

## Cover Sheet – Social Service Activity

**AGENCY NAME:** Survival Centers Inc. DBA Amherst Survival Center  
**AGENCY ADDRESS:** 138 Sunderland Road, PO Box 9629, North Amherst, MA 01059  
**AGENCY PHONE NO:** 413-549-3968      **CONTACT PERSON:** Lev Ben-Ezra  
**CONTACT PERSON EMAIL:**      lev@amherstsurvival.org  
**CDBG FUNDING REQUEST:**      \$56,650.00

**1. Project Name:** Amherst Survival Center Food Pantry (A continuation of projects funded with MA CDBG funds)

**2. Project Description:**

The ASC's Food Pantry programs provide access to good nutritious food for low-income residents of Amherst, including children, seniors, people experiencing homelessness, individuals and families.

The Amherst Survival Center (ASC) requests \$56,650.00 to support continuation and expansion of its CDBG-funded efforts in its Food Pantry for Amherst residents, including 1) free monthly grocery shop for more than 2,000 low-income Amherst residents; 2) weekly evening and monthly weekend hours of operation; 3) free grocery delivery for seniors; 4) Kids Boost program providing families with school-age children extra food during each of the six months that include school vacations; 5) expansion of purchase of fresh, healthy and nutritious produce; 6) community wide efforts to source additional food to meet the needs of an expanded allocation; 7) increased sourcing, including direct purchase, of culturally appropriate foods and diverse protein options to meet the needs of our culturally and ethnically diverse community; 8) expanded language access initiatives to better serve speakers of multiple languages; and 9) outreach efforts to better connect underserved communities within Amherst to the Food Pantry and other resources at ASC.

**3. Project Location (Street address)** 138 Sunderland Road in North Amherst. (The Pantry also operates two offsite food distribution programs in Amherst: the Senior Mobile Nutrition Program delivers groceries to Amherst senior housing and the Amherst Senior Center; and the Mobile Food Pantry, in partnership with the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts distributes food in South Amherst.)

**4. Budget Request** \$56,650.00

**5. Type of Activity (check one):**

- Household (family and individual) stabilization
- Support services for the homeless
- Youth development
- Economic self-sufficiency (adult education)
- Food and nutrition**
- Health services

**6. National**

Total number of beneficiaries (individuals served): 2000-2400  
Total Low/Mod beneficiaries (individuals served): 2000-2400

Proposal Items:

- ✓ Answers to Questions (p.1-9)
- ✓ 12-Month Project Budget (p.10)
- ✓ Agency Budget and Balance Sheet (p.11)
- ✓ Organizational Chart (p.12)
- ✓ List of Board of Directors (p.13)
- ✓ Cert. of Tax Compliance (p.14)
- ✓ Cert. of Non-Collusion (p.15)

Supporting Attachments (Orig. only):

- ✓ References, Demographic Data, and Stories of Impact (Attach. A)
- ✓ Letter of Support- CES/Healthy Hampshire (Attach. B)
- ✓ Letter of Support- CHD/ Family Outreach of Amherst (Attach. C)

ORIGINAL     COPY

**National Objective Description:** The Amherst Survival Center (ASC) Food Pantry and its population-specific programs (Kids Boost, Senior Mobile Nutrition Program, children’s diapers, menstrual products, culturally appropriate food), serve low-income residents of Amherst and twelve surrounding towns, effectively meeting the national objective to benefit low- and moderate- income persons, based on the limited clientele category<sup>1</sup>. 98.6% of pantry recipients (and 100% of those served with CDBG funds) are qualified as low/moderate income based on HUD AMI guidelines and roughly 90% are low and very low income. This criterion is verified annually, when participants complete and sign an income self-declaration form outlining both USDA eligibility and HUD area median income levels, and provide proof of residence. We have worked with the Town of Amherst to ensure that self-disclosure forms serve the funder’s needs, cater to the participant’s capacity, and reflect updated income guidelines. Pantry registrant data is maintained in a designated, confidential database. Each Pantry visit or delivery is recorded, including pounds of food received and special allocations (Kids Boost, Thanksgiving, diapers, etc.). Household sizes and residence are confirmed at each visit. We also track USDA eligibility, as well as inquire about receipt of other public benefits in order to link participants to additional appropriate services.

In program year 2018-2019, 100% of the 1,965 individuals and 873 households served with CDBG funds were residents of Amherst. (52% of the total individuals served in the Pantry and mobile programs in 2018-2019 were residents of Amherst, including 47% the total individuals served by the onsite Pantry.) With additional outreach efforts currently planned, we expect to increase the number of Amherst residents served to 2,000-2,400 in the 2020-2021 program year, and project that between 51-55% of total individuals served by the Pantry will be Amherst residents. 100% of the individuals served with CDBG funds will be both Amherst residents and meet the LMI guidelines outlined in the RFR.

The Pantry’s allocation system, based on points per person (Attachment A-II), receives positive reviews by participants who cite the choice they have when shopping as the strongest feature of the system. The use of our “shop sheet” helps ensure an accurate distribution, while the point system supports shopper’s ability to select the foods that meet their family’s needs and preferences, maximizing use. The allocation categories directly align with USDA nutrition guidelines (i.e. protein, grains, fruits/vegetables), reinforcing awareness of these guidelines and ensuring that shoppers receive a balanced variety of foods to meet nutritional needs.

In 2018-2019, the ASC continued to experience significant numbers of people using its services: it served 35,894 meals to low-income Amherst residents, and distributed groceries to 2,186 Amherst residents in 963 households in the Food Pantry and mobile programs. The Center’s Fresh Food Distribution had 30,043 visits, distributing fresh produce and baked goods to visitors. Overall, the ASC had 47,811 visits (68%, or 32,579 visits, by Amherst residents) from individuals in need of food, health care, clothing, job search support, housing case management, assistance with food stamps/SNAP, health insurance, information and referral services, and a welcoming community. The Food Pantry makes a modified allocation to individuals experiencing homelessness, offering a smaller weekly vs. one monthly allocation, with more prepared foods that don’t require kitchen facilities. The Food Pantry now also makes a modified allocation to individuals who walk, ride the bus, or bike to the Pantry, allowing them to split their monthly allocation into two trips to facilitate easier carrying home of groceries.

**A. Consistency with Community Priorities** This proposal is most consistent with the Community Priority of food and nutrition. The Food Pantry, in concert with community meals, and daily fresh food distribution, make a significant impact, meeting the food and nutrition needs of Amherst residents navigating food insecurity.

The proposed project also meets needs outlined in the community priorities of household stabilization, support services for seniors, and support services for those experiencing homelessness. By providing monthly groceries to low-income families, thus freeing up economic resources to meet other basic needs such as rent, medical care, or transportation, the Food Pantry supports family and individual stabilization. The included Senior Mobile Nutrition Program (SMNP), providing grocery delivery for seniors, is a critical support service for seniors, promoting access to nutrition and support for independent living. The ASC’s unique combination of tailored food pantry distribution offered under the

same roof as daily meals, a welcoming warming/cooling center, and support services such as self-service laundry, private shower, mail service, public computers and copy/fax access, provide a robust set of support services for those experiencing homelessness

This proposal supports Amherst Survival Center's Food Pantry for Amherst Residents, including:

- 1) Free monthly grocery shop for more than 2,000 low-income Amherst residents;
- 2) Weekly evening and monthly weekend hours of operation;
- 3) Free grocery delivery for seniors;
- 4) Kids Boost Program providing families with school-age children extra food during each of the six months that include school vacations;
- 5) Expansion of purchase of fresh, healthy and nutritious produce;
- 6) Community wide efforts to source additional food to meet the needs of an expanded allocation;
- 7) Increased sourcing, including direct purchase, of culturally appropriate foods and diverse protein options to meet the needs of our culturally and ethnically diverse community;
- 8) Expanded language access initiatives to better serve speakers of multiple languages; and
- 9) Outreach efforts to better connect underserved communities within Amherst to the Food Pantry and other resources at ASC.

