

05.06.2025

Grant Review Committee
Matt Jose
Community Foundation for MetroWest
Natick, Ma 01760

Subject: Letter of Intent – Establish a Food Pantry in Covelo, CA

Dear Mr. Jose

I am pleased to submit this Letter of Intent for funding to establish the Covelo Community Food Pantry, a project aimed at addressing food insecurity and health disparities in Covelo, California. As a rural community in Mendocino County, Covelo faces limited access to affordable and nutritious food, contributing to high rates of diet-related health issues and economic hardship. This initiative seeks to create a sustainable, community-driven food pantry that provides fresh, healthy food options, supports nutrition education, and partners with local farmers, food producers, and healthcare providers to enhance long-term food security.

The project will focus on equitable food distribution, nutrition workshops, and outreach programs to empower residents with resources and knowledge for healthier lifestyles. We will collaborate with regional food banks, small-scale farmers, and tribal health organizations to increase access to fresh produce and staple foods. Additionally, our initiative will include mobile food distribution services for residents with limited transportation and educational programs on budget-friendly meal planning and nutrition-based disease prevention. The requested funding will cover operational costs, food sourcing, outreach efforts, and program implementation to ensure long-term sustainability and community impact.

With experience in food security initiatives, community outreach, and program development, I am committed to leading this project in collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders. I appreciate the opportunity to apply for this grant and look forward to submitting a full proposal detailing our approach, anticipated outcomes, and financial needs. Please let me know if there are any additional requirements or materials needed. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marc A Tager
P.O. Box 2930
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
marcatager@gmail.com
415.840.5207

Proposal Title: Covelo Food Pantry
Principal Investigator: Marc A Tager

ESM 435: SGP: Grant Proposal Cover Sheet

Applicant Name (PI) and Contact Information	Name	Marc A Tager	
	Address	P.O Box 2930 Fort Bragg, CA 95430	
	Phone	415.840.5207	
	Email	marcatager@gmail.com	
Project Title	Enhancing Community Food Security in Covelo through the Expansion of Pantry Services		
Organization (where the PI is working)	Name	Cal Poly Humboldt	
	Address	1 Harpst Street Arcata, CA 95521	
	Phone	707.826.3011	
	Email	mat191@humboldt.edu	
Amount Requested \$65,981	Project Start Date		
	Project Duration	12 months	

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Title of the Project:

Enhancing Community Food Security in Covelo through the Expansion of Pantry Services

Problem to be Studied:

The project aims to address the critical issue of food insecurity in Covelo, California, where a significant portion of the population lacks consistent access to nutritious food. The research component will focus on quantifying the extent of food insecurity in the region, identifying barriers to food access, and evaluating the effectiveness of current food aid programs.

Goals of the Project:

The primary goal is to enhance food security in Covelo by expanding the capacity and services of the local food pantry. Objectives include increasing the frequency of food distribution, broadening the variety of food offered, and improving community outreach and education about nutrition and food resources. Currently approximately 150 families are served twice a month, we will increase that to 500 weekly by the year's end.

Methods:

This project will employ mixed-methods research, including surveys to assess community food security levels, interviews to gather qualitative data on community needs, and statistical analysis to measure the impact of service enhancements. Data collection and analysis will help tailor pantry services to better meet community demands.

Budget:

The total amount requested for this grant is \$57,361.25.

Principal Investigator (PI) and Sponsoring Organization:

The PI, a student at Cal Poly Humboldt, is pursuing a Bachelor's Degree with a focus on Leadership and Social Ethics. I have extensive experience in community service and nonprofit operations allowing me to oversee this project's execution effectively. Cal Poly Humboldt, known for its strong emphasis on community-based research, serves as the sponsoring organization, providing administrative support and academic oversight.

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Bridging the Gap in Food Access: Establishing a Community-Driven Food Distribution Initiative in Covelo

Statement of the Problem

Covelo, California, embodies the significant challenges of food insecurity common across many rural U.S. communities. Defined by geographic isolation, limited transportation, and minimal retail infrastructure, Covelo faces barriers that make accessing affordable, nutritious food consistently difficult (Morton & Blanchard, 2007; Smith & Morton, 2009). While the town has a small grocery store and several convenience outlets, these often offer overpriced goods and predominantly processed, low-nutrient options, limiting residents' ability to meet dietary needs affordably (Johnson et al., 2015).

