

Sample Grant: The Cottage Church Food Pantry

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October 11, 2024

Mr. Paul Peters
Grant Program Manager
Mustard Seed Foundation
7115 Leesburg Pike, Suite 304
Falls Church, VA 22043

Dear Mr. Peters:

In response to your request after my letter of inquiry, The Cottage Church is pleased to submit this full proposal requesting a seed grant of \$24,000 for our food pantry program. This grant will allow The Cottage Church to fund a food pantry for an urban congregation and community throughout the coming year.

Since 2022, The Cottage Church has sought to return to the site of a previous church split to serve the local community. Now that the building is providing hundreds of residents with a place to worship, the church is seeking to continue the food pantry program where the previous church left off, so that 500 people of all ages, generations, and family types can receive three meals per week.

This food pantry has potential to serve hundreds in the immediate area who struggle with food insecurity. Thank you for your favorable attention to our proposal. Should you have any questions, please contact me directly at (303)555-5555 or rebekah@thecottagechurch.org. We are honored to be considered for this grant and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Rebekah T McKamie

Rebekah McKamie
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents 3

Summary 4

Background Information 5

 Organizational Overview 5

Project Summary 7

 Need Overview 7

 Problem Solving Overview 8

Goals and Objectives 9

 Organizational Goals 9

 Program Goals 9

 Program Objectives 9

Methods for Evaluation 10

 Quantitative 10

 Qualitative 10

Budgeting 11

Appendices 15

 Appendix A: Church Governing Board Members 15

 Appendix B: Church Statement of Faith 15

 Appendix C: Partnerships 17

References 18

Summary

The Cottage Church serves a community in inner-city Denver and cut the ribbon on a new building early in 2024. The church that previously stood on the same site once served the community with a food pantry that was open to all residents of the community. The previous church, Grace Church Denver, closed down and was then demolished in 2023. Since then, many residents have lost access to food assistance that supplements their government benefits, and the cost of food continues to rise. The Cottage Church is seeking a grant to resurrect the food pantry and fill a nutritional gap for the community.

The Cottage Church is seeking \$24,000 to cover 50 percent of the initial costs for their food pantry and its operation throughout 2025. Included in this amount is food storage, computer and technical equipment, and one part-time staff member. Most of the work will be done by 14 volunteers from The Cottage Church, and food will be supplied by donations from the congregation and nearby grocers.

The food pantry's goal is to reduce hunger in the immediate vicinity around the church, and the objective is to provide 500 people with three meals per week, for a total of 78,000 meals in 2025. Outcomes will be determined by using quantitative data to count the meals that have been provided each week, and qualitative data from surveys will allow for process evaluations throughout the year.

We appreciate The Mustard Seed Foundation's consideration of a seed grant that will allow many families experiencing food insecurity to be filled, both nutritionally and spiritually, if they choose.

Background Information

Organizational Overview

Preach the gospel. Be the body. This is The Cottage Church's community-minded mission. The mission of the church is to gather as believers in Christ and share the gospel with those who are lost. The secondary purpose is to be the hands, feet, and voice of Christ while serving the surrounding community, which is made up of people from multiple generations and ethnic groups.

The Cottage Church is located along East Colfax Avenue, which is one of the poorest areas in Denver, and also experiences an alarming crime rate (CrimeGrade.org, n.d.). The site of this church has been a beacon for the community for four generations. It is a safe space in an area deemed unsafe by many standards.

The Cottage Church began in 2022 after a church split. Grace Church Denver had a congregation of about 2,000 and was meeting in a poorly maintained century-old building. There was conflict in the leadership over whether the church should be renovated or whether the congregation should seek a new place to worship in a safer part of the city. Closer investigation revealed this was a deeper conflict between more orthodox church practices and more contemporary ones. When an inspection revealed that the original building needed to be condemned, Grace Church Denver split. The more orthodox congregants flocked to a denominational church that more closely reflected their beliefs, and the contemporary believers chose a more contemporary place to worship.

The Cottage Church began with 54 congregants who took a middle ground and sought the former unity and community-mindedness that Grace Church Denver once stood for. They first met in congregants' homes and then in a school gym as they grew to 500 congregants. In an ironic turn of events, The Cottage Church acquired Grace Church Denver's property after the building was demolished. Through fundraising, the congregation put a secure building on the property with potential for growth in the future. The congregation, made up of primarily families, is both ethnically and generationally diverse. Tracking along with the data for the City of Denver, the diversity index is high, with a 74.9 percent

likelihood that two people chosen at random will belong to two different ethnic groups (Downtown Denver Partnership, 2021).

