

Move Drip Email

What does it take to move a food bank? It's a question that the PSLA community, staff, volunteers, and clients, had to seriously ask ourselves at the beginning of the year.

Towards the end of 2020 the Seattle Labor Temple, PSLA's home for the past 46 years, was sold. I had been told this moment would come since I began my time at PSLA, but after almost three years, I had started to doubt it would ever happen. But, in defiance of my beliefs, a buyer came through and PSLA was told it had until March 15th to pack up and go. Which brings me back to the original question. What does it take to move a food bank??

The short answer... a lot. We have a lot of stuff, but fortunately a lot of help too. PSLA has fridges and freezers(14), storage shelves(21), work stations(5), vans(2), and clients(≈2,200). Not to mention, sets of stairs, a hurdle that everything had to clear. For our clients, we distributed 500 moving flyers in 4 languages. And we're only halfway there. This work was done by teams of national guard servicemembers, dedicated PSLA volunteers, and our staff.



Back in January, after searching the Belltown and surrounding neighborhoods for retail space, we learned that, without additional support, our organization wouldn't be able to afford to stay close to our community. We were running out of options and time.

I haven't thought much about what would have happened if the [Showbox](#) hadn't opened its doors to us and offered their unused venues. At the time it felt like pure luck. Realistically, the combination of channels we were using to spread the word about our predicament got our message through to the right people. But that's still luck in my book. Like other venues, the Showbox has had no use for its 10,000+ sq. ft. space since last April. The combination of the ample space, and the fact that it was available to us made it an ideal, temporary, location for the PSLA food bank.



Though there is a downside. Of the Showbox locations, the one best suited for us was south of downtown, over two miles away from PSLA's previous location in the Labor Temple.

When I spoke with clients about the relocation, the feedback I received told me that making the trip across town would be manageable for some, difficult for many, and impossible for others. In Belltown, PSLA was situated so most of its clients could easily walk and wheel a couple block from their homes to shop and receive our services. In our temporary Showbox spot, a 30-minute bus ride separates us.

Access to healthy food is extremely place based in the US, where urban residents often face the most barriers to getting the items they need. Our long-term goal for PSLA is to move back to

Belltown, to re-establish permanent roots, and to expand services, community partners, and the scope of our work. Until then, we will continue serving from the Showbox and telling our story.