These efforts increase access to working families (weekend and evening hours), speakers of multiple languages, and shoppers of multiple ethnicities and cultures. All of these demonstrate our commitment to the food and nutrition priority as identified in Amherst's Community Development Strategy. This proposal also supports the continuation of our monthly grocery delivery for seniors in Amherst. The onsite pantry allocation reinforces nutrition education, as it directly corresponds with the USDA nutrition guidelines. The Center augments this with quarterly healthy cooking classes, recipe distributions, and nutrition tastings with the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (FBWM), all of which showcase Pantry ingredients. The ASC's food and nutrition programs, and specifically its Food Pantry, are strongly compatible with the Town's Community Development strategy.

ASC's food and nutrition programs, the Food Pantry, the Senior Mobile Nutrition Program, the mobile food pantry, our community meals and daily fresh food distribution programs, as well as our free walk-in health clinic, the community store, and its collection of services reserved for people experiencing homelessness, its philosophy, mission and strategies are all consistent with, and strive to achieve, the Town of Amherst's goal to "contribute to a high quality, safe, civil, healthy, and sustainable community." The ASC achieves this in a convenient single location, maximizing access and removing barriers to services. The Amherst Survival Center continues to embrace opportunities to bring its programs to people who cannot get to the Center for food, while remaining deeply committed to understanding the barriers that prevent people from accessing its programs in order to develop new strategies to increase access to food and nutrition in the Amherst community. Our mobile programs include the Senior Mobile Nutrition Program (part of this proposal) and the monthly mobile food pantry in South Amherst, a designated food desert, in partnership with the FBWM. The Amherst Survival Center has a track record of successful collaboration with other service providers in order to improve access and reduce duplication of services. On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, collaborators from other organizations provide services onsite at the Amherst Survival Center, creating easy, one-stop-shop access to information and referral, food stamp/SNAP application assistance with the FBWM; Salvation Army vouchers; housing case management with Elliott Homeless Services; health insurance assistance from Health Care for the Homeless and Community Action; clothing repair workshops with expert sewers. In addition, we collaborate with the Franklin Hampshire Career Center to hold multiple job fairs each year, the Town of Amherst to present annual flu immunization clinics; Community Action for fuel assistance, and the League of Women Voters of Amherst for voter registration sessions and community educational events. We also collaborate with the FBWM on the monthly mobile food pantry, tastings and other events. We refer and collaborate with the John Musante Health Center, the Community Health Center of Franklin County, and area medical providers. We participate in case consultation with Craig's

Doors, providing consistent wrap-around support for guests of their shelter. On-site collaborations allow Center programs to cross-refer participants for convenient additional support. The roster and schedule of these services address the Amherst Master Plan's goal to "provide community services to meet the needs of all of its residents" including "critical social support services."<sup>ii</sup>

The ASC's development and printing of materials (in a variety of languages) informs the community of its food and nutrition services, increases access and supports program utilization. We are committed to discover and use new strategies to create and ensure access to the Food Pantry and all Center programs for Amherst residents in need.

**B. Agency Information** Started in 1976, the Amherst Survival Center (ASC) connects people in need with food, health care, wellness, clothing and community through volunteer efforts. We serve more than 6,000 people a year, the majority of whom live in Amherst, in more than 46,000 visits. The only organization of its kind in the area, the ASC offers free meals (daily breakfast bar, daily hot lunch, weekly dinner), free groceries (daily fresh produce and baked goods, monthly full grocery shop), free clothing and housewares, free medical care, and a wide array of community activities (ranging from sewing workshops to live music to cooking classes). Our resource center provides access to partner organizations' social services conveniently onsite. We provide free access to computers, and copy/fax services. The ASC makes special support services available for people who are experiencing homelessness, including self-service laundry and shower facilities, private lockers, mail service, a modified food pantry allocation, and specific items from the Community Store. A diversity of volunteer opportunities are available to all, providing connection and engagement, and a meaningful way to fulfil service hours required by Department of Transitional Assistance, educational, or other benefit programs. The ASC is a stable and well-respected 501(c)3 non-profit organization, governed by a skilled and dynamic volunteer Board of Directors (p. 13), with robust capacity to accept donations of time, goods, and funds, and distribute goods in a fair and equitable manner.

All ASC programs are located under one roof so that the Center serves as the only agency in the area that provides comprehensive basic needs services in a single location, an easy one-stop support service for families and individuals. For families who are often burdened with needing to receive a variety of supports, securing so many programs in one location is a great relief and improves access to services. Studies show that service integration "produces significant dividends in the form of reduced duplication and waste, strengthened local communities, and improved client outcomes"<sup>iii</sup>. Integration allows us to refer within the Center: a patient in the health clinic can be assessed for food security and referred to the Food Pantry and lunch; a Food Pantry recipient who is not receiving SNAP can be referred to the weekly SNAP assistance offered onsite; a person seeking support to find employment can get interview clothing in the store. Follow-up is convenient and effective.

We are committed to connecting with those experiencing food insecurity who are not yet coming to the Center. Some people can't get to the North Amherst location due to transportation or mobility. Others may have work schedules that conflict with our weekday hours. Some area residents don't know about us, or have misinformation about who is "eligible" to come. Some are fearful of getting the help they need based on their immigration status. Some have language barriers. Over the last few years, reducing these hurdles has been a primary focus of the Center. Our hours now include both a weekday evening and one Saturday each month. We now have a bus stop directly in front of the Center. We deliver groceries from the Pantry every month to seniors, we partnered with the Food Bank to bring a Mobile Pantry to South Amherst, and we continue to focus on additional mobile options. We have made great strides to improve language access including a new website that easily translates into numerous languages, materials and signage in four languages, and new systems to better utilize the language skills of our volunteers. We requested feedback and now stock new culturally appropriate foods in the Pantry. Our HungeRX program supports area physicians to screen for food insecurity and refer patients to the ASC, reducing stigma and increasing access by providing the information in a medical setting.

The ASC's approach begins with a broad definition of basic needs and a vision to reduce food insecurity in our community. Our definition includes not only food and clothing, but also health care, easy access to other benefit programs and entitlements and a supportive community. Our community programming includes field trips, live music performances, picnics, special meals and events. This focus on community building and reducing stigma increases access to basic needs services. (See Attachment A-IV, Stories of Impact.) One critical way we create this environment is by providing participants with opportunities to assist with providing services as volunteers. Our reliance on volunteers is both an operational necessity, we could not open our doors any day without the volunteers needed to do this work, and it is central to our approach and mission—fostering a community where we know that we all have gifts to offer, we all have needs, and that together, we have enough.

Most services are available to any individual who comes to the Center. This “low threshold” for services, or “low barrier of entry,” has been shown to increase engagement and utilization, offers greater access to needed services, and encourages use of referrals, all of which help to produce successful outcomes and high engagement rates. The combination of the “low threshold” and the opportunity to be engaged as a volunteer can substantially reduce the embarrassment or stigma that may accompany requests for assistance. A focused effort to remove barriers and the stigma that might undermine program use is a top priority for the ASC. The trust built throughout the Center increases willingness of participants to complete the required intake for the Food Pantry, including proof of residence (since it is open only to residents of 13 towns) as well as the income self-declaration form.

Over its 40-plus year history, the Center has shown its capacity and interest in launching new programs, and maintaining and sustaining existing ones based on the needs of community members. The ASC has a strong history of meeting all reporting requirements and complying with all funding guidelines. As a successful member agency of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (FBWM), the ASC has complied with all appropriate local, state, and federal standards of operation. The ASC's universal access approach has been recognized and highlighted by regional and statewide groups as a model for other organizations. Since relocating to its new building in 2012, the ASC has maximized space and expanded its food and nutrition offerings. In the past year, the Center invested in new equipment for our Fresh Food Distribution and milk storage to support safe storage and a welcoming shopping experience. The site continues to offer a clean, welcoming setting. Continual improvements based on program needs increase our capacity to meet the nutritional needs of Amherst residents, while offering programs that help to meet its mission and commitment to the community. The ASC has a successful track record of reporting on its previous CDBG funding, reflecting on services provided with town staff, improving service delivery, and sharing materials with other funded programs.

