wonderful variety of foods I've received. It's really been something that's saved my life. I have not gone hungry because of Keystone."

– FOOD SHELF PARTICIPANT

Approximately **37% of Minnesotans** report some level of food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

**20% of Ramsey County children** were estimated to be food insecure in 2020, which is dramatically higher than the statewide rate.<sup>2</sup>

Keystone food shelf participants spend an average of **57% of their household income on housing**.<sup>3</sup>

Ramsey County has **higher rates of food insecurity** than the Minnesota state average, and this gap widened during the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

**Adults 55 and older** are the second-highest group after children who experience hunger and seniors are the fastest-growing age group of Ramsey County residents.<sup>5</sup>

## Keystone's Response to Community Need

Free food support is a lifeline for low-income people in our community, especially during tough times. Keystone serves many of the populations most impacted by hunger in Minnesota – those who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), children, seniors and individuals without stable housing.

The stress of the pandemic and inflation have led to more residents in need and many first-time food shelf visitors. From July 2021 to July 2022, we saw a 232% increase in the total number of people accessing Keystone's food shelf services, with participant numbers increasing from 2,631 to 8,730 in one month!

We met this growing need with innovation, creating large pop-up food distribution events, adding more Foodmobile services and launching a doorstep delivery program. Our new services allow us to reach more individuals with common barriers to food access, including limited transportation, mobility challenges and disabilities.

1. Wilder Foundation Food Insecurity Report (July 2021)
2. Feeding America Map the Meal Gap Dataset
3. Keystone Service Demographic Data
4. Ramsey County Food Insecurity Dataset
5. Ramsey County Food Insecurity Dataset





# From Hunger to Hope

## Planning for a New Community Food Center

Despite years of creativity and resourcefulness in food distribution, our current spaces limit expansion, innovation and distribution of resources.

Our plan for a new Community Food Center was born during a community engagement process in 2019 that included input from over 700 community members. Our key takeaway: Ramsey County needs more food resources, and Keystone should expand to provide these resources. That community input informed Keystone's 2020—24 Strategic Plan, and we got to work.

Knowing we needed more space to store and distribute food, we began searching for a site. Our community urged us to prioritize these elements – location in our core service area, easy access by public transit, more space for food and community connection as well as room to grow.



We began our search for an affordable location that would give us space to design a building that fits our vision of a welcoming place for all. In spring 2020, we were notified that a 20,000 square foot location on University Avenue was available.

We spent the next six months assessing the building with key project partners to ensure the location would accommodate our vision. With early lead gifts from Allianz Life, the Hardenbergh Foundation and the Old National Bank Foundation, we purchased the buildings located at 1790 and 1800 University Avenue West in St. Paul in December 2020. Hundreds of foundations, companies, organizations and community members made early investments to make this center possible.

**With the support of our community, Keystone is committed to revitalizing these buildings and creating a gathering space that will be a lasting investment in St. Paul.**



“Keystone is not afraid to offer solutions, even when they may be new and different. They find ways to do nearly the impossible when it comes to delivering food and ensuring folks in crisis get the resources they need.”

**- COMMUNITY LEADER**

## What Keystone's New Community Food Center Will Make Possible

The Community Food Center is a crucial capacity-building strategy for Keystone as we continue to grapple with unprecedented levels of community need for food shelf resources. This new building will allow Keystone to double the amount of food available for low-income households in Ramsey County and will offer flexibility to evolve and expand as needs in our community continue to grow and change. This new site will:

- **Offer an expanded, efficient and responsive shopping space** to provide more fresh foods, culturally specific items and personal care items.
- **Contain consultation spaces** for our staff to help even more neighbors apply for financial assistance, enroll in public programs such as SNAP and refer to other supportive resources.
- **Grow and deepen partnerships with our food bank providers** like Second Harvest, The Food Group and other community-based organizations.
- **Expand capacity for mobile distributions.** The Community Food Center gives Keystone the efficiency of a central food shelf and warehouse to expand our neighborhood-based food access programs throughout Ramsey County. A large garage provides space for an expanded Keystone Foodmobile fleet to go to more community spaces, like low-income housing communities, libraries and health clinics. The center will also house coordination logistics for neighborhood-based community food distributions and home delivery of food shelf resources to seniors.
- **Improve our ability to leverage volunteers.** The Community Food Center greatly expands the space available to accommodate large groups of up to 30 volunteers. Corporate and community groups are ready and willing to offer their valuable time and energy to manage our expanded inventory.
- **Vastly expand warehouse space** so that Keystone can capture additional free or low-cost food resources, such as government commodities and food rescue items, to nourish our community.
- **Welcome everyone.** Each area within the Community Food Center is designed to reflect our community – bright, welcoming and vibrant. The Center includes a community room where Keystone will host programs and invite partners to share their services.



"Keystone is a big safety net. People come here and are treated with integrity and respect. There's not judgment."

– VOLUNTEER

**The Community Food Center will provide a central Keystone hub** for community engagement where neighbors can help neighbors and everyone is welcome!



# Vision for Keystone Co

## GARAGE

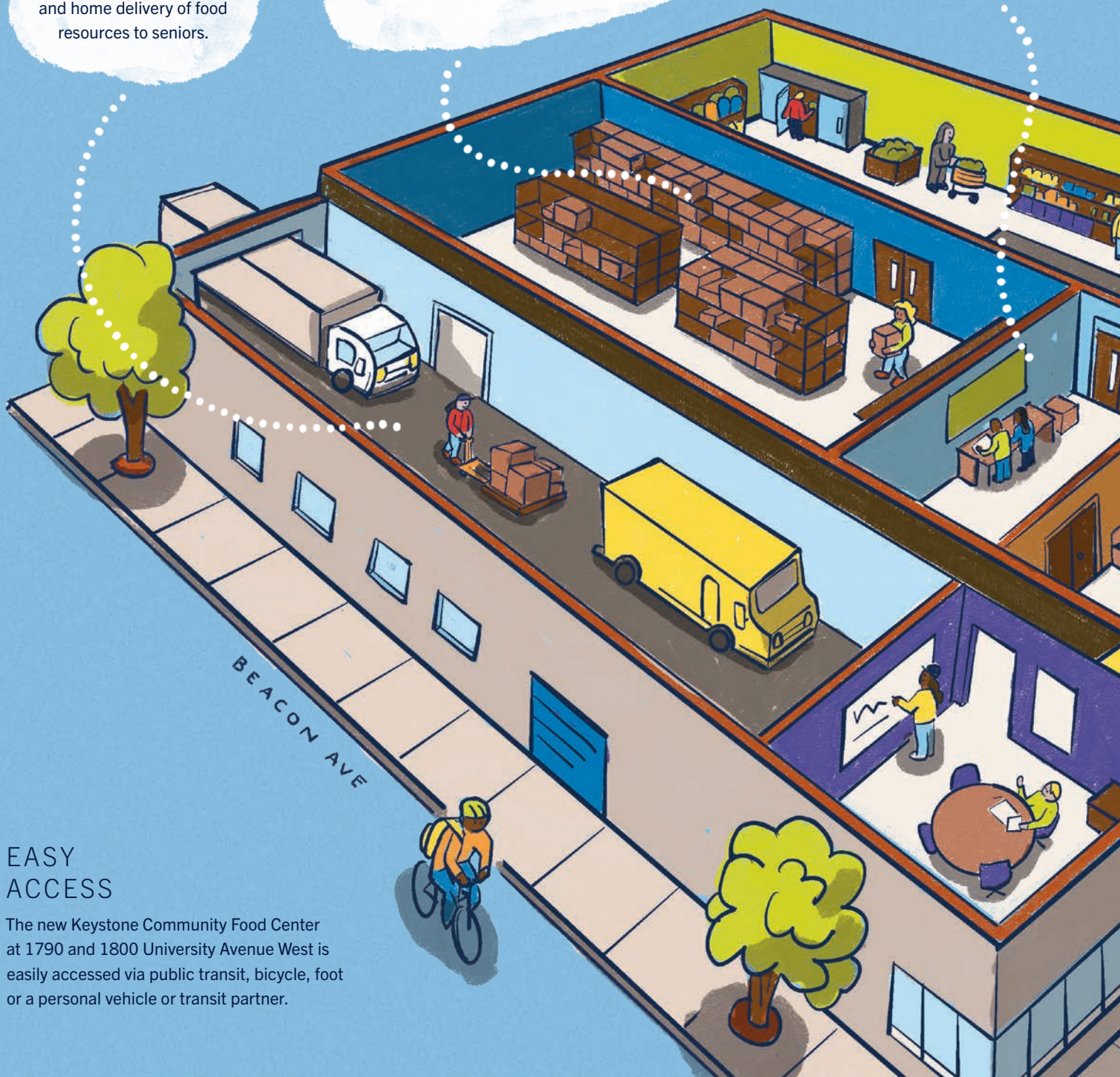
The three-bay garage will allow us to expand Keystone's Foodmobile fleet and support logistics for neighborhood-based community food distributions and home delivery of food resources to seniors.

