

## Open Arms of Minnesota – Opening our Arms Wider to Nourish our Neighbors: A Capital and Capacity Building Campaign



### Opening Our Arms Wider to Nourish Our Neighbors.

**Open Arms of Minnesota (OAM)** is the *only* nonprofit organization in the state of Minnesota preparing and delivering over a million **free, medically tailored meals** every year to a community of clients whose lives are drastically changed by critical health conditions. Although there are other organizations that provide food, **there is no other organization that combines the services of Open Arms of Minnesota to grow, prepare and deliver free, made-from-scratch meals, medically tailored for someone facing a life-threatening illness, accompanied by individualized nutrition education from a registered dietitian.** Clients are referred to Open Arms by a wide network of healthcare partners including Health Partners, M Health Fairview, Allina, Hennepin Healthcare, the Minneapolis VA Health system, Sanford and Mayo.

There is no shortage of need for Open Arms' services. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, over 920,000 Minnesotans are currently living with life-threatening illnesses including cancer, HIV/AIDS, COPD, congestive heart failure, end-stage renal disease, ALS, and MS. More than 80% of these individuals also live with food insecurity, multiple illnesses, and a lack of stable income or housing, with thousands more caregivers and dependent children impacted by their loved one's diagnosis. Since 2010, weekly deliveries to Open Arms' clients have increased by 400 percent. Over the past five years, healthcare referrals to Open Arms have increased by more than 100%. COVID-19 magnified the need for Open Arms services. The public health crisis drove (OAM) client numbers to levels we have never seen. In 2020, for the first time, we expanded beyond the Twin Cities and surrounding suburbs and began shipping meals to clients in rural and out-state Minnesota to help address the growing requests for our services.

Open Arms has raised \$6.8 million in the first phase of a **capital and capacity building campaign** to meet the following issues: a 40% increase in demand for services, lack of workspace or parking for volunteers and staff, outdated and overused equipment and physical space, lack of pantry, dry or cold storage space available. We are requesting \$500K to close our campaign and complete needed renovations and upgrades, which are detailed below.

#### **The major goals of the capital and capacity building campaign continue to be:**

- ***Expand capacity of current facility and kitchen: Critical updates and improvements to Minneapolis kitchen.***
- ***Strengthen Client Services: Invest in shipping meals statewide, upgrade client tracking system to allow for more personalization of menu choices and improved tracking of health outcomes.***
- ***Expand our east metro services: build a new kitchen in St. Paul increasing meal capacity by 50% — from 2,000 to 3,000 meals/daily— enabling us to better serve/onboard new clients in Ramsey County and further east.***

Although we raised \$6.8M in phase one, we are in need of the additional funds to end the campaign. This increase was due to increased demand by clients and health care partners, as well as historic inflation, staff shortages and supply chain issues experienced throughout Minnesota and beyond.

#### ***Specifically, the \$500K requested in S.F. 1309, will help us to close the final phase of the capital campaign by immediately impacting Open Arms clients in the following ways:***

- Complete dedicated shipping and distribution space in our St. Paul facility to reach clients living in greater Minnesota – with more than 5000 meals per week to the furthest reaches of the state
- Complete construction of freezers that hold more than two times our current capacity=60,000 meals.
- Complete South Minneapolis building upgrades, which has been used by more than 100,000 volunteers and staff over the past 13 years to prepare more than 7 million meals.