The Cottage Church has operated as a state nonprofit, but the fledgling ministry received its 501(c)(3) approval in 2024. The 7-person board of directors is directly involved in church operations, and all of them serve as volunteers. They each use their gifts and resources to fund operations and plan outreach events. The pastor, serving as executive director, takes only a part-time salary. He manages operations from his home throughout the week, always looking for new opportunities for The Cottage Church congregation to serve in the community, to preach the gospel, and to be the body.

Project Summary

Need Overview

For three generations, Mrs. Biggs' family attended Grace Church Denver. Their family home was across the street from the aging building. When her husband was murdered, leaving her with two young boys to raise alone, Grace Church Denver offered her counseling services and supplemented their nutrition with food assistance from the food pantry. When the church split occurred in 2024, Mrs. Biggs and her teen sons lost access to the food assistance they relied on to supplement their nutrition.

The congregation of over 500 continues to raise money from tithes and donations, but this year's projections show that its available funds only amount to half of what would be needed to fund a food pantry. Since the Mustard Seed Foundation supplies 50 percent of project costs, this would allow for The Cottage Church to once again provide a food pantry for those in need.

Mrs. Biggs is not alone when it comes to food insecurity. SoFi (2023) has data suggesting that in Colorado, each resident must spend about \$342 per month, or about \$3.80 per meal. Residents of Denver County, or inner-city Denver, have the most cases of public assistance in the state (Colorado Department of Human Services, 2024). While 64 percent of eligible Denver County residents have enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), most people only receive an average of \$1.98 per meal (Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, 2024; Hunger Free Colorado, 2024). This creates a gap of \$1.82 per meal that not every family or individual can cover.

Thankfully, Colorado offers free school lunches for public school students (Colorado General Assembly, n.d.). Unfortunately, this does not help students in the evenings or on weekends and holidays. Something needs to stop the food insecurity left by public assistance and other programs, otherwise residents of Denver county may begin to suffer. A food pantry that is accessible to all in the community is a solution that can help bridge the gap and bring the community together.

Problem Solving Overview

The Cottage Church has been seeking to fill a large gap in the community ever since Grace Church Denver shut down. While there are many interventions necessary to support a struggling community, “food pantries play a crucial role in combating food insecurity” (An et al., 2019). The Cottage Church has a new building with the capacity for a food pantry and has partnered with area grocery stores to make for a sustainable system with less waste.

In the past, church-goers and nonreligious community members alike have come to the site for food assistance, so the system works. However, the budget has been overextended with the new building and the church does not have any full-time staff members. So, there is a need for items and staff that could keep the pantry functioning for the community.

The Cottage Church believes in being the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Therefore, Jesus is the model in the Bible, and He did not allow His audience to go hungry. He fed thousands who had gathered in the area to hear Him teach:

“So they all ate and were filled. . .” (*New King James Bible*, 1982, Matt. 14:21)

The Cottage Church’s audience is a community in Denver, Colorado. Food is a basic need, and food costs are rising. This need is worthy of the church’s attention.

Goals and Objectives

Organizational Goals

Beyond the spiritual support provided by regular services on Sunday and throughout the week, The Cottage Church's primary goal is to serve the community in ways that reduce gaps in basic needs. One way it plans to do this is to decrease nutrition gaps by providing food for the community.

Program Goals

The Cottage Church's food pantry's goal is to reduce hunger for 500 people each week in Denver, immediately in the neighborhood of The Cottage Church on East Colfax Avenue.

Program Objectives

- 500 people will receive three meals per week in 2025, for a total of 78,000 meals.
- The people served will represent multiple genders, ages, family types, and ethnic groups.

Methods for Evaluation

Quantitative

The Cottage Church has measurable objectives for 2025, so the following factors will determine the outcomes of the program:

- Each donation of food that comes in from donors will be inventoried using a dedicated laptop.
- Each box of food (three meals for one individual) will be counted as it goes out the door.
- The demographics of each individual will be recorded unless they choose to remain anonymous.
- Monthly audits and an end-of-year report will confirm the daily numbers to show that 78,000 meals were received by community members in 2025.

Qualitative

Food pantries can face multiple challenges that can become barriers for potential clients (An et al., 2019). It is important to be flexible as far as how the pantry functions and whether it is serving the community as anticipated.

