

Arlington EATS' proposal for ARPA Funds

Since 1992, Arlington EATS has served the residents of Arlington, first as the Arlington Food Pantry and now as one of the largest social service agencies in Arlington. During the early days of the pandemic we were able to transition our services to a home delivery model, which guaranteed food in a safe manner to Arlington's most vulnerable residents, those with low to moderate income who are food-insecure. As well, we took the lead in coordinating other agencies to assist in our mutual COVID-19 response. We worked closely with the Department of Health & Human Services, Council on Aging, Arlington Public Schools, Medical Reserve Corp, and Food Link to develop a plan that was coordinated and effective. Since March 2020, we have made over 15,000 home deliveries of food.

As some of our programming, including vacation and summer lunches and emergency food closets were put on hiatus during the pandemic, EATS has found other innovative ways to reduce stigma and increase access to healthy and nutritious foods. In July 2021, EATS launched the Fresh Bucks program where SNAP or P-EBT card holders could receive \$15 per week in Fresh Bucks to be used at any vendor at the Arlington Farmers' Market. As we have reached the midpoint of the program, so far 2,200 vouchers have been used: 79% were used for fresh produce, 16% were used for meat/fish/eggs/cheese, and 5% were used on bread and prepared foods.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still a reality in our community and will cause uncertainty for some time to come. Despite vaccines and business reopenings, we continue to provide weekly deliveries to 250 families each week; prior to the pandemic we were serving an average of 165 families per week. Despite our increases and ease of access to services, EATS is only serving a third of the number of residents who are at risk of being food insecure in Arlington. After the Great Recession, it took 10 years for food insecurity rates to get to pre-recession levels. In the past two years, **Arlington EATS doubled in size to meet the needs of the community in a challenging time and we will continue to address food security needs going forward.** As we plan for the future, we anticipate hiring several staff members in the next 3 years to sustain programs, expand our services, and address long-term food insecurity in Arlington. Funding for these positions is essential to ensure Arlington EATS is able to keep up with increasing demands. Attaches is a description of the future plans and needs of Arlington EATS.

We are grateful for this consideration and the value Arlington has for addressing food insecurity.

Sincerely,

Andi Doane
Executive Director

Year	Position/Item	Description	Financial need, includes benefits at 25% when appropriate	FY Total
FY22	Part time driver	As EATS reopens to in-person shopping, we will hire a driver to make weekly food deliveries, especially to those who are homebound.	\$30,000	\$45,000
	Needs Assessment	Hire a consultant to determine who is accessing various food insecurity services in Arlington, who is eligible but not accessing, and how to remove barriers/improve access.	\$15,000	
FY23	Full Time Program Assistant	Hire additional program staff as EATS expands hours as we move into a new building and all programs become fully online, following COVID hiatus.	\$45,000	\$125,000
	Part-time social service staff	Hire staff to assist with managing partners agencies that provide services at EATS building (i.e. financial planning, fuel assistance, SNAP applications, immigration counseling, etc) and provide case management as needed.	\$30,000	
	Hunger-Free Arlington Strategic Planning	Hire a consultant to lead Arlington EATS in developing a plan where hunger can be fully addressed so that all residents have access to sufficient and nutritious food.	\$50,000	
FY24	Launch social service support program	EATS will launch a social service support program that will bring together community members to support individuals who are developing goals that will provide them a means of getting out of poverty. One example of such a program is Circles USA .	\$55,000	\$55,000

Total Request: \$225,000