Currently, Covelo's food security relies heavily on two monthly food distribution events—one operated by the Round Valley Indian Tribes and another by the Mendo Food Network. Though vital stopgaps for many families, these efforts fall short of providing comprehensive or reliable support, particularly for the most vulnerable groups such as elders, low-income households, and those lacking transportation (Doe & Clark, 2017). Without a centralized system to coordinate services, these scattered efforts risk inefficiency, missed populations, and service overlap. Establishing a dedicated, centralized food pantry is therefore not just beneficial but essential to ensure equitable, consistent access. By coordinating existing services and creating a sustainable framework, this project seeks to address urgent local food system gaps and improve the well-being of the entire community (Brown, 2018).

Specific Aims

The project seeks to achieve the following aims:

- **Establish a dedicated food resource hub** that consolidates and enhances local distribution efforts, creating a single, reliable access point.
- **Increase food distribution capacity** to reach more Covelo households, especially underserved ones.

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- **Strengthen community partnerships** through sustained collaboration with local stakeholders, including tribal leaders, healthcare providers, and farmers.
- **Implement a data-driven outreach system** to dynamically adapt services to evolving community needs, improving efficiency and responsiveness (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015).

Background

Rural isolation is a key driver of food insecurity, with communities like Covelo facing intertwined barriers such as high transportation costs, limited fresh food outlets, and economic marginalization (Morton & Blanchard, 2007). Rural food insecurity is often underestimated because it remains hidden in self-reliant populations, yet its impacts are often more severe than in urban areas (Smith & Morton, 2009). While federal programs and local food distributions offer occasional relief, the absence of a permanent, community-centered food infrastructure perpetuates scarcity and vulnerability (Brown, 2018). Research suggests that centralized food systems not only alleviate immediate hunger but also build resilience by strengthening social networks and providing reliable food access points (Grey & Patel, 2015; Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015). Establishing such a system in Covelo offers the opportunity to address both acute and systemic causes of local food insecurity.

Review of the Literature

Historically, rural food insecurity has been persistent and underrecognized, with most interventions and research focusing on urban settings (Smith & Morton, 2009). Community programs and mobile food distributions have emerged in rural areas as adaptive responses, achieving mixed results (Johnson et al., 2015). However, studies consistently reveal sustainability challenges, including inconsistent funding, seasonal supply issues, volunteer shortages, and geographic barriers (Doe & Clark, 2017).

Critically, the literature highlights troubling inconsistencies between rural distribution models and actual community needs. Brown (2018) points out that many programs use standardized assumptions, like generic food boxes or urban-designed delivery systems, without considering local dietary preferences, cultural relevance, or transportation limitations. This mismatch can lead to food waste, underused services, or the exclusion of vulnerable groups like elders or

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those in remote areas (Brown, 2018; Doe & Clark, 2017). While mobile pantries and periodic events temporarily expand access, they rarely offer the continuity or integration needed to disrupt cycles of insecurity (Grey & Patel, 2015). Best practices increasingly call for integrated, community-led models that combine cultural fit, reliable access, and data-driven adaptability to achieve sustained impact (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015).

Review Criteria

The initiative's effectiveness will be evaluated by:

- (1) the successful launch of a centralized food hub;
- (2) measurable increases in households receiving consistent, nutritious food; and
- (3) the formation and durability of partnerships with local organizations, healthcare providers, and the Round Valley Indian Tribes. Grounding evaluation measures in best practices and local needs ensures accountability and long-term success (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015; Brown, 2018).

Methods

Pre-Startup Data Collection and Planning

Before securing a pantry location, a community needs assessment will gather baseline data on local food insecurity, current services, and gaps in culturally appropriate access (Feeding America, 2021; Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015). Data will be collected through surveys, stakeholder interviews (including tribal leaders and farmers), and regional reports, then securely stored for use in planning (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA], 2022).

Startup Phase (Months 1–2)

After finalizing the lease, the project will hire a Pantry Coordinator to oversee daily operations, volunteer management, and reporting (Greer, Cross-Davies, & Patel, 2019). Supplies, shelving, refrigeration, and outreach materials will be procured and installed (USDA, 2022). Strategic partnerships with local farmers, tribal groups, and regional networks will be formalized to secure diverse, nutritious food sourcing (Grey & Patel, 2015).

