

10

# FOOD AND NUTRITION



# PROJECT #24

## Growing Wyoming: Community Solutions to Nutrition Through School Gardens and Enhanced Education



### Identify the need for the proposed project

H.O.P.E. Gardens installs, maintains, and provides learning experiences in hands-on school gardens for K-12 students. H.O.P.E means Helping Other People Eat, which we do by empowering people to grow their own food affordably and sustainably. Our programs leverage established partnerships with area schools to serve over 2,300 children, families, and adult Kent County residents— with thousands more desiring our support. Our work includes the infrastructural, intellectual, and emotional systemic changes needed to improve the lives of the 1 of every 7 adults and 1 of every 5 children in our state who are food insecure. Our organization is dedicated to supporting the nutritional health, food access needs, resource sharing, and mental health of our neighbors. As a member of the coalition in the Kent County Essential Needs Taskforce (ENTF), which coordinates the efforts of non-profit, government, and private company interventions in critical health services, we see consistent food instability across Michigan. Our focus is on Wyoming, where 60% of students are economically disadvantaged and more than 90% are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Demand for H.O.P.E. Gardens increases through word of mouth as our programming reaches new members of the regional school systems. Our year over year growth signifies the need in our community for our work and trust in our programming and capital investments. Food is intrinsically linked to our diverse cultures and well being, yet often the “where and how” of food is reduced to mindless consumption. Our gardens and programming increase student understanding of how to grow, share, prepare, and find joy in consuming fresh produce harvested through their collective efforts. This proposal focuses on the long-term impact that regular, integrated garden education and access to learning gardens can have on social and community determinants of health. The aim is for our work to provide tools that begin to address disparities in food equity as one route to economic equity, health, and racial justice.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$75,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$100,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$40,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Christie Koester  
**Organization:** H.O.P.E. Gardens

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Expanded Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Brief Description

H.O.P.E. Gardens seeks support in 1) installing a garden and infrastructure at 4 public schools in Godwin Heights and Wyoming Public Schools and 2) expanding our health impact by piloting our successful after-school programming as schoolwide, in-class lessons at 3 selected schools in Wyoming, MI. 1. Learning Garden Installation and Expansion: H.O.P.E. Gardens will create and expand learning gardens at four schools: Godwin Heights Middle, Parkview Elementary, North Godwin Elementary, and Oriole Park Elementary. These living outdoor classrooms expose students to growing their own food, working in community, and making healthy food choices. A new garden will be installed at Godwin Heights Middle School with needed infrastructure, including fencing, storage sheds, compost bins, benches, picnic tables, and trellises, added at 3 other school gardens. 2. Hands-On Garden Education: By expanding our successful after-school programming into daytime programs at 3 pilot schools (to be determined) in Godwin Heights and Wyoming Public Schools, all students will gain health, nutrition, and food access benefits. Expanded programming into three schools with whom we are already partners would directly impact up to 1,400 more students.

### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

Partner community organizations involved with this project include: Godwin Heights and Wyoming Public School Systems; school administrators, principals, and staff at Godwin Heights Middle, Parkview Elementary, North Godwin Elementary, and Oriole Park Elementary; Ruth’s Chris Steak House; Wege Foundation; and Michigan Fitness Foundation.

### Long-Term Benefit

This project increases food access and positive health outcomes through direct provisioning of food and the means to grow one’s own food. A small seed in the hand of a child can transform communities to embrace solutions bringing an end to food insecurity. Second, this project gives underserved students learning opportunities needed to bridge gaps created by Covid-19 learning disruptions. Our programming increases food access and STEM learning for students feeling the greatest Covid-19 impacts.



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$75,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$100,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$40,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Christie Koester  
**Organization:** H.O.P.E. Gardens

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Expanded Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**   
**Sustainability:**   
**Feasibility:**   
**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

Partner community organizations involved with this project include: Godwin Heights and Wyoming Public School Systems; school administrators, principals, and staff at Godwin Heights Middle, Parkview Elementary, North Godwin Elementary, and Oriole Park Elementary; Ruth’s Chris Steak House; Wege Foundation; and Michigan Fitness Foundation.

## Intended Beneficiary

The primary beneficiaries are K-12 students in Wyoming, MI, who participate in our hands-on garden programming. Since this program represents increased garden infrastructure, our learning gardens will also impact students at these schools for years to come. Additionally, the pilot expansion of schoolwide garden education will provide H.O.P.E. Gardens with a template for continuing to expand such programming to other schools we serve. Wyoming schools with whom we have partnered and have expressed interest in day programming include Parkview Elementary (345 students), Godwin Heights Middle (619 students), North Godwin Elementary (288 students), West Godwin Elementary (427 students), and Oriole Park Elementary (332 students). We will select three schools with whom to partner for this pilot based on need and interest. Our impact reaches far beyond students as they bring their learning, experiences, and interest in trying and growing fresh food home with them. Secondary beneficiaries are the families and community members who learn alongside their children. As a resource to children and families, H.O.P.E. Gardens provides hands-on learning experiences that teach students the art and science of growing food. As a resource for teachers and administrators, we offer educational programs, curriculum, and school garden design, consultation, and installation. As a resource to the community, we offer regenerative gardening workshops and training, connecting generations and broadening community access to healthy, affordable food.

## Estimated Cost

\$75,000-\$100,000

## \*Source of Funding

The anticipated total project budget for this expansion is \$75,000-\$100,000; we are requesting \$40,000 from ARPA funds. To meet the full budgetary need, H.O.P.E. Gardens has received confirmation from a corporate funder, Ruth’s Chris Steak House, which is providing partial support to this project through its annual fundraising event. Depending on the final amount donated from this fundraising event and whether we are selected as an ARPA grant recipient, H.O.P.E. Gardens will pursue additional funding as needed through individual and corporate donations and other available grants. Starting in August 2022, we also will launch a two-year funding agreement with the Wege Foundation to support operational costs, including partial support of our garden education team. H.O.P.E. Gardens has also applied to continue a partnership with the Michigan Fitness Foundation, which will partially support our programming expansion into day programming.

## Project Management Experience

Since 2015, H.O.P.E. Gardens has operated throughout Kent County, particularly in Wyoming, and has managed after-school programs, daytime school programs, summer programs, garden installation and maintenance, and the volunteers and staff needed to safely and adequately provide these services to our school partners. We currently serve 15 Kent County public schools located in Wyoming, Grandville, and Byron Center.





## Federal Funds Experience

H.O.P.E. Gardens has partnered with the Michigan Fitness Foundation on a Community Impact Project since 2019 through a USDA SNAP-Ed grant, and we have applied to continue this partnership to further expand our hands-on school garden programming next year. Our leadership and staff are familiar with federal reporting requirements and understand the importance of following procedures for achieving compliance with federal reporting guidelines and appropriate use of funds. Our process also involves avoiding duplication of efforts across the many collaborators in the project. Additionally, we have received federal funds through the Kent County Covid relief fund, supporting programming for area public schools during the pandemic crisis, and completed all required reporting and documentation.

## Studies on Impact

“The Association between Education Outside the Classroom and Physical Activity: Differences Attributable to the Type of Space?” Children, <https://doi.org/10.3390/children8060486>. “Green Schoolyards as Havens from Stress and Resources for Resilience in Childhood and Adolescence.” Health & Place, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2014.03.001>. “School Gardens: Helping Students Understand Where Food Comes From to Break Down Barriers to Healthy Food.” <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/61831>. “Assessing a Garden-Based Curriculum for Elementary Youth in Iowa: Parental Perceptions of Change.” HortTechnology, <https://doi.org/10.21273/HORTTECH.18.1.18>. “Curriculum-Based Outdoor Learning for Children Aged 9-11: A Qualitative Analysis of Pupils’ and Teachers’ Views.” PLOS ONE, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0212242>. “Does Access to Green Space Impact the Mental Well-Being of Children: A Systematic Review.” Journal of Pediatric Nursing, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedn.2017.08.027>. “At Home with Nature: Effects of ‘Greenness’ on Children’s Cognitive Functioning.” Environment and Behavior, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00139160021972793>.

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$75,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$100,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$40,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Christie Koester  
**Organization:** H.O.P.E. Gardens

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Expanded Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

## Partnership

Partner community organizations involved with this project include: Godwin Heights and Wyoming Public School Systems; school administrators, principals, and staff at Godwin Heights Middle, Parkview Elementary, North Godwin Elementary, and Oriole Park Elementary; Ruth’s Chris Steak House; Wege Foundation; and Michigan Fitness Foundation.

## Guidehouse Ranking Notes

 **Eligibility**

 **Sustainability**

 **Feasibility**

*Eligible as it would address food insecurity*

*One time expense*

# PROJECT #235

## Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign



### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

### Identify the need for the proposed project

Feeding America West Michigan’s efforts to meet the need for food assistance in Kent County and the other 39 counties throughout its service area in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have been hindered by its limited organizational capacity. Its 55,000 sq. foot main facility in Comstock Park, in operation since 2001, now lacks the space to handle the sizable quantities of product it has acquired over the last decade. Since 2017, it has operated beyond its capacity and become pervasively inefficient. The warehouse has produced numerous logistical bottlenecks that have hindered the food bank from pursuing its vision. Its floor is often congested with hundreds of pallets of food stacked two to three high. Forklifts and pallet jacks frequently face traffic jams through the only fully open aisle. The three shipping and receiving docks have faced similar backups. Reclamation volunteers regularly overflow into other departments, disrupting their workflows. The food bank has resorted to inefficient means to match its service area’s demand. Administrative and development staff have moved off-site – incurring a monthly rent expense – to fill what used to be office space with food. In 2020, the food bank invested in a new freezer, which was immediately filled to capacity. Soon after, an influx of frozen food from the USDA showed freezer space was still lacking. In response, the food bank increased its off-site frozen storage by over 300% and filled its parking lot to capacity with leased semi-trailers to store excess food, at significant cost. Nevertheless, the food bank saw a 40% increase in food waste in 2020. The food bank’s internal inefficiencies have also impaired its external relationships. Because order-fulfillment staff must reorganize pallets while enclosed within such congestion, agency partners frequently wait in line to load their orders. The food bank has only three docks to load and unload food at its current warehouse; it estimates that the optimal dock number is now 13, as it has progressively increased its direct deliveries to communities while agency pickups have decreased. The food bank has turned down many large volunteer groups due to its inability to accommodate them logistically, despite its substantial need for increased volunteer presence. Similarly, it has needed to decline many food donations because the reclamation area is ill-equipped to process them. These challenges have wasted resources that could have helped the 293,500 neighbors facing hunger in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, including 68,860 in Kent County. It is clear that the food bank lacks adequate space at its current warehouse.

Food banking best practices across the country have changed. The U.S. is witnessing an emergency feeding system pushed to its limits, exposing the true extent of the hunger problem. Food banks were originally intended to feed people during a crisis, but they have become a de facto grocery store for 46.5 million people living in the U.S. every year who travel to a food bank or food pantry to fill the gaps in their household’s capacity to put enough food on the table. SNAP, the most significant federal nutrition program, is used by over 40 million low-income people annually to enable them to afford a nutritionally adequate diet.

According to the Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center’s April 2022 study, “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on U.S. Hunger Relief Organizations,” the number one food system weakness selected by the HROs was inequitable access to fresh, healthy food. Over 60% of HROs also perceived overabundance of processed foods leading to diet-related diseases to be a weakness. The Feeding America national organization has created new nutrition guidelines for food banks to follow, but food banks like Feeding America West Michigan, which operate and fundraise independently within their own service areas, must make significant logistical adjustments to accommodate these changes. According to the Feeding America national organization, skyrocketing food and fuel prices over the last year have further constricted food-insecure families’ access to food and strained food banks’ abilities to support them.

*(continued on next page)*



## Identify the need for the proposed project (continued, part 2)

Every aspect of food bank operations, from the procurement of food to the delivery of it, has spiked in cost. Supply-chain disruptions have significantly decreased the amount of food donated to the food bank, necessitating the purchase of massive quantities of food to accommodate the continually increasing need in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Widespread increases in costs and decreases in donated product have coincided with the expiration of several pandemic-era, government-run programs meant to ensure neighbors had access to food. Expanded Child Tax Credits, for example, helped lift millions of children out of poverty and provided extra support for families to purchase groceries and other necessities. Those payments ended in December 2021. Similarly, SNAP households will lose \$82 per month of critical benefits when the Public Health Emergency declaration ends. The loss of these programs is making demand for Feeding America West Michigan’s services skyrocket.

