DEMONSTRATION SAMPLE: fictional organization created to showcase writing quality. All data is illustrative.

The Riverton Food Partnership, Mason County, the Riverton Community Foundation, and every statistic, name, and dollar figure below are invented for demonstration purposes. The structure, sourcing style, and budget discipline reflect how a real application would be built from a client's actual data, with every statistic tied to a named state and a dated, verifiable source.

Riverton Food Partnership

Proposal to the Riverton Community Foundation, Basic Needs Fund, Fall 2026 Competitive Cycle

Project title	Fresh Routes: Mobile Pantry Expansion to Cedar Bend and Harlan Townships
Amount requested	$30,000
Grant period	12 months (January–December 2027)
Total project budget	$54,400
Organization budget	$1.6M (current fiscal year)
EIN / status	501(c)(3), determination letter on file
Contact	Ellen Marsh, Executive Director, Riverton Food Partnership, 410 Mill Street, Riverton

Cover Statement

The Riverton Food Partnership requests $30,000 from the Riverton Community Foundation's Basic Needs Fund to launch Fresh Routes, a second mobile pantry route serving Cedar Bend and Harlan townships. These are two rural communities in eastern Mason County where the nearest full-service grocery store is now 14 and 17 miles away, respectively, and where households are driving past their own closed IGA to reach our warehouse pantry in Riverton, if they can get there at all. After a two-month setup phase, Fresh Routes will run eight distributions a month at four township stops, roughly 80 distributions over the grant year's ten operating months. That delivers more than 100,000 pounds of food, at least 30 percent of it fresh produce, protein, and dairy, to at least 240 unique households. The request covers slightly more than half the cost of a part-time route coordinator and driver, a share of vehicle operating and food costs, and the full cost of the cold-chain equipment that keeps eggs and produce safe at an outdoor distribution in July. Our first mobile route, launched in March 2024 on the county's west side, reached 210 households a month within nine months. We are applying that playbook (same truck, same intake system, same volunteer model) to the part of the county the data says needs it most.

Statement of Need

Mason County's headline economic numbers are unremarkable. Unemployment sits near the state average, and Riverton's downtown has more open storefronts than it did five years ago. The food data tell a different story. Feeding America's 2025 Map the Meal Gap (based on 2023 data) places Mason County's food insecurity rate at 14.8 percent, roughly 6,100 of the county's 41,000 residents, against a statewide rate of 11.9 percent. For children the gap is wider: 19.5 percent, about 1,800 kids. The 2025 County Health Rankings put Mason County in the bottom third of the state's counties for food environment index, a position that has slipped in each of the last three years.

The need isn't spread evenly, and that's the problem this project addresses. Cedar Bend and Harlan townships, combined population 6,400, sit in the county's eastern third. Median household income there is $52,300, against $61,800 countywide (American Community Survey, 2019–2023 5-year estimates), and the 2024 United Way ALICE report places 31 percent of township households below the ALICE survival-budget threshold. That figure includes both households in poverty and working households that earn above the poverty line but can't cover a basic survival budget of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care. When the Cedar Bend IGA closed in 2024, both townships' census tracts met the USDA Food Access Research Atlas definition of low-income, low-access. There's no public transit east of the Riverton city limits. The county's on-demand service costs $4 each way and requires 48 hours' notice. Roughly 9 percent of township households have no vehicle at all. At Cedar Bend Elementary, 58 percent of students now qualify for free or reduced-price meals, up from 49 percent two years ago, the steepest climb of any school in the district.

Our own intake records sharpen the picture. Households from the two eastern ZIP codes increased their visits to our Riverton warehouse pantry by 34 percent over the past year, yet they still account for only 6 percent of total pantry visits. Applying the township-level income, ALICE, and school-meals data above to the county's Map the Meal Gap estimate, we estimate the two townships hold roughly 22 percent of the county's food-insecure residents (about 1,300 people) on less than 16 percent of its population. People are not less hungry east of the river. They're farther away. The county 211 line logs food assistance as the single most common request originating from those exchanges, and a 28-mile round trip to a pantry is a real cost for a household already stretching gas money and shift hours. The food needs to go to them.

