

Chester County Community Foundation Grant Proposal Summary Sheet

Date 12/03/18

Contact Information:

Organization Name: West Chester Food Cupboard Executive Director Name: N/A
Address: 431 S. Bolmar St, West Chester, PA 19382 Executive Director Email:
Phone: 610-344-3175 Board of Directors Chair Name: Joseph Fratinardo
Website: wcfood.org Primary Contact Name: Kim McNicholas
Year Incorporated: 2012 Primary Contact E-mail: wcfood@gmail.com
FEIN: 46-1420690

Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation? Yes No__ Not Sure__
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation Yes No__ Not Sure__
 Donor Advised Fund(s) __ Fund for Chester County __ Don't know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest: __ Arts, Culture & Humanities __ Environment/Animal Welfare __ Education
 Health Human Services __ Religion

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served: West Chester Area School District

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served: The West Chester Food Cupboard is a nonprofit organization providing food assistance to West Chester area residents in need. We serve children, adults and the elderly who suffer from food insecurity and whose income falls at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. In fiscal year 2018 we served 1,162 households, representing 2,549 low-income individuals including 1,368 adults, 296 elderly and 885 children. Total client visits were 6,959. We assist food insecure families and individuals regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or religion.

Mission: We believe that there is nothing more basic than food security and it is our mission to empower the community to work together to assure that all West Chester residents receive the food they need in order to live a healthy, active life. To that end, the West Chester Food Cupboard commits to provide a variety of fresh and nonperishable food items to West Chester residents in need "...because no one should be hungry!"

Proposal Summary: We respectfully request general operating funds to support our mission to alleviate hunger in West Chester by increasing the quantity of food we are able to provide, expanding the nutritious options we offer, and serving a greater number of low-income, food insecure residents.

Annual Budget: \$680,000 _____ __0__ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
 ____100% of budget for program expenses __7__ # of Board Volunteers
 ____0% of budget for administrative expenses _180+_ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
 ____0% of budget for fundraising expenses _19,135_ # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: David R. Clare and Margaret C. Clare Foundation \$115,000; W.W. Smith Charitable Trust \$40,000; Welfare Foundation \$40,000; West Pharmaceuticals \$35,000; The Myers Family 25,893

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$7,500

We are appreciative of gifts in any amount that help us feed food insecure residents of West Chester.

WEST CHESTER FOOD CUPBOARD GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

1. Organization's history, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

History and goals:

The West Chester Food Cupboard is the largest hunger relief agency serving low-income residents in West Chester. Since its founding in 2009 the Cupboard continues to serve more clients each year, reaching 2,549 individuals in fiscal year 2018. We serve economically disadvantaged residents struggling with a wide variety of challenging circumstances: single parents and their children, individuals with ill health, the elderly on fixed incomes, people existing on inadequate benefits, the unemployed and the working poor. All have income falling at or below 150% of the federal poverty level.

We are proud to be an all-volunteer organization, staffed entirely by caring and dedicated community members who are committed to treating our clients with dignity, friendliness and respect. We operate under the direction of a seven-member Board of Directors with fourteen Lead Volunteers. The Lead Volunteers are uniquely experienced in the work of the Cupboard and are the governing body responsible for making decisions regarding day-to-day operations.

The primary objective of the WCFC is to provide supplemental food assistance for low-income residents who suffer from food insecurity. Central to this is our goal of offering a variety of the high-quality fresh foods that are essential for the good health of our clients.

Key achievements and distinctiveness:

- One of our great successes came in July 2017 when we **moved to our new location** at 432 S. Bolmar Street. The new facility doubled our footprint to 5,500 square feet and allowed us to provide additional refrigerators and freezers for meat, poultry and fish. The increased space has greatly improved our ability to accept more donations, store a greater amount of food purchases and distribute more food to more people.
- In fiscal year 2018 we **distributed an incredible 1,118,000 pounds of food, an increase of 18% over the previous year.**
- **Clients now receive approximately a two-week supply of groceries.** Previously this was a four to five-day supply.
- Over the past five years we have **doubled the number of households served**, currently providing supplemental food to 578 households per month.
- We **increased food choices** available to our clients, enhancing our protein options by adding frozen fish, chicken and pork and doubling the amount of eggs and dairy products that our clients receive.
- A distinguishing aspect of the Cupboard, and testament to our compassionate volunteers, is our **effort to supplement nonperishable items with high-quality foods critical to ensuring a healthful diet for our clients.**
- In 2014 we established the only **Summer Food for Children Program** in the West Chester Area School District to assist client families during the summer months when critical school meals are not served. In 2018 we completed our fifth successful summer of this program, distributing approximately 32 pounds of food per month for each school age child during June, July and August. In total, we distributed approximately 67,200 pounds of food to 700 families through this program in 2018.
- The West Chester Food Cupboard has always been **100% volunteer run with no paid staff.** This is clearly a defining characteristic of the Cupboard, an organization filled with committed people who care about their neighbors. We currently have approximately 180 volunteers.
- We are **client choice cupboard.** Once a month our clients select the groceries they need and want based on personal preferences. Providing choices rather than a predetermined box of groceries allows our clients to control any dietary restrictions or preferences. Our new space is arranged like a grocery store and provides our clients with a dignified experience similar to going to any other grocery store.