The charitable food needs in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have grown and changed; to meet those needs, Feeding America West Michigan requires a larger space with room for designated areas to house programs that target specific populations. Consequently, in 2021, the food bank invested \$6,650,000 in organizational resources to purchase a 120,600 sq. foot warehouse at 3070 Shaffer Ave SE in Kentwood. It plans to renovate the building to both address the limitations of its current warehouse and expand its services. The food bank estimates that the new building will enable it to progressively grow its capacity to eventually distribute 37.5 million meals’ worth of food per year, a 50% increase over the 25 million meals it distributed in 2020. With community support, the Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign can renovate this space and turn it into the food bank neighbors in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula need. The new facility will include 3.2 times the freezer and cooler space and twice the dry storage space of the current facility. It will be equipped with three drive-in bays at which agencies will pick up product and an additional 13 loading docks, dramatically increasing the food bank’s capacity to provide direct delivery of nutritious food to children and families in need. The facility will include office space as well as collaborative gathering spaces to meet with partners, offer training on best practices, and coordinate partnerships between agencies. These spaces will enable the food bank to aid partners in helping families identify, mobilize, and appreciate the assets, resources, and competencies within their community that can mitigate the impact of stressful conditions like food insecurity. In these spaces, the food bank will continue its work helping agencies identify clients’ barriers to accessing their services, destigmatize support services, explain service eligibility requirements, fill out forms, help parents understand their role as advocates, and understand the lingering impact of childhood poverty on their clients. While addressing each family’s individual difficulties, the food bank is working to understand and change the structural inequities and conditions that contribute to these difficulties. By providing food at no cost to clients, the food bank enables them to invest scarce resources into other necessities. As less of their money is consumed by food and – in the long term – healthcare, clients become more financially secure and avoid future encounters with hunger; consequently, communities bear reduced food insecurity-driven healthcare costs.

At the Fresh Start Center, an on-site client-choice pantry and education space, clients will be active participants in the process. The Fresh Start Center will not only provide families in need with food but also help them identify their needs and navigate the complex web of social service systems. It will include a commercial kitchen, permitting the rescue of a wider variety of food (e.g. coleslaw with rescued cabbage; prepared and prepackaged nutritious meals for meal programs) and a greater variety of menu items. Guests at the Fresh Start Center will be able to connect with community partners and access resources like recipes, tip sheets, and computers to help them sign up for SNAP and similar programs.

(continued on next page)

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

### Partnership

(Listed in main description)



### Identify the need for the proposed project (continued, part 3)

The Fresh Start Center will serve as a model for hundreds of charitable food organizations to incorporate more nutrition-education and wraparound services. The Mobile Food Pantry program, which has delivered food to neighbors facing hunger since 1998, is the food bank’s flagship program. By expanding the food bank’s capacity to source nutritious food – especially fresh fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy – the new facility will enable the food bank to refine Mobile Pantry menus to reflect local community and family needs through diverse and culturally appropriate products. While these efforts are currently underway, the capacity of the current warehouse has stymied the speed and scale at which they can unfold. The new facility will provide staff with the means to sort through higher volumes of donated items, assemble more complex and specialized loads, and more easily prepare educational materials for distribution. The new facility will house an area specifically for Golden Groceries, a fledgling program that will provide seniors throughout West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula with two boxes of groceries each month as well as information about support services available to them. These boxes’ contents will be tailored to meet the specific dietary needs of the senior population and emphasize fresh, seasonal produce.

By moving into the Kentwood facility, the food bank will be able to expand Gather 2 Grow, its summer meals program, to serve children throughout its 40-county service area and provide a larger variety of high-quality, child-friendly food to organizations operating backpack programs. The food bank plans to conduct child-focused pilot programs including school food pantries and a subset of Mobile Pantries tailored exclusively to children’s needs. The food bank also has a number of nutrition-education initiatives under its Fresh Start programming umbrella that it hopes to grow into full programs upon moving into the new facility. One such initiative is A Recipe for Success, which provides neighbors in need with a social and community context to access nutrition-education resources at Mobile Pantries by producing live cooking demonstrations as well as recipe and cooking utensil giveaways. Another initiative, Fresh Start Education Sessions, provides children in preschool through second grade with simple nutrition lessons without burdening teachers. This target population is just beginning to form knowledge and opinions regarding food; early intervention is critical to ensuring they develop healthy habits and maintain them throughout their lives. The food bank’s nutrition-education programming aims to provide parents and children with emotional, instrumental, and informational support to promote proper child development through nutrition. Finally, the move will enable the food bank to expand its Prescription for Nutrition pilot into a full-fledged program, ultimately serving its entire service area. Currently, the pilot is a collaboration with Catherine’s Health Center in Grand Rapids. Through this “food-as-medicine” program, healthcare providers can screen clients for food insecurity as part of their regular healthcare appointments and then prescribe three days’ worth of food to food-insecure clients, tailored to their specific health needs.

The Governor’s Food Security Council (FSC) Final Report, released in February 2022, affirmed the need for these programmatic introductions and expansions. Of the study’s 11 recommendations for addressing the issue of food insecurity in Michigan, the Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign to renovate the Kentwood facility is a key step in addressing eight of them. Those eight are:

- Increase funding for fresh and culturally appropriate food through local and regional programs.
- Expand childhood nutrition programs and Community Eligibility Provisions in Michigan school districts.
- Improve food access through increased transportation options including home delivery.
- Pursue a federal 1115 waiver to develop a pilot program that addresses the social determinants of health for Medicaid beneficiaries that includes evidence-based interventions that improve access to medically-supported food and nutrition services.

(continued on next page)

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

### Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

### Partnership

(Listed in main description)





## Identify the need for the proposed project (continued, part 4)

- Create a stakeholder coalition to identify innovative and sustainable financing solutions that address food insecurity.
- Increase feedback from Michigan residents utilizing community food programs.
- Create a coordinated support system for clients seeking assistance through the MI Bridges platform.
- Improve infrastructure for food insecurity screening, referral, and diagnostic coding in health care organizations.

The study specifically recommends “grant program(s) focused on bolstering local and regional food initiatives. This should include support, including infrastructure, for... community-based organizations.” The FSC recommends “opportunities for greater inclusion of nonprofit organizations that may not be able to match, and to widen flexibility for more varied programs including prescription for health programs... and charitable food programs including mobile food markets and grocery recovery programs.” The food bank is West Michigan’s main provider of mobile food markets, as well as its main grocery recovery program. As stated previously, it is currently running a prescription for health pilot program. Only by moving to the Kentwood facility can the food bank achieve its plans to expand these programs. “In order to... address the social determinants of health for Medicaid beneficiaries,” including “evidence-based interventions that improve access to medically supported food and nutrition services,” the FSC recommends “health care and community partners to identify a food insecurity and health demonstration project.... A major focus of this project would be to evaluate the return on investment for a standardized and scalable food-as-medicine intervention.”

As the largest charitable food organization in West Michigan, the food bank is uniquely capable of operating a food-as-medicine program, like so many other food banks in the Feeding America network across the country operate in coordination with local healthcare partners. It plans to do exactly that once it gains the necessary capacity through the Kentwood facility. In order to improve food access through increased transportation options including home delivery, the FSC recommends establishing a Michigan Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (MICCAM) targeting specific “populations experiencing heightened rates of food insecurity” to “make recommendations to policy makers regarding access and mobility efforts for those populations, including allocation of state and federal funds, as they become available (ARPA funds, infrastructure bills, etc.). Initiatives that MICCAM might explore include increasing fresh food availability at pantries and mobile markets across the state, and mileage reimbursement or flat fee payment for home delivery as well as other methods of last mile delivery.” One of the food bank’s stated goals of moving into the Kentwood facility is to expand targeted programs for children and seniors, as these populations experience heightened rates of food insecurity. Again, the food bank is the foremost provider of fresh food at pantries in Kent County and West Michigan as a whole, as well as its primary provider of Mobile Pantries. The Kentwood facility will also enable the food bank to significantly expand its home delivery programming, especially for seniors via Golden Groceries. The study further recommends creating “a stakeholder coalition to identify innovative and sustainable financing solutions that address food insecurity.” The Kentwood facility will further increase the food bank’s capacity to collaborate with food industry stakeholders by improving its efficiency, creating dedicated spaces in the facility for collaboration, and increasing its fundraising capacity. FSC notes that “there is currently no functionality for a client to communicate feedback on whether they were able to access the requested resource or program and provide input on what was their experience in doing so.” It recommends “a sustainable, on-going approach to obtaining regular feedback directly from residents to gain a better understanding on client experience using various programs and resources, and to drive future investments and improvements based on this input.”

(continued on next page)

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

## Partnership

(Listed in main description)





## Identify the need for the proposed project (continued, part 5)

This recommendation, like the Kentwood facility, “will require a one-time investment to build the new capabilities initially but should be sustainable and easily maintained with minor updates achieved through regular system maintenance and updates.” The FSC recommends a coordinated support system for clients seeking assistance through the MI Bridges platform. The Fresh Start Center at the new Kentwood facility, as previously described, will assume this role by guiding clients through the process of signing up for resources such as SNAP or WIC, receiving their feedback, evaluating the responses, coordinating with other community partners and MDHHS, and improving the function of these programs throughout Kent County and all of West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. In order to increase feedback from Kent County residents utilizing community food programs, the Kentwood facility is an essential step.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Brief Description

The food bank estimates that, by moving into the Kentwood facility and expanding its programs and services, it can increase its distribution of nutritious food to West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula by 30% within five years and 50% overall. This plan has several components, none of which are possible in the current warehouse: Increase collaborative efforts between local charitable food organizations Encourage and model the incorporation of wraparound services into partner programs across West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula Expand targeted programs for children and seniors Expand nutrition-education programs Expand food-as-medicine programs Utilize Mobile Food Pantries as a stop-gap measure while working to transform the fixed pantry system from the reactive, emergency model of the past to a sustainable, nutritionsecurity model The food bank requests \$5 million in grant funds from Kent County ARPA for the Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign to renovate new spaces within its new facility, improve its programming through the use of those spaces, expand its food rescue and distribution capabilities, increase agency support, and build new community partnerships.

### Long-Term Benefit

The food bank projects that the Kentwood facility will increase the amount of food delivered to Kent County by 30% within five years, lifting approximately 43,942 individuals out of hunger. It projects an eventual 50% increase in distribution, or approximately 50,702 individuals lifted out of hunger. In other words, this \$5 million grant will position the food bank to lift an additional 16,901 Kent County residents out of hunger each year – well beyond its current capacity.

### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Intended Beneficiary

The need for food assistance is evident in Kent County. According to the Feeding America national organization, 68,860 (10.6%) of the county’s residents, including 15,390 (9.7%) of its children, experienced food insecurity in 2019. Additional data generated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that these numbers increased by 9% and 15%, respectively, in 2021. Given the conditions described previously, the food bank expects to see similar levels of need in the immediate future. According to the United Way’s most recent ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) study, 36% of households in Kent County cannot afford basic necessities.

### Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

*(continued on next page)*



## Intended Beneficiary (continued, part 2)

That percentage includes 24,544 households that live in poverty and 63,814 ALICE households, whose incomes do not support their basic costs of living despite exceeding the Federal Poverty Level. Members of the latter group often turn to the food bank’s programs when in need of food assistance, as government programs such as SNAP are not always an option. A single person earning minimum wage in Michigan is not eligible for SNAP; neither is a single mother of one earning \$12 an hour. US costs of living – especially those related to the most essential human needs, such as those measured by the ALICE Essentials Index – have risen steadily since 1980 and skyrocketed since 2007; wages have not kept pace. An increasing number of working people need food assistance programs to meet their basic needs. The food bank’s programs effectively target families experiencing food insecurity: approximately 70% of the food bank’s clients live below the poverty line. In 2021, the food bank collaborated with Public Policy Associates (PPA) to conduct a study of clients’ experiences with food insecurity and their attitudes toward food bank programs. Respondents to the PPA study related some of the ways in which they needed to compromise on their own health and wellbeing to make ends meet. 63% of survey respondents indicated that, over the last year, they “bought the cheapest food available, even if [they] knew it wasn’t the healthiest option.” 55% had eaten food after its expiration date. 49% reported that at least one member of their household had unpaid medical bills. High percentages of respondents reported a need to choose between food and other essential expenses, including transportation (55%), utilities (51%), medicine or medical care (47%), and rent or mortgage (40%).