Over the past several years, the ASC has developed, implemented and evaluated several new programs that have since become part of the roster of programs regularly offered. The Food Pantry, in particular, has implemented several innovative initiatives, many with CDBG support. These include a personal care pantry, a children's diaper distribution (distributing 83,680 diapers in 2018), feminine hygiene distribution (distributing 59,700 tampons/pads in 2018), the Kids Boost (extra food for school children in months with school vacations), a new allocation system, a modified allocation for people experiencing homelessness (allowing for greater frequency and more prepared foods), a modified allocation for people riding the bus, guaranteed fresh produce all year, and availability of new, culturally appropriate foods following the town-supported Latinx Food Access Project.

We have the capacity – staff expertise, a robust volunteer network, safe food storage equipment, our food recovery vehicle fleet, effective food drive systems, and a now established Neighborhood Food Project – to successfully provide our core services. These services are performed by an extensive network of volunteers, organized and led by a small and nimble team of 11 staff, only four of whom are full time, (see Organizational Chart, page 12). A significant measure of ASC's success comes from comments about the program from its recipients. The Pantry plays an important role in the ability of Amherst residents to access nutritious food. *“The Pantry means having a cushion in this time of*

*increasing costs. Thank you,”* states one Pantry participant. Another shares, *“As a senior on a fixed income, the Pantry means that I will always be able to eat healthy. No fear!”* Two Amherst parents report, *“The Food Pantry is the best place in the area. So great for resources,”* and *“The Pantry means I can feed my children! It’s a huge help.”* (Also see Attachment A-IV, Stories of Impact.)

The ASC is a leader in efforts that bring together organizations to reduce food insecurity in our community. These efforts have ranged from community wide diaper drives, generating diaper donations and increasing community awareness of diaper need, to collaboration between partner programs to redistribute leftover food from ASC at a smaller program on Wednesday when we are closed, to coordinated efforts to effectively outreach to new populations in Amherst.

With strong systems in place, experienced staff and a dedicated crew of volunteers, the ASC’s Food Pantry is well-equipped to meet the need for its services, to reduce food insecurity, and to assess and implement new strategies to increase access. For over 40 years, the ASC has delivered its services in a respectful manner, treating those who come for support and assistance with dignity, while relying on well-trained volunteers as service providers. We have an unparalleled record of delivering services in an exemplary, equitable, consistent, professional, and fair manner.

**Our Goals are informed by existing and emerging needs, and a multi-year Strategic Plan.**

- The primary goal of the Strategic Plan is to increase our organizational capacity to distribute *more food to more people*, and directly and significantly *reduce food insecurity* in our community and *increase access to nutritious food*.

**Long-Term Goals** The multi-year Strategic Plan for the organization focuses on five areas, three of which involve the Food Pantry and this proposal:

- Distribute **more food** from the pantry by sourcing and distributing 7+ days per person/month;
- Reach **more people** with food pantry services, specifically seniors, residents of housing developments, and those with language or transportation barriers to accessing services; and
- **Respond to the effects of poverty** by supplying a personal care pantry.

**Short-term goals** In the short term, we aim to ameliorate and reduce the immediate food needs of low-income individuals and families. We are specifically focused on increasing access to food for underserved area residents including those with language and transportation barriers. As a result of continuing the CDBG-funded services in this proposal, we will:

1. Provide a week’s worth of free groceries (food, personal care items, diapers, and pet food) each month to any Amherst resident facing food insecurity.
2. Make the Pantry accessible to those who work during the week by offering weekly evening and monthly Saturday hours.
3. Provide access to free, healthy food for those who can’t make it to the Center including monthly grocery delivery for Amherst seniors, and the monthly South Amherst Mobile Food Pantry.
4. Fill the school vacation meal-gap (loss of school provided meals) by providing extra food to families with school-age children, during each of the six months with school vacations.
5. Ensure access to fresh produce by guaranteeing multiple fresh fruit and vegetable options in the Food Pantry year-round.
6. Increase food donations received community wide.
7. Ensure availability of culturally appropriate foods for our clientele, including ongoing availability of recently added latinx foods, diverse protein options, and other identified items.
8. Increase access, specifically the ease of Pantry intake and shopping process, for speakers of varied languages.
9. Increase participation of currently underserved communities within Amherst who are facing high rates of food insecurity.
10. We will complete a feasibility assessment (including cost and partnership development) of new mobile options and increased evening/weekend hours.

**C. Project Budget** A detailed project budget, agency budget, and balance sheet are attached (p.10-11). The 12-month project budget details all program delivery and direct program costs, all revenue sources, and all expenses (\$209,750 Food Pantry total; \$106,978 Amherst only). It includes in-kind goods (\$140,000 in food donations, \$71,400 of which are directed to Amherst residents) and projected funds. In addition to the revenue listed, the successful distribution of food from the Amherst Survival Center's Food Pantry is only possible thanks to the generous contributions of volunteer time. More than 50 weekly volunteers contribute 150 hours every week, picking up food from the Food Bank, unloading food, stocking the Pantry shelves, organizing inventory, and assisting Pantry shoppers select groceries. An additional 20-30 volunteers each month bundle diapers, recover produce from area stores and farms, pack and deliver groceries to area seniors, and distribute food at the mobile pantry.

The Amherst Survival Center (ASC) offers its excellent Food Pantry services (including 5+ days of food per person, Kids Boost, year-round produce, variety and choice, personal care pantry and pet food, evening and weekend hours and senior delivery option) at below or level the costs of comparable programs. The ASC provides these services for an average of only \$51.65 per individual served per year, compared with \$54.62 or \$199.69 at pantries in Greenfield and Northampton respectively. Because Food Pantries can provide very different levels of services, it is also useful to review average cost per pound of food/goods distributed. ASC spends \$0.46 per pound of food distributed, while the comparison pantries spend \$0.26 and \$2.06. This variance is partially due to the amount of food purchased directly to supplement quantity and variety available by donation as well as varied administrative, operations and staffing costs of the programs in each organization. Our low cost per person, low cost per pound, and relative high quality of service indicate very reasonable costs for services at ASC. ASC is requesting only \$28.33 in CDBG funds per person per year for each LMI Amherst Resident served to provide monthly groceries including the extensive program components outlined in this proposal.

The Amherst Survival Center engages in a rigorous and deliberate budget process that relies on best practices in nonprofit financial management, including careful analysis of actual costs and revenue while projecting future needs. The process begins in late winter prior to the fiscal year, with administrative staff working with program staff and consulting with the Board's Finance Committee. After several months of careful planning and discussion, the Finance Committee proposes an organizational budget to the full Board for its approval in June for the upcoming fiscal year. The ability of the ASC to create a budget that not only accurately reflects expenses but also projects needed revenue is reflected in the organization's strong fiscal position, as identified in its annual audit (available upon request).

The enclosed budgets (p. 10-11) have been prepared by Kara Schnell, Finance and Human Resources Manager, in consultation with Lev Ben-Ezra, Executive Director, and in line with the annual operating budget put forth by the Amherst Survival Center Finance Committee, and approved by the full Board of Directors. Ms. Schnell has been responsible for all the financial transactions of the Center, since 2008, from processing incoming donations and grant awards, to accounts payable and grants reports, to the organization's capital campaign and building construction. She plays a key role in the preparation of the Center's annual operating budget. She works closely with the Center's independent auditor during the annual audit process. As the staff liaison to the Center's Finance Committee, she prepares monthly financial reports for the Finance Committee, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Director. She has also prepared the accurate and comprehensive financial reporting for the town of Amherst for the ASC's quarterly reporting of its past CDBG grants. Lev Ben-Ezra, Executive Director, also brings strong nonprofit financial experience, facilitating effective financial oversight. She has successfully managed budgets up to \$3M including complex state and federal funds and CDBG awards from four towns. The Finance Committee includes employees of area financial institutions, and Board Members with extensive financial acumen. The committee is chaired by Deron Estes, Board Treasurer. The Board of Directors reviews the financial statements for the organization at its regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The ASC's finance policies and procedures reflect nonprofit best practices, checks and balances, and a rigorous process to ensure accuracy.

**D. Project Description** The Food Pantry provides essential nutritional support through a free monthly grocery shop available to households in Amherst and 12 surrounding towns, and grocery delivery to seniors in Amherst, Pelham and Belchertown. The USDA defines food insecurity the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active healthy life. *Hunger* is the individual experience, the personal sensation that “I am hungry,” while *Food Insecurity* indicates the lack of available resources (financial, access, etc.) for food at the household level; the lack of available resources to alleviate that hunger. The Food Pantry combats food insecurity faced by Amherst residents in two significant ways, by providing food—free monthly access to nutritious groceries; and by alleviating the financial burden of purchasing those groceries, freeing up financial resources to cover food costs the rest of the month.

