



COVID-19 Rapid Response Mini-Grant Letter of Request

Date: November 30, 2020

Contact Information

Organization Name: West Chester Food Cupboard

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In a few brief paragraphs, please explain:

1. **What geographic area is served?** *(If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served)*

The West Chester Food Cupboard (WCFC) serves residents of the West Chester Area School District. Temporarily we served any resident of Pennsylvania since June 2020 and will continue to do so until February 2021. Due to recent client volumes, spikes in local COVID cases the layout of our facility and the winter months coming we can no longer safely serve clients from out of the West Chester Area School District despite wanting to do so. Trying to maintain the current volumes (850 families for November) puts all our volunteers at risk of contracting COVID, and puts our operations at risk of being shut down if we have an incident. We will continue to support West Chester Area Scholl District residents.

2. What population is served, what has been the impact of COVID-19, and how has your nonprofit responded?

The West Chester Food Cupboard is one of the largest hunger relief agencies in Chester County. It is the primary source of food assistance for low income residents of the West Chester Area School District. During the COVID crisis the food cupboard temporarily expanded its territory to all Pennsylvania residents in need.

Thanks to the generous support of the community, providing cash and food donations we had 1,613 households registered and provided food to 626 households a month for the year ended June 30, 2020. We distributed over 1.2 million pounds of food and personal care items to those in need for the year ended June 30, 2020.

All our clients receive a wide variety items such as the ones listed below:

- Quality proteins including chicken and fish
- Fresh produce including apples, oranges, celery, lettuce, carrots, onions and potatoes
- Dairy including milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese and butter
- Personal care items including soap, tooth paste and brushes, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, dish and laundry detergent, shaving cream, razors and feminine
- A wide variety of non-perishable items you would find in any grocery store such as canned meats, vegetables, fruits, soups, tomato products, beans - fresh and canned, peanut butter and jelly, cereal, rice and pasta, spices and condiments

Each client is allowed to utilize our service once a month.

50% of the items provided are purchased with cash donations and the other 50% is provided with food donations.

Our volunteers provide labor free of charge and the support of the community (cash and food donations) enables us to complete our mission. We could not help those in need without the support of the community.

During the COVID crisis we implemented a drive through system to protect the health and safety of our volunteers and clients. Groceries are loaded directly in client cars by our volunteers in order to properly social distance. We have also temporarily expanded our territory to serve all Pennsylvania residents in need through February 2021. The impact of COVID on our organization so far is as follows:

- Our monthly volume of clients has been in a normal range of about 600 to 700 hundred families a month, however, in November we served 850 families and we are not sure if this is a holiday spike or possibly a new level of need.

- While clients can only come once per month for a full allocation of food, we have been providing emergency food for those who are in danger of running out.
- Many food items (e.g. meat, soup, frozen vegetables, eggs) are difficult to find in stores. This affects WCFC in two ways. Clients will look to WCFC for items they cannot find in stores – increasing visits to WCFC. Additionally, stores that typically donate such items to WCFC are doing so in lower quantities or not at all. Until COVID-19 started, WCFC would receive approximately 1,000 pounds of meat products from area grocery stores; we are now receiving almost none. Even items that we purchase from major grocery chains are unavailable. Our non-perishable food supply has decreased greatly and our supply of meat is now almost depleted. We have secured new sources to purchase food and have been making more purchases to offset lower food donations
- It is important to note that WCFC is 100% volunteer run, so well over 90% of funding support goes directly to food purchases.
- To ensure a safe environment, WCFC has greatly changed its procedures in order to minimize the risk of virus transmission to clients and/or volunteers. All clients are currently served with a 'drive-through' approach. Volunteers are limited in number so as to practice appropriate social distancing. All volunteers wear masks and gloves and wash hands and change gloves between tasks. No one volunteers if they show any signs of COVID symptoms.

3. How much funding is sought? How does this compare to your annual operating budget? What will the funding be used for? What is the expected timeframe for use of funds?

- WCFC respectfully requests \$5,000 in grant support from the Chester County Community Foundation. Food purchases for the upcoming year are expected to be \$600,000.
- WCFC would use the funds as soon as they are available. The need is current.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or requests for additional information.