



**Vernon County Community Grant Program**

**GRANT APPLICATION**

*Economic Development,  
Tourism, and/or Community  
Enhancement*

Amount of grant funds requested (up to \$5000) \$5000 Requested

Facility Upgrade - Living Faith Food Pantry March 15, 2019

Project Title

Date Submitted

Living Faith Food Pantry (a ministry of Living Faith Church)

Name of Organization

209 Sands Rd, Viroqua, WI 54665

Organization Address

City, State, Zip

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• Dale Toltzman, Pastor / Director

Name & Title of Contact person regarding this application

608 542 0581 dtoltzman@gmail.com

Phone

Email

Living Faith Food Pantry (LFFP) is a community outreach ministry of Living Faith Church which has addressed the food insecurity needs of the Viroqua area for 25 years. We have established an array of volunteer, food source, and financial partners that has generated a one-hundred percent community funded budget and an all volunteer work force. LFFP distributes 6,000 pounds of food each week to 160 area households and has been recognized by Second Harvest Food bank as a leader in the distribution of fresh produce.

**Describe the proposed project in detail, including goals and objectives.**

- o How does this project/activity/event advance one or more of the focus areas of Economic Development, Tourism, and/or Community Enhancement?

The extensive Food Pantry facility and equipment upgrade will advance the economic development of Vernon County by assisting people in the work force that are marginally employed or in low pay jobs to maintain their families and homes until better opportunities become available. The Pantry also supports new residents to the area, allowing for food assistance to off-set financial stress until they can develop new businesses or become fully integrated into the work force.

LFFP also enhances the community by offering food assistance to people on fixed incomes, those facing underemployment, people caring for an ill family member, or those overwhelmed by unexpected medical expenses. In short the Pantry provides a safety net for households threatened by many difficult circumstances.

Finally, LFFP's establishment of partnerships also benefits the community by making use of locally grown produce that would ordinarily be discarded. This area is advanced in the development of community supported agriculture, where growers contract with households for a box of produce each week. However, when their contracts are filled and there is no market for what is left, Community Hunger Solutions (CHS) collects this surplus and distributes it to Food Pantries. We receive roughly 800 pounds of fresh produce each week from CHS that would ordinarily be thrown away. Finally, we have a local farmer that collects the waste that the Pantry generates to feed his pigs. He regularly donates pork to the pantry for distribution.

- o Discuss the community need for the project, the benefits for the community as a result of the project and the community support of the project?

Participation in the Pantry has grown by 20% annually for the last five years, which has created stress on capacity of our existing design. Every area of the facility, entry / waiting processes. storage space, refrigeration capacity, and service areas are deficient in continuing to provide quality service to our clients. These inefficiencies place a lot of stress on the patrons and volunteer work force. In 2018 the growth rate was only 5%, primarily due to long wait times, inadequate waiting areas, and difficult access to restrooms.

The facility and equipment upgrade would allow the Pantry to address the aforementioned deficiencies, increasing our ability to serve those who genuinely need this support. In addition, the Pantry needs to consider its ability to serve a large influx of demand in the case of an economic downturn. Even with recent reports of a growing US economy, all projections from Hunger Relief Organizations forecast an increasing need for food assistance in the future. The planned facility upgrade would be in a position to respond to this growing need. Many low income households do not have the financial reserves to weather the increases in transportation costs and medical expenses. The Pantry continues to provide needed support to economically deprived and depressed residents.

- o Include the target population and the expected number of people this project/program/event will reach.

Our two distribution programs offer a broad range of eligibility that supports the working poor, marginally employed, disabled, people on fixed incomes, medically impoverished, and other underserved groups. We serve on average 160 households each week (approx 500 individuals). In 2018 LFFC served 17,904 people (8,137 adults, 3,606 seniors, and 6,161 children), with a monthly turnover rate of six percent.

Our ability to respond to a growing need is inhibited at present by the lack of a waiting room, long service lines, two hour service times, difficult access, and limited access to restroom facilities. Our planned expansion would allow a 50 percent increase in participation.

- o How would project raise the visibility of Vernon County and your community?

Living Faith Food Pantry is currently seen as a leader in the distribution of fresh produce, an opportunity that is a direct result of Vernon County's thriving agricultural community. By offering this fresh produce to individuals that normally struggle with this dietary option due to financial challenges, we demonstrate compassion as a community. Area partners such as Organic Valley, Cakery, Community Hunger Solutions, and Harmony Valley are recognized as key supporters of LFFP's mission. Continued support for a modern, updated facility demonstrates that this county recognizes and addresses the need of the economically disadvantaged.

