

March 11, 2020

Dear Professor Silver and students,

Thank you for inviting Food For Free to apply to the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course Grant. We feel that Food For Free is a strong fit with your stated mission, to support organizations that demonstrate passion for decreasing the opportunity divide by providing resources to help people overcome adversity.

Food For Free is a Cambridge-based non-profit hunger-relief organization founded in 1981 serving several communities in Greater Boston.

Food For Free improves access to healthy food within our community by rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste, strengthening the community food system, and creating new distribution channels to reach underserved populations. We envision a future where everyone in our community, regardless of age, income or ability, has consistent access to fresh, healthy, delicious food.

We are writing to request \$10,000 from the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course. This grant will help support our programs that fill a unique niche in the local emergency food system. Our programs focus on fresh produce and healthy prepared foods. We keep food in the community by working with farmers to recapture what they cannot sell and with universities to repurpose their cafeteria surplus. We deliver, making it possible for small programs to provide nutrition they otherwise could not. We tailor our services to the needs of each program, whether that is fruit for an afterschool program, or easy-to-prepare foods for homeless families sheltered in a motel. By supporting Food For Free, the Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course will help us increase access to healthy food for the low-income individuals we serve.

Should you have any questions about our request, you can reach me by phone at 617-868-2900 or via email at sarakimmel@foodforfree.org. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Sara Kimmel
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Plan for Utilizing Funds

We are requesting this grant to support general operating costs for our programs. Food For Free operates several programs to increase access to healthy food for underserved populations, including Food Rescue and Distribution, Home Delivery, Family Meals, Weekend Backpack Programs, School Markets, Transportation Partnership and Field of Greens. These programs fill gaps in the emergency food system and make it easier for families to access food in the places they live, work, learn, and play.

Food Rescue and Distribution collects food that would otherwise be wasted and distributes it to community-based food programs, schools, and other organizations that reach low-income families. Today, we distribute to 110 food programs in 10 Greater Boston communities, reaching more than 30,000 people. Last year we distributed 2.2 million pounds of food to members of our community in need, equal to 1.7 million meals. Of this, 2 million pounds was rescued food that might otherwise have been discarded.

Home Delivery brings healthy groceries to over 160 low-income seniors and people with disabilities, who are unable to access food pantries due to chronic illness or disability.

Family Meals repackages rescued prepared food into heat-and-eat meals for people who face barriers to cooking for themselves. Last year we produced 27,500 meals created with rescued prepared food from corporate, hospital, and university dining halls. We distributed these meals to community colleges, K-12 schools, transitional housing programs, and other community programs.

Our **School Markets** offer families a monthly, easily accessible way to pick up free groceries when picking their kids up from school. We now support eight School Markets, with plans to expand to 21 over the next three years.

Last year, our **Cambridge and Somerville Weekend Backpack Program** reached over 900 young students, sending them home with breakfasts, lunches, and snacks each weekend during the school year. In 2019, we expanded into the summertime, working with five camps in Cambridge and Somerville to reach about 300 kids. This pilot was successful, and we plan to expand on it in 2020.

Our **Transportation Partnership** picks up and delivers Greater Boston Food Bank orders for 12 food programs that lack their own transportation.

Field of Greens is Food For Free's own small farm, hosted by Lindentree Farm, in Lincoln, MA. Our farm grows vegetables for Pine Street Inn's guests and culinary arts training program.

Other Sources of Funding

Food For Free has a diverse funding stream, including grant revenue from private and corporate foundations, events, individual contributions both large and small, and government grants and contracts.

Short-term and Long-term Goals

Our program goals for the upcoming year and long-term future are as follows:

Food Rescue and Distribution

- Provide food for (at least) 110 food programs over the course of the year
- Rescue 2 million pounds of food. Distribute 2.2 million pounds of food (includes rescued, purchased, and other)

Home Delivery

- Deliver healthy grocery boxes to 160-165 residents in need twice a month

Family Meals

- Expand prepared food donor and recipient sites with a goal of having the capacity to make 100,000 meals by the end of fiscal year.

School Markets

- Expand from 8 to 21 school markets within 2 the next years

Backpack Program

- Build on the success of last year's summer pilot programming by extending the Backpack Programs into the summer months.

Why Our Staff Are Passionate About Food For Free

Our staff care deeply about the members of our community and strongly believe that healthy food is a human right. It is easy to feel excited to work for an organization that for almost 40 years, has been embedded in the local community successfully working in partnership with social service agencies, corporations, government, schools and volunteers to ensure that all people, regardless of age, income or ability can access healthy, fresh, delicious food.

As I write this grant, the world is in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Watching my leadership team and colleagues respond to this challenge has been one of the most inspiring experiences of my life. In a short time, under tremendous pressure, I witnessed Food For Free staff come together with flexible, inventive, safe and effective strategies to help meet the food security needs of students who were suddenly without school lunches, elderly neighbors, and other vulnerable community members who could not get to the grocery store safely.

