

# LOI Form

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## *Organization Information*

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**A Word version you can use to draft your request is available for download.**

**The rubric that will be used to score your LOI is available for download.**

### **Project Name\***

Please give your proposal a short, descriptive title. This is how your request will appear throughout the PCF grant portal.

Sustaining Clearwater Need at FEAST Food Pantry

### **Amount Requested\***

**The minimum grant request for this process is \$50,000.**

**The maximum grant request for this process is \$325,000.**

If you request the full \$325,000, your organization should be able to demonstrate a *significant* impact to be made from these funds.

Please be sure that your grant request is proportional to your annual operating budget. If you have any questions about how much funding to request, please contact Jocelyn Howard at [jhoward@pinellascf.org](mailto:jhoward@pinellascf.org).

\$73,403.00

### **Annual Operating Budget\***

Please provide the amount of your annual operating budget, (expenditures only) for your entire organization.

\$837,365.00

### **Grant Start Date\***

PCF expects to issue a contract to approved organizations in September 2023. If awarded with a contract issuance date of September 1, 2023, when would your organization begin to spend funds?

10/01/2023

### **Grant End Date\***

PCF expects the grant period to be between 12 and 24 months for this process. Given this range, when would your organization expect to finish expending funds if awarded?

09/30/2025

## Mission Statement\*

Please write your organization's mission statement below. This should be no longer than one or two sentences.

The mission of FEAST is to compassionately provide food and personal care items to families in need in North Pinellas County. FEAST has grown to be this area's leading food pantry serving nearly 5,000 residents a month, an estimated 60,000 will be served this year.

## Is your organization headquartered in Clearwater?

*Why PCF asks this: Given that the City of Clearwater is the funding source for this grant program, PCF may prioritize organizations headquartered in Clearwater or those that have a strong presence in the City.*

No

## Programming Background\*

Please describe the program that this grant would support.

### Example

Peer Counseling Services Inc. offers after-school support groups for middle schoolers and high schoolers. Below, Peer Counseling Services Inc. would describe what its programming is, how its programming works, and who is served.

*Why PCF asks this: PCF wants to learn about what your organization does and how it carries out its mission.*

FEAST Food Pantry is centrally located in Pinellas County, one block from Highway 19. Because of this central location, FEAST will support 5,000 food insecure Clearwater residents this year with almost 2,000 of them coming from zip code 33755, within the Clearwater target area that is the priority of this grant.

“Sustaining Clearwater Need at FEAST” is the effort to expand current services to meet the overwhelming demand from food insecure families from Clearwater seeking help from FEAST. Prior to the pandemic, FEAST served only 1,000 residents a month with very few coming from the Clearwater area. Based upon a multiyear trend line of demand for services, it is expected that 2,383 residents from zip code 33755 will seek help from our organization in 2024 and 2,860 in 2025.

The families that we serve come from a variety of populations, including children, senior citizens, low-income families, & homeless people. Currently, residents in need can visit our pantry twice a month to receive food for their families. FEAST distributes bags of shelf stable food, including canned and boxed items, based upon family size, which typically equates to a 3-4 day supply of food each visit. In addition, FEAST provides families with perishable food staples such as meat, milk, and fresh produce, which helps them to create a balanced diet for their families. In addition to food, FEAST also provides personal care items such as toilet paper, paper towels, toothpaste, & other hygiene products not permitted for purchase under SNAP.

Because good nutrition directly correlates with good health and people have unique health needs, FEAST tailors its food and services to the expressed health needs of its families. For instance, we serve many older adults and recognize their unique nutritional requirements as many suffer from chronic diseases. Therefore, we customize the food we distribute and offer lower sodium, lower sugar, low carb and higher fiber options. Another great example, for our homeless population, we design “no cook” bags to support good nutrition without the ability to cook.

FEAST strives to provide a dignified experience for our families and treat each person with respect and kindness. We take pride in providing food and personal care items to Pinellas County residents with compassion and respect.

This request will allow FEAST the opportunity to meet the increasing demands for food from Clearwater residents in the target area that is the priority of this grant.

## History in Clearwater\*

Please describe how long you've been providing services in the City of Clearwater, and the nature of such services.

*Why PCF asks this: Given that the City of Clearwater is the funding source for this grant program, PCF may prioritize organizations headquartered in Clearwater or those that have a strong presence in the City.*

FEAST was started by Palm Harbor United Methodist Church over 30 years ago and for many years the pantry served on average 1,000 clients a month. Later formed as a secular charity and under new leadership in 2020, FEAST has grown to be the leading North Pinellas County food pantry.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2019, FEAST only served 12,000 residents with very few coming from Clearwater. Demand has grown 400% since the start of the pandemic, achieving 50,000 residents served in 2022 including significant growth in Clearwater residents asking for help.