Project Description

Fresh Routes extends our existing mobile pantry model to four fixed stops in Cedar Bend and Harlan townships, each served twice a month (eight distributions per month). The route launches in month three, after a two-month setup phase, and runs through month twelve: roughly 80 distributions across the grant year's ten operating months, continuing without interruption into year two.

The model. Our 16-foot refrigerated box truck loads at the warehouse the morning of each distribution. That means shelf-stable staples sourced through Two Rivers Regional Food Bank (collected on twice-monthly pickup runs to the food bank's regional warehouse, a 120-mile round trip), fresh produce recovered through our retail rescue partnerships with three Riverton-area grocers, and purchased protein, eggs, and dairy to fill the gaps donation streams never reliably cover. Stops are sited where people already go: the Cedar Bend Elementary parking lot, the Harlan volunteer fire station, a township park pavilion, and a church lot on the county road between the two townships, with site agreements already signed for three of the four. Each distribution runs two hours, staffed by the route coordinator, the driver, and four to six trained volunteers. Clients choose their own food from tables rather than receiving a pre-packed box. Our west-side route data show the choice model reduces waste and increases produce uptake.

The people. A new half-time Mobile Pantry Coordinator owns the route: site relationships, volunteer scheduling, intake, and the monthly numbers. A part-time driver (10 hours weekly) handles the truck, food bank pickups, and load-out. Both report to Program Director Dana Whitfield, who built the west-side route and will supervise launch.

More than food. Every distribution includes a SNAP screening table. Our benefits-access volunteer, trained through the state's SNAP outreach partner program, screens interested households on a tablet and helps complete applications on the spot. On the west-side route, about one in four screened households turned out to be eligible for benefits they weren't receiving. A flyer rack carries referral cards for the community health center's sliding-scale clinic, LIHEAP energy assistance, and the school district's family liaison.

Why this design. We considered a school-based backpack program and a delivery model and set both aside. Backpack programs reach only enrolled children, and township seniors are a growing share of our eastern-ZIP intake. Home delivery costs roughly three times as much per pound served and strips out the choice model. A fixed-stop mobile route is the highest-volume, lowest-cost way to close a distance gap, and it's the model we already know how to run.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Reduce food insecurity in Cedar Bend and Harlan townships by removing distance as a barrier to consistent, nutritious food.

1. **Launch.** By the end of month 3, operate four distribution stops across the two townships on a twice-monthly schedule (eight distributions per month), with signed site agreements and a trained volunteer pool of at least 20.
2. **Reach.** By the end of month 12, serve at least 240 unique households (approximately 650 individuals) and complete at least 1,800 household visits across roughly 80 distributions. That target equals roughly a third of the townships' estimated 775 below-ALICE households and about half of their estimated 1,300 food-insecure residents.
3. **Nutrition.** Distribute at least 100,000 pounds of food during the grant period, of which at least 30 percent is fresh produce, protein, or dairy, verified by load-out category weights.
4. **Benefits access.** Screen at least 120 households for SNAP eligibility and assist at least 25 in submitting completed applications by month 12. The application target sits just below the one-in-four eligibility rate observed on our west-side route, because some eligible households choose not to apply.
5. **Client outcomes.** Administer the USDA 6-item Household Food Security Survey Module at each household's first registration and again at month 12 to returning households (target matched $n \geq 100$). The aim is at least a 15-percentage-point reduction in the share of matched households classified as having very low food security, and at least 60 percent of matched households reporting more frequent fruit and vegetable consumption than at baseline.