## WAREHOUSE

The warehouse provides greater capacity and flexibility to capture and distribute food resources. Additional refrigerator and freezer spaces, a loading dock (which we currently lack) and more square footage will increase the volume of food (especially of culturally specific food) and household items we can receive and distribute from 2.3 to 4.0 million pounds per year.

## VOLUNTEER SPACE

The Community Food Center expands capacity to engage volunteers, providing additional space to offer hands-on, meaningful volunteer opportunities to attract and engage our volunteers who keep Keystone running!



## EASY ACCESS

The new Keystone Community Food Center at 1790 and 1800 University Avenue West is easily accessed via public transit, bicycle, foot or a personal vehicle or transit partner.

# Community Food Center

## Opening Doors to Food Security

### FOOD MARKET

The Community Food Center features a greatly expanded shopping area (triple the size of our current combined shopping spaces) and allows participants to have an efficient, responsive and dignified shopping experience.

Keystone's new center will expand our commitment to working with our community to preserve and strengthen what is valued by and valuable to the neighborhood. Keystone's reputation and 80+ years of history are focused on developing and sustaining relationships and programs that matter to neighbors and community partners. With your generosity, we will open doors and provide food security for neighbors for years to come.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT SUITE

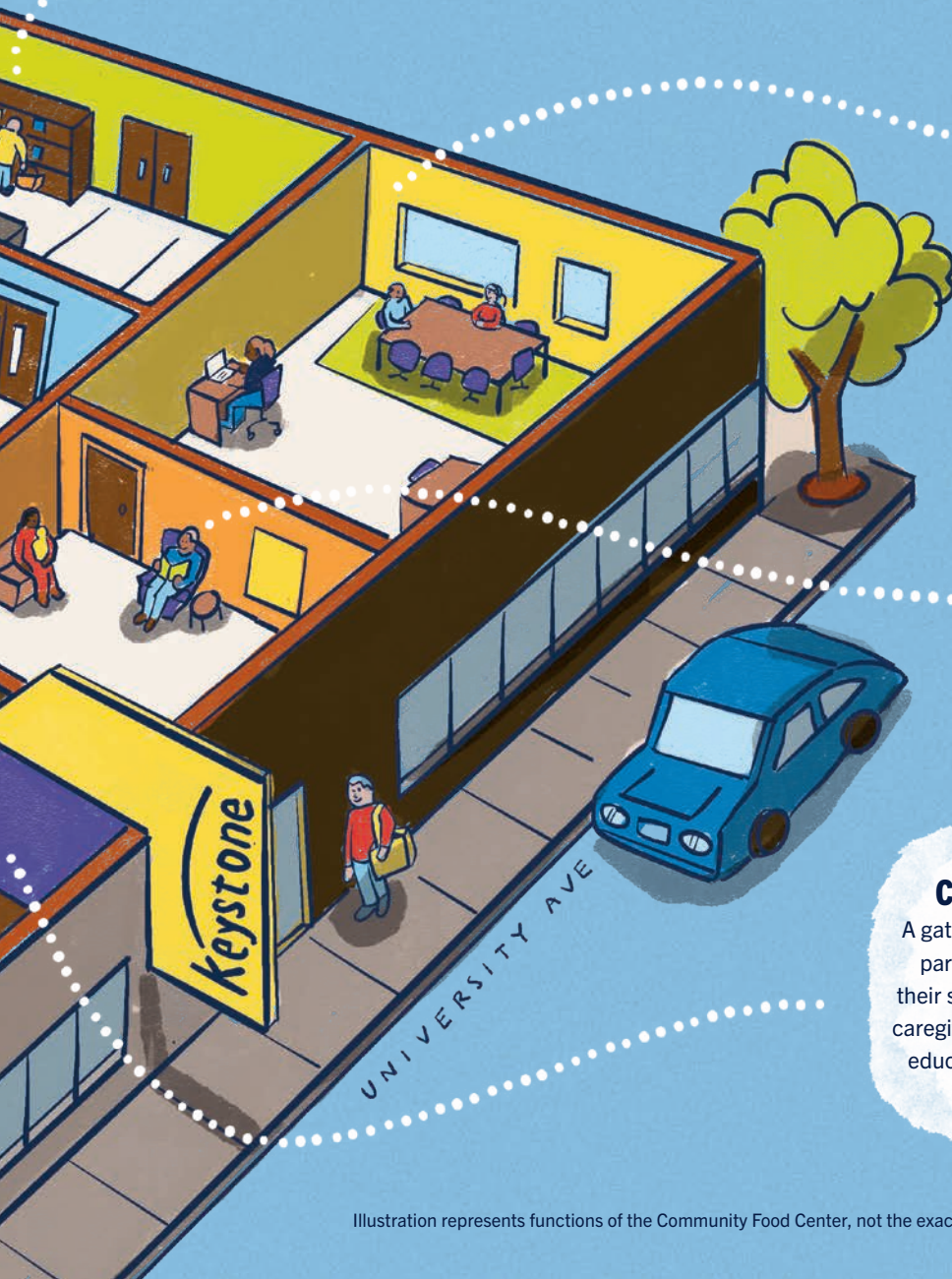
This central administrative headquarters will allow all basic needs program staff to collaborate and innovate to expand support for neighbors in need.