FEAST uses a simple trend line based upon the past 3 years of volume to determine the numbers of families to be served in 2023 and through 2025. The Board of Directors approves the volume projections each year. FEAST is trending to serve 60,000 neighbors in 2023 & plans to serve 72,000 in 2024 & 86,400 in 2025.

Consistently 8% of FEAST's population is from the Clearwater area & 3.5% from the priority target area of this grant. FEAST estimates that almost 5,000 Clearwater residents will seek help from FEAST this year & those numbers will grow to 5,841 in 2024 & 7,009 in 2025. FEAST further projects that it will continue to serve residents from 33755 at the same growth rates we have seen for the past 4 years. FEAST will serve almost 2000 residents from this zip code this year & the pantry estimates 2,383 in 2024 and 2,860 in 2025.

To accomplish such significant growth, FEAST has developed partnerships to maximize our ability to help the community. These collaborations have helped to minimize food spoilage by sharing perishable food items with Oldsmar Cares, Dunedin Cares, and St. Vincent De Paul. At times when we receive donations in large containers, such as #10 cans or 50-pound bags of food, we deliver them to Metropolitan Ministries to be used in their kitchen. To further support our Clearwater clients, FEAST has partnerships with Neighborly Care Network as well as Junior League of Clearwater Dunedin.

The increased demand from Clearwater has been significant since the start of the pandemic and our Board of Directors expects the growth to continue based upon market pressures, housing costs and continued inflation.

## Outcomes\*

Define one to two outcomes already being measured by your organization in relation to the programming this grant would support. This is not the outcome of this specific funding, but of the programming itself. **Outcomes are not the number of people you will serve, but how they or their situation will change.**

"Outcomes - are specific, measurable statements that let you know when you have reached your goals.

Outcome statements describe specific changes in your knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors you expect to occur as a result of your actions. Good outcome statements are specific, measurable, and realistic."

(W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide)

### **Example**

80% of youth involved in peer counseling will show increased emotional intelligence after six months of participation.

*Why PCF asks this: PCF considers measurable outcomes to be a cornerstone of effective social service programming. Tracking outcomes allows both an organization and its supporters to know how effective its programming is and helps an organization improve its programming over time.*

FEAST surveys clients to assess if families see a reduction in stress levels as well as an improvement in overall well-being after seeking services from FEAST. We are proud to report that at least 80% of the families served consistently report improvement in stress levels and 80% consistently show improvement in overall well-being.

FEAST will measure grant success by ensuring FEAST serves many more Clearwater residents from the grant target area. Furthermore, FEAST expects that because of our services, at least 80% of Clearwater residents served will show decreased stress levels and at least 80% will show an increase in overall wellbeing as measured by a short two question survey.

Reduction in stress and improvement in overall wellbeing for Clearwater residents will be achieved by a reduction in food insecurity through visits to our pantry.

## **Measurements\***

Explain what measurement tools you will use to evaluate the stated outcome(s) above. That is, how will your organization know it is achieving or not achieving the outcome(s) stated above? Stronger requests will use a validated tool or method of data collection.

### **Example**

Peer Counseling Services administers the Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test before counseling begins, and in six-month intervals thereafter.

*Why PCF asks this: PCF would like to know how the outcome(s) you've specified are measured, and if you used a validated tool that has been proven in usage outside your organization. If you've developed your own tool, please describe how it was made.*

FEAST currently utilizes a cloud-based method of collecting and storing data within our organization. FEAST employs a database called Food Bank Manager to collect names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses from our clients at the initial visit. At subsequent visits, we access their profile and capture the data of the visit and any new or changed information. At this visit, a two-question survey obtains clients self-reported determination of improvement in stress levels as well as improvement in overall well-being.

Food Bank Manager is also used to generate reports to examine the number of people that we serve as well as information regarding client demographics and outcomes.

FEAST collects information from its clients during their visits to demonstrate that our pantry is reducing food insecurity for local families. Consistently research shows that a reduction in food insecurity will lead to an improvement in physical and mental health for our clients.

FEAST assesses our clients' stress levels as well as their overall sense of well-being by administering a brief two question survey to our pantry clients. Our trained volunteers will ask clients about these improvements and record the client's response. The data collected from surveying the clients will consistently shows

improvement in stress levels and improvement in overall well-being for families in our community because of our services.

## Grant Impact\*

How would this grant help your organization and its clients achieve the outcomes stated above? That is, what would you be able to do with this funding that you otherwise could not?

*Why PCF asks this: The intention of this grant is to fund organizations providing support for individuals and families in Clearwater with emergency housing and social services needs. How that support happens, and how this grant could help, differs from organization to organization. PCF would like to know specifically how this grant would help your organization and the clients you serve.*

Funding from this Clearwater ARPA grant will provide the necessary funding to allow FEAST to serve the overwhelming numbers of Clearwater residents from zip code 33755 who are seeking help with food insecurity from FEAST.

