

## **Reinventing Food Pantries: A Capacity Building Grant Opportunity**

The Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions at Connecticut Food Bank | Foodshare is pleased to release this Request for Proposals to build the capacity of food pantries in our network to offer client choice, promote dignity, increase access to healthy food, and connect clients to community resources. The Institute, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Public Health and a local family foundation, intends to support food pantries interested in transforming their space with new equipment and resources, and upgrading their operations to provide holistic and wrap-around services.

### **The main goals of this grant opportunity are to support your pantry to do one (or more) of the following:**

- Convert the layout and shelving of a pantry to client choice where guests can choose their food with dignity
- Promote healthy food, like fresh produce, lean meat, and dairy products, with new refrigerators and display cases
- Use the SWAP (Supporting Wellness at Pantries) stoplight system to rank food nutritionally with shelving and displays
- Connect food pantry guests with community resources by providing referrals with a resource center, such as a computer station with printer and resource materials, to build stability and financial wellbeing
- Create a more welcoming space to provide comfortable seating, or conduct a "facelift" with fresh paint

Eligible applicants can apply for a grant up to \$10,000 to fund the purchase of new equipment and supplies, which may include some staff time, to transform their food pantry. Staff from the Connecticut Food Bank | Foodshare and the Institute will work with recipients to discuss best practices and strategies for making these transformations.

### Eligibility criteria

A food pantry is eligible for this opportunity if it meets the following criteria:

- Member of the Connecticut Food Bank | Foodshare network in good standing
- At least one full-time employee
- Open to clients at least one day per week
- Demonstrated buy-in from pantry leadership to undertake this type of transformation

### Eligible equipment

- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Shelving
- Organizational bins
- Computers
- Printers
- Tables/Desks
- File Cabinets

### Items that are NOT eligible under this grant

- Capital campaigns; additions to organizational reserves or investments
- Overhead/administrative costs such as:
  - rent/mortgage payment for main facilities
  - utilities associated with the main facilities
  - vehicle/unemployment/general liability/other insurance
  - other admin costs not directly related to the proposed program/project
  - General facility maintenance and/or improvements are not eligible expenses (roofing, HVAC, lighting, security systems, sprinklers, etc.).
- Fundraising promotions
- Lobbying (staff time, other expenses)

### Timeline

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through September 30, 2021. The grant period will extend for six months after the award date, and a final report with detailed budget will be due 30 days following the grant end date.

There are three (3) steps to apply:

- 1) Complete the grant application.
- 2) Complete the **Agency Capacity Assessment** (20 minute survey). This is required in order for your grant proposal to be considered complete. You can find the survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CapBuildGrant>
- 3) Email your completed application to Brittney Cavaliere at [bcavaliere@foodshare.org](mailto:bcavaliere@foodshare.org).

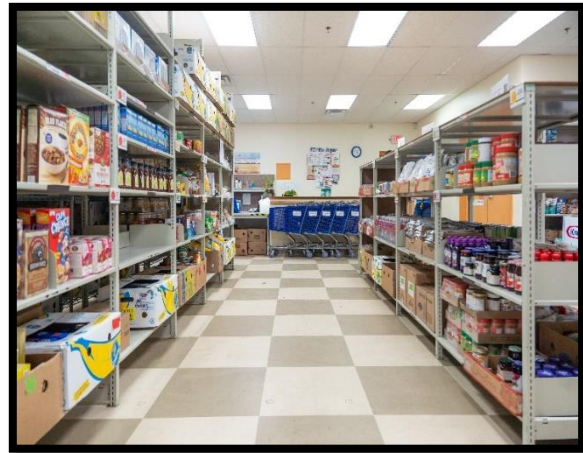
**Below are some examples of pantry transformations. Additional ideas not shown below that fit the goals of this grant opportunity are welcome, too!**

Offering Client Choice and Promoting Dignity in Food Pantries

Offering food pantry guests the ability to choose the food they take home is important and creates an atmosphere of respect. When your guests can select their own food, it builds community and trust between guests, staff, and volunteers. Additionally, food waste may be cut down when guests choose food they enjoy and are comfortable preparing. A model food pantry is one that is structured similarly to a grocery store, providing guests with choice in the foods they select for themselves and their families.



*Figure 1: Jewish Family Services Food Pantry, New Haven*



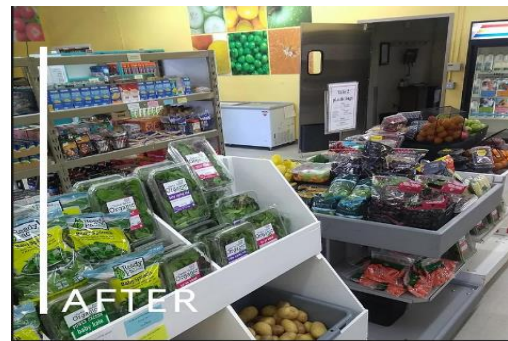
*Figure 2: HVCC Food Pantry, Vernon*

Providing Healthy Food

Increasing access to nutritious food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, and lean meats can help improve the health of food pantry guests. Promoting healthy food may require additional equipment such as refrigerators, produce bins, and shelving. Ideas for equipment include glass-front refrigerators that are more appealing to display food, metal shelving with wheels, and possibly even small shopping carts to feel more like a grocery store. The following photos are examples of healthy client choice.



Below are examples of a before and after transformation from the Minnesota SuperShelf program.



The SWAP (Supporting Wellness at Pantries) stoplight system is an easy to use tool to help food pantry staff and volunteers rank food nutritionally to increase access to healthy food. SWAP can help you promote healthy food in your food pantry! Below are examples of SWAP at work:



### Connecting to Community Resources

While people come to food pantries for food, we know they typically need additional resources to help support their families. The Institute can work with your pantry to provide referrals and wrap-around services to help build stability and financial wellbeing. This often requires additional equipment such as computers, printers, tables and file cabinets.

