



## Sparta Community Food Pantry

**Program: Wheels to Waste Less: Food Collection and Distribution Program**

### Who we are

For 40 years, Sparta Community Food Pantry (SCFP) has offered food assistance without judgement. Our mission is to offer healthy, nutritious food to those struggling with hunger and food insecurity. The community we serve includes low income, working poor, homeless, homebound, displaced, disabled, immigrants, veterans, chronically ill, seniors and mentally challenged.

### The program we are proposing

Based in Sussex County NJ, SCFP serves clients in 51 towns living in Sussex, Morris and Warren counties. We interact with approximately 4,000 clients each month through our pantry walk-in hours as well as home deliveries. Additionally, we partner with Atlantic Health Systems to help recently discharged, recuperating patients, who do not have the ability to get food.

Apart from moderate grants that allow SCFP to purchase shelf-stable food items from the state, all our food is donated. Of that, 90% is collected, including the state food, by volunteers in their own vehicles or in truck rentals. 100% of our deliveries to clients are made by volunteers in their own vehicles. The current business model has just the truck rental expense for 2024 at \$19,700. We strive to offer clients a choice in selecting produce, dairy, meats, frozen and shelf stable items by sourcing donations.

This program for the purchase of vehicles will allow SCFP to offer food equity to clients in the way they want and need.

It is important to share that the estimated value of food rescued in 2024 by SCFP was 4.2 million dollars! There is food to be found.

## What makes this a high-impact program

This program will expand our ability to source and collect donations quickly, bringing much needed healthy options to the pantry and to the client.

Ownership of vehicles will optimize the way we operate. SCFP will have better reaction time for donation collection of rescue food, by not having to wait to get a rental truck, which can result in loss of the donation. Perishable food, which often equates to healthy food, once made available for donation requires pick up quickly. You snooze, you lose!

In addition, our volunteers will be optimized by NOT using private vehicles to deliver to homebound and displaced clients. These volunteers will be working on additional pantry days allowing us to see more clients and work more efficiently. The number of volunteers we have, approximately 100, is an asset that allows for continued growth by serving more clients in all the populations we assist.

## How we will make it happen

Awarding a grant to SCFP will allow for the purchase of a van and box truck with lift gate. A lift gate is essential to accessing large volumes of goods on a pallet

We currently rent a truck 1-2 times a week (for 5 years). We need to wait until a truck is available and have often lost out on food donations because the supplier needs to move the product quickly. The ability to have a truck allows us to contact food resources and react quickly, securing more donated food. Availability of a van allows SCFP the ability to pick up multiple daily donations at one time, with one vehicle, and one driver. The current model uses multiple drivers with personal vehicles, to pick up daily donations. The van will also be used to deliver to much larger areas to those homebound or displaced people living in motels.

## How we will measure success

The tangible measurement of this program's success will be realized by the food rescued, projected to be an additional 400 tons. As our monthly client base of 4,000 people served continues to increase by 35% year over year, increased inventory is imperative!