The goal of the Food Pantry is to make nutritional food available to all low-income individuals and families, ensuring that area residents have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. To realize this goal, we offer free groceries to area residents experiencing food insecurity, and we employ a number of population specific strategies to best meet specific needs, such as delivering groceries to local seniors or offering extra food during school vacations. With this proposal, the ASC proposes to continue and expand CDBG-funded strategies to better serve Amherst Residents including 1) free monthly grocery shop for more than 2,000 low-income Amherst residents; 2) weekly evening and monthly weekend hours of operation; 3) free grocery delivery for seniors; 4) Kids Boost program providing families with school-age children extra food during each of the six months that include school vacations; 5) expansion of purchase of fresh produce; 6) community wide efforts to source additional food to meet the needs of an expanded allocation; 7) increased sourcing, including direct purchase, of culturally appropriate foods to meet needs of our culturally and ethnically diverse community; 8) expanded language access initiatives to better serve speakers of multiple languages; and 9) outreach efforts to better connect underserved communities within Amherst to the Food Pantry and other resources at ASC.

The monthly grocery distribution contains canned food, grains, proteins, soup, dairy (fresh milk, cheese, eggs), prepared foods, fresh produce, and bread. Personal care items are also available, including toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, toilet paper, menstrual products, children’s diapers, and adult incontinence briefs. The distribution can range between 40-300 pounds, supplying 15-18 meals per person in the household. Food is sourced from the Food Bank, recovered from supermarkets and farms, donated via food drives, and purchased from local vendors. Shoppers register on their initial visit and annually thereafter by providing proof of residence for each person in the household, their ages, self-disclosure of income, and questions about student status, disability, benefits received, and demographic information.

In 2018-2019, the Pantry provided food for 1,968 Amherst residents, in 873 households, who received ~180,000 pounds of food. Of Amherst Pantry shoppers, 133 identified themselves as homeless, 33 identified as a veteran, and 412 as being disabled. 288 of these Amherst residents are seniors, and 441 are female head of households. The Amherst residents who shop at the Pantry are more diverse racially than the town at large, highlighting income disparity that exists nationwide. See Attachment A for additional demographic information. Of the 1,968 Amherst residents served in the pantry, 96.5% of them were low-income, and 89.9% were very low and extremely low income. In addition to those served by the onsite Food Pantry and Senior Mobile, 437 Amherst residents (175 households) received over 30,000 pounds of free produce through the South Amherst mobile pantry during the 2018-2019 year.

Reliable access to healthy food is a critical community priority as evidenced by multiple local community needs assessments (including the Healthy Hampshire Food Access Assessment<sup>iv</sup>, the Cooley Dickinson Hospital Community Health Improvement Plan<sup>v</sup>, and the Community Action Pioneer Valley Community Needs Assessment<sup>vi</sup>), by residents facing food insecurity who access the Food Pantry and speak to how critical it is, and by the number of community members who vote with their time and dollars, volunteering, donating food, and offering funds to the ASC Food & Nutrition Programs.

**E. Project Need** Basic needs services like the Pantry are critical in Amherst. In its 2015 Status Report on Hunger in Massachusetts, Project Bread highlighted rising food insecurity in MA. According to Feeding America, the food insecurity rate in Hampshire County is 9.6%, ranking 10<sup>th</sup> out of 14 counties.

Amherst's food insecurity rate is 19.5%. College students are experiencing food insecurity and finding local pantries to meet their needs. Amherst is no different. The Wisconsin Hope Lab's recent study on basic needs insecurity in MA colleges reported that 1 in 3 students at Massachusetts public 4-year colleges had low or very low food security and had been unable to meet their nutritional needs within the last 30 days<sup>vii</sup>. Local colleges are experiencing this trend and reaching out to the ASC for support. In Amherst, 44% of K-12 students receive a meal benefit, such as free/reduced priced lunch. This number has risen more than 51% in the last 8 years, indicating the extent of food insecurity and increasing need.

The Economic Policy Institute has reported that at the US poverty level, the full range of basic needs, including food, clothing, shelter, transportation, health care and child care, remains unaffordable<sup>viii</sup>. Research shows that two parents with two children need to each earn \$18.62/hour full-time to provide for the family's basic needs<sup>ix</sup>, and a single parent would need to earn \$27/hour to support those children without assistance<sup>viii,ix</sup>. Yet the Massachusetts minimum wage is \$12.00, and the federal minimum wage is only \$7.25. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's 2013 State of the People indicated that Amherst was 1 of 5 communities in the Valley to have poverty rates above 20%, along with Springfield and Holyoke<sup>x</sup>. Studies consistently show that rates of illness and lower life expectancies in the US fall disproportionately on the poor and are attributed, in part, to lack of access to affordable nutritious food.

The Amherst Survival Center Food Pantry increases access to healthy food, its other nutrition programs multiply that access. The ASC creates a nutrition safety net in our community. See Attachment A-IV, Stories of Impact for a few examples of the impact of CDBG funds and this project.

**F. Community Involvement and Support** Community involvement and specifically the involvement of potential beneficiaries is infused at every level of Amherst Survival Center program development. This is accomplished most significantly by engagement of volunteers (including many who also rely on our services), and seeking and responding to participant feedback (eg. surveys, feedback from service providers, comprehensive needs assessments such as the recent Latinx Outreach project, informal feedback). These strategies, along with program data, keep ASC programs rooted in real need. We provide ongoing opportunities for participants to offer insight on program delivery and new services. In the coming year, we plan to further build on these existing strategies as we pilot a new Program and Advocacy committee providing leadership development and advocacy opportunities to participants.

Satisfaction surveys offer opportunities for participants to share their experiences, identify program strengths, describe emerging needs, suggest improvements. At Pantry check-in, staff asks new registrants how they learned about our services. These check-ins also provide opportunities for returning shoppers to make suggestions. Volunteers, both participants and not, offer their own feedback as well as feedback received through conversations while assisting shoppers.

The ASC offers multiple ways for community members to join in the effort to reduce food insecurity. Amherst residents' commitment to prioritize the Pantry is shown by their contributions of time, funds and goods. The ASC has a current roster of 263 volunteers each week: 20% work directly in the Pantry, 5% are on the food recovery team which brings food donations daily to the pantry, 5% assist with the weekly food delivery to the Senior Center, and 4% on the mobile. Of the volunteers in Food Pantry programs, ~70% live in Amherst. Community members and organizations supply the Food Pantry thru food drives and the Neighborhood Food Project, an ongoing door-to-door neighborhood food drive (see [www.amherstsuvival.org/nfp](http://www.amherstsuvival.org/nfp)). In these ways, the ASC offers Amherst residents an opportunity to strengthen their community and support their neighbors. The Neighborhood Food Project's rapidly growing participation demonstrates that it, too, is meeting a community need of engagement. The ASC's track record of creating programs to meet emerging needs as identified by recipients, to improve access, and to foster program improvements, allow it to maximize community involvement and support.

Many organizations collect feedback. The test of engagement, however, is the degree to which organizations make meaningful changes based on information received. Last year, the Amherst Survival Center completed the Latinx Outreach Project, including 27 interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders. As a result of this assessment, we began stocking new items in the Food Pantry, updated

our website to one that is mobile friendly and offers better translation service, translated numerous materials, advertised in new locations, addressed concerns raised in our website FAQs, created tools for volunteer assisted multi-lingual tours, created “I speak \_\_\_” buttons to better identify the language diversity of our volunteers, and changed policies we learned were creating barriers for some households. This response is not unlike changes made several years ago when we allocated funds to purchase fresh milk based on shopper feedback, versus the boxed milk available to us for free; or recent changes to offer new personal care products requested by seniors including bladder pads and incontinence briefs.