Infrastructure Phase (Months 3–4)

The pantry space will be set up, including storage systems and client intake areas. A promotional and outreach plan will be launched, featuring social media, a project website, and printed materials (Bazerghi, McKay, & Dunn, 2016). Outreach will be monitored for engagement

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reach, and staff will receive training in culturally responsive practices and data entry (Feeding America, 2021).

Pilot Distribution Phase (Months 5–6)

Twice-weekly food distributions will begin. A client tracking system will record attendance, food needs, and demographics (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015). Nutrition handouts and culturally relevant food preparation tips will be shared (Grey & Patel, 2015). Photo documentation will monitor activity, and client feedback systems will be established (USDA, 2022).

Expansion Phase (Months 7–8)

Distribution will increase to three times per week. The pantry will host its first nutrition workshop, focusing on local and Indigenous food traditions (Grey & Patel, 2015). Healthcare partnerships will be formalized to establish food referral systems (Bazerghi et al., 2016). All activities will be tracked and analyzed for trends (Feeding America, 2021).

Evaluation Phase (Months 9–10)

Comprehensive evaluation will include community surveys assessing impact, satisfaction, and unmet needs (Greer et al., 2019). Service data will be analyzed to identify gaps and guide adjustments, with findings informing the final report (USDA, 2022).

Sustainability Phase (Months 11–12)

A sustainability plan will be developed, focusing on diversified funding and long-term partnerships (Bazerghi et al., 2016). A community celebration and fundraiser will boost visibility and support (Feeding America, 2021). A detailed final report summarizing activities, outcomes, and recommendations will be submitted to funders (Greer et al., 2019).

Timeline & Key Activities

Months 1–2 (Startup)

Finalize lease, hire coordinator, purchase supplies, build partnerships.

Months 3–4 (Infrastructure)

Set up space, install storage, develop outreach, launch social media and website.

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Months 5–6 (Pilot)

Start twice-weekly distributions, implement tracking, and distribute nutrition materials.

Months 7–8 (Expansion)

Expand to three distributions/week, host workshops, build healthcare partnerships.

Months 9–10 (Evaluation)

Conduct surveys, analyze data, adjust services.

Months 11–12 (Sustainability)

Develop a sustainability plan, apply for grants, host fundraisers, submit final reports.

Summary

This proposal outlines a strategic approach to improving food security in Covelo by creating a community-driven food distribution initiative. The project will address gaps in access by establishing a centralized food resource hub that provides culturally relevant, nutritious food. By expanding service capacity, strengthening partnerships with local and tribal organizations, and using data-driven outreach strategies, the initiative seeks not only to meet immediate hunger needs but also to build a sustainable, resilient system ensuring all residents have reliable access to healthy food.

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Budget Line Items			Funds Requested
A. Salaries	Rate	Total	██████████
PI	\$25/hour x 25 hrs/week x 52 weeks	\$32,500	██████████
Co-PI			██████████
Other Personnel			██████████
Line A: Total Salaries			\$32,500
B. Fringe Benefits (15% of total salary)			\$4,875
C. Equipment (only for item individually over \$500)			
D. Travel	Domestic		██████████
	Foreign		██████████
Line D: Total Travel Costs			
E. Other Direct Costs	Supplies	\$1500	██████████
	Equipment	\$4000	██████████
	Publication	\$1500	██████████
	Consultants		██████████
	Computers	\$1000	██████████
	Other	\$12,000	██████████
Line E: Total Other Direct Costs			\$20,000

A. Total Direct Costs (Add lines A through F)	\$57,375
B. Indirect Costs (Add 15% of amount on line F)	\$8,606
C. Total (Direct and Indirect costs: Lines F + G)	\$65,981
D. AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$65,981
E. Other Support (matching funds or in-kind support)	

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BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

The largest share of requested funds is for the part-time Pantry Coordinator, who will manage all aspects of the Covelo Food Pantry's expansion. This includes overseeing weekly food distributions, supervising volunteers, coordinating deliveries, and handling client services. We request \$32,500 to cover one part-time coordinator working 25 hours per week at \$25/hour over 52 weeks ($25 \text{ hrs/week} \times \$25/\text{hr} \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$32,500$). This role is essential for ensuring smooth daily operations as the pantry grows from serving 150 families twice monthly to 500 families weekly.

Fringe benefits are calculated at 15% of total salary to cover payroll taxes and workers' compensation, totaling \$4,875 ($\$32,500 \times 0.15 = \$4,875$).

