



6580 Valley Center Drive | Suite 124 | Radford, VA 24141 | 540-639-9313

April 10, 2020

N R V R C . O R G

Matthew Weaver
VA Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Weaver,

This Letter of Intent is to seek support from the Community Development Block Grant program to expand and sustain Live Work Eat Gather's [Neighbors in Need pilot program](#) through the extent of the COVID19 crisis.

Live Work Eat Gather (LWEG) is a community driven 501c3 nonprofit whose focus is to cultivate and nourish the community through the support of local food and farms, the creation and growth of jobs, the security of a home, and the gathering of friends and neighbors. LWEG oversees [The Millstone Kitchen](#), a new commercial shared use kitchen that is part of the Old School at Prices Fork project, and which has been working to scale startup local food entrepreneurs by providing business support services and commercial kitchen space for rent. The Millstone Kitchen is fully outfitted with a walk-in cooler and freezer, ranges, convection ovens, tilting skillet, steam-jacketed kettle, dehydrator, commercial mixers, commercial food processors, and more.

The Neighbors in Need meals program is designed to accomplish the following win-win-win:

1. Provide local food access organizations with prepared meals to feed vulnerable people through distribution systems already in place and well-executed.
2. Provide sustaining revenue streams for caterers currently operating out of the Millstone Kitchen and support the hiring of additional service workers at a time layoffs are expected in the service industry.
3. Support local small farms affected by the loss of direct marketing during the COVID19 crisis.
4. Keep Millstone Kitchen operating and open to provide business support services to the local small food business economy by coordinating the Neighbors in Need program and providing opportunities that align with LWEG's community-based mission.

Counties

Floyd | Giles
Montgomery | Pulaski

City

Radford

Towns

Blacksburg | Christiansburg
Floyd | Narrows | Pearisburg
Pembroke | Pulaski | Rich Creek

Higher Education

Virginia Tech | Radford University
New River Community College

Community Development Block Grant funds will help us accomplish the following tasks:

Plan and Design a Scaled-up Program: This includes revising the Kitchen's Standard Operating Procedures to create a safe, new, and expanded workflow, securing a receiving and storage area for food donations, establishing a distribution area for the prepared meals, and identifying and securing partnerships for distribution expansion.

Source Food: This includes developing and managing the supply chain of food, which would include both food donations from programs such as Virginia Tech's Campus Kitchen program and food purchases from local farms and restaurants with excess inventory.

Seek Additional Donations: This includes finding and onboarding additional donors and grantors to continue to sustain the operations as needed.

Source Labor for Meal Production and Delivery: This includes working with two existing catering companies operating at the Millstone Kitchen to facilitate partnerships with local food producers and hunger relief agencies, coordinate menu planning for specific audiences, arrange ingredient purchases and storage, and prepare and deliver the meals. The caterers will specifically target purchases from local restaurants that have excess inventory and local farmers. Caterers will also have the ability to hire laid off restaurant workers with kitchen prep experience to support the preparation of these meals.

Distribute Meals: This includes connecting with local, trusted organizations that already have established food programs aimed at helping vulnerable groups. Six community-based organizations that serve 500 families combined and across three counties, are already interested in partnering to support delivery and distribution if funding is available to scale up this program. We have budgeted for 600 meals per week, but it is estimated that potentially 750-900 meals could be served through this program every week. Finished meals will either be refrigerated or frozen until pickup or delivery.

Build a Replicable Rural Model: We see our program as an easily replicable model, and to serve that purpose, we are willing to play a leadership role. This would include reaching out to other community shared use kitchens across the state to walk them through the concept and startup process as well as to create a platform (via webinar or virtual meeting format) for sharing ideas and troubleshooting issues. Many model programs come from urban areas of the country and we would like to show what is possible in a small-town rural context. The development of this program will also help to build upon and contribute to the knowledge and efforts of the [NRV Thrive Food Access network](#), of which we are a member. The NRV Thrive coalition has been working to develop and deepen connections between food access partners within our region. This program seeks to advance two of the four main goals of the network: 1) to develop better ways to transport, preserve and share fresh foods and 2) to improve the food distribution system.

Without additional funding we will not be able to scale up and sustain the program to meet our community's needs during this time of crisis. Currently the number of meals we can prepare

each week is directly dependent on the number of donations coming from individual community members. This creates challenges because week to week we are having to assess how much food we can purchase from local producers and cannot guarantee a set number of meals to our community partners for delivery. CDBG funding would allow for certainty and consistency of meals to our local business and community partners, helping them predict staffing needs, solidify partnerships with local farmers, and adapt to changes in demand.

With additional funding, Live Work Eat Gather's Millstone Kitchen is uniquely positioned to implement this program.

- We have the kitchen assets and space to provide safe and nutritious meals to the community.
- We are experienced at working with multiple partners and businesses in the kitchen space for the benefit of the community.
- We have staff capacity to quickly apply to the program's administration.
- Our board and staff have broad reach with different segments of our community, including trusted relationships with local businesses, local government partners, food access organizations, local farmers, and potential donors to quickly build the program.
- The program fits squarely within our mission.

It is important to note, this grant request already has support to be formally submitted through Montgomery County, with grant administration services to be delivered by the New River Valley Regional Commission.

We greatly appreciate your consideration in supporting this program at this critical time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin R. Byrd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and last name "Byrd" clearly legible.

Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
Executive Director

Hyperlinks in letter:

<https://www.wdbj7.com/content/news/Farmers-caterers-combine-efforts-to-provide-fresh-meals-to-Neighbors-in-Need-569461951.html>

<https://www.millstonekitchen.org>

https://cfnrv.org/wp-content/uploads/NRV-Food-Access-Report_Oct-2019.pdf

Program Budget Request

| Expenses | Total Requested from CDBG | Other Project Expenses | Description of CDBG Request |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Kitchen Manager Salary Neighbors in Need Program Manager | \$8,640.00 | | 20 hours x 24 weeks (6 months) @ \$18 an hour to include program coordination and statewide advisement role. |
| Materials & Supplies | \$905.50 | | 12, 23x13x15" portable coolers for delivery x \$20 each 6 months surface sanitizer x \$100 per month current use 3 hand sanitizer dispensers x \$18.50 each Bulk hand sanitizer \$50 per case |
| Subsidized kitchen User Fees | \$4,000.00 | | Reduction in rent by 40% market rate for kitchen use related to the program. |
| Rent of Fridge/ Freezer | \$1,440.00 | | 6 months of 1 full rack use in both freezer and cooler \$120 x 2 racks x 6 months |
| Food Budget | \$108,000.00 | \$21,600.00 | \$9 a meal x 600 meals a week x 24 weeks. The \$9 includes production cost assumed by caterer/meal producer (purchase of local produce from farmers, staff wages, packaging materials, delivery and general overhead) |
| Delivery Costs by Food Access Organizations to Clients | \$3,600.00 | | 6 organizations x \$25 per week x 24 weeks to support gas and distribution costs. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
| Grant administration | \$10,000 | | NRVRC staff time to administer grant, track expenses, coordinate with funder and grant recipient, Montgomery County. |
| <i>Subtotals</i> | \$126,585.50 | \$21,600.00 | |
| Total Project Cost | \$148,185.50 | | |

| Income: | Secured | Pending | Description |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| Foundations | \$2,000.00 | \$3,000.00 | Community Foundation of the New River Valley and NRV United Way applications have been submitted. |
| CDBG | | \$126,585.50 | Relates to this request. |
| Individual gifts | \$4,000.00 | \$15,600.00 | Individual donations through program website |