**G. Project Feasibility** The ASC has provided food and nutrition services for more than 40 years, including substantial increases in Food Pantry services. The ASC has a strong track record of developing effective programs to meet the needs of our low-income neighbors in ways that are high impact, feasible, increase access, reduce stigma, and maximize community resources, including volunteers. Responses to customer satisfaction surveys document reliance on the Pantry. Food insecurity data points to local need. Local needs assessments cite specific local need<sup>IV,V,VI</sup>. College officials identify growing needs on campus. Participant feedback and pantry registration data confirms need by residents.

**Solicitation:** Outreach takes place largely by word of mouth and via referrals from other service providers, as well as medical providers screening for food insecurity. The ASC is also listed in online resource guides available directly to residents. We flier, promote our programs via social media, and conduct targeted outreach to underserved communities. Participants register by completing an intake form (including income self-disclosure), bring proof of residence for each person in their household, and begin to receive services. **Staffing:** Executive Director: oversees organizational management, community outreach, program assessment; Program Director: oversees program, supervises Coordinator, manages Center operations; Pantry Coordinator: runs daily operations of pantry, participant intake, food ordering, supervises volunteers/assistant; Pantry Assistant: inventory, stocking; Finance Manager: budget, billing and invoices; Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator: recruits, trains, schedules volunteers; participant outreach. ASC staff work with 50 Pantry volunteers each week, including Pantry recipients. ASC has successfully completed all past CDBG projects and reporting within timelines specified. **Milestones:** Funding will allow for immediate continuation of existing CDBG-funded programs. The program is ongoing, and funding will immediately support these interventions.

**H. Project Impact** The impact of this program is that 2,000+ fewer Amherst residents will be hungry and food insecurity will be reduced as a result of the ASC efficiently and fairly distributing food to low-income households. Recipients report that this service enables them to become more self-sufficient because the food they receive help their families survive in between paychecks. (See Attachment A-IV, Stories of Impact.) Numerous studies confirm that “persons who had access to and used a wide variety of free food sources such as soup kitchens [and] pantries that give free groceries...”<sup>xi</sup> were significantly better nourished than those without those resources. As a result of CDBG funding, this project, and the completion of our short term goals (detailed on page 5):

- More than 2,000 low income Amherst residents will have increased access to nutritious food and ingredients to prepare healthy meals at home, reducing food insecurity in Amherst.
- At least 80% of participating Amherst residents will report increased food security.
- At least 70% of participating Amherst residents will report that they have more money for other basic needs such as rent, heat, transportation or medical care.
- At least 80% of participants will report being satisfied or very satisfied with the program, and will indicate that they are likely or very likely to refer someone else to the program.
- Pantry participation by priority, underserved population will increase.

These measures will be assessed with program participation data and customer satisfaction surveys. Participant feedback and report of impact will add qualitative data to the quantitative information garnered.

**Amherst Survival Center  
Food Pantry Program Budget  
10/1/2020-9/30/2021**

| Income                               | Amherst              | Non-Amherst          | Total Food<br>Pantry |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Income Sources</b>                |                      |                      |                      |
| Town of Amherst CDBG                 | \$ 56,650.00         | \$ -                 | \$ 56,650.00         |
| United Way of Hampshire County       | \$ 8,000.00          | \$ 12,000.00         | \$ 20,000.00         |
| Individual Contributions             | \$ 35,328.00         | \$ 62,922.00         | \$ 98,250.00         |
| Adobe Foundation                     | \$ 3,500.00          | \$ 16,500.00         | \$ 20,000.00         |
| Health New England                   | \$ 1,000.00          | \$ 4,000.00          | \$ 5,000.00          |
| Florence Bank Community Choice Award | \$ 1,000.00          | \$ 2,350.00          | \$ 3,350.00          |
| Fallon Health                        | \$ 500.00            | \$ 2,000.00          | \$ 2,500.00          |
| Project Bread                        | \$ 1,000.00          | \$ 3,000.00          | \$ 4,000.00          |
| <b>Total Income</b>                  | <b>\$ 106,978.00</b> | <b>\$ 102,772.00</b> | <b>\$ 209,750.00</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>                      |                      |                      |                      |
| <b>Personnel</b>                     |                      |                      |                      |
| Pantry Coordinator                   | \$ 19,670.00         | \$ 18,900.00         | \$ 38,570.00         |
| Pantry Assistant                     | \$ 8,560.00          | \$ 8,220.00          | \$ 16,780.00         |
| Substitute Coordinator/Assistant     | \$ 1,265.00          | \$ 1,210.00          | \$ 2,475.00          |
| Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator     | \$ 4,915.00          | \$ 4,725.00          | \$ 9,640.00          |
| Program Director                     | \$ 3,960.00          | \$ 3,805.00          | \$ 7,765.00          |
| <i>Subtotal</i>                      | <i>\$ 38,370.00</i>  | <i>\$ 36,860.00</i>  | <i>\$ 75,230.00</i>  |
| Payroll Taxes and Benefits 20%       | \$ 7,677.00          | \$ 7,370.00          | \$ 15,047.00         |
| Work-Study Students                  | \$ 1,350.00          | \$ 1,300.00          | \$ 2,650.00          |
| <b>Total Personnel</b>               | <b>\$ 47,397.00</b>  | <b>\$ 45,530.00</b>  | <b>\$ 92,927.00</b>  |
| <b>Program Operations</b>            |                      |                      |                      |
| Food Purchases                       | \$ 27,540.00         | \$ 26,460.00         | \$ 54,000.00         |
| Personal Care Pantry                 | \$ 8,415.00          | \$ 8,085.00          | \$ 16,500.00         |
| Supplies-Produce Bags                | \$ 663.00            | \$ 637.00            | \$ 1,300.00          |
| Office Supplies/Copy & Print         | \$ 408.00            | \$ 392.00            | \$ 800.00            |
| Transportation                       | \$ 2,550.00          | \$ 2,450.00          | \$ 5,000.00          |
| Utilities/Refrigeration              | \$ 3,635.00          | \$ 3,490.00          | \$ 7,125.00          |
| Equipment & Equipment Repair         | \$ 2,422.00          | \$ 2,328.00          | \$ 4,750.00          |
| <b>Total Program Operations</b>      | <b>\$ 45,633.00</b>  | <b>\$ 43,842.00</b>  | <b>\$ 89,475.00</b>  |
| <b>Administration (15%)</b>          | <b>\$ 13,948.00</b>  | <b>\$ 13,400.00</b>  | <b>\$ 27,348.00</b>  |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                | <b>\$ 106,978.00</b> | <b>\$ 102,772.00</b> | <b>\$ 209,750.00</b> |
| <b>Net Income</b>                    | <b>\$ 0.00</b>       | <b>\$ 0.00</b>       | <b>\$ (0.00)</b>     |
| <b>In Kind Goods: Food Donations</b> | <b>\$ 71,400.00</b>  | <b>\$ 68,600.00</b>  | <b>\$ 140,000.00</b> |