We request \$1,500 for essential supplies, including 100 reusable bags at \$5 each ($\$5 \times 100 = \500), 50 food storage bins at \$10 each ($\$10 \times 50 = \500), and \$500 for gloves, cleaning supplies, and sanitation items to maintain health standards.

We request \$4,000 for equipment, including one commercial refrigerator for storing perishable items (\$3,000) and two industrial shelving units at \$500 each ($\$500 \times 2 = \$1,000$). This equipment is vital to handle the increased food volume and maintain safe storage.

Outreach and publication expenses are budgeted at \$1,500, covering 2,000 bilingual flyers at \$0.25 each ($\$0.25 \times 2,000 = \500), social media advertising and boosted posts (\$500), and translation services for culturally appropriate outreach (\$500).

We request \$1,000 for a dedicated laptop for the Pantry Coordinator to manage scheduling, reporting, and donor relations, ensuring smooth administrative operations.

Finally, \$12,000 is requested to purchase culturally relevant food items through the Mendocino Food Network, which offers 3-to-1 buying power compared to retail. This provides approximately \$36,000 worth of nutritious foods such as wild rice, blue cornmeal, beans, squash, and berries, essential for supporting local Tribal foodways.

Summary

The total direct costs are \$57,375, combining salary, fringe, supplies, equipment, outreach, computer needs, and culturally meaningful food purchases. Applying a 15% indirect cost rate ($\$57,375 \times 0.15 = \$8,606$), the total budget request amounts to \$65,981. This carefully structured budget ensures that every dollar is maximized to strengthen food security and resilience in Covelo.

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Johnson, D., Martin, P., & Williams, K. (2015). Mobile food pantries: Effectiveness in rural food desert communities. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, 10*(4), 578–595. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2015.1056892>

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MARC ANDREW TAGER

Fort Bragg, CA | m: +1 415 840 5207 | marcatager@gmail.com | LinkedIn

Results and growth-driven leader with career-long record of strategic planning, organization/business growth and development, and operations management success

Accomplished, success-oriented professional highly regarded for streamlining and optimizing operational efficiency, driving significant improvements in organizational growth and development, and overseeing and directing a wide range of key operations across different areas. Dedicated leader with a proven history of supervising, leading, and collaborating with high-performing teams that surpass all expectations. Achieve success by devising and developing fundraising strategies, organizing, and coordinating events and campaigns, and leading the development and execution of financial plans. Organized and a keen eye for detail, with demonstrated ability to prioritize and manage multiple projects simultaneously. Leverage strong communication skills to foster long-lasting relationships with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders. Thrive in fast-paced, collaborative, and diverse environments.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Operations Management· Process Improvement· Donor Stewardship· Financial Planning· Team Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Organizational Development· Marketing/Advertising· Project Management· Event Coordination· Public Relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Strategy Development· Community Outreach· Negotiating |
|--|---|---|

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DUNLAP ROOFING, FORT BRAGG, CA, APRIL 2024 TO PRESENT
MARKETING DIRECTOR

- Direct and oversee all marketing and advertising efforts, crafting strategies that enhance brand visibility and market penetration.
- Innovate digital marketing campaigns, including SEO and social media strategies, resulting in a measurable increase in customer engagement and sales.
- Coordinate with other Dunlap enterprises to align marketing strategies with business goals, ensuring consistent company growth and market adaptability.
- Analyze market trends and customer feedback to continually refine marketing approaches and tactics.

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MENDO FOOD NETWORK, MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA, AUGUST 2024-MARCH 2024
COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR

- Developed and implemented strategic outreach initiatives aimed at enhancing community engagement and support for food security projects across Mendocino County.
- Managed and coordinated educational programs and partnerships, significantly increasing community awareness and participation.
- Organized and led successful fundraising campaigns, securing necessary funds to sustain network operations.
- Established the first volunteer run pop up in the history of the organization.
- Trained remote sites in proper use of W-5 software increasing the distribution of CSFP.

EMERALD DOLPHIN INN AND GOLF, FORT BRAGG, CA, 2023

OPERATIONS MANAGER

- Played a key role by directing, enhancing, and optimizing daily hotel operations with a focus on maintaining the grounds and facilities to deliver an exceptional environment and experience for guests.
- Led the creation, development, and implementation of new ownership policies and procedures, as well as handling the strict enforcement of these policies and procedures to optimize operational efficiency.
- Carried out the effective administration of the company's social media platforms and dealt with and addressed customer inquiries and problems to maximize satisfaction and retention.
- Administered and coordinated budgeting processes, drove the optimization of bill payments, and guaranteed financial accountability.
- Guaranteed ongoing compliance with regulatory requirements while maintaining necessary permits at the Federal, State, County, and City levels.
- Undertook and completed a wide range of key duties and tasks related to payroll management and tax preparation to ensure accurate financial transactions.
- Devised, developed, and established strategic initiatives to drive continuous improvements in guest satisfaction while upholding the highest standards of service.