Activities and Timeline

Months	Activities
1–2	Hire route coordinator and driver; finalize fourth site agreement; recruit and train 20+ volunteers with Cedar Bend Elementary and the Harlan fire auxiliary; order cold-chain equipment; bilingual outreach (mailers to township households, yard signs at stops, announcements through schools, churches, and the 211 line)
3	Route launches: first distributions at all four stops; intake in Link2Feed includes a baseline USDA 6-item food security module for each registering household

Months	Activities
3–5	Ramp phase: build toward an average of 20 households per distribution, a deliberately conservative pace that accounts for the townships' smaller, more dispersed population; coordinator adjusts stop times and food mix based on intake patterns; SNAP screening table live at every distribution
6	Client feedback survey on stop times, hours, and food mix (paper and text link); mid-year report to the Foundation with distribution data and route economics
6–12	Full operation: build from an average of 25 households per distribution toward 30 by months 10–12, reaching the west-side route's nine-month volume on a comparable schedule; quarterly volunteer refresher trainings; corporate route-sponsorship solicitations begin (see Sustainability)
12	Month-12 follow-up survey (USDA module re-administered to returning households); final report with full-year outputs, outcomes, cost per household visit, and year-two funding plan

Evaluation Plan

Output data are collected at the point of service. Every household registers once in Link2Feed, the client-intake database we share with Two Rivers Regional Food Bank, which gives us unduplicated household counts, visit frequency, household size, and ZIP-level reach without adding paperwork at the table. Food is weighed by category (produce, protein/dairy, shelf-stable) at warehouse load-out before each run, so the 30-percent-fresh objective is checked against recorded weights. SNAP screenings and submitted applications are logged by the benefits volunteer at each distribution.

Outcome data come from the USDA 6-item Household Food Security Survey Module, a validated instrument, administered at baseline during each household's first registration and re-administered to returning households in month 12, on paper and by text link, in English and Spanish. Pairing baseline and follow-up responses gives a matched before-and-after measure rather than a one-time recall. Both administrations also include a single fruit-and-vegetable frequency item. The month-6 survey is limited to route logistics (stop times, hours, food mix) because three months of operations is too early to claim outcome change. The Program Director reviews route data monthly and adjusts; the Executive Director reports quarterly to the board and to the Foundation. If a stop consistently draws under 20 households, the plan is to move the stop.

Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term outcomes	Longer-term outcomes
RCF grant; refrigerated truck; 0.5 FTE coordinator; PT driver; 20+ volunteers; Two Rivers food supply; retail rescue partners; Link2Feed	8 mobile distributions/month at 4 township stops; client-choice food tables; SNAP screening and application help; community referrals	~80 distributions; 240+ unique households; 1,800+ household visits; 100,000+ lbs distributed (≥30% fresh); 120 SNAP screenings, 25 applications	Reduced share of households classified with very low food security (USDA 6-item module); increased fruit/vegetable consumption; eligible households enrolled in SNAP; reduced travel cost burden	Reduced food insecurity in the eastern townships; stabilized household budgets; durable county-wide food access infrastructure

Organizational Capacity

The Riverton Food Partnership has distributed food in Mason County since 1998. Last fiscal year we moved 1.1 million pounds through our Mill Street warehouse pantry and our west-side mobile route, serving just over 2,000 households a month with a staff of nine (6.5 FTE), a 13-member board, and an active volunteer corps of about 240. Our current operating budget is $1.6 million, drawn from individual giving (41%), foundation and corporate grants (33%), congregations and civic groups (14%), and special events (12%). We carry no debt, hold a board-designated operating reserve equal to three months of expenses, and our last three independent audits were issued without findings.

The directly relevant experience is the west-side route. Launched in March 2024 with a community foundation grant of similar size, it grew from 60 households a month to 210 within nine months and now runs on a blend of operating funds and a corporate sponsorship. Program Director Dana Whitfield, who built it after twelve years in food banking (including five managing agency relations at Two Rivers Regional Food Bank), will supervise Fresh Routes through launch. Executive Director Ellen Marsh is in her eleventh year leading the organization and sits on the state food bank association's rural access work group. The refrigerated truck, warehouse, intake system, food sourcing relationships, and volunteer training curriculum all exist today. This grant extends infrastructure that is already built and performing to a new geography.