The food bank’s programs are effective in addressing clients’ and communities’ needs. 90% of respondents to the PPA study indicated a desire to eat more fruits and vegetables and 91% said they do so when Mobile Pantries make such items available to them. 54% said all or most of the fresh fruits and vegetables they eat come from Mobile Pantries. Mobile Pantries play a crucial role in filling in the gaps that federal programs leave behind. 80% of respondents to the PPA study said their SNAP benefits usually last only two or three weeks out of the month. One example of an individual who might seek assistance from the food bank is Sally, a grandmother who, due to a recent surgery on her hands, needed to take time off from her three part-time jobs and struggled to keep food on the table for her grandchildren. Her family’s financial situation worsened after her partner lost his job, and past drug convictions prevented her from applying for and receiving aid from SNAP. (Currently, Michiganders with two past drug convictions are ineligible for SNAP for life.) Fortunately, Sally has been able to bridge this gap and fill her grocery bags at the food bank’s Mobile Pantries. “It’s a godsend,” she said. When families are forced to sacrifice their food budget, it can have a serious impact on other aspects of their lives. JP, Anna, and Sarai, community school coordinators at Wyoming elementary schools through Kent School Services Network, shared their stories of hosting Mobile Pantries, spending their days soothing empty stomachs with snacks, listening to kids’ concerns and connecting families in need to resources. “You can tell a student’s behavior is different if they miss breakfast in the morning,” JP said. “Sometimes it just takes us saying, ‘Do you want some fruit?’ and they feel better.” Sarai and Anna shared similar experiences. “A lot of the ones that would end up having to deal with the social worker or behavioral interventionist – a lot of the time, they were just looking for a snack,” Sarai said. “I’ve known families that have struggled with getting food. They’re working up to two to three jobs, but they have to pay rent, they have to pay daycare, they have to pay their bills and it’s hard. Maybe they have 20 or 30 dollars for food – and if they have five or six kids, is that enough for them?” But thanks to the food bank’s programs, JP said, families “can continue to keep paying other bills and saving up money for other things other than just food.”

(continued on next page)

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

## Partnership

(Listed in main description)



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

## Intended Beneficiary (continued, part 3)

By expanding Gather 2 Grow through the Kentwood facility, the food bank would help many more clients like Abby, a KDL Wyoming Branch librarian and mother of a 2-year-old and 5-year-old. “I went through a divorce over COVID,” she said. “Now I’m a single-income family. I just applied for [SNAP] and WIC for the first time in my life.” Abby found it difficult to ask for help by applying for food assistance, even though she believes it is worthwhile. She said she loves that Library Lunches to Go is “just offered,” no questions asked. The improvements to the Mobile Pantry program, planned as part of the food bank’s program expansion through the Kentwood facility, would help clients like Emily, a mom of five, who attended a Mobile Pantry at Sibley Elementary in Grand Rapids. This specific distribution was part of a pilot initiative in which the food bank partnered with the Kent County Medical Society Alliance to provide three partner schools with activity kits that included vegetable erasers and stickers, a kid-friendly recipe book called “I Heart Vegetables” (available in both English and Spanish), and activity sheets such as grocery store bingo. “I liked those recipes. They’re very simple, but you can see they’re wholesome,” Emily said. “Money has been tight. It had always been tight before, and then my husband was laid off for four months. We’re just trying to play catch up from that. This is one way we can save money for other things.”

The food bank conducted a similar pilot with support from the Kent Medical Foundation. Through this pilot, schools distributed 350 activity kits — each filled with a jump rope, activity sheets and book about vegetables — at their Mobile Pantries. The kits showed kids fun ways to stay active and eat healthily. Jackee, a community school coordinator who runs Godfrey-Lee Public Schools’ Mobile Pantries, said: “Many of our younger students were excited to receive them because they came with a jump rope. I believe the activity kits will help kids stay active and do something other than be on an electronic. The books will allow them to learn about being healthy and using their energy in a healthy way.” These programs also build connections within the local community and set a positive example for the youth participating in them. “It’s just giving back to the people who helped raise me,” said Memo, a school staff member who recalls getting food from Mobile Pantries when he was a student at Godfrey-Lee. “The biggest thing is showing the kids that just because you come from this small community doesn’t mean you can’t make it big. It’s not always about being a doctor or lawyer but about giving back. I think it’s had a positive effect on the kids.” By moving into the Kentwood facility, the food bank will gain the capacity to offer programs like these pilots on a more consistent and enduring basis, throughout its entire service area. As stated previously, the charitable food needs in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have grown and changed; to meet those needs, Feeding America West Michigan requires a larger space with room for designated areas to house programs that target specific populations, including expanded programs for seniors, children, nutrition education, and food-as-medicine. In the new warehouse’s first five years, the food bank plans to achieve a 30% increase over the number of meals it distributed in 2020 (over 30.3 million meals’ worth of food per year). This spike would substantially increase the food bank’s equitability of service throughout its 40-county service area, as those gains are projected to occur in the areas most in need of charitable food services, especially in Kent County.

The Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign’s eventual impact extends beyond those who are currently in need of food assistance. The campaign is an opportunity for the food bank to introduce specialized programs that address the root causes of hunger and provide personalized support for households whose precarious financial situations could put them at risk of experiencing food insecurity in the future, namely the 88,358 (36%) Kent County households that, according to the ALICE study, cannot afford basic necessities.

*(continued on next page)*





## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

## Intended Beneficiary (continued, part 4)

By adopting this more proactive approach to hunger relief, the food bank can position itself to alleviate food insecurity before it can manifest and ultimately “shorten the line” for its own programs. Decreasing the prevalence of hunger in Kent County will have myriad impacts on the community’s overall health and wellbeing. As a social determinant of health, food security is also a key aspect of economic stability. Eliminating very low food security among children is an economic stability objective of the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, as is reducing household food insecurity and hunger. According to a 2019 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, food insecurity in Kent County costs over \$80.3 million (\$128 per capita) in additional associated healthcare costs every year. As evidenced by the PPA study, these costs are often imposed on those with the least capacity to bear them. By expanding the food bank’s capacity to increase neighbors’ access to nutritious food, the Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign will help drive reductions in these costs for individuals and families in Kent County. According to the Feeding America national organization, an individual facing hunger in Kent County faces a weekly food budget shortfall of \$17.79. Because an estimated 68,860 of the county’s residents face hunger and households susceptible to food insecurity typically experience it during seven months of the year, the community’s estimated annual food budget shortfall is over \$37.1 million. In 2020, the food bank delivered 5.8 million meals with a retail value of \$17.6 million to the county, which it projects lifted approximately 33,801 of the county’s residents out of food insecurity.

The Kentwood facility will position the food bank to further close the budgetary gap for neighbors in need. A 30% increase in the amount of food delivered to the community (feasible within the first five years of the food bank’s use of the new warehouse, as noted earlier) would equate to the delivery of 7.5 million meals with an estimated retail value of \$22.9 million, thereby lifting approximately 43,942 individuals out of hunger. An eventual 50% increase in distribution would equate to the delivery of 8.7 million meals with an estimated retail value of \$26.4 million and approximately 50,702 individuals lifted out of hunger. That means that this \$5 million grant projects to lift an additional 16,901 Kent County residents out of hunger each year, beyond the food bank’s current capacity. In short, this campaign will benefit an incredible number of people in Kent County for years to come, especially the 36% of those who cannot afford basic necessities. The food bank is not proposing a one-time fix but rather a fundamental change to the structure of the charitable food system in Kent County and beyond. The move to the Kentwood facility will similarly reverberate throughout the entirety of the food bank’s service area. A 30% increase in the amount of food delivered to West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula as a whole would equate to the delivery of 24.3 million meals with an estimated retail value of \$74.1 million, thereby lifting a projected 142,145 individuals out of hunger. An eventual 50% increase in distribution would equate to the delivery of 28 million meals with an estimated retail value of \$85.4 million and approximately 164,014 individuals lifted out of hunger. Ultimately, this campaign aims to lift an additional 54,672 individuals in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula out of hunger each year.

## \*Partnership

The impact of the food bank’s move into the new Kentwood facility will reverberate throughout Kent County and beyond. The food bank serves its clients in 40 counties in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula through over 700 agency partners, including emergency pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, residential facilities, senior homes, rehab centers, and youth programs. These partners rely on the food bank as not only their source of food but also the coordinator of a holistic strategy to hunger relief throughout the community.

*(continued on next page)*



### \*Partnership (continued, part 2)

All of these programs, and thereby all of the clients served through them, will be positively impacted by the food bank’s move to the Kentwood facility. Feeding America West Michigan is the backbone behind organizations like Marcy’s Pantry in Curtis. “I knew our pantry could not keep up with just donations,” Ethel, a volunteer there, said. “The food bank has been a godsend to us because we would not be able to supply the number of families we are supplying now if we did not have it.” Michelle, Director of Social Concerns at St. Alphonsus Food & Clothing Center in Grand Rapids, likewise recognizes the food bank’s role in what her organization does. “At least 80% of our food comes from the food bank,” she said, “so it is very valuable for us to have that resource. It helps us serve so many people, rather than us having to pay full price at a grocery store.” When the food bank cannot provide enough food to partners, they often need to purchase additional food at retail value to fully meet their communities’ needs. This initiative aims to significantly decrease the frequency at which partners rely upon that alternative. In renovating the new Kentwood facility, the food bank aims to dramatically transform the programmatic capacity of its agency partners. “Feeding America West Michigan is a huge resource for us,” Joni, Executive Director of Angels of Action – a nonprofit that provides kids in need with snacks and after-school meals – said. “There’s a lot of things we can get in large quantities so we can provide the schools with snacks. And when we talk about snacks, it’s things that are healthy and will last them throughout the day.”

This campaign aims to increase the nutritional value of the food that organizations like Angels of Action provide as well as expand the number of organizations through which it provides children’s programs. The food bank plays a critical role in coordinating charitable food activity in the county, bringing together multiple organizations to collaborate on programs like Mobile Pantries. The Kentwood facility is essential to the continuation of the food bank’s leadership role in charitable food in the county. Sue, a priest at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Grand Rapids, emphasized the importance of working alongside others in the community towards the same goals – “It’s not a time for us to be ‘silo-ing’ and doing our own thing,” she said at a Mobile Pantry at which her parishioners joined volunteers from East Leonard Elementary School and Third Reformed Church, while simultaneously serving the church’s outdoor breakfast, which serves many local community members struggling with homelessness. Many charitable food organizations active in Kent County have already endorsed this campaign. As stated previously, all of the food bank’s agency partners in the region and their clients will directly benefit from the food bank’s move to the Kentwood facility. A list of the food bank’s more than 200 agency partners in Kent County, through which it conducts its programs and distributes food to neighbors in need, is available at the end of this section. The move into the Kentwood facility will coincide with a reduction in the food bank’s number of active agency partnerships, as the aforementioned collaborations will make its operations more efficient. The food bank’s current target number of agency partners is 650. A reduced number of agency partners will enable the food bank to more easily ensure its partners are trustworthy and provide adequate services. This project’s impacts on the food bank’s capacity to collaborate with other organizations (and, in turn, serve its clients) will become evident as it queries Primarius, its enterprise resource planning software, to see lists of its agency partners, determine trends, and generate reports. The food bank monitors its distribution numbers by regularly querying Primarius. It will track its new partnerships with complementary service organizations, healthcare providers, and major funders throughout the grant period to gauge one aspect of its progress with regard to collaborations. The frequency at which agency partners rely on retailers can be indicated by meals, pounds, individuals, and families served. The food bank will track the expansion of its agency partners’ capacity through annual surveys, Service Insights tracking, and the implementation of the Feeding America national organization’s nutrition standards.

(continued on next page)

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**  
Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** New Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

- Eligibility:** 
- Sustainability:** 
- Feasibility:** 
- Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

## Partnership

(Listed in main description)



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

### \*Partnership (continued, part 3)

Upon moving into the Kentwood facility, the food bank plans to form regional client advisory committees to amplify underrepresented voices, speak to the client experience, and contribute to planning programs. Committee members would be compensated for their partnership and expertise as the food bank seeks to increase its investment in communities disproportionately affected by poverty and hunger. The food bank takes feedback from its clients seriously. Through the PPA study, clients critiqued the food bank’s ability to provide diverse and culturally appropriate food through the Mobile Pantry program, requested more nutrition-education materials, and emphasized the convenience of drive-through Mobile Pantries. The food bank is consequently working on several remedies for these issues. First, it is working to refine menus to reflect local community and family needs through diverse and culturally-appropriate products. Second, the food bank has rapidly expanded its efforts through its Fresh Start programming to facilitate nutrition-education programming at food distributions, provide a library of recipes and online cooking demonstrations to pantries and their guests, produce live cooking demonstrations, and distribute cooking tools. Third, the food bank has made drive-through Mobile Pantries a permanent option for agency partners. All of these efforts can be improved upon as the food bank moves into the Kentwood facility. Finally, the food bank has recently embarked upon a Service Insights initiative, a universal system to electronically collect data from all of the people it serves via agencies, enabling it to report unduplicated clients served and track demographic information. Moving forward, the food bank’s new Service Insights initiative will allow it to gather data on the individual community scale via its partners, identify service gaps, improve outcome tracking, and provide a new perspective on the trustworthiness and accessibility of existing partners. Data gathered through Service Insights will drive decisions about future programs and initiatives and ensure communities receive services tailored to their needs. Finally, the food bank is employing Fishbeck to perform the architectural/engineering design services for the Kentwood facility. Fishbeck is a full-service architecture and engineering firm that has served Grand Rapids and West Michigan since 1956. They are well known for their work providing design services for other non-profit entities such as the Special Olympics of Michigan, Network 180 Health Systems, and Goodwill Industries International. The Christman Company has been hired to perform the construction management services. Founded in 1894, Christman has served West Michigan for 30 years and helped to build the local economy with more than \$1.5 billion in recent successful projects in the region, including Steelcase’s office construction program, Brembo’s new foundry and warehouse addition, and many others.

