



INNOVATION WORKS® CASE STUDY

REMOVING BARRIERS TO GROWTH & IMPACT

The Challenge

Since 1932, the Dubuque Rescue Mission has served individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness in the Dubuque community. As needs evolved and resources fluctuated, the organization recognized an opportunity to reassess how its work aligned with available capacity. Leadership looked for ways to focus programs more effectively while engaging new partners and supporters in imagining a best-practice approach to serving under-housed and unhoused individuals.

The Innovation Works® Approach

The Rescue Mission participated in a one-day Innovation Works® strategy session, bringing together staff and key board leaders. Through facilitated team-based exercises, participants worked in small groups to develop and pitch strategic ideas across several critical areas, including:

- Organizational operations and structure
- Staff development
- Housing and shelter programming
- Meal services
- Partnership development and funding strategies

The session encouraged creative thinking while grounding decisions in mission, capacity, and community impact.

The Outcome

The Innovation Works® process provided the Rescue Mission with a clear framework for decision-making and strategic prioritization. The team established shared priorities, defined next steps, and gained confidence in making difficult but necessary choices about program scope and organizational focus.

With greater alignment and clarity, the Dubuque Rescue Mission is now better positioned to evolve its approach and strengthen how it serves unhoused individuals in the Dubuque community today and into the future.

“Our time at the Innovation Lab was an amazing opportunity to step out of our day-to-day and ask some big questions we have been needing to wrestle with for some time. Because of the groundwork that was laid in this meeting, we have been able to narrow our focus, reform our mission, and provide more robust care to our community.”

REV. SAMUEL FELDERMAN Executive Director