So, in addition to keeping track of numbers, The Cottage Church will send home surveys in boxes on a quarterly basis. These may be completed online or using the paper version, and a box will be left outside the food pantry door to receive the surveys. If even a fraction of those served complete the survey, this will provide enough data to learn whether improvements can be made to the program. The survey will allow for process evaluations to improve the program over time so that all those served are satisfied with the program.

The congregation, program director, and volunteers will also receive a quarterly survey and have their voices heard regularly. Most of the board lives in the community. These individuals will have a clear perspective of what is working and what is not, so their ideas will be taken into consideration for program improvement throughout the year.

Budgeting

The Cottage Church Food Pantry is a program that brings a community together. Most products are donations, and most laborers will be volunteers, but there are still some costs involved both initially and on an ongoing basis. The total cost of the program is \$384,478.93 for 2025, but that includes all indirect costs and anticipated in-kind food donations. The grant would fund 50 percent of the program costs for 2025, or about \$24,000.

The Food Pantry Coordinator would likely be hired internally from the church congregation. The food pantry would be open four hours per day except Sunday, and the coordinator would need to be present during that time. For security, and to keep with the church's accountability policy, there would also need to be two volunteers present. In Colorado, the median income for a food pantry coordinator is \$50,000 per year if full time, which is \$24.04 per hour (Glassdoor, 2024). The coordinator would be present about 24 hours per week, so this rate is modified to \$30,000 per year. No fringe benefits are required for a part-time employee in Colorado, and this person would be paid as a 1099 contractor. The volunteers will be performing work at the minimum wage level, volunteering once a week for four hours at a time. The minimum wage in Colorado is \$14.42 per hour (Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, n.d.), so this becomes 57.68 per week in-kind for 14 volunteers: a total of \$41,991.04. Volunteers are discussed within the indirect costs section of the budget, which follows this narrative.

Church utility costs are estimated at about \$1.00 per square foot per year (Smart Church Solutions, 2023). At 7,000 square feet, The Cottage Church would cost \$7,000 per year. This has been divided into hours for this budget, and the food pantry takes full responsibility for the electricity used when the pantry is open: 1,248 hours per year or 14.2 percent of the time. 14.2 percent of \$7,000 equals \$997.26 per year.

Marketing materials would include yard signs to be placed throughout the immediate community, printed with Canva (Canva, n.d.). Other marketing would be to post on well-established community social media for free. Most residents are members of these social media pages, so boosting a post would not be

necessary. Social media for the food pantry would be part of the coordinator's job, so no other costs would be incurred for marketing.

A dedicated laptop would be used by the coordinator and volunteers for administrative purposes. Laptop costs vary, but a mid-grade option is included as a reference with a regular cost of \$629 (Best Buy, n.d.-a). Basic software and taxes put the total at \$930.63 for the dedicated laptop. The cost to set up the pantry might include additional items such as bags, boxes, surge protectors, and other miscellaneous items yet to be determined. An estimated allowance is included for these items.

Multiple shelves will be required to store the food that has been donated. Perishable food items will need to be stored in refrigerators. Large industrial shelving costs about \$510 per shelf, and the pantry would be best to start with 8 shelves. This comes out to \$4,080. A side-by-side refrigerator with glass (allowing for convenience when people "shop" or for periodic inventory) costs \$2,400 (Best Buy, n.d.). Four of these would be ideal, to equal \$9,600.

The food pantry will rely on food donations from the community and nearby grocers. Colorado residents spend an average of \$3.80 per meal (SoFi, 2023). With an objective of helping 500 people eat three meals per week, this becomes \$296,400 per year in required donations in-kind.

| Program Information | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Program | The Cottage Church Food Pantry |
| Applicant Organization | The Cottage Church |
| Grant Period | 01/01/2025 through 12/31/2025 |

| Personnel (PS) | | |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Expense | Notes | Total Cost |
| Wages | | |
| Food Pantry Coordinator | 24 hours per week @ \$24.04 per hour over 52 weeks | \$30,000 |
| Fringe Benefits | Not needed for part time | \$0 |
| Burden | 1099 employee, no additional costs | \$0 |
| Total | | \$30,000 |

| Other Expenses (OTPS) | | |
|------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Expense | Notes | Total Cost |
| Utilities | 14.2 percent of annual utilities | \$997.26 |
| Marketing Materials | Community signs | \$230 |
| Computer Equipment | Dedicated Laptop and Software | \$930.63 |
| Miscellaneous supplies | Allowance for setup supplies and materials | \$250 |
| Shelving | 8 industrial shelves @ \$510 | \$4,080 |
| Refrigerators | 4 glass-front refrigerators @ \$2,400 | \$9,600 |
| Total | | \$16,087.89 |

| Miscellaneous Indirect Costs | | |
|------------------------------|--|------------|
| Expense | Notes | Total Cost |
| Rent | Building is owned, and no rent is paid | \$0 |