The food bank’s partners in Kent County include: Grand Rapids Community College Foundation; Members of Kent School Services Network: Cedar Springs Schools, Godfrey-Lee Public Schools, Godwin Heights Public Schools, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Sparta Area Schools, and Wyoming Public Schools Kent District Library, including the Alpine Township, Byron Center, Comstock Park, Englehardt/Lowell, Gaines Township, Grandville, Kelloggsville, Kentwood, Plainfield Township, Nelson township, Spencer Township, Krause Memorial, Tyrone Township, Walker Township, and Wyoming branches, as well as several Bookmobile sites; East Leonard Elem/St. Mark’s Episcopal Church; GRPS Westside Schools/KSSN; Innovation Central High/GRPS; Southwest Elementary GRPS; Acts Gospel Outreach Ministries; Adams Park/Boston Square CRC; Alternative Directions; American Red Cross - Kent County; Arbor Circle; Attic After School; Backpack; Buddies / Fellowship CRC; Baxter Community Center; Berean Baptist Church; Bethany Christian Services Bibleway Empowerment Center ; Boys & Girls Club of Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth, including Camp O’Malley; Bread of the World Church; Brookside CRC; Brown Hutcherson Ministries Food Pantry; Buist Community Assistance Center; Calvary CRC; Calvary Undenominational Church; Calvin Theological Seminary; Camp Blodgett/Kids Camp & After School Program; Cascade Fellowship CRC;

*(continued on next page)*





**\*Partnership (continued, part 4)**

Catholic Charities West Michigan; Sissell Adult Foster Care Home; Cedar Springs UMC Community Food Pantry; Central Reformed Church-Addie's Pantry; Children's Advocacy Center of Kent Co/Children's Assessment; Christ Temple Apostolic Faith/Greater Christ Temple ; Church of the Servant CRC; CIM - CMC Patient Pantry /Spectrum Health System; City Impact Cedar Springs; Coit Community Church; Community CRC; Community Food Club; Community Needs Council / HWMUW; Community Rebuilders; Community Services of Dutton/The Community Basket; Comprehensive Therapy Center; Cornerstone Church; DA Blodgett/St. John's Home; David's House Ministries; Degage Ministries; Discovery CRC; Dwelling Place - Herkimer Apartments; Dwelling Place - Weston Apartments; Dwelling Place- Verne Barry Place; East Congregational U.C.C.; East Paris Comm Food Pantry/Islamic Mosque & Religious Inst.; Eastern Ave. CRC Saturday Program; Eastown Community Association; Enriched Living; Exodus Place; Faith Reformed Church Food Pantry; Family Network; Family Outreach Center - FET & SS Program; Family Promise of Grand Rapids; FGF/Brown Hutcherson Ministries; FGF/Lifequest Urban Outreach/Alpha League; First Community AME Church; Food Pantry; First CRC Friends & Neighbors Network; First Cutlerville CRC; Park Congregational Church; Flat River Outreach Ministries; Fuller Avenue CRC; Gerald R. Ford Academic Center/Madison Square CRC; Grace Bible Church/ IFCA; Grace CRC; Grand Rapids Red Project; Grandville Senior Neighbors Food Pantry; Guiding Light Mission; Hand2Hand backpack program sites, including Calvary Christian Reformed Church (CRC), Coopersville CRC, Corinth Reformed Church, Cornerstone United Methodist Church (UMC), Covenant CRC, Sparta Church of the Nazarene, Frontline Community Church, Gaines Church, Harbor Life Church, High Pointe Community Church, Hillside Community Church, Ivanrest CRC, Journey Church, Kentwood Community Church, Lee St. CRC, New Hope Community Church, Plainfield Christian Church, Plymouth United Church of Christ, Providence CRC, Bella Vista Church, Second Byron CRC, South Harbor Church, Sparta Baptist Church, Sparta UMC, The Story Church, Frontline Community Church, Fair Haven Church, and Zion Reformed Church; Hands In Mission/Feeding Walker Kids; Helping Important People Succeed; Heritage Reformed Church; Hispanic Center of Western MI; Holy Spirit Episcopal Church/DFMSPEC; Hope Network -; BHS - Pivot; HOPELink of West Michigan ; ICCF-Family Haven; Ideal Park CRC; Iglesia de Dios Manantial de Vida; Iglesia; Pentecostal El Alferero; Iglesia Sanandos las Naciones/MSLN; Indian Trails Camp; Ingenium Coach; Inter Tribal Council - HP Head Start; Islamic Center & Mosque of GR; KEC Beltline/GR Student Advancement Foundation; Kentwood Christian Church; Kentwood Community Church/Open Table; Kids Food Basket; LINC Up; Lincoln Schools Campus/King's Table Ministries; M.L.K.Jr.L. Academy/First UMC; Macedonia Baptist Church; Mamrelund Evangelical Lutheran Church; Matthew's House Ministry; Meals on Wheels Western Michigan; Mel Trotter Ministries; Head Start for Kent County; Michele's Rescue; Mision De Fe; Missionary Church of Christ Inc.; Mount Mercy Housing Corporation; Multitude Ministries, Inc.; North End Community Ministry; New Faith Temple CDC; New Hope Missionary Baptist Church Food Pantry; New Life Food Pantry COGIC; Nonprofit Innovations Inc.; Noor's Heaven of West MI Services; North Kent Connect; NW Food Pantry Coalition at Trinity Reformed Church; Oakdale Park CRC; Other Way Ministries; Our Hope Association; Peace Lutheran Church; People In Need; Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church; Pleasant Hearts Pet Food Pantry; Pleasant View Manor; Plymouth Arms Apartments/Central Christian Church; Positive Options, Inc.; Region 1 Transition Services programs in Cedar Springs and Rockford; Ransom Towers Apts./Central Reformed Church- RCA; Red Pine Bible Church; Resolute ALF - Eastern; Revive and Thrive Project; Rockford High School Spec Ed / NKCS; Rogers Heights Spanish SDA Church; Safe Haven Ministries; Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center; Salvation Army Disaster Services; Fulton Heights Salvation Army; Salvation Army Turning Point; Spectrum Community Services residential programs, including the 22 Mile, Algoma, Blythefield, Clyde Park, Forest Hills, Iris, Kingdom, Lake Gerald, Madison, Parkview, Shiawassee, Skyway, Springmont, and Stauffer homes;

(continued on next page)

**Project Cost**

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

**Submitter Info**

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

**Project Overview**

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

**Source of Funding**

(Listed in main description)

**Partnership**

(Listed in main description)



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**  
Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** New Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

## \*Partnership (continued, part 5)

SECOM South End Community Outreach Ministry; Shawnee Park Christian Reformed; Sheldon Food Pantry/Hope Community Housing Corp.; Shepherds of Independence; Sherman Street CRC; Southeast Church of Christ; Sparta Area Migrant Resource Co; St. Alphonsus Parish Community; St. Isidore Catholic Church Food Pantry; St. John's U.C.C.; St. Mark's Episcopal Church; St. Mary Magdalen Church; St. Mary Roman Catholic Church Food Fund; St. Paul Lutheran Church; St. Paul's Anglican Church; Steepletown Neighborhood Services; Streams of Hope Food Center; Street Light Outreach Church; Streetlight Outreach Ministries; Strong Beginnings - Spectrum Health System; Strong Tower Ministries/Trinity CRC; Temple Emanuel Food Pantry /Congregation Emanuel; The Green Apple/John Knox Community Food Pantry-The Pantry; The Lighthouse for Teen Mothers; Thresholds residential programs, including the 56th Street, Eastern Avenue, Mayfield South, Plainfield, Villa East, Porter, and Westchester Homes; Together In Faith Ministries; True Light Baptist Church; UCOM ; United Methodist Community House-Seniors; Unleashed Love Pet Rescue, Inc.; Unlimited Alternatives; UofM Health West Comm Health Center/ Metro Foundation; Vineyard North Church; Wedgwood Christian Services ; Wellspring Lutheran Services; West MI Center For Arts & Tech; West MI Community Advancement; West MI Veterans Assistance Program; Westend CRC; Westminster Food Pantry; Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church; Woodview Christian Church; YWCA -Domestic Crisis Center/Sojourner House; Zion Lutheran Church

## Estimated Cost

Feeding America West Michigan estimates the costs for the Kentwood facility purchase, renovation, and program expansion to total approximately \$18.7 million. The food bank has already invested \$6,650,000 in organizational resources to purchase the building outright. It has already raised \$5.3 million and projects it will raise approximately \$7 million through grants and donations as part of the Nourish Tomorrow Advancement Campaign by July 2023, which will cover most of the renovation and program expansion costs. Consequently, the food bank requests \$5 million through Kent County ARPA to cover the remainder of the renovation and program expansion costs. Without this funding, the new food bank's ability to dramatically impact the 36% of households in Kent County that cannot afford basic necessities will be significantly hindered.

## \*Source of Funding

Once the building modifications are completed, the food bank will sustain itself through ongoing fundraising, donor cultivation, and grant support. The food bank relies on funding partners throughout its entire service area to stay operational and keep its programs running. The food bank is approaching large foundations, businesses, and major donors throughout its 40-county service area for contributions. The food bank has secured a lead gift of \$2 million from Meijer, which was announced in Spring 2022. The following organizations have endorsed this advancement campaign already: Amway, BISSELL, City Impacts, Community Food Club, Community Action House, Community Foundation for Delta County, Discovery Church, Exodus Place, Family Network of Wyoming, Jandernoa Foundation, Kids Food Basket, M.E. Davenport Foundation, Mel Trotter Ministries, Peter C. and Emajeon Cook Foundation, Senior Meals Program, Streams of Hope Food Center, The Green Apple Pantry, and United Church Outreach Ministry. The food bank anticipates that many more organizations that currently procure food from the food bank or are integral in fighting hunger in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula will join this list.

*(continued on next page)*



### \*Source of Funding (continued)

As the food bank expands its capacity to act as the foremost leader in fighting hunger throughout its service area, its enhanced programmatic capabilities will enable it to forge partnerships with a far greater variety of organizations, including complementary social service organizations and healthcare providers. As stated previously, many of the food bank’s over 700 agency partners have also begun to merge their resources. The food bank intends to play a pivotal role as they consolidate services to create economies of scale. By helping to coordinate regional collaborations, it can build the entire network’s capacity to adopt best practices, collect data in an unprecedentedly effective manner, shorten the line, and fight hunger more efficiently. The collaborative spaces afforded by the new facility will make this transition even more feasible. In order to maximize its sustainability, the food bank has begun to invest in communication resources for its agency partners. It recently developed a communication toolkit and will use it to train its agency partners on communicating with neighbors in need as well as other partners and resources in their communities. This is the beginning of a long-term effort to encourage and train these partners to fundraise in their local communities. While the food bank serves all of West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula and is building partnerships with a broad base of large foundations and major donors, agency partners have a greater opportunity to build deep connections to their local communities, knocking on doors in nearby neighborhoods or holding local fundraising events. The food bank believes that by investing in its partners and helping them coordinate their fundraising efforts, hunger relief infrastructure can be built far more sustainably than it could if all of these organizations were to continue operating in silos. This campaign represents a paradigm shift in the charitable food landscape of West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. The new facility is not only a key piece of the food bank’s plan to improve its efficiency of service throughout the region but also a major step in its pursuit of new, long-term partnerships with major funding partners. As the campaign continues and the food bank moves into the Kentwood facility, such partners will have an unprecedented opportunity to effect change in the lives of the 38% of households in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula that are either experiencing poverty or fall below the ALICE threshold. With enough support, the food bank can turn this new space into the facility that Kent County, West Michigan, and the Upper Peninsula need.