**Amherst Survival Center  
Budget Overview: FY2020  
July 2019 - June 2020**

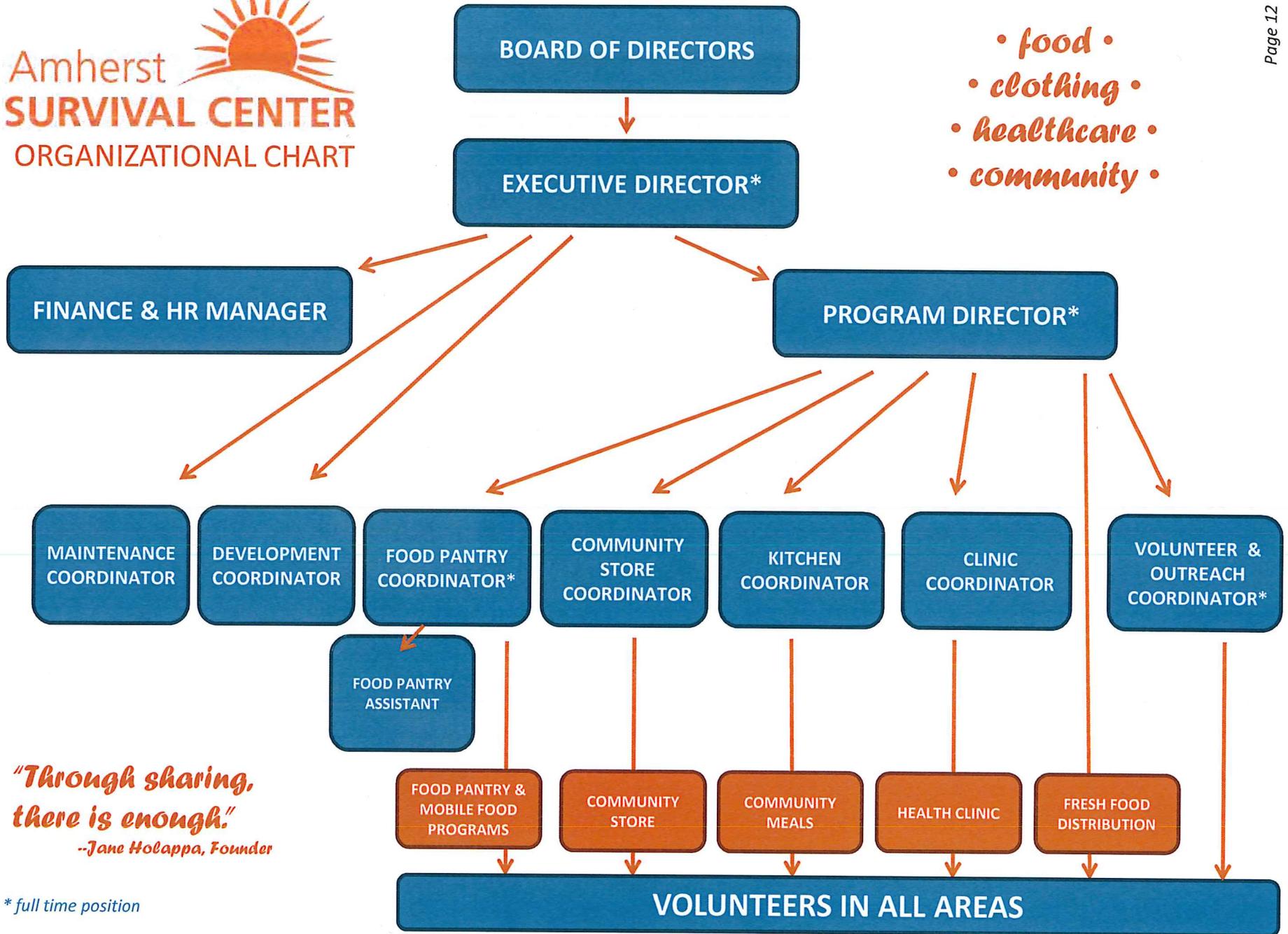
|                                     | <b>Total</b>          |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                      |                       |
| 4000 Contributions/Donations        | \$ 478,450.00         |
| 4080 Planet Aid Partnership Program | \$ 600.00             |
| 4100 Private Grants - Unrestricted  | \$ 113,750.00         |
| 4200 Private Grants - Restricted    | \$ 111,000.00         |
| 4300 Public/Government Grants       | \$ 46,875.00          |
| 4400 Fundraising Special Events     | \$ 84,500.00          |
| 4500 Interest Income                | \$ 8,850.00           |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                | <b>\$ 844,025.00</b>  |
| <b>Expenditures</b>                 |                       |
| 5000 Payroll Expenses               | \$ 527,488.00         |
| 5002 Work Study Interns             | \$ 5,500.00           |
| 5225 Recruitment and Training       | \$ 7,250.00           |
| 5250 Professional Fees              | \$ 8,800.00           |
| 5300 Office Supplies                | \$ 6,500.00           |
| 5350 Insurance                      | \$ 9,462.00           |
| 5400 Telephone and Internet         | \$ 4,380.00           |
| 5455 Computer and Software Expense  | \$ 11,450.00          |
| 5500 Program Activities & Supplies  | \$ 100,700.00         |
| 5606 Occupancy - 138 Sunderland Rd  | \$ 68,100.00          |
| 5620 Depreciation Expense           | \$ 67,800.00          |
| 5680 Repairs & Maintenance - Equip. | \$ 4,000.00           |
| 5685 Lease Expense                  | \$ 1,200.00           |
| 5800 Auto/Travel                    | \$ 9,550.00           |
| 5870 Outreach and Fundraising       | \$ 18,230.00          |
| 5890 Miscellaneous                  | \$ 6,575.00           |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>           | <b>\$ 856,985.00</b>  |
| <b>Net Operating Revenue</b>        | <b>\$ (12,960.00)</b> |
| <b>Other Revenue</b>                |                       |
| 4550 Investment Income              | \$ 20,760.00          |
| 4900 In-Kind Revenue                | \$ 815,000.00         |
| <b>Total Other Revenue</b>          | <b>\$ 835,760.00</b>  |
| <b>Other Expenditures</b>           |                       |
| 5610 Investment Expense             | \$ 7,800.00           |
| 5900 In-Kind Expense                | \$ 815,000.00         |
| <b>Total Other Expenditures</b>     | <b>\$ 822,800.00</b>  |
| <b>Net Other Revenue</b>            | <b>\$ 12,960.00</b>   |
| <b>Net Revenue</b>                  | <b>\$ -</b>           |

**Amherst Survival Center  
Balance Sheet  
As of November 30, 2019**

|  | <b>Total</b>           |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                          |                        |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                  |                        |
| Bank Accounts                          | \$ 23,293.15           |
| 1200 Accounts Receivable               | \$ 600.00              |
| 1040 Gift Cards                        | \$ 1,507.89            |
| 1090 Petty Cash                        | \$ 113.37              |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>            | <b>\$ 25,514.41</b>    |
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>                    |                        |
| 1580 Furniture/Equipment               | \$ 29,360.29           |
| 1595 Building - 138 Sunderland Road    | \$ 1,591,727.52        |
| 1597 Land-138 Sunderland Rd.           | \$ 157,500.00          |
| <b>Total Fixed Assets</b>              | <b>\$ 1,778,587.81</b> |
| <b>Other Assets</b>                    |                        |
| 1310 Prepaid Insurances                | \$ 9,374.43            |
| 1700 Vehicles                          | \$ 14,382.12           |
| Investment Accounts                    | \$ 1,512,674.60        |
| <b>Total Other Assets</b>              | <b>\$ 1,536,431.15</b> |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                    | <b>\$ 3,340,533.37</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>          |                        |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                     |                        |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>             |                        |
| Accounts Payable                       |                        |
| 2000 Accounts Payable                  | \$ 9,611.52            |
| <b>Total Accounts Payable</b>          | <b>\$ 9,611.52</b>     |
| <b>Other Current Liabilities</b>       |                        |
| 2100 Payroll Liabilities               | \$ 48.44               |
| 2120 Accrued Payroll                   | \$ 7,864.05            |
| 2160 Accrued Vacation                  | \$ 5,463.41            |
| <b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b> | <b>\$ 13,375.90</b>    |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b>       | <b>\$ 22,987.42</b>    |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>               | <b>\$ 22,987.42</b>    |
| <b>Equity</b>                          |                        |
| 3050 Unrestricted Net Assets           | \$ 2,851,438.51        |
| 3100 Temp. Restricted Net Assets       | \$ 22,794.82           |
| 3200 Temp Rest. Net Assets-Campaign    | \$ 200,943.31          |
| 3900 Retained Earnings                 | \$ 428,124.89          |
| Net Revenue                            | \$ (185,755.58)        |
| <b>Total Equity</b>                    | <b>\$ 3,317,545.95</b> |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>    | <b>\$ 3,340,533.37</b> |

Amherst   
**SURVIVAL CENTER**  
 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

- food •
- clothing •
- healthcare •
- community •



*"Through sharing,  
 there is enough."  
 --Jane Holappa, Founder*

\* full time position

Survival Centers, Inc.  
Amherst Survival Center  
Board of Directors  
Fiscal Year 2020

The Board of Directors meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Amherst Survival Center at 5:30pm. Terms end in June of the year noted.