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Food Donations (in-kind) | 1,500 meals per week @ \$3.80 per meal over 52 weeks | \$296,400 |
| Volunteers (in-kind) | 14 volunteers x 4 hours per week @ \$14.42 over 52 weeks | \$41,991.04 |
| Total | | \$338,391.04 |

| Project Total | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| PS | \$30,000 |
| OTPS | \$16,087.89 |
| Miscellaneous | \$338,391.04 |
| Total Program Cost | \$384,478.93 |

Appendices

Appendix A: Church Governing Board Members

The Cottage Church functions with only a limited board of directors. Except for the Senior Pastor, who takes only a part-time salary, and the future food pantry coordinator, all directors are volunteers.

Rev. Ron McDonald: Executive Director, Senior Pastor

Rev. Booker King: Chairman, Associate Pastor

Meredith Dillard: Treasurer, Congregant

Sandra Covens: Secretary, Music Leader

Rebekah McKamie: Director of Communication, Congregant

Joy Waters: Programs Director, Events Coordinator

(TBD): Food Pantry Director, Congregant

Appendix B: Church Statement of Faith

(copied from rebekahtyne.com, 2023)

As requested in the Mustard Seed Foundation grant package, I have supplied The Cottage Church's Statement of Faith. The applicant's Statement of Faith was also requested, but there is no variation. The board adopted the Statement of Faith that was previously written by the applicant for her personal website.

We believe...

The Bible is the only true, Holy Word of God. It is inspired by God; therefore it is infallible in design, execution, and overall message. It must be interpreted literally. The Scriptures were given to man as a field guide, and contain every doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness that is needed to be thoroughly equipped for God's work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

God is all-powerful, all knowing, and all-present, and exists eternally in three persons. The Father, The Son (Jesus Christ), and The Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139:1-12; Matthew 28:19)

Jesus Christ is fully man and fully God. He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, and gave His life as payment for our sins. He was resurrected on the third day as seen by many witnesses. (Luke 1:26-35; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6)

The Holy Spirit abides in all who have been reconciled with God through faith in Jesus Christ. His ministry on earth has not ceased, and He indwells and works through believers. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an experience. (John 14:16-18)

Salvation is only through Jesus Christ and only by the grace of God. All have sinned, and sin separates us from God. Jesus died for sinners to reconcile us to God. Believing in the sacrifice of Christ is the only means to the Father. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23; John 14:6; John 3:16-18)

Works are not able to bring a person to Salvation and are not required for a person to be saved. However, when a person trusts Jesus Christ as their Savior, works commissioned by and accomplished through the Holy Spirit should and will follow, and be brought to completion. (Philippians 1:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 15:5)

Humans are created in the image of God, and all human life, from conception until natural death, is indisputably sacred. (Genesis 1:27; Psalm 139:13-18; Exodus 20:13)

Eternity Humans are eternal beings, and those who accept Christ will be resurrected and transformed at the end of all things into their spiritual bodies. Those who refuse to accept Christ have chosen eternal condemnation and punishment—a removal from the presence of God forever. (Matthew 10:28; Matthew 25:46; John 3:16)

Faith is a gift from God, and our circumstances (health and wealth) are not dictated by how much faith we have in that moment. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and only God can increase faith. Faith, healing, and works of God cannot be activated through words, but by the will of God alone. (Job 40:9; Luke 17:5; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9)

Appendix C: Partnerships

The food pantry will rely on donations from the congregation and community, but The Cottage Church has also partnered with some nearby grocers and restaurants. Besides filling nutritional gaps in the food pantry, this also allows for these stores to reduce food waste.

Sprouts Famers Market

3625 E Colfax Ave

Denver, CO 80206

Einstein Bros. Bagels

895 Colorado Blvd

Denver, CO 80206

Safeway

6220 E 14th Ave

Denver, CO 80220

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