### Project Management Experience

Feeding America West Michigan gathers and distributes food to relieve hunger and increase food security in 40 counties in West Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. It is a clearinghouse for resources, research, and advocacy; its data supports evidencebased programs across over 700 agency partners—forming a cohesive hunger-relief infrastructure across the region. The food bank provides 21 million meals’ worth of food to neighbors across Michigan each year. Mobile Food Pantries—the food bank’s flagship program—deliver fresh produce, dairy, and protein to neighbors in need. Golden Groceries delivers pre-packed boxes of food to foodinsecure seniors. Gather 2 Grow partners with 16 Kent County libraries to provide meals to children facing hunger during the summer and has recently expanded to four additional counties. Fresh Start provides neighbors in need a social and community context to access nutrition-education resources at food distributions. Finally, the food bank’s most crucial function is as the most costefficient means of gathering and distributing food through its hundreds of agency partners and their own programs, many of which rely on the food bank as their primary source of food. The food bank coordinates with other basic needs organizations to identify circumstances on the ground and informs policymakers of food security conditions. As a partner to the Feeding America national organization, the food bank accesses unmatched data to identify communities at risk of hunger. The food bank also annually surveys agencies to help them overcome challenges. It conducts studies, surveys, and focus groups on its programs. With over 70 active grant agreements and uncountable partnerships, it must generate quantitative data demonstrating its programs’ efficacy while simultaneously turning outward to acquire public knowledge to gain qualitative insight into its clients’ needs. Interviewing its clients is one way the food bank gains insight into their perspectives, but it is rapidly expanding the avenues by which it connects with the communities it serves and includes them in the program-planning process.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin  
**Organization:**  
Feeding America West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** New Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*





## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$18,700,000

**ARPA Request:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Jake Sabourin

**Organization:**

Feeding America West Michigan

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

## Partnership

(Listed in main description)

## Federal Funds Experience

The food bank is the local leader in charitable food in managing federal funds, and increasingly so. In 2020, the food bank received \$3.2 million in revenue via The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), \$4,361 in SFSP funding, \$143,920 through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP, a FEMA-funded program), and \$647,500 through other federal funds. These numbers have continued to increase since then. The food bank expects its 2022 TEFAP distribution figures to be much higher than in previous years. Additionally, the food bank is now starting to take on primary responsibility for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) throughout its service area and anticipates it to be a significant element in its Golden Groceries program going forward. As an example of the food bank’s crucial role in managing federal funds on behalf of charitable food organizations in Kent County, it received \$248,871 in EFSP funding through Phase 39 and ARPA-R, which it allocated among 103 agency partners this year. It is the one organization responsible for determining how EFSP charitable food funds are allocated among these many organizations due to its central role, high-level view, and access to significant data to make decisions that best serve neighbors facing hunger in the County. Other counties in the food bank’s service area have begun to adopt a similar practice, utilizing the food bank’s capacity to allocate federal funds in a responsible way. No other charitable food organization in West Michigan has this capacity or its in-depth knowledge of the needs of the charitable food system. However, due to the field’s increasing reliance on the food bank as the central hub around which West Michigan charitable food operates, it needs to significantly increase its capacity (by relocating to a more appropriate facility) to accommodate its increasingly critical role in the process.

## Studies on Impact

The Governor’s Food Security Council (FSC) Final Report (2022), the Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center’s April 2022 study, “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on U.S. Hunger Relief Organizations,” the PPA study, as well as a variety of other research conducted by the Feeding America National Organization including Map the Meal Gap, and other data collected by the food bank, have all been discussed in depth throughout this application.

## Supporting Documentation

1. [Campaign Donors](#)
2. [Shaffer Design Packet](#)
3. [Annual Report](#)
4. [Letter of Support #1](#)
5. [Letter of Support #2](#)
6. [Letter of Support #3](#)
7. [Letter of Support #4](#)
8. [Nourish Tomorrow Brochure](#)

## Guidehouse Ranking Notes



**Eligibility**



**Sustainability**



**Feasibility**

*Programs that address food insecurity are eligible.*

# PROJECT #294

## Good Food Systems Initiative



### Identify the need for the proposed project

We have partnered with local universities, community resource centers, and clinics to administer surveys and hold focus groups asking about community health and what needs are in the different geographical areas we serve. Food has been a top priority because of the high food insecurity population in Kent County. We also administer surveys quarterly for our Fresh Markets asking if fresh, green, fair, and affordable food is something needed to be sure we stay on track with addressing root cause issues to poverty. Our Refresh Now program administers a baseline survey and a post program survey allowing us to see feedback and what is and what is not working while focusing on food as medicine.

### Brief Description

Refresh Now is a food prescription program housed at two local Kent County health clinics. This program improves health for those working to address a major chronic disease or risk factors for a major chronic disease (examples: Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic renal disease, cancer, major mental health disorder). Refresh Now helps participants increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by offering fresh food vouchers to purchase fresh, locally grown produce, and helps increase knowledge through healthy living classes/community engagement opportunities. Fresh Markets are Access' healthy food retail sites. The Markets offer affordable access to healthy, local produce in an equitable, noncharity setting while supporting the Michigan agricultural economy. The Markets are a hybrid of a corner store and a farmer's market; open year-round, shoppers purchase produce and value-added items at their convenience and can use SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, and veggie vouchers as well as cash or credit. As a resource for grocery shopping, the Fresh Markets increase access to healthy and local food in low-income neighborhoods and are housed within non-profit community centers. Produce is sold at 50% of the retail value, ensuring affordability and the revenue generated goes toward the purchase of additional food. Through both program initiatives we have been able to collaborate with other organizations whose values align with ours.

### Long-Term Benefit

The long-term goal of the Fresh Markets is to create and support thriving local agriculture and economic systems, increase affordable access to healthy food, and encourage authentic community-led initiatives to food access. The long-term goal of Refresh Now is to improve the health of the community, create support for the local healthy food economy, connect clinics to healthy food retail sites, and promote the wisdom of using food as medicine

### Intended Beneficiary

To participate in both programs there are different ways to qualify as a participant but overall both programs serve low income Kent County residents. Specific to Refresh Now, participants are established patients at one of the two clinic sites and must be diagnosed or at high risk for a major chronic illness, be a resident of Kent County, have the ability to commit to the three-month program, and be at least 18 years of age (although the participant's entire family benefits from the fresh food vouchers). Specific to the Fresh Markets, shoppers are low-income residents that are under 300% of the federal poverty guidelines. To ensure that the markets are highly accessible for this population, there is no referral or intake process for acceptance as a market shopper, nor do we collect demographic information from shoppers. The only form of verification is that a shopper will sign a declaration form stating they are below 300% of the poverty line. Shoppers can visit the Market as frequently as they choose and purchase whatever amount they desire, just as in a traditional grocery store. The Fresh Market model prioritizes low barrier to participation because of the foundational belief that the most equitable food access model is a socially normative shopping experience with affordability as the priority. This is supported by the Community Food Survey 2018 (CFS), conducted by the Calvin Center for Social Research which found that "People with a higher income ate more fruits and vegetables than those with a lower income. However, the majority of respondents from all income brackets indicated enjoyment of and desire to eat fresh fruits and vegetables." This finding evidences the inequity in accessibility of healthy food based on income.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$250,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$750,000

**ARPA Request:** \$250,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** McKenzie VanPatten

**Organization:**

Access of West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Existing Project

**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

Current funded organizations are United Methodist Community House, Exalta, and Catherine's Health Center. We also collaborate with the community resource centers across Kent County, Spectrum Health Healthier Communities, and other nonprofit entities.



### Estimated Cost

250,000-750,000

### \*Source of Funding

Not specifically through the county, our organizational long-term funding strategy is multi-pronged. Each of our major programs (Good Food Systems, Poverty Education, and Congregation Connections) has a different funding stream. Good Food Systems is supported by collaborative grants, Poverty Education is revenue earning, and Congregations Connections is supported by congregation donations. We also utilize general individual and corporate donations across our programs, as well as have other small income earning opportunities such as providing trainings, workshops, and speaking engagements. Our three Good Food Systems partners are currently completing their third year of engagement with us and we have guaranteed them three years of pilot funding. We are committed to procuring funding for the sites from mid-2020 to mid-2023. After the three year engagement, each site will be prepared to sustain the programming on their own with diverse financial investment and ability to adapt programming based on their unique assets and lessons learned. Our Good Food Systems funding stream engages a variety of funders, and we have some committed long-term support.

### Project Management Experience

We have housed the pantry network for over 40 years which is a collaborative of all Kent County food pantries. As our work has shifted into equitable solutions we work with many of those individual sites to create institutional change through our Good Food partner collaborative. We are confident in leading and collaborating with many different organizations to carry out the values of our work.

### Federal Funds Experience

We have experience working with federal funds through COVID relief funding and other collaborative funding that we have had to report back on federal dollars.

### Studies on Impact

As mentioned above, we partner with universities and our healthcare system to support our work with evidence based research around food as medicine and health equity.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$250,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$750,000

**ARPA Request:** \$250,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** McKenzie VanPatten

**Organization:**  
Access of West Michigan

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Existing Project

**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

### Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

### Partnership

Current funded organizations are United Methodist Community House, Exalta, and Catherine's Health Center. We also collaborate with the community resource centers across Kent County, Spectrum Health Healthier Communities, and other nonprofit entities.

### Guidehouse Ranking Notes

**Eligibility**

*Food insecurity programs are eligible*

**Sustainability**

*On surface, this appears sustainable inasmuch as it is ongoing (and already exists). Question about what specifically funding will be used for.*

**Feasibility**

# PROJECT #311

## Healthy Food Education



### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$180,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$210,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Nancy Cromley

**Organization:** John Knox  
Community Food Pantry (D.B.A.)  
The Green Apple Pantry)

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

Other sources of funding would come from our supporting church community, individuals and community grants.

### Partnership

Steepletown Neighborhood  
Services

### Identify the need for the proposed project

We are a small food pantry serving SE Kent Co., including Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Caledonia and Wyoming. In the past few years, we have developed many new partnership creating opportunities for food that needs to be gleaned and sorted. Unfortunately, our kitchen is small making this process very difficult. As we move beyond Covid we are looking for was to once again connect with our neighbors and develop programs that support healthy living through nutritious food education. We recognize a need in our community to create opportunities to support youth training through work force development as it pertains to the food industry. A larger commercial kitchen will streamline our ability to sort and glean food, create space for education and make it possible to provide a revenue stream through kitchen rentals.

### Brief Description

This project will address our need for additional space to support our ability to glean and prepare food for our neighbors. It is our intention to offer education and workforce development classes and youth camps to this community. We have worked in partnership with other non-profits to provide youth workforce development in the food industry and would like to expand these relationships. This past year we developed a community garden and would love to expand our education opportunities relating to gardening, canning and healthy cooking classes. A large commercial kitchen would provide a space to address this need. We are also looking at ways to create revenue that supports our pantry. This commercial kitchen could be rented to community members creating opportunities that supports the community needs as well as our fiscal obligations

### Long-Term Benefit

The long-term benefit of this project is to continue to support the nutritional needs of our neighbors. We provide a service to low income and underserved families of this community. With the increase in food and gas prices we are seeing an increase in need for our services, and we know this trend will continue. During these past few years new partnerships have been created requiring additional space for gleaning and preparing food. A commercial kitchen will create a space for education.

### Intended Beneficiary

The intended beneficiary of this project are the neighbors that we serve. Our service area includes SE Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Caledonia and Wyoming. We provide a service to the most vulnerable of our community, those families falling below the federal poverty guidelines, including those facing ALICE obstacles. Kentwood is one of the most diverse communities in the nation, so many of our neighbors are immigrants seeking help to get established. This project will also focus on youth by developing education opportunities that help with workforce development.

### Estimated Cost

\$180,000 - \$210,000





### Project Management Experience

We have not had experiences with managing or leading large county-wide projects. We are a small food pantry that started 35 years ago in a church, and expanded as a stand alone non-profit 3 years ago. We are not a county-wide organization.

### Federal Funds Experience

n/a

### Studies on Impact

n/a

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$180,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$210,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Nancy Cromley

**Organization:** John Knox  
Community Food Pantry (D.B.A.)  
The Green Apple Pantry)

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

Other sources of funding would come from our supporting church community, individuals and community grants.

### Partnership

Steepletown Neighborhood Services

### Guidehouse Ranking Notes



**Eligibility**



**Sustainability**



**Feasibility**

*Eligible as it would address food insecurity*

# PROJECT #136

## Kent County Food Policy Council Food Systems Assessment and Plan



### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$125,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$150,000

**ARPA Request:** \$99,995

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Janelle Vandergrift

**Organization:** Kent County Food Policy Council, a subcommittee of the Essential Needs Task Force

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** New Project  
**Matching Funds:** 26-50%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

\$50,000 from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

### Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

### Identify the need for the proposed project

With the mission to advocate for and promote a local good food system, Kent County Food Policy Council (KCFPC) has identified the need for backbone data needed as baseline for understanding the Kent County food system, as well as form a proactive plan with goal setting to address how Kent County will move toward achieving an equitable local good food system. Having the tools of an Assessment and Plan is critical to the KCFPC's strategic priorities of connecting food system sectors, promoting aligned data and food system understanding, promoting community learning, advocacy, and propelling action.

The need for systemic change in our food system is all too evident in Kent County: a collaborative community food survey, conducted in 2019 by Calvin University Center for Social Research indicated that people desired to eat fresh fruits and vegetables regardless of their income yet were not able to consume fresh produce at the same rate with cost being the primary deterrent for low-income households. Voice Kent data from 2017, gathered by Grand Valley State University's Johnson Center, shows that while the majority of people (78%) can meet their basic needs (water, food, housing, etc.), there are disparities (66% Latinx and 70% Black). According to County Health Rankings and Roadmaps of 2018, only 8% of White children in Kent County live in poverty, yet 34% of Black and Latinx children live in poverty. Finally, a 2016 map of geographic proximity to produce retailers across the county shows that 38% of households in Kent County cannot access to fresh produce retailers within reasonable travel time (thresholds for one-way trip set at 15 minutes walking, 5 minutes driving, 45 minutes by public transportation).

Our food system includes growing and harvesting happening here yet the farmland in our county is in jeopardy: according to the USDA, there were 1010 farms in Kent County in 2017, a 13% decrease from 2012. Further, those farms are overwhelmingly owned by white farmers, with a little under 2% identifying in other racial categories. When it comes to food waste, the Kent County Department of Public Works shares that 35% of what we throw away locally is organic. When food waste goes into a landfill, it breaks down through an oxygen-less process and in turn releases methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. To address issues in our food systems, food policy councils are widely established in communities in Michigan and around the country. In fact, there are 27 councils in Michigan alone – from Detroit to Saginaw to Traverse City and the UP – the Kent County Food Policy Council joined this cohort in the summer of 2021. The Michigan Good Food Charter provides a framework for KCFPC and for exploring what a good food system would be; one that is accessible, equitable, fair, healthy, diverse, and sustainable.

Until the KCFPC came into formal existence in 2021 there was no one entity taking initiative to inform local policy related to food systems, including health equity and food access strategies. Although there exist many organizations focused on food access and health, there has not been a body of representative citizens that proactively receive resident feedback and devise strategy to ensure that goals related to food system areas are implemented and accounted for across Kent County.

In 2018, the Formation Team of the Kent County Food Policy Council implemented a plan for inclusive and equitable community engagement and gathered data to develop policy priorities that represent a wide reach of Kent County residents and food sector stakeholders. This process allowed us to pinpoint food policy priorities as defined by a wide variety of stakeholders: in every session and across surveys, food justice, equity and sovereignty was identified as the highest priority. The council will be able to use this community-driven feedback to develop a policy agenda and initiate efforts that move the county toward a place of sustainable, equitable production, consumption and access to healthy food.



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$125,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$150,000

**ARPA Request:** \$99,995

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Janelle Vandergrift

**Organization:** Kent County Food Policy Council, a subcommittee of the Essential Needs Task Force

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** New Project

**Matching Funds:** 26-50%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

\$50,000 from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

## Brief Description

The Kent County Food Policy Council (KCFPC) is requesting funds to hire a consultant to assist in creating a Food Systems Assessment and a Food Systems Plan. The Assessment will include secondary research cataloging the current landscape of food system policy and activity in Kent County, whereas the Plan will represent resident and community voice in expressing their goals for the county's food system. In utilizing a Food Assessment, the Council will have a tool that represents all current food system, health, and access opportunities. The Assessment will review the Community Health Improvement Plan, the action plans of the Food and Nutrition Coalition, and the work plan of the Healthy Eating, Active Living work group convened by Kent County, in addition to other available resources. Once the Council is equipped with an Assessment containing this information, it will be able to use the research therein to engage with community members to form a relevant Food Systems Plan. The Assessment and resultant Plan will give the Council the research and resident-informed data needed to strategically address current health and food system issues identified by the community and to engage municipalities, institutions, and residents in aligning actions to the goals of the Plan.

## Long-Term Benefit

Kent County needs a clear or unified policy process related to the food system. Positive policies within food system sectors vary widely by municipality, creating confusion and lack of clarity for residents. There are currently no proactive attempts by the city of Grand Rapids or other Kent County municipalities to address targeted food system goals, and the current Master Plan, formed in 2002, noticeably lacks an emphasis on food system objectives for food system transformation.

## Intended Beneficiary

Kent County residents, businesses, agencies, and health systems. Because food is essential for survival and we all eat everyday, the impact of food systems change could affect all of the 650,000 residents of Kent County. While not everyone in the county will feel the direct benefits of this project, the assessment and plan will be particularly focused on 25% of residents who fall into the ALICE population category (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) and the 10% of households who fall below the federal poverty guideline. The ALICE population faces unique challenges with access to food and opportunity in our county.

## \*Partnership

To accomplish this project we would work with a consult agency called New Ventures Advisors. We chose this consultant group based on their experience in conducting a food systems Assessment and Plan at the intersection of food policy with the values of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and equipping/coaching community leadership. As we sought out proposals from consultants we found an immense lack of expertise at this intersection; New Venture Advisors stood out as they provided examples that are structured both in process and in product with the value-set that the KCFPC holds. We are thrilled to consider working with them on a toolkit that will serve Kent County and the City of Grand Rapids for years to come. In addition to our consultant collaboration, the process of creating the Assessment and Plan is collaboration-based. The Assessment will reach out to existing groups, institutions, and individuals to compile research and data related to the current status of food system activity in Kent County. The Assessment will rely on the work that has been done by other groups and the expertise of those involved in the food system. The Food Systems Plan will be created based on input provided by residents via surveying and feedback sessions. KCFPC will establish these groups and connections by utilizing partnerships with the institutional affiliates of Council members, as well as with community organizations. The Council membership has representatives from the sectors of government, health, education, business, non-profit, agriculture, and community members at large, thus the collaborative network and outreach of this group spans the entire county. Council members come from organizations, agencies and businesses including: Spectrum Health, Lindo Mexico, Migrant Legal Aid, H.O.P.E Gardens, Grand Valley State University, Kent County Department of Public Works, HealthNet and Michigan Fitness Foundation.



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$125,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$150,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$99,995

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Janelle Vandergrift  
**Organization:** Kent County Food Policy Council, a subcommittee of the Essential Needs Task Force

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** New Project  
**Matching Funds:** 26-50%

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

\$50,000 from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund

## Partnership

(Listed in main description)

## Estimated Cost

\$125,000-150,000

## Project Management Experience

The Heart of West Michigan United Way (HWMUW) acts as the fiduciary for the Essential Needs Task Force & Kent County Food Policy Council. HWMUW provided grant support for the Covid CARES act funding in 202 and 2021. The Essential Needs Task Force has significant experience convening community organizations, agencies and residents and facilitating systems level conversations.

## Federal Funds Experience

As mentioned, HWMUW provided grand support for the Covid CARES act funding in 2020 and 2021. HWMUW is also fiduciary for the local Continuum of Care and manages multiple US Department of Housing and Urban Development issued grants annually.

## Studies on Impact

Beyond the impetus to achieve a Kent County food system assessment and plan as expressed by Council members, there exists great amount of support for the development and usage of such tools from food system experts: "Just as a long journey is made easier and clearer by using a road map, a community food coalition or policy council's work is greatly enhanced through the guidance of a community food assessment" (Community-Based Food System Assessment and Planning Facilitators Guidebook, 2018, page 1). Other municipalities and regions have also developed food systems plans or policy plans. The San Diego Food System Alliance is currently in a two-year process called Food Vision 2030 that is an inclusive process which engages the full community in research and engagement to develop a vision for their food system. New York City recently released a 10-year policy plan called Food Forward NYC which solicited feedback from the community in developing goals to transform their food system. Douglas County, Kansas, also developed a food systems plan with the support of New Ventures advisors. The plan's goals include action on food waste, equity, support for food workers and entrepreneurs, conservation and improving soil health.

## Supporting Documentation

- [1. Letter of Support #1](#)
- [2. Letter of Support #2](#)

## Guidehouse Ranking Notes



**Eligibility**

*Eligible as it would address food insecurity*



**Sustainability**

*Once the plan is created, additional funding should not be necessary*



**Feasibility**



# PROJECT #310

## Lamoreaux Community Garden



### Identify the need for the proposed project

Nearby apartments and strawberry-box style houses with very little yard space made gardening difficult in the area.

### Brief Description

We have a small garden with several members that work to grow food to provide to local mutual aid projects. We also provide and supply boxes, soil, tray and seeds to folks who cannot travel to the Community Garden.

### Long-Term Benefit

We have a small garden with several members that work to grow food to provide to local mutual aid projects. We also provide and supply boxes, soil, tray and seeds to folks who cannot travel to the Community Garden.

### Intended Beneficiary

The community members that learn more or receive nutritional produce from our mutual aid project.

### Estimated Cost

\$500-\$2000

### Project Management Experience

I have worked in agriculture since 2005, at that time I worked for an organic farm and did so seasonally for 7 seasons on and off. We worked with several surrounding farms from 3 separate counties to coordinate shared cropland/projects.

### Federal Funds Experience

None whatsoever.

### Studies on Impact

There are many! Some that show they reduce crime. Some that show they provide a sense of belonging. And of course there are environmental benefits!

<https://nccommunitygardens.ces.ncsu.edu/resources-3/nccommunitygardens-research/#:~:text=Results%20suggest%20that%20community%20gardens,social%20health%20and%20community%20cohesion.>

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$500

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000

**ARPA Request:** \$500

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Mallory Mckenzie

**Organization:**  
Lamoreaux Community Garden

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Existing Project  
**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

n/a

### Partnership

n/a



## Supporting Documentation

[Additional Information](#)

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$500  
**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$500

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Mallory Mckenzie  
**Organization:**  
Lamoreaux Community Garden

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Existing Project  
**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

### Source of Funding

n/a

### Partnership

n/a

### Guidehouse Ranking Notes

 **Eligibility**

*Eligible as it would address food insecurity*

 **Sustainability**

*Unsure how the money is actually being spent.*

 **Feasibility**

# PROJECT #112

## Providing an incubator/community/demonstration kitchen



### Identify the need for the proposed project

United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM) recognizes a need for an incubator/community/demonstration kitchen space that can accommodate the needs of our neighbors. In 2019, Strategic Growth Group did extensive research for a number of nonprofits, including a heavy focus on UCOM. This research showed that our neighbors had a strong interest in an incubator/community/demonstration kitchen but face unique barriers that restrict them from utilizing other types of kitchens like PreP Space and the Grand Rapids Downtown Market, such as prohibitive costs to use these spaces as well as distance and lack of perceived access. Incubator/community/demonstration kitchens offer well-equipped commercial kitchen facilities for people seeking to grow food businesses. Many of our neighbors have or would like to start small cooking and catering businesses (like making tamales) that would benefit from having a larger kitchen space to create their goods to sell. UCOM empowers our neighbors by supporting them with tools that can help provide a better income revenue stream for their families. These kitchens have proven to be especially powerful solutions for communities whose predominant language is not English, which is a core-segment of individuals that UCOM serves. An area that would allow for transitional work experience in the food and restaurant industry would provide tremendous educational opportunities in the realm of workforce development. Hands-on education in the field of culinary practices and procedures means that neighbors would have opportunities in the food industry with ready to work experience.

Workforce development is a core focus at UCOM. There is a major need for education in industries like food service to provide potential workers with hands-on experience. These educational opportunities help workers gain job skills and training to make them more employable. Neighbors are then able to secure and sustain a job to earn money. An earned income means that neighbors are better able to take care of their families. Job skills that provide ongoing income also benefit individuals mentally and emotionally since they have a reliable and steady means of supporting themselves through acquired skills. Through generous donations from supportive local grocery stores, UCOM is often given large quantities of food that is not always usable for our neighbors due to the amount of the product. UCOM is committed to the concept of food waste recovery and has a goal of utilizing all of the products we receive. An incubator/community/demonstration kitchen will provide the commercial space needed to produce different types of products like soups, breads, salsas and more with leftover fresh food ingredients thereby preventing thousands of pounds of food waste annually. The resultant foods could be sold or distributed to our neighbors. Participants in our classes or individuals using the kitchen as start-up business incubation space would be able to utilize the recovered food items, benefitting their production capabilities and adding potential earned income streams.

A large incubator/community/demonstration kitchen would give UCOM the capacity to expand its nutrition and cooking classes. Adequate kitchen space will allow more neighbors to utilize these programs with the goal of developing entrepreneurship in the food sector. Kitchen upgrades including video camera and projection system, new appliances for varied cooking methods, and other essentials will allow UCOM's cooking classes to expand and flourish. Communal meals provide our neighbors with the opportunity to connect and get to know each other better. The incubator/community/demonstration kitchen would create a space for families and individuals to come together at UCOM, cooking together, utilizing different skill sets, and enjoying a meal together. Not only does this bring community members together, but it also enhances physical, emotional, and mental health by reducing social isolation.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**ARPA Request:** \$2,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Dr. Bruce Roller

**Organization:** United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM)

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:**

Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*



## Brief Description

UCOM proposes to build an incubator/community/demonstration kitchen that would be accessible to our neighbors. A specific focus will be upgrading our appliances to commercial quality that will allow our entrepreneurial neighbors to scale up their food production for business growth. Kitchen upgrades including video camera and projection system, new appliances for varied cooking methods, and other essentials that will allow UCOM's focus on food system workforce development to expand and flourish. The kitchen will include a large space to cook as well as to demonstrate cooking methods. The demonstration area will have seating near a prep table to showcase different healthful, fresh recipes. These cooking classes are an expansion of UCOM's already popular programming. Utilizing this larger space UCOM will, with excess produce and other fresh items, create food products to sell helping to reduce food waste. A ServSafe certified individual will be hired to oversee the kitchen, ensuring safe cooking and sanitation practices. We are currently exploring different partners who would be a good fit for our proposed project. As a social enterprise, the kitchen will be a space both for social impact in workforce development in the food sector, as well as provide streams of earned income for UCOM and the entrepreneurs that utilize the space.