**Theodore Parker, President**  
(2013-2022)  
31 Campus Plaza Road  
Hadley, MA 01035  
413-256-0321  
tparker@kohlconstruction.com  
President, Kohl Construction

**Barbara White, Vice President**  
(2016-2022)  
39 Main Street  
Montague Center, MA 01351  
Day: 413-367-2101  
Cell: 413-230-4485  
Beloki1943@gmail.com  
Owner, Blue Heron Restaurant  
and Catering

**Deron Estes, Treasurer**  
(2018-2022)  
156 Cherry Lane  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-230-3072  
deron\_estes@hotmail.com  
Manager, Decision Support  
Cooley Dickinson Hospital

**Chris Howland, Clerk**  
(2016-2022)  
669 North Pleasant Street  
Amherst, MA 01003  
W: 413-545-5385 C: 978-853-4101  
chowland@umass.edu  
Director, Purchasing/Marketing,  
UMass Auxiliary Enterprises

**Paul Bobrowski**  
(2019-2022)  
55 Hulst Road  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-695-7582  
pb@pioneervalleylaw.com  
Senior .NET Architect,  
State of CT, Judicial Information  
Tech Division

**Jan Eidelson**  
(2019-2022)  
80 Kellogg Ave.  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-687-1233  
janeidelson@gmail.com  
Community Member

**J. Lynn Griesemer**  
(2013-2022)  
83 Flat Hills Road  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-530-3629  
lgriesemer@donahue.umass.edu  
Town Council President,  
Town of Amherst, MA

**Jennifer Moyston**  
(2018-2021)  
149 Farmington Road  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-461-5363  
jennifer.moyston@yahoo.com  
Administrative Assistant,  
Town of Amherst, MA

**Maria-Judith Rodriguez**  
(2016-2022)  
234 Heatherstone Road  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-658-4387  
mariajudith@ymail.com  
Chief Human Resources Officer,  
Amherst College

**Manju Sharma**  
(2012-2021)  
25 Pondview Drive #A  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-545-2735  
msharma@cns.umass.edu  
Researcher, UMASS

**Diana Spurgin**  
(2018-2021)  
57 Tanglewood Road  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413-219-8780  
diana@spurginfamily.com  
Community Member

**Allison van der Velden**  
(2018-2021)  
99 Hillside Rd  
South Deerfield, MA 01373  
480-823-1103  
a.h.vandervelden@gmail.com  
Assistant Dental Director,  
Community Health Center of  
Franklin County

**Nicola Usher**  
(2019-2022)  
37 Harris Street  
Amherst, MA 01002  
917-428-3152  
nicola.mare@gmail.com  
Undergraduate Program Advisor,  
UMASS School of Public Health  
and Health Sciences

## Attachment A

- I. References/Endnotes
- II. Amherst Survival Center Food Pantry Points System
- III. Participant Demographics
- IV. Stories of Impact

### I. References/Endnotes

- <sup>i</sup> “Basically CDBG” (May 2014), Chapter 3: National Objectives, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Basically-CDBG-Chapter-3-Nat-Obj.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> Amherst Master Plan, p. 2.4 <http://bit.ly/1cRgxPv>
- <sup>iii</sup> Hassett and Austin, “Service Integration: Something old and something new,” (1995) in Administration and Social Work.
- <sup>iv</sup> Healthy Hampshire, “Healthy Hampshire Food Access Assessment,” (2017), <http://bit.ly/HHFAA>
- <sup>v</sup> Cooley Dickinson Health Care, “Community Health Improvement Plan,” (2017-2019), <http://bit.ly/CDHCHIP2017>
- <sup>vi</sup> Community Action Pioneer Valley Community Assessment Report and Strategic Plan FY2018-FY2020, <http://bit.ly/CAPV2020>
- <sup>vii</sup> Wisconsin Hope Lab, Basic Needs Insecurity in Massachusetts Public Colleges and Universities (2017), <http://bit.ly/HopeLabMA>
- <sup>viii</sup> Bernstein, Brocht and Spade-Aguilar (2000), How much is enough? Basic Family Budgets for Working Families; Economic Policy Institute <http://bit.ly/li2pnys>; Feeding America “In Short Supply” <https://bit.ly/2Z0ueH7>
- <sup>ix</sup> CNBC Map of MIT Living Wage Calculator, <https://cnb.cx/38R1wNq>; National Center for Children and Poverty, Columbia University
- <sup>x</sup> Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, “State of the People,” (2013), <http://bit.ly/PVPCSOP2013>
- <sup>xi</sup> Gelberg, Stein and Neumann, “Determinants of Undernutrition Among the Homeless,” (1995) in Public Health Reports 110(4): 448-454

### II. Amherst Survival Center Food Pantry Points System

Since our allocation is based on points per person, the person who signs in a program participant completes a “shop sheet” based on the size of their household.

**Points per Household**

| HH Size         | 1           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|-----------------|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| USDA            | 1           | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| Fresh Veggies   | 4           | 8  | 12 | 16 | 20 | 24 | 28 | 32 | 36 | 40 | 44 | 48 |
| Canned Veggies  | 4           | 8  | 12 | 16 | 20 | 24 | 28 | 32 | 36 | 40 | 44 | 48 |
| Protein         | 3           | 6  | 9  | 12 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 24 | 27 | 30 | 33 | 36 |
| Kid Snacks      | 2 per child |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Miscellaneous   | 1           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Grains          | 5           | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 |
| Hygiene         | 1           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Bonus           | 1           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Fresh Fruit     | 5           | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 |
| Milk            | 2           | 2  | 2  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 6  | 6  |
| Cheese          | 1           | 1  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |
| Eggs            | 1           | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| Cold Prepared   | 1           | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Frozen Prepared | 1           | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| Frozen Meat     | 1           | 1  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 3  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |
| Bread           | 1           | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |

Most points equate to one unit, such as a can of beans, a box of cereal, a bag of rice, or a medium package of meat. Some items “cost” two points, such as large packages of frozen meat, or large jars of peanut butter. Each USDA point equates to one of each item available through USDA, often 8-10 items. Produce points often “buy” a bundle of items, such as a bag of carrots, 3 small zucchini, or a box of berries.

This system allows maximum choice (a shopper chooses which veggies or

which grains they prefer) while ensuring an equitable distribution of food to shoppers throughout the day and month of a nutritionally balanced assortment of food.

**III. Participant Demographics: ASC Food Pantry Participants who are Amherst Residents**

| Age Breakdown of the Amherst Survival Center’s Food Pantry’s Amherst residents, 2018-2019 |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Ages  | Amherst residents |
| Ages 0-17   | 663 (33.7%)       |
| Ages 18-59  | 1,017 (51.7%)     |
| Ages 60+  | 288 (14.6%)       |
| <i>Total</i>  | <i>1,968</i>      |

|  | Amherst Residents/<br>Food Pantry Participants | Town of Amherst<br>(census 2010) |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| White/Caucasian                          | 47.5%  | 76.9%                            |
| Black/African American & bi-racial       | 19.9%  | 5.4%                             |
| Asian/Pacific Islander                   | 20.9%  | 10.9%                            |
| American Indian & bi-racial              | 1.2%   |                                  |
| Other/multi-racial/prefer not to specify | 10.5%  |                                  |
| Latino (may be duplicated)               | 24.0%  | 7.3%                             |

**IV. Stories of Impact from Food Pantry Recipients**

This summer, a young woman came to the Amherst Survival Center for the first time, looking for the Food Pantry. As she pushed a cart of groceries out to her car, a staff member asked if she had visited fresh food distribution to get additional produce and bread. She shook her head. “I didn’t think I could even get food from the pantry. [A domestic violence shelter] just sent me over, but I don’t have any paperwork, so I didn’t think I would be allowed to get anything today.” She smiled nervously, “but the lady in the pantry said it was fine.” After being shown around, she had a hot meal, got produce to take home, and left the Community Store with a toy and a book for her son. She got the food that she came for, along with a few extras, including a warm welcome and a bit of comfort on an extremely trying day. Sure enough, the next time she visited, she brought proof of address for herself and her son, and has continued to use the Food Pantry regularly as she works to rebuild her life. She had fled her home for the safety of herself and her child and had no paperwork. The Amherst Survival Center’s commitment to low barrier to entry meant that we were able to serve this family first with an “emergency box,” without proof of residence, and build a relationship leading to ongoing participation and access to needed resources.