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SEABIRD LODGE, FORT BRAGG, CA, 2022

GENERAL MANAGER

- Orchestrated all elements of the effective and swift implementation of essential systems and policies mandated by the management company, guaranteeing seamless integration and compliance.
- Operated with a strong and ongoing focus on driving increases in revenue and reducing costs to allow for maximum success.
- Served in an integral role by directing the entire marketing program and overseeing critical activities related to personnel recruitment, termination, procurement, and more.
- Placed an emphasis on achieving excellence in the hospitality sector, leading to an 80% increase in guest satisfaction and positive online reviews.
- Contributed to the establishment and maintenance of a collaborative work environment to improve hotel management and operational efficiency.
- Conceptualized and implemented strategic cost containment measures, streamlined and optimized resource allocation, and ensured the meeting of organizational objectives.
- Tasked with administering facilities in an efficient manner and leading the development of staff training programs to maintain high-quality standards.
- Executed a wide range of key activities related to quality assurance while meeting industry standards and optimizing the guest experience.
- Pioneered the design and development of financial strategies to enable the consistent meeting and exceeding of organizational KPIs.

OCEAN'S EDGE ESTATES, FORT BRAGG, CA, 2020 TO 2021

RESIDENT MANAGER

- Showcased success by overseeing and coordinating a wide variety of real estate management and operational activities to enable business growth.
- Spearheaded all aspects of the creation, development, and execution of strategic plans to enhance and optimize property performance and resident satisfaction.
- Performed in-depth and regular property inspections to guarantee ongoing compliance with all quality and safety standards.
- Charged with administering and executing various leading processes, including tenant screening, negotiations, and lease agreement administration.
- Established and cultivated strong and sustaining relationships with tenants by addressing concerns and delivering exceptional service.
- Carried out the organization and coordination of maintenance and repairs through collaboration with vendors to achieve swift issue resolution.
- Handled the creation, updating, and maintenance of accurate documentation on property-related activities and financial transactions.
- Performed the administration, monitoring, and allocation of property budgets while identifying opportunities for cost savings and efficiency improvements

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EDUCATION AND CREDENTIALS

BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.S.) INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL IMPACT, MAY 2025

ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE (A.S.) IN SOCIOLOGY AND ETHNIC STUDIES, MAY 2024
Mendocino College, Mendocino, California

AWARDS AND HONORS

- *Phi Theta Kappa*

VOLUNTEERISM

THE NXE FOUNDATION (STICHTING NXE), AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS, 2017 TO PRESENT

CHAIRMAN

- Serve as Chairman of this non-profit dedicated to digital preservation and digital archaeology of humanity's heritage in a publicly available data warehouse with a focus on deep data.
- Leverage extensive expertise and experience to dispense consulting and advice across Information Technology, Cyber Security, Social Media, R&D, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and AR/VR.
- Conceptualize, develop, and implement strategic plans with a focus on meeting client needs and business objectives across different areas.
- Conduct the evaluation and assessment of organization's technology infrastructure and dispense recommendations on improvements and upgrades.
- Provide assistance and support to organizations in identifying opportunities and driving significant improvements in performance.
- Actively engage and participate in research and development activities while maintaining a thorough knowledge of emerging trends and technologies.

FORT BRAGG FOOD BANK, FORT BRAGG, CA, 2023 TO 2024

FOOD BANK VOLUNTEER

- Clearly and effectively communicated with other volunteers to perform a wide range of duties and tasks in support of the organization's activities.

REFERENCES

RACHELLE SUTHERLAND	MENDO FOOD NETWORK	707.615.6654	RACHELLE@MENDOFOOD.ORG
STEPHEN DUNLAP	OWNER DUNLAP ROOFING	707.964.8735	SDUNLAP@MCN.ORG
SCOTT HOCKETT	FORT BRAGG CITY COUNCIL	707.962.0204	NOYOYFISH@GMAIL.COM