## Long-Term Benefit

This project will provide an area for transitional work experience, offer a next step in the journey of small-scale, food processing infrastructure for entry-level food entrepreneurs, give our neighbors hands-on experience in preparing healthy meals, reduce social isolation, improve mental health, and increase community vibrancy, and minimize food waste by turning excess fresh ingredients into other forms of food that can be sold or given away to our neighbors.

## Intended Beneficiary

Minority, low-income, and immigrant neighbors in our community are the primary intended beneficiaries. Our neighbors will be able to use this kitchen to not only create and sell products for small businesses, but it will allow UCOM to expand our cooking classes to engage the expertise of the community. Facilitating peer-to-peer education as well as formal culinary education for neighbors enhances self-confidence and grows individual-level understanding of the importance of nutritious foods. This in turn supports growth in community health and mitigates illness caused by poor nutrition. Providing a space where neighbors can work together preparing communal meals promotes improved physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing. This incubator/community/demonstration kitchen will also allow our neighbors to connect to other resources like MSU extension courses, since there would now be a space to host those classes. Utilizing their skills, neighbors will teach each other furthering community and a sense of friendship. This education will build good will and promote social wellness which increases community vibrancy.

## \*Partnership

We are currently in the process of identifying community partners that would work with us on this project. This type of kitchen project has been identified by entities throughout Kent County as a viable and important addition to any neighborhood and therefore the opportunities for partnership are numerous. The number of accessible kitchens in Kent County is limited not only to food business entrepreneurs but also to non-profit organizations and other programs looking to rent kitchen space. Partnership ideas include: providing opportunity to Grand Rapids Community College Culinary Program for student placement in community, partnering with StartGarden or SpringGR for placement of graduated business entrepreneurs, hosting a non-profit such as Revive and Thrive for youth-oriented job training, and hosting educational partners such as Spectrum's Culinary Medicine program and MSU Extension educators. UCOM already possesses a vast number of partnerships with local grocers and farms for food sourcing and donations. We are in the process of facilitating neighborhood listening sessions and evaluation of opportunities to ensure that we move forward with the most strategic partnerships while also fulfilling the goals of the ARPA funding. Additionally, we will forge connections with other non-profit commercial kitchens such as the South East Market/WMEAC pilot, New City Neighbors, Amplify GR, and the Center for Community Transformation.

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**ARPA Request:** \$2,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Dr. Bruce Roller

**Organization:** United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM)

## Project Overview

### Funding Group:

Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*





## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**ARPA Request:** \$2,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Dr. Bruce Roller

**Organization:** United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM)

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:**

Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*

## Estimated Cost

Our estimated costs for the program fall into two categories: start-up costs and ongoing costs including funding for potential partner organizations. Our start-up costs for the program are \$750,000. This will include the reconfiguration and expansion of the space in our building to accommodate a commercial kitchen. This will include new energy efficient appliances, kitchen items, video camera and projection system to showcase demonstrations. The ongoing costs and funding for our partner organizations will be \$1,250,000 over a four-year period. This funding includes administrative costs, costs for an employee, licensing, training, inspections, and maintenance for the equipment. Our partnering organization(s) will receive funding through our ongoing costs. We are currently actively searching for partners in this collaboration. The start-up costs and ongoing costs including funding for partner organizations will be a total of \$2 million dollars.

## \*Source of Funding

We have strong relationships with other funding sources and would be able to connect with them about matched funding. The Grand Rapids Community Foundation and Wege Foundation have shown interest in the addition of a community kitchen that would be usable for entrepreneurs as well as educational space. We have also had multiple financial institutions excited about the prospect of a community kitchen which would provide education and job skills training to empower neighbors in their financial journey. Additionally, the kitchen will provide an earned income stream for UCOM as we allocate a portion of kitchen usage time as affordable rental space for entrepreneurs or other non-profits, as well as potentially sell goods created by class participants as a social enterprise. In the development stage, UCOM will determine a goal for earned income over the first 3 years of operations. UCOM plans to ask for funds from The Wege Foundation and the Grand Rapids Community Foundation in the amount of \$200,000 to support operations

## Project Management Experience

UCOM receives funding from the City of Wyoming for our position of Pantry Resource Assistant. Our Pantry Resource Assistant engages with the neighborhood and the community surrounding UCOM with an emphasis on reaching our Spanish speaking neighbors and volunteers. This 4-year grant allows for the Pantry Resource Assistant to manage, recruit, and train volunteers with a particular focus on neighbors impacted by COVID-19 and bilingual neighbors to meet the needs of the community. In addition, this position builds strong relationships with neighborhood groups to create a trusted and safe space. Moreover, they recruit members and plan monthly meetings for an advisory committee where neighbors will be heard and plans will be put in place to meet those identified needs. They also focus on promoting UCOM programming at community forums where more families and individuals can learn about the mission and how UCOM hopes to support the community. Finally, our Pantry Resource Assistant develops, administers, and records results of community satisfaction surveys where we can see what needs UCOM is meeting and where more support is needed. UCOM also partners with several county wide organizations like the Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF), the Employment Services Collaborative (ESC), and the County Wide Pantry Network.

## Federal Funds Experience

UCOM has some experience working with federal funding. We received \$200,000 from a competitive federal grant through ACSET. ACSET works with faith-based organizations like UCOM. Our funding allowed us to work with justice-involved individuals. UCOM's role in the ACSET partnership was to support participants in increasing their employability by providing workshops and tutoring sessions in basic life skills as well as workforce development. The program assisted individuals in putting together resumes and job applications to help secure and retain employment. The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) has provided funding annually for many years. These funds have been routed via Feeding America and UCOM has successfully allocated these monies for pantry support.



## Studies on Impact

In a 2019 study of UCOM done by the Strategic Growth Group (SGG), there was an identified need for an incubator kitchen that would serve minority and immigrant neighbors. A case study of La Cocina California validates the effectiveness of this type of project. La Cocina works to cultivate low-income food entrepreneurs, especially immigrants and minorities. It provides affordable, commercial kitchen space, industry-specific technical assistance, and access to market opportunities and strives to help communities build economic security while leveraging individual skills and passions. The program has successfully helped to launch over 120 businesses. Hot Bread Kitchen of New York is another incubator kitchen that shows the effectiveness of this type of project. Hot Bread Kitchen is a non-profit bakery offering paid, on-the-job culinary training to hard-to-employ immigrants and minorities. Participants are prepared to launch food industry careers through production of breads and baked goods. It also offers an incubator program for food enterprises that includes business. A 4-week culinary training program that provides job skills and work readiness training to Hot Bread Kitchen participants contributes to 100% success rate in hiring.

## Supporting Documentation

[UCOM Pantry Farms Final Report](#)

## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**ARPA Request:** \$2,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Dr. Bruce Roller

**Organization:** United Church Outreach Ministry (UCOM)

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:**

Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



## Guidehouse Ranking Notes



**Eligibility**

*Arguably workforce development or community health. This would partially depend on impacted community.*



**Sustainability**

*Organization has a plan for sustainability.*



**Feasibility**

## Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

## Partnership

*(Listed in main description)*



# PROJECT #15

## Grand Rapids Food Co-op Staffing Support

### Identify the need for the proposed project

Research into the need for food access in central Grand Rapids, study of the cooperative business model and movement, experience with other food co-ops around the country.

### Brief Description

The Grand Rapids Food Co-op is bringing the community together to build a full-service grocery store in the limited food access area of central Grand Rapids. We incorporated in 2016 and currently have almost 400 owner households. We need funding to hire two paid staff positions. An Outreach Coordinator to build our ownership to 800 owners and a Project Manager once we have the store site selected to oversee the buildout. Each owner contributes \$250 as their share, our low income owners contribute \$25 as their share. The rest of the money will come from owner loans, commercial loans, and other grants. The coop will be open to all shoppers. The co-op will support local farmers and producers with an outlet to sell their products. The co-op will empower the community to own their grocery store and have a voice in what it stocks and how it is designed and run.

### Long-Term Benefit

Better food access in central Grand Rapids, an empowered community, a stronger local food web, a sustainable business model of cooperation rather than extraction.

### Intended Beneficiary

The whole county will benefit from this project because it will improve food access and local food sustainability.

### Estimated Cost

Total build out costs will be around \$3 million for a 5,000 SF store.

### Project Management Experience

We are community volunteers backed by expert consultants from the Food Co-op Initiative, Seven Roots, and Columinate. We have been working on this project since 2016, attending yearly conferences, webinars, and doing research. Many of us are professionals in different fields and have had previous business experience in project management, government, marketing, and community building.

### Federal Funds Experience

We have applied for grants previously and are familiar with the process and the reporting.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$3,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$3,000,000

**ARPA Request:** \$200,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Linda Jones

**Organization:**

Grand Rapids Food Co-op

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Existing Project

**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

No

### Partnership

No



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$3,000,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$3,000,000  
**ARPA Request:** \$200,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Linda Jones  
**Organization:**  
Grand Rapids Food Co-op

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Existing Project  
**Matching Funds:** 51-75%

**Eligibility:**   
**Sustainability:**   
**Feasibility:**   
**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

No

## Partnership

No

## Studies on Impact

This recent study from the National Co-op Grocers:  
<https://www.ica.coop/en/media/news/food-co-ops-make-big-difference-us-communities#:~:tex=economic%20impact%20of%20food%20co-ops%20in%20the%20US>.

## Supporting Documentation

[Additional Documentation](#)

## Guidehouse Ranking Notes

 **Eligibility**  **Sustainability**  **Feasibility**

*Location of the store is key - if within a food desert - would be eligible.*

*Lacking guaranteed funding after 2026 though partners were identified*



# PROJECT #188

## Grounding Communities in Local Food: Supporting Farmers and Intergenerational Education



### Identify the need for the proposed project

Food redlining has had detrimental effects on long-term health, social and economic outcomes in Kent County. Collaborative community-based efforts have been successful in reducing barriers to food access and improving economic stability around social determinants of health. Many of the low-income residents on the SE and SW side are afflicted with food access issues that culminate in chronic health problems such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension that only worsened during the pandemic. These chronic health concerns are symptoms of the generational wealth gap experienced by Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) in these areas, beginning with land theft from these groups over generations. The COVID-19 pandemic widened this wealth gap, as it disproportionately affected BIPOC residents, who had higher rates of mortality. Many BIPOC growers in GR have the knowledge, experience, and culture to create an effective solution to food access and health issues that plague their communities. Food accessibility in the southeast area of Grand Rapids is scattered, consisting mainly of convenience stores, small grocers and occasional farmers markets. Fresh foods are not regularly available in quantities that are required for adequate nutrition. South East Market was birthed in the pandemic in response to these alarming social disparities and vision to create a more equitable and sustainable local food system in West Michigan. They source first from priority growers (Black, brown, Indigenous, local and women led businesses and farms). Through their grassroots model, they have identified the economic and financial barriers BIPOC farmers face. Urban agriculture is one of the best ways for us to transform our soil, empower neighbors and increase access to healthy food with transparency in frontline communities. Due to rising land costs during the pandemic, it has become increasingly difficult for beginning farmers to find stable land to build infrastructure for their businesses. The average cost per acre in Kent county is \$6,000, which is ~\$1,000/acre higher than the national average. This project is needed in our county This project is needed in our county in order to support the career development of these beginning farmers, and ensure a stable local food system for generations to come.

### Brief Description

This project aims to increase the number of priority growers (female, queer and people of color) within the workforce of West Michigan, through access to land, education and funding. This is a collaboration between GR Parks and Rec, Freedom School, Southeast Market, the West Michigan Farmers of Color Land Fund, WORMIES Vermicompost, and the West Michigan Environmental Action Council. We aim to activate more green spaces with education-centered community gardens, with children's enrichment programs through Freedom School that liberate minds through urban agriculture, movement, mindfulness, and ethnic studies. Through partnership with Wormies Vermicomposting, we would offer not only education about composting, but space for food waste to be processed. One of these gardens benefits an estimated 200 community members each summer from education and food produced there, while beautifying the neighborhood. In addition, we hope to increase the number of priority growers by creating a tool library for shared use among beginning food producers, providing financial support to at least 10 farmers to have secure land for growing, creating jobs in this field for farmers and farmworkers, and mobilizing food grown through urban agriculture.

