

# Capital Area Food Bank to double size of warehouse

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Doubling the size of the **Capital Area Food Bank** means doubling the amount of food that reaches the 633,000 people - 200,000 of whom are children - in the area who are at risk of suffering from hunger.

The Capital Area Food Bank will start construction this summer on its 125,000-square-foot warehouse on 8 acres on Sixth Street NE, which includes a renovation of 25,000 square feet of office and training space.

That's more than twice the size of their current 48,000-square-foot facility, half a mile away at 645 Taylor St. NE.

Food distribution from that locale has plateaued to 20 million pounds a year due to a lack of warehouse space -- even though demand has been rising since 2000. When the new food bank opens next year, it will be able to distribute double that.

The new facility, which will feature solar panels and other energy-efficient features, will have additional refrigeration space, a commercial kitchen for hot meal prep and increased trucking space to transport perishable food more quickly.

Philanthropists have so far raised \$28.7 million of the \$36 million goal needed to pay for the property and development costs.

The most recent additions to the effort were \$1 million in solar panels by **BP Solar** and J.W. Marriott Jr.'s recent pledge, bringing his total given to \$3 million. With help from campaign chairs Donald Graham, Bill Marriott, Abe Pollin and Bennett Zier, the nonprofit's "'Til No One is Hungry" campaign has experienced accelerated support from civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders.

The food bank currently serves over 383,000 people a year through more than 700 member agencies, which is a 39 percent increase since 2001.

Partner agencies such as Bread for the City in D.C. rely on 70 percent of the food they distribute coming from the Capital Area Food Bank. Each month they serve 5,000 households -- approximately 15,000 people -- at their two centers in Northwest and Southeast.

"We are doing all we can -- but I think we're seeing the tip of the iceberg," said George Jones, executive director of Bread for the City. "I'm pretty confident that if we could accommodate them, we'd see another 1,000 people a month at each of our two centers. The need is definitely there."

Since their founding in 1980, the Capital Area Food Bank has distributed more than \$500 million of food and fresh produce.