The demand for our services is growing exponentially as food insecurity continues to rise in Pinellas County. According to recent data from Healthy St. Pete., it is estimated that more than 14% of households in our county experience food insecurity. The effects of the pandemic, coupled with overwhelming inflation and runaway housing costs, will continue to create a higher need to help people provide food for their families.

National inflation has dropped to a current level of 5.2% this year, however, it's not quite down as much in the Tampa Bay area compared to the rest of the country. Despite the slight decrease in inflation rates, the Tampa Bay area is still seeing food costs as one of the largest price increases for families to face with an average price increase of 8.5% from prior year. Energy costs for electricity in the area are also up an average of 14.8% over the past year. According to the Insurance Information Institute, property insurance rates are projected to increase by 40% in 2023. All of these cost pressures are forcing many families to seek help to feed their families.

Unfortunately, research shows that children and adults suffering from food insecurity often have long term health consequences and negative effects on their physical and mental health. A study published last year in the American Heart Association included more than 27,000 adults and examined the effects of food insecurity on health. Researchers found more cardiovascular disease and higher overall death rates among those reporting food insecurity. Food insecurity can also cause significant physiological stress, depressive disorders, and an increase in the risk of other mental illnesses.

Locally, the Network to End Hunger finds that as many as 36,000 children in Pinellas County are food insecure. According to multiple studies, childhood food insecurity can result in serious consequences on physical health, academic performance, general development, and mental health.

Our "Sustaining Clearwater Need at FEAST" program will help to prevent these negative consequences for Clearwater residents who live in in the high need target area of this grant.

## Preliminary Budget Narrative\*

Please write a brief breakdown of line items showing how your requested funds would be used. You may add context to the expenses if needed (for example, if salaries are requested, state how that position supports the programming described in your proposal). A more detailed, formal budget will be required if your request is moved forward in the funding process.

Small equipment purchases are permitted under this grant provided they are directly tied to service delivery. You

may include those purchases in this narrative.

If your organization will be requesting indirect costs, please include this in your narrative. Note that the indirect cost rate for this grant is capped at 5% of the grant.

*Why PCF asks this: PCF would like to gain a general understanding of the proposed programming costs for this grant.*

FEAST is requesting \$73,403 from Clearwater ARPA to provide the direct funding to support Clearwater residents who live in zip code 33755 and who will seek help from FEAST. The grant is for 24 months starting in October 2023.

FEAST served 1,655 residents in zip code 33755 in fiscal year 2022. In 2023, FEAST is budgeted to serve 1,986 from this area. Demand is further expected to grow to 2,383 in 2024 and 2,860 in 2025.

The average cost per client at FEAST in 2023 is \$14. This cost per client includes the direct costs to provide food and personal care items plus 1% overhead costs. The total cost to support the increased demand for FEAST services from Clearwater residents in zip code 33755 will be \$33,365 for FEAST's fiscal year 2024 which begins in October, 2023. FEAST is projecting to see another 20% increase in clients served from this zip code the following year. In 2025, FEAST will support 2,860 residents from this grant's target area. The cost to support these families will be \$40,038.

FEAST has two part time paid staff members to support mission delivery and 3.5% of their salary costs will be applied towards the cost of food distribution for this grant.

FEAST has budgeted the cost per person served to maintain over the 24 months of this grant at \$14. FEAST has seen a reduction in its cost per person served because of the significant growth in the total population served allowing the organization to take advantage of economies of scale. FEAST believes the future inflation costs will be offset by the volume economies.

FEAST is proud to report that 99% of annual operating expenses are direct service cost.

## Reduction in Funding\*

Due to limited funding, your request amount may not be fully awarded if it is moved forward in the grant process. How would reduced/partial funding impact your proposed program?

*Why PCF asks this: The review committee that ultimately recommends proposals for funding may consider partial funding. PCF would like to know upfront what impact this would have on your proposal.*

Because 99% of the funding will be applied towards the direct cost and distribution of food and or personal care items for Clearwater residents in zip code 33755, if partial funding is achieved, FEAST will reduce the numbers of residents it will support. Each Clearwater resident served costs \$14 per visit.

FEAST appreciates the opportunity to receive funding to support more Clearwater residents from zip code 33755 who are struggling to eat and who choose to seek help from FEAST. If partial funding is obtained, FEAST will reduce the numbers of residents it can support.

FEAST knows that for each family who receives services from FEAST, there is an 80% chance of self-reported reduction in stress levels and improvement in overall well-being.



## File Attachment Summary

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### *Applicant File Uploads*

*No files were uploaded*