### Long-Term Benefit

We strive to strengthen West Michigan's local food system by securing land for beginning farmers, doing soil remediation, and creating career opportunities in farming. These projects will engage diverse communities with the land, provide employment and cultural education. These opportunities will improve quality of life by creating safer, more vibrant neighborhoods, and a space for food waste through the vermicomposting program, while providing intergenerational education opportunities.

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,500,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$5,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Alita Kelly

**Organization:** South East Market

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

n/a

### Partnership

Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Dept; Power to the People 616; Wormies Vermicompost; West Michigan Environmental Action Council; South East Market; West Michigan Chapter of National Young Farmers Coalition



## Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,500,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$5,000,000

## Submitter Info

**Name:** Alita Kelly

**Organization:** South East Market

## Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Community Health

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** No

**Eligibility:** 

**Sustainability:** 

**Feasibility:** 

**Impact:** 

## Source of Funding

n/a

## Partnership

Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Dept; Power to the People 616; Wormies Vermicompost; West Michigan Environmental Action Council; South East Market; West Michigan Chapter of National Young Farmers Coalition

## Intended Beneficiary

People across generations who want to improve their health, wellness and education, especially for people of color and those with an interest in producing food for their community. This will benefit all residents of West Michigan in the long run by increasing the number of food producers, therefore making fresh, local food sourcing more reliably available.

## Estimated Cost

\$2.5 - 5 million (increases with the number of parks we can build on, and the number of farmers we can support).

## Project Management Experience

The West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC) has completed several regional environmental reports and projects, including Climate Change Resilience Report for the City of Grand Rapids, the Lower Grand River Water Trail Report. Our partners from WMEAC are currently overseeing projects funded by Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EPA NPS 319 federal pass-through). Other projects and initiatives include regional voter education, low-impact development projects, primary and secondary education programs, and sustainable homeowner education.

## Federal Funds Experience

USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production funding FY 2021 EGLE 319 (Non-point Source Pollution) Coastal Management Program [State passthrough] Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

## Studies on Impact

In 2016, USDA's Economic Research Service published a comprehensive study of farmland ownership, tenure, and transfer in U.S. agriculture. While the US loses 2,000 acres of farmland to development daily, and 40% of farmland is leased and insecure, we hope to keep our corner of Michigan an equitable food and farming center. The USDA Food Access Research Atlas shows that as a result of historic planning, the neighborhoods in Southeast Grand Rapids now consists of 60% Black, 14% Hispanic (total population of 4,842 per 2020 est.). More than 40% of the area population fall below the poverty line, and have been identified as having low access to fresh foods. A study published in the National Library of Medicine evaluates the impact of urban gardens on nutrition and healthy food beliefs. It found that urban gardening has been proven to positively influence stress reduction outcomes, foster social cohesion while providing participants the opportunity to build social networks and connect to their community. In a study published by Cambridge University, a systematic review of urban gardens found that they create increased fruit and vegetable consumption and overall community health.

## Guidehouse Ranking Notes

 **Eligibility**

*Greenspace and action against food insecurity are eligible, pending location and program design*

 **Sustainability**

*Does not include a funding plan or fund availability after expending all the ARPA dollars.*

 **Feasibility**

# PROJECT #231

## No-till drill rental program for Kent County to support a sustainable agriculture industry transition



### Identify the need for the proposed project

Kent Conservation District works to support farmers in addressing natural resource concerns caused by their farming operation such as soil erosion, water pollution, plant disease and pest pressure, and air pollution—while helping them meet their bottom line. The recent near doubling of fuel and fertilizer prices has been economically catastrophic for farmers, in some cases forcing selling of land, liquidation of equipment, or laying off staff. At the same time, soil erosion, soil degradation, and unstable precipitation from climate change threaten the long-term sustainability of many farms. Our 5-year county-wide Conservation Needs Assessment (2022), which had responses from 73 farmers and farm technicians, identified soil erosion, soil health, and water quality as the three most urgent resource concerns in Kent County's agricultural sector. The no-till seed drill is an essential tool for landowners looking to keep soil from blowing or washing away, and operating their farms using best management practices that reduce non-point source pollution. Using a no-till drill to plant crops can benefit farmer's bottom line and the environment, as it can cut fuel costs by more than 5 times, reduce erosion, and build soil health and productivity long-term, especially when paired with cover crops and good soil management practices. Despite these benefits, we estimate that less than 30% of farmers use this technology in Kent County. Barriers to using no-till technology include upfront equipment cost—which can range from (\$40,000 to >\$100,000), lack of understanding of how to operate the drill or its benefits, resistance to new technologies, and soil/weather conditions on some farms. For farmers and their farmland to benefit from this technology, these barriers are often too large to overcome. We can help remove these barriers by providing an affordable no-till drill rental program and the technical assistance to help farmers use and understand it. We receive several inquiries each year regarding no-till drill availability.

### Brief Description

KCD intends to purchase a no-till seed drill and start a no-till rental and training program for Kent County farmers. This grant would fund the purchase of a no-till drill and make it available to producers throughout the county. The program will emulate other successful conservation district programs which require a small rental fee for equipment maintenance. This year, KCD, through the Rogue River Watershed Partners received a 1-year \$40,000 watershed support grant from EGLE to create a Buffer and No-till Campaign in the Rogue River watershed. \$25,300 of this grant is earmarked to purchase a no-till drill and promote its use. Unfortunately, that amount is insufficient as the cheapest adequate seed drill we have been able to find is \$45,000. Equipment also requires an operator, maintenance, storage, and insurance. Promotion and training can also be expensive, as it requires knowledgeable technical staff, events, and marketing. Our staff is up for these tasks, and we have already identified experienced no-till farmers who are willing to support with training, operation, and maintenance. Cost is the only barrier to creating this much-needed program. ARPA funds, paired with EGLE funds, would allow us to purchase an adequate no-till drill, cover costs to market the program, and ultimately set up a self-sustaining service to the farming community that will enable innovative and skilled farmers, while addressing environmental challenges that the industry faces in the long-term.

### Long-Term Benefit

Local agriculture is essential for the long-term resilience of Kent County's economy and public health. Rising prices combined with degradation of land from soil erosion and climate change threaten the sustainability of local farms. No-till farming integrates soil, water, and fuel conservation. Surpassing current cost and knowledge barriers is necessary for farmers to transition to this more sustainable and cost-effective practice, for the longevity of Kent County's agricultural industry.

### Intended Beneficiary

Farmers in Kent County (training, new equipment, improved soils), County Drain Commission (reduced sediment loads), county residents (cleaner air and water)

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$40,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$70,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Joel Betts

**Organization:**  
Kent Conservation District

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 76% or greater

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

Rogue River Watershed Partners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited, Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds



### Estimated Cost

\$40,000-\$70,000

### \*Source of Funding

We have an EGLE 319 grant for \$40,000 which has \$25,300 earmarked for the no-till drill and related outreach. We also have grants from the MAEAP program and conservation district operational grants that cover our staff’s time devoted to this as match, valuing between \$10,000 and \$40,000, depending on time devoted to the program. We estimate that the drill would cost \$45,000, and together with cost of maintenance, insurance, storage, marketing, and farmer operator/trainer fees the total cost could be between \$65,000 and \$95,000 for 2022-2026.

### Project Management Experience

Kent Conservation District was established in 1947 to protect the county’s natural resources. We have decades of experience in successfully implementing county wide grants (such as our Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program, MAEAP) and administering USDA NRCS Farm Bill Program dollars across the county. Our invasive species strike team is recognized as a county leader in the treatment of invasive species, as the district has been part of a regional effort to control invasive species since 2006. We have hosted numerous grants and projects, and currently have more programs than ever before as priority and demand for conservation work continues to grow. We have 6 full time staff and additional parttime staff, and are supervised by a board of directors, giving us the capacity to manage and lead large county-wide projects.

### Federal Funds Experience

Kent Conservation District has been awarded and successfully managed two EE EPA grants and a National Fish and Wildlife funded agricultural engineer (SOGL). We currently administer two National Association of Conservation District grants (USDA funded). Our District’s Conservation Technical Assistance grant administers USDA NRCS Farm Bill Program dollars across the county

### Studies on Impact

No-till farming saves money and improves productivity in the long term (Cusser et al, 2020), improves soil health (Blanco-Canqui 2020), reduces emissions (Hollinger et al. 2005), and captures carbon (Bernacchi et al. 2005) when compared to conventional tillage. It is a commonly used planting practice, especially for grains and cover crops in Kent County, and is increasingly being adopted on US farms (Horowitz 2010). Dozens of conservation districts have hosted successful no-till drill rental programs, with several in Michigan. Individual program reporting has shown that these programs help with no-till adoption (Forster & Rausch 2002), but no summative research has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs at scale. References: Blanco-Canqui (2020). In Notill Farming Systems for Sustainable Agriculture (pp. 233-249 Bernacchi et al. (2005). Global Change Biology, 11(11), 1867-1872. Cusser et al. (2020). Global Change Biology, 26(6), 3715-3725. Forster et al. (2002). Journal of environmental quality, 31(1), 24-31. Hollinger et al. (2005). Agricultural and Forest Meteorology, 130(1-2), 59-69. Horowitz et al. (2010). (No. 1476-2016-120976).

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$40,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$70,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Joel Betts

**Organization:**  
Kent Conservation District

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Economic Innovation and Workforce Development

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Expanded Project

**Matching Funds:** 76% or greater

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

### Source of Funding

(Listed in main description)

### Partnership

Rogue River Watershed Partners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited, Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds





### Guidehouse Ranking Notes

**Eligibility**

**Sustainability**

**Feasibility**

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$40,000  
**Maximum Cost:** \$70,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Joel Betts  
**Organization:**  
Kent Conservation District

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Economic Innovation and Workforce Development  
**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition  
**Project Status:** Expanded Project  
**Matching Funds:** 76% or greater

**Eligibility:**

**Sustainability:**

**Feasibility:**

**Impact:**

*Not a government service - not eligible under revenue replacement. Individuals or communities served is not clear or does not align with Treasury guidelines' definition of 'impacted' or 'disproportionately impacted'.*

*Kent Conservation District has the staff to handle this project*

### Source of Funding

*(Listed in main description)*

### Partnership

Rogue River Watershed Partners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited, Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds

# PROJECT #279

## Purchase of Development Rights Funding



### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Denny Heffron

**Organization:** Agricultural Preservation Board

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Existing Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

Community foundations who have looked to Kent County PDR investment previously but withdrew funding when the County was no longer funding PDR from the General Fund.

### Partnership

Frey Foundation, Steel Case, Kent County Farm Bureau

### Identify the need for the proposed project

The rate of farmland loss and the sprawling development pattern it encourages is well documented. As the price of farmland increases, more farmers will find continuing this tradition financially impossible, exiting the business and creating a cascading effect on the agriculture industry as well as its aligned business such as food and hospitality. Relatedly, this will encourage other, non-farm developments, on existing farmland that will contribute to sprawling development, increased traffic, burdening schools and other public services.

### Brief Description

Allocate \$2 million to the GRCF PDR fund for purchasing preservation easements on prime and unique farmland in Kent County to be matched by other groups. Use these funds to purchase an estimated 2000 acres by leveraging state and federal funds. Further, these funds can be combined with area foundations who can match by giving to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and grow the Purchase of Development Rights Endowment.

### Long-Term Benefit

The long-term benefits are a thriving and protected agriculture vertical supply chain, stormwater capture, carbon capture, and protect natural habitats. As well as a continuing legacy of the agricultural heritage of Kent County, a readily accessible and local food supply that can be found at local stores, restaurants, and farmers markets.

### Intended Beneficiary

Local farmers are the primary beneficiaries.

### Estimated Cost

\$2,000,000.00

### Project Management Experience

The County already secures and monitors conservation easements as well as connects with area foundations.

### Federal Funds Experience

The County already applies, processes, and maintains federal grants for Purchase of Development Rights conservation easements

### Studies on Impact

Yes, a Texas A&M report shows economic contribution, water and biodiversity protection, and the ability to curb suburban sprawl when land is protected.



### Guidehouse Ranking Notes



Eligibility



Sustainability



Feasibility

### Project Cost

**Minimum Cost:** \$2,000,000

**Maximum Cost:** \$2,000,000

*Not an eligible use of ARPA funds.*

### Submitter Info

**Name:** Denny Heffron

**Organization:** Agricultural Preservation Board

### Project Overview

**Funding Group:** Quality of Life

**Project Theme:** Food and Nutrition

**Project Status:** Existing Project

**Matching Funds:** 0-25%

**Eligibility:**



**Sustainability:**



**Feasibility:**



**Impact:**



### Source of Funding

Community foundations who have looked to Kent County PDR investment previously but withdrew funding when the County was no longer funding PDR from the General Fund.

### Partnership

Frey Foundation, Steel Case, Kent County Farm Bureau