### LOBBY

The lobby is the welcoming heart of the Community Food Center and will be a central hub where neighbors can meet and help neighbors.

### COMMUNITY ROOM

A gathering space where community partners will have space to share their services, such as tax assistance, caregiver support groups and financial education programs for community members at the center.





**MISSION**

The mission of Keystone Community Services is to strengthen the capacity of individuals and families to improve their quality of life.

**VALUES**

Our core values – equity, advocacy, professionalism, responsibility, innovation and support – are embedded in all areas of Keystone to ensure our services in our community are effective and sustainable.

**CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS**

**Debbie and Tom Lentsch**

CFO & CEO, Unified Screening & Crushing

**Mark Traynor**

Keystone Board of Directors Member

**Walter White**

Retired CEO, Allianz Life Insurance Company

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Patrice Bailey**

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

**Charlene Bradley**

Target Corporation

**Dave Burns**

Attorney at Law

**Lynn Flagstad**

U.S. Bank

**Diane Gerth**

Attorney at Law

**Tiffany Kong**

Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

**Paul McKim**

Best Buy

**Julie Novak**

BankCherokee

**Steve Thiel**

Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America

**Trupti Naik Storlie**

State of Minnesota Management and Budget

**Mark Traynor**

Teacher, St. Paul Public Schools

**Bianca Rhodes**

St. Paul Neighborhood Network

**Darren Wolfson**

Blue Dog Studio

**CAMPAIGN SUPPORT TEAM**