



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Building to Serve campaign?

The Building to Serve Campaign will put in place a new Family Opportunity Center, which will be a centralized hub where struggling families can receive a wide range of services. The center will be a place where they can not only get help with food and shelter, but also mental health counseling, education and training, and one-on-one coaching to help them overcome barriers to long-term self-sufficiency. It's a place where families have the opportunity to change their lives.

What services will be offered at the Family Opportunity Center?

We're building the new Family Opportunity Center with room to grow, and with the expectation that services will grow and change over time just as community needs do. At this time we are expecting to open the center with the following on-site services:

- Market style food pantry
- Dedicated areas for drive through food distributions and food fairs
- Case management, mentorship, and coaching
- Emergency rental and housing assistance
- Employment services and career coaching
- Financial education
- Mental health counseling
- Refugee Resettlement services
- Free, hot meals provided by our partner, Martha's Kitchen

The center will have space for other programs like our legal services and parenting education programs. It will also have room to expand during disaster or times of high need.

Why is the new Family Opportunity Center needed?

The simple answer is that we've outgrown our current facilities. The number of people coming to us for help has far outstripped the capacity we have to serve at any of our current locations. We've adjusted by renting additional office space and housing programs at different locations across the city. But that's not convenient for our clients who must travel between these various locations to receive the help they need. And it's not cost effective – or good stewardship of our resources – for the organization in the long-term.

Why is now the time to build the new Family Opportunity Center?

During the pandemic meeting the community's immediate need for food and housing became our primary focus as families suddenly found themselves jobless or with drastically reduced income.

But the pandemic is behind us, and our communities have emerged with long-term impacts that go far beyond the immediate need for food and shelter. Families are struggling to regain the stability they had pre-pandemic as economic, political, and social issues continue to affect their everyday lives.

Relief was necessary, but recovery is now what many families need.

The Building to Serve campaign comes at the perfect time, as we recommit ourselves to helping people achieve long-term stability and self-sufficiency. Emergency and crisis services will always be an important part of the help we provide, but the Family Opportunity Center embodies our true mission and vision of helping people change their lives for the better.

Why are we building the Family Opportunity Center in north Houston?

Over the past couple decades Houston has changed dramatically. Not only have we continued to grow as the nation's 4th largest city, but many of our neighborhoods – especially those inside the 610 loop – have undergone a transformation.

When we opened the Guadalupe Center – our current food pantry – in the 1990s, the East End was one of the neediest communities in the city. We were exactly where we needed to be – close to where our clients lived and worked. But today the area is completely different. Empty lots are now expensive townhouses and trendy restaurants. Developers have driven up prices and pushed out old residents. Now our clients have to travel from all over the city, sometimes spending hours on the bus or in traffic just to get to our food pantry. The location no longer makes sense.

The new location at 9111 Jensen is located in one of Houston's poorest neighborhoods, and is easily accessible to our clients, and located directly on a major bus route. It will have a spacious parking lot and is easily accessible by car, located between three major highways – I-69, I-610, and I-45.

Why build new and not rent more space?

Finding a space to rent that meets all of our needs in one location would be almost impossible. Buildings that suit our needs are rare in the communities that need our services. Also, we need offices and classrooms for our programs and staff, a kitchen and café area, space for a market-style food pantry, and the warehouse space to support it. Even if we could find a space that was large enough and in the right area, we'd have to invest significantly to renovate it to fit our needs. Then we'd still be at the mercy of a lease agreement.

Building new is really the only option that makes sense to ensure the Family Opportunity Center meets the needs of our clients and programs, and is also a financially responsible investment in the future of our organization and those we serve.

How will we pay for the new Family Opportunity Center?

The Family Opportunity Center will cost about \$25 million to purchase the land, prepare it for building, and construct the new facility. To raise the funds, we are initiating a major new

capital campaign called the Building to Serve Capital Campaign. We expect the Capital Campaign will last for 18 – 24 months.

How long will it take to build the new Family Opportunity Center?

The new center will be built in phases, beginning with demolition and preparation of the purchased land. Then we will construct the building itself. And finally, we will complete the center with landscaping, signage, and other finishing touches.

All in all it will take three to four years to complete – depending on the pace of the capital campaign and construction. We anticipate move-in and operations to begin in late 2027 or 2028.

How will we sustain the Family Opportunity Center after the Capital Campaign is over?

Some of the funds raised from the Building to Serve Campaign will be earmarked for an operating and maintenance reserve for the new Family Opportunity Center. These funds will be invested and used in perpetuity to support the ongoing operation and maintenance of the facility itself.

Programs operated at the Family Opportunity Center will be supported through ongoing fundraising activities carried out by our Development Department – just like our programs are today. A combination of individual donations, private and public grants, diocesan support, and special fundraising initiatives will provide the financial sustainability our programs need to operate and help as many people as possible.