In addition to the passion I generated by my colleagues, I am equally inspired by how our community supports Food For Free. In our attempt to meet the sudden needs associated with COVID-19, we put out a call for volunteers. In a week's time we had almost 2,000 people sign up to volunteer and help us bring food to our community. I feel honored to work for an organization that so clearly has earned to trust or the community it serves.

Impact on Local Community

Below, please find some examples of how our community members describe the impact of Food For Free on their lives or organizations.

In 2019, Food For Free's Food Rescue and Distribution program distributed 2.2 million pounds of food to members of our community in need. This is equal to 1.7 million meals. Of this, 2 million pounds was rescued food that might otherwise have been discarded. We reached 30,000 people in partnership with over 100 food programs. Comments from our partners describe the impact of this program.

- *If East End House didn't have a relationship with Food For Free we might not have had the resources to provide Cambridge residents with an Emergency Pantry service.—East End House Emergency Food Pantry*
- *Food For Free allows us to provide a healthy fresh meal. In past years we would serve canned vegetables and instant potatoes. Now we serve fresh fruits and vegetables with every meal. This makes our diners feel respected—like we've gone out of our way to make the meal really special for them.—Faith Kitchen, Cambridge*
- *Receiving Food For Free impacts our program by enabling us to serve fresh fruit and vegetables to our young people. We are able to enhance our meals, snacks and have fresh fruit for our children available throughout the week because of your weekly donation. Young people in our*

program are learning that fresh fruit is an ideal option when they are looking to have a snack throughout the day.—Community Art Center

Our Family Meals program produced 27,500 meals created with rescued prepared food from corporate, hospital, and university dining halls. We distributed these meals to community colleges, K-12 schools, transitional housing programs, and other community programs. The impact of this program is described by our recipient partners.

- *For years, Food For Free has been an esteemed partner of On The Rise helping us to provide essential food support to hundreds of homeless and formerly-homeless women in our Safe Haven. Last month, we began receiving Family Meal packages from Food For Free in part to help fill food benefit gaps in the aftermath of the government shutdown. These additional resources filled a critical need, and we will continue to offer them to women who come to our door in a food crisis.*— Delphene Mooney, Director of Development & Communications, On The Rise
- *Food insecurity is campus-wide concern. Food For Free is an additional resource allowing us to provide multiple meals to approximately 110 students a month*—Kristine Larkin, Bunker Hill Community College Single Stop, Charlestown

Our Home Delivery program delivered groceries twice a month, made up of at least 50% fresh produce, to over 160 clients each month. These clients are low-income residents and eligible to use the Cambridge Food Pantry Network but who are unable to do so due to illness or disability. Surveys have found that:

- 69% of clients report eating fresh fruit daily while in the program, compared to 26% before the program
- 57% of clients report eating fresh vegetables daily, compared to 32% before the program
- 45% of clients report “never” having to skip meals while in the program, compared to 25% before the program

Many clients noted the program’s effect on their eating habits, saying things like:

- *“I am able to eat more regularly, and eat veggies regularly.”*
- *“It has given me more healthy choices”*
- *“You make me more independent.”*
- *“[The program] makes you want to cook.”*
- *“Your deliveries make the difference between me eating produce at all...”*
- *“I feel more secure and happy knowing I can get something in my kitchen to eat.”*

Field of Greens, our small farm, supplied Pine Street Inn with over 5,000 pounds of vegetables. This increases the amount of fresh produce they provide to their guests and use in their job training program.

- *At Pine Street Inn, the health and wellbeing of our guests is a priority. Many of our guests are dealing with a variety of health issues such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. Food that we receive from Food For Free ensures that we are providing a variety of nutritious items as part of our meals service.*— Jack Nolan, Pine Street Inn, Boston

As I previously mentioned, I am writing this grant during our response to the COVID-19 crisis. Food For Free has dramatically impacted our community in a short amount of time during tough challenges.

- Within 4 days we delivered groceries to over 1,100 Cambridge homes and supported deliveries to over 300 Somerville homes

- We've supported distribution of 400-500 meals (breakfast and lunch) to Cambridge students every day this week
- We've responded to dozens of universities, corporations, and restaurants, making sure their surplus food doesn't go to waste
- We developed protocols that included safety guidelines for the health and safety of those volunteering, as well as the community members we serve.

What Makes Us Distinct

Food For Free believes that it is important to meet community members where they are. Our philosophy is that hungry people shouldn't have to go where there is food; healthy food should be available to all people where they live.

Since 1981, Food For Free has filled a unique niche in the local emergency food system. We focus on fresh produce and healthy prepared foods. We keep food in the community by working with farmers to recapture what they cannot sell and with universities to repurpose their cafeteria surplus. We deliver, making it possible for small programs to provide nutrition they otherwise could not. We tailor our services to the needs of each program, whether that is fruit for an afterschool program, or easy-to-prepare foods for homeless families sheltered in a motel. And we collaborate, working in partnership with schools, businesses, and other non-profits to meet emerging community needs.

Food For Free's goal is to ensure that everyone, regardless of income or ability, has the opportunity to eat a healthy, balanced diet. By supporting Food For Free, The Framingham State University Nonprofit Giving Course Grant, will help us make this possible for the low-income individuals we serve.

Thank you for considering our request.