- o How will you measure the impact of the project if the goals and objective were reached?

The only direct and obvious measure of attaining our goals is in tracking patron usage. However, knowing the people we serve, we are convinced that unless our target population receives this support, there would be a detrimental impact on the county. Undoubtedly, there would be an increase in demand for additional county support systems without the provision of hunger relief through LFFP. Additionally, the expansion of our facility would allow for us to consider additional support service options.

- o What is your timeline for your project?

- 2-26-19 We hired an architect to begin drawing plans.
- 4-1-19 Architechural plans will be submitted to the State for approval.
- 5-1-19 Bids will be back from contractors to establish a firm project cost.
- 6-1-19 Grant writers will begin supmitting grant applications.  
The "Friends of the Pantry" Committee will kick off the capital campaign.
- 8-1-19 Begin lining up in-kind donations of labor and services related to the project.
- 10-1-19 Negotiations with our renters regarding space considerations in our warehouse.
- 10-1-19 Preliminary modifications will begin on the warehouse.
- 1-1-20 Warehouse space will be available to begin construction.
- 5-1-20 The new facility will be fully operation (there will be no disruption of service during construction).

We anticipate an increase in usage of 20 – 30% the first year in these upgraded facilities, with 10-15 percent growth each year for the next several years. We maintain detailed usage records for our partner organizations from which we can measure results.

- o Will you be utilizing local resources and other Vernon County businesses services and products?

We fully expect to establish contracts with local electrical, plumbing, and HVAC providers for the technical labor. Other basic construction materials will be purchased locally. We have a large base of community support and we expect to find local contractors that will donate all or a portion of their services to a worthy cause. We we may have to go outside of the county for the construction and installation of the walk-in refrigeration units.

- o How would or does this project include community partners?

We have formed a "Friends of the Pantry" leadership committee to work with the community to establish support partnerships. A twenty-five year history of community support from local banks, service groups, churches, businesses, and individuals assures us that this project will draw these relationships. The "Friends" have established a full calendar of public relations and fundraising events for the for the Food Pantry for both ongoing operational support and the capital campaign for this project.

- o Does the project have commitment of match with either in-kind donation of materials or volunteer hours, or with dollars? Please explain.

We receive over 5,000 hours of volunteer labor for the operation of the pantry each year and we anticipate a similar response to this construction project. We have commitments from area builders / carpenters for donated or in-kind labor for general construction. We have soon receive a check from from Second Harvest for a \$5,000 Capacity Building Grant and a local church has promised another \$2,000. We recently received first time support from the Lions Club for \$1,000 and from the Viroqua Food Co-op for \$1,182, with offers of an interest in a long term partnership. This community's historical support assures us that it will respond to this need for a facility and equipment upgrade.

- O Breakdown of Estimated Budget for project (attached).

# Living Faith Food Pantry

## Budget for the Facility and Equipment Upgrade

The budget is based upon square footage projections from our Architect on similar structures and on the preliminary bids on the walk-in refrigeration units. Architectural drawings will be completed by early April and bids by early May to establish a firm project budget.

Plans, permits, and fees	4,500
General Construction	35,000
Heating and Cooling	20,000
Plumbing	25,000
Electical	20,000
Walk-in Refrigeration	75,000
Equipment	5,000
Project Total	<u>\$185,000</u>

**NAMES & SIGNATURES OF 3 SUPPORTING COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**\*\*Also required is 1 letter of support from local government (please attach to application)**

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Print Name and Signature

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Print Name and Signature

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Print Name and Signature

**Approval from Applicant Organization**

I approve submission of this grant request and certify that the purpose of this request is charitable and that monies received from the Vernon County Tourism Promotion and Economic Development Committee will be used solely for the project stated in this application.

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Print Name and Signature Date

**Email Grant application on or before March 15, 2019 to Economic Development Coordinator Christina Dollhausen at [christina.dollhausen@vernoncounty.com](mailto:christina.dollhausen@vernoncounty.com) or drop off or mail to:  
Christina Dollhausen, Vernon County Economic Development Coordinator  
400 Court House Square St – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Viroqua, WI 54665**