An Amherst resident recently returned to the Center after a two months or so away. Last summer and fall, she was out of work and trying desperately to keep her house for herself and her son. She shared that during that period of time, she got all of her food from the Amherst Survival Center. I asked if her

monthly trip to our Food Pantry was enough to get by. “Altogether, it’s enough,” she said. “I come for the cooked lunch, and it’s big. I wrap up the meat to take home with me. Together with some rice from the pantry and vegetables from the fresh food distribution, that is my dinner. The fruit I get, that is breakfast for tomorrow. I stretch the groceries from the Pantry so I have enough over all of the weekends. I have to be careful, but it’s enough.” Now, she is grateful to be employed again. She is working three low wage jobs and doing her best to piece it together. She comes to the pantry less often, “only when I needed to ... but I appreciated knowing that you are here if I need more.” We assured her that she is welcome to use the Pantry for as long as she needs, “until you are back on your feet.” The Center’s food and nutrition programs meant she had food during a period of unemployment, and was at least in part responsible for keeping her in her home. Now the Food Pantry is a critical resource as she catches up on back bills and rebuilds from that crisis.

An elderly Amherst resident called the Center a few weeks ago. He had heard about the Senior Mobile Nutrition Program from a neighbor. He spoke at length about not liking to ask for help. He is a veteran, a widow, and used to be an avid hunter, I learned. While I explained the program he was delighted. It was clear that transportation to the Center would be hard for him, and perhaps even more significantly, that his pride and the stigma around asking for help would have been big hurdles for him to come. He made sure to let me know that he and his wife never had to use a food pantry when his kids were young. “I just went out and [hunted] what we needed...but,” he chuckled, “I’d end up the one hunted now.” After his first delivery, I got a hand-written post it-note in the mail, “Thank you very much for the groceries. Thank you.”

“Thank you so much for being here [on Saturdays],” shared an Amherst mom with three young kids in tow. She was here during recent Saturday morning open hours. “I work all week, but we really need the food. I’ve talked to a lot of people in other towns, and they say their pantries aren’t open on the weekend. People think that once you have a job, you’re fine, but it’s not enough. Without the pantry, and the diapers...” she trailed off. “So, just thank you.”

One of our regular participants, an Amherst local, is currently homeless. Because he is staying both outside and in a shelter without access to kitchen facilities, he makes use of the specialized Pantry allocation, picking up some of his groceries every few days, and selecting mostly ready to eat items like salads and sandwiches. “I wouldn’t be alive if it weren’t for all of you. I hope you know that.” He recently stated. “All of it really, the long johns, the shower, seeing a doctor, the food. Being able to come [into the Pantry] and get a few things here and there, it makes a big difference. I hope you know... you all are keeping a lot of people alive.”

“I’ve known about the [Amherst Survival Center] food pantry for a while. I was registered, but I didn’t used to come very much. It is hard to take all the groceries on the bus, and sometimes it was hard to shop because I don’t speak English. When I heard from [my social worker] that you had Spanish-speakers here now, and that I could come more often, I decided to try it again,” shared an Amherst parent who shops regularly at the South Amherst Mobile Pantry. She has now been coming twice every month to the onsite Food Pantry, splitting her distribution in two. “It still takes a long time to get here, but it’s worth it because I get so much good food. Now we have enough when our food stamps run out.”



TOWN OF AMHERST  
TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN  
TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
TOWN OF CHESTER  
TOWN OF CHESTERFIELD  
TOWN OF CUMMINGTON  
TOWN OF GOSHEN

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON  
TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD  
CITY OF NORTHAMPTON  
TOWN OF PLAINFIELD  
TOWN OF RUSSELL  
TOWN OF WILLIAMSBURG  
TOWN OF WORTHINGTON

Amherst CDBG Review Committee  
Attn: Nathaniel Malloy  
Amherst Town Hall  
4 Boltwood Avenue  
Amherst, MA 01002

December 20, 2019

Dear Amherst CDBG Review Committee,

I am pleased to offer my enthusiastic support for the Amherst Survival Center's application for Amherst Community Development Block Grant funding to support their Food Pantry Programs.

Healthy Hampshire works with municipal and community leaders to effect changes to community policies and systems that promote access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity for all residents. To this end, we have worked with multiple stakeholders – organizational leaders, residents, and other community members—who are working to end food insecurity in Amherst and surrounding towns. We recently concluded a bilingual Food Justice Planning Process in Amherst that prioritized resident engagement and included input from key organizational partners, including the Amherst Survival Center. The process identified several key barriers to healthy food access in Amherst, including: limited money and time to procure healthy foods; limited sources of healthy and culturally appropriate food close to home; several challenges with using public transportation infrastructure; high competition for emergency food; and language and cultural barriers to accessing healthy food where it is available.

The Amherst Survival Center has demonstrated itself as an incredible partner in increasing food security in Amherst and providing resources in a way that actively overcomes these barriers. They offer free, regular access to high quality, and healthy groceries. Through their mobile programs and split pick up options for bus riders, they have made their Pantry more accessible to those with limited transportation. Their unique one-stop-shop provides access to many resources conveniently under one roof, and they are known throughout the community for the ease of access and low barrier to entry for their services. The point system utilized and commitment to year round fresh produce provides maximum choice for participants to meet specific diets and preferences. Finally, they have taken their commitment to cultural competency seriously, engaging the community in needs assessments, planning, and responding promptly to shopper requests for new foods.

The Amherst Survival Center provides reliable access to healthy food for area residents in an environment that is characterized by welcoming and respect. We cannot underestimate the vital role they play in the food security of Amherst Residents. I offer my strong encouragement to support their application in full, allowing continued Food Pantry services, and the proposed expansions to best meet the needs of all Amherst Residents.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bankert  
Program Manager, Healthy Hampshire  
sbankert@collaborative.org

Advisory Board

Lynn Logan, Co-Chair  
Kimberly Stender, Co-Chair  
Katherine Appy  
Sarah Auerbach  
Robin Brown  
Connie Gillen  
Maggie Hodges  
Betsy McInnis  
Michele Miller  
Deb Napier  
Louise Reilly  
Roy Rosenblatt  
Kacey Schmitt

Amherst CDBG Review Committee  
Attn: Nathaniel Malloy  
Amherst Town Hall  
4 Boltwood Avenue  
Amherst, MA 01002

December 20, 2019

Dear Amherst CDBG Review Committee,

I am honored to offer my wholehearted support for the Amherst Survival Center's application for Amherst Community Development Block Grant funding to support their Food Pantry Programs.

Staff

Laura Reichsman, Director  
Nik Krauchi  
Diva Franca  
Francine Rodriguez  
Iris Rosa

At the Center for Human Development's (CHD) Family Outreach of Amherst program, we see firsthand how the challenges of income insecurity negatively impact all members of a family. For families facing income insecurity, everything is a tradeoff. Food or rent. Rent or heat. Heat or gas for the car to get to work. Gas for the car or medicine for the kid. Medicine or food. The Amherst Survival Center knows, as does Family Outreach of Amherst, that no one should have to choose between basic needs. We also know high food costs can easily leave a family with little left for rent and that missed rent payments are one of the primary causes of eviction we are trying to avoid with our housing stabilization program. Continued and expanded availability of the Amherst Survival Center's Food Pantry is critical to helping our families meet their basic needs and stay in their homes.

The Amherst Survival Center is compassionate and responsive in the services they provide. They understand their role in serving Amherst Residents holistically to meet not only their food security needs, but the full scope of basic needs they have. The Amherst Survival Center is committed to providing healthy food in a manner that is respectful. Shoppers often comment on the smiling reception greeters, the helpful staff, and the variety of culturally appropriate foods offered. Shoppers who work during the day rely on the weekly evening and monthly weekend hours. Families with school age children appreciate the additional food during school vacations. When our staff offered feedback about the experience of large families and those riding the bus, the Amherst Survival Center responded by adjusting policies to better meet their needs. We are thrilled to be collaborating with the Amherst Survival Center to expand future mobile programs to better serve residents without transportation.

We appreciate partnering with the Amherst Survival Center to jointly promote the health and stability of Amherst families. Residents of Amherst rely on and will benefit from the continued and expanded Food Pantry services. I offer my wholehearted encouragement to the committee to fund their proposal in full.

Sincerely,



Laura Reichman,  
Director, Family Outreach of Amherst