Sustainability

Fresh Routes' steady-state cost is approximately $58,000 annually, higher than the launch-year operating total rather than lower, because year two runs twelve operating months against year one's ten, even after one-time equipment and launch outreach drop out. Our year-two plan funds the route through three streams. Our operating budget absorbs the coordinator position ($26,800, roughly 45 percent of the total); the board has approved adding it to the personnel budget contingent on a successful launch year. Corporate route sponsorship covers about 30 percent (roughly $17,500), using the stop-sponsorship model that now underwrites our west-side route, with solicitations to two regional employers beginning in month 6. Foundation support covers the remaining 25 percent, including a year-two application to Two Rivers Regional Food Bank's agency expansion fund, for which mobile routes in low-access tracts are a stated priority. We're asking the Foundation to fund the launch year. The plan above carries the route after that.

Budget

Project budget, 12 months (total: $54,400; requested: $30,000)

Line item	Total cost	Requested from RCF	Other sources
Mobile Pantry Coordinator (0.5 FTE: $22,000 salary + $4,800 benefits/payroll taxes)	$26,800	$16,000	$10,800
Part-time driver (10 hrs/wk × 42 operating wks × $19/hr = $7,980, plus payroll taxes and workers' comp)	$8,900	$4,400	$4,500
Vehicle operations (≈5,000 route and pickup miles at $0.80/mile: fuel, maintenance, insurance share)	$4,000	$2,400	$1,600
Food: shared-maintenance fees (65,000 lbs × $0.08/lb = $5,200) and purchased protein, eggs, dairy ($6,000)	$11,200	$4,200	$7,000
Cold-chain and site equipment (24 insulated totes, 6 folding tables, 2 canopies, coolers, signage/cones)	$2,400	$2,400	$0

Line item	Total cost	Requested from RCF	Other sources
Outreach and client materials (bilingual mailers and flyers, yard signs, SNAP referral cards)	$1,100	$600	$500
Total	**$54,400**	**$30,000**	**$24,400**

Budget narrative. Personnel is the largest cost because the coordinator role is what makes the route work. The half-time coordinator (annualized at $44,000 FTE, consistent with our current pay scale) owns sites, volunteers, intake, and reporting, and the driver line reflects 420 hours across the route's 42 operating weeks (months 3 through 12). Vehicle costs are projected from two years of west-side route actuals at $0.80 per mile: roughly 2,600 miles for 80 distribution runs to stops 14 to 17 miles from the warehouse, plus roughly 2,400 miles for 20 twice-monthly pickups at Two Rivers Regional Food Bank's regional warehouse (a 120-mile round trip), about 5,000 miles in total. The food line works in three tiers: 65,000 pounds sourced through Two Rivers at the food bank's $0.08-per-pound shared-maintenance fee; approximately 10,000 pounds of purchased protein, eggs, and dairy; and roughly 28,000 pounds of donated retail-rescue produce that carries no per-pound cost, which is how an $11,200 food line delivers more than 100,000 pounds. Equipment is one-time and stays in service beyond the grant period.

Other sources ($24,400): $13,400 committed from our operating budget (board-approved; covers the coordinator share of $10,800, the vehicle share of $1,600, and $1,000 of food); $6,000 committed from the Riverton Area Faith Coalition ($4,500 toward the driver, $1,500 toward food); $4,500 pending from the Hartmann's Markets Charitable Fund toward food purchases, decision expected in January 2027, after this cycle's award date; and $500 of committed in-kind printing for outreach materials. If the pending corporate request is declined, the board has authorized bridging the food line from the operating reserve while we pursue an alternate corporate funder, so the route launches on schedule either way.

At full operation, the Foundation's $30,000 works out to roughly $16 per household visit, with each visit delivering about 55 pounds of groceries to a parking lot the household can actually reach.

Prepared as a demonstration writing sample. All organizations, people, statistics, and budget figures are fictional and illustrative.