2. Funding request

Description of key initiatives:

The West Chester Food Cupboard's Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2019 identifies the following key initiatives:

Increase the quality and quantity of food provided for our clients by 5%-10% per year.

Healthier fresh foods are often cost prohibitive for our clients whose diets typically consist of affordable but highly processed foods. Thanks to donations from community gardeners, we are fortunate to be able to provide a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to our clients during the summer months. To ensure that they continue to benefit year-round from the nutrition that this fresh produce supplies, we have been purchasing staple fruits and vegetables and will continue to bring as much fresh food as we can into the Cupboard. In addition to augmenting the quantity and options of fresh produce offered, we continue increasing the supply of chicken, turkey, fish, eggs and dairy products we are able to distribute. All of these foods provide vital nutrients often missing from the diets of our food insecure clients. They are the foundation of good health and an essential component of our clients' monthly shopping cart.

Increase the number of clients served by 5%-10% per year by creating more awareness of the WCFC in the community. We have been addressing this through collaboration with West Chester School District and West Chester University, outreach with social service agencies, doctor's offices, and communities of faith, and through use of advertising, news articles and social media.

Specific needs and issues to be addressed:

Quintessential West Chester, a small town in the wealthiest county in Pennsylvania, likely evokes the impression of having an affluent population. The reality is that there is a very wide socio-economic gap and many residents struggle with poverty, finding it difficult to provide basic human necessities for themselves and their families. In fact, statistics show that 24.9% of West Chester Borough residents live below the federal poverty level, making it particularly challenging for them to live here.

Hunger is a real concern for the economically disadvantaged and many find it hard to put food on the table. Families are faced with making tough choices between paying for a meal or other basic necessities such as rent, utilities, health bills and medications, with food often falling low on the list. These are not choices anyone should have to make.

Compounding the economic challenges suffered by the food insecure are the associated health risks of chronic disease such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. For children, insufficient quantities and a lack of nutritious food takes a devastating toll on their physical, psychological, emotional and cognitive functioning, jeopardizing their futures in profound ways. The WCFC is striving to alleviate the effects of hunger and a poor diet by not only assuring our clients have sufficient quantities of food but also by focusing on purchasing nutrient dense foods crucial to their good health.

Organizational impact if initiative undertaken:

Funding will enable us to address hunger and food insecurity, allow us to maintain our commitment to supply nutritious food essential for the good health, and aid us in our capacity to sustain and grow our services. Much of our produce, protein and dairy needs to be purchased with funds we receive through donations and/or grants. A general operating grant will support us in pursuing key initiatives, with almost every dollar donated going directly towards providing food (except for rent and utilities).

Activities to implement the initiative:

Our key initiatives are established and ongoing. The extent of their success is dependent on donations received including solicitations from individuals, nonprofit organizations, grants and businesses.

Why it is important to fund this now:

The needs of our clients are real and current, as they continue to miss meals, go to school hungry, and suffer the issues of poor health that are a consequence of hunger. The current economic climate has disproportionately impacted the economically disadvantaged and has resulted in an increasing number of food insecure individuals and families seeking assistance; bringing people who never imagined themselves in need of food support to the Cupboard.

As the Cupboard provides supplemental food to increasing numbers of our neighbors, the Cupboard itself faces a need for additional resources. We rely 100% on donations from the community. There are no middlemen at the Cupboard, no national or regional organization and, because we are operated entirely by volunteers, we have no paid staff. With no salaries to pay, the vast majority of our funding goes directly towards purchasing food for our clients. We are very prudent about how we spend the money we receive because we know that it has been entrusted to us by funders who are counting on us to make good use of their donations. The West Chester Food Cupboard makes a real difference in people's lives. Our value in the community is reflected in the words of our clients:

"Sometimes I don't know how we'd make it. I have three girls. I don't even know how to be able to put food on the table, but we get to come here and it's a huge assist. The help that this place provides, it can't be quantified, it just can't."

"I was a skilled worker for 35 years, but health problems forced me to retire early. Now I can only get part time work for minimum wage. It's really hard."

"I have three kids, and one is disabled. My teacher's aide salary just doesn't go far enough, and I don't receive food stamps."

"I worked all my life, supported a family, and ran a household, but everyone's gone and I'm on my own and I just can't manage."

3. How impact and results will be demonstrated

Success will be evident in the greater quantities of food provided to our clients, the improved quality of nutrient rich foods we offer, and in the number of new clients served each month. Due to the reporting capability of the databases and record keeping that we maintain, our goals are objective, trackable items. At the end of our fiscal year we will be able to measure the quality and quantity of food provided and the number of individuals served. Additionally, qualitative data will be gathered through client surveys to ascertain that their needs are being met and their expectations surpassed.

We are enormously grateful for the support of our community whose caring embodies a core value of the WCFC of working together to help our neighbors in need. Your generosity allows us to keep our doors open and our clients served.