



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**



UNITED WAY
Whatcom County

2025 Community Impact Grants Common Application

PART A: COVER PAGE

Please fill out this form completely. Note that individual funding agencies have specific grant requirements and will require supplemental materials. Please check the agency website below for details.

To which source are you applying?

- City of Bellingham’s Housing or Human/Social Services NOFA:
<https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities-2/partnerships-funding>
- United Way of Whatcom County’s Community Impact Fund:
<https://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org/help-for-organizations/>
- Whatcom County Health and Community Services:
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/Bids.aspx>

Agency Contact Information:

Agency Name: Ferndale Food Bank

DBA (if applicable): Click here to enter text.

EIN: 91-1166240

UEID (from SAM.gov): EB8HN2J2ZJ15

Mailing address: PO Box 1593, Ferndale, WA 98248

Website: ferndalefoodbank.org

General phone: 360.223.0788

State of Washington Business License Number(s): SWV0309424-00

Executive Director (or authorized representative):

Name: Sierra Crook

Title (if not ED): Executive Director

Email: director@ferndalefoodbank.org

Phone: 360.223.0788

Application Contact (If different):

Name: Click here to enter text.

Title: Click here to enter text.

Email: Click here to enter text.

Phone: Click here to enter text.

Program Information:



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Program Name: Ferndale Food Bank

Program Address: 1671 Main St., Ferndale, WA 98248

Are all program services delivered at this address? Yes No

Funding Request: The award amount is dependent on the funding organization. Please see individual funder's supplemental materials for more information about the funds available.

How much funding per year are you requesting for this program?

\$ \$25,000.00

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$ \$26,000.00

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$ 812,168.04

PART B: AGENCY INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 1-5.

1. **Agency Mission.** Please paste or copy your agency's mission statement below.

The Ferndale Food Bank is committed to the mission of distributing food and support to *all* community members in need, with dignity, respect, and understanding. Single individuals and families can visit once a week for as long as assistance is needed.

2. **Agency Beneficiaries.** Briefly describe the intent of your agency's programs and who primarily benefits from them. Please describe your organization's impact, specifying the number of beneficiaries or clients served per year and their demographics.

The Ferndale Food Bank recognizes the role of food beyond its caloric value: it is nutrition but also connection, nourishment, sustenance, and culture. The Food Bank aims to be a place where people can come and get an immediate solution to a resource need while feeling welcomed as a member of our community.

Each year, we serve 7,268 unique individuals and feed over 56,000 mouths. Of the clients we assist, 20% are seniors, 34% are children, and all are considered low-income or living below the poverty line. Nearly half (49%) of our clients identify as BIPOC or are foreign-born, with the largest groups being 20.9% Latinx, 12% Ukrainian, and 6% Russian. Additionally, more than 38% of those we serve speak a language other than English. Over the past two years, we've seen an 118% increase in demand for our services. The average value of a weekly distribution is approximately \$100, meaning



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that clients who visit the Food Bank helping them build stability in other



regularly can save up to \$400 a month, areas of their lives.



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3. **Qualifications and expertise.** Briefly summarize your agency’s qualifications and expertise (e.g., years of operation, accreditations, experience of staff members, and number of volunteers). Please mention any recent major organizational changes.

The food bank employs two full time staff and two part time staff. All employees have educational and experiential backgrounds in agricultural, food production, non-profit management, and intercultural services. Our successful food distribution model is supported by over 200 volunteers that have contributed over 14,000 hours of their time to the food bank this year. We partner with four local grocery stores to rescue over 700,000 pounds of food each year, and receive fresh produce donations from other community partners such as the First Fruits Garden at the Ferndale Community Garden, the CTK Farm, and Growing Veterans. Above all, we believe that everyone deserves access to food security and have been working for over 40 years to make that a reality. The Ferndale Food Bank is proud to be a part of the efforts in Whatcom County that make healthy, nutritious food available to our community.

In September of 2024, the food bank adjusted its distribution to a fully shopping model, meaning clients come into the food bank to select their food options themselves. This change was made in an effort to enhance dignity, equity, and accessibility for clients. By allowing shoppers to select foods based on their preferences, dietary needs, and cultural considerations, we aim to empower individuals and promote inclusivity. The transition to a client choice model has not only fostered greater client satisfaction but also provides real-time, valuable feedback to tailor food purchasing, resulting in a more relevant and dignified service. Additionally, it addresses language and communication barriers previously experienced in other models and increases accessibility for clients.

4. **Racial Equity and Social Justice.** What steps has your organization taken to address issues of racial equity and social justice within your agency? Which steps are complete, and which are planned or ongoing?

To address issues of racial equity and social justice, the Ferndale Food Bank has taken several concrete steps over the last two years. These steps have included:

- **Bias awareness and de-escalation training:** Starting in 2024, all volunteers and employees are required to undergo mandatory de-escalation and bias awareness training. This training is designed to foster an anti-racist, equitable environment and equip our team with tools to handle challenging situations effectively and with biases suspended.
- **Increased language accessibility:** We have expanded the availability of our written materials from two languages (English and Spanish) to six, now including Ukrainian, Russian, Punjabi, and Arabic. This ensures better communication and inclusivity for a broader segment of our community.



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- **On-site multilingual support:** We speaking staff member available at immediate assistance and ensure language barriers do not hinder access to resources.
- **Board diversity:** We have set clear goals for racial and ethnic diversity within our Board of Directors to better reflect the demographics of the community we serve. Currently, this goal is 50% met, with two Latinx members joining the board in the past year. Over the next year, we plan to add members who represent the Ukrainian and Russian communities, as well as individuals from the Indigenous and Black/African-American populations.
- **Employee diversity:** Staff diversity goals are also being actively pursued. At present, all staff members are either female or non-binary, with one staff member identifying as Latinx.

Looking ahead, we are planning to establish a **Client Advisory Board** in the coming year. This will provide a formal mechanism for our clients to contribute directly to decision-making, ensuring that the voices and perspectives of the people we serve are reflected in our operations and strategies. These efforts are ongoing, and we remain committed to continuously evaluating and improving our practices to better support racial equity and social justice within our organization and community.

5. **Agency Funding.** List your organization’s most significant funding sources from greatest to least (including the United Way, Whatcom County Health and Community Services and City of Bellingham); dollar amounts are not necessary. Significant funding sources can be defined as sources that make up more than 15% of your program budget. If you have many funding sources, you may list them by category (i.e., federal, state, foundations, individual donors). Please mention any anticipated or recent changes in your future funding or financial position.

1. State Funding
2. Federal Funding
3. Private Funding
4. Corporate Funding

We are anticipating a significant change in the coming year in state and federal funds available due to the conclusion of ARPA program funding availability. From this, we predict our funding source levels will invert, with Private and Corporate funding being our top two sources, and state and federal funding being the bottom two sources.

PART C: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 6-8.

6. **Program Summary.** Briefly summarize the program and its core activities in one or two sentences.

The food bank is requesting funding for our Farm Worker Food Delivery program. This program purchases culturally relevant produce from a local Farm Worker’s Co-op farm, along with other dried good food items, to deliver to 56 farm worker households in the area once a week for six weeks in the summer high season.



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7. **Program Purpose.** Identify the community need(s) that the program addresses. What are the measurable outcomes that will result from the services provided?

Through this program we provide about 260 individuals with dried goods and produce boxes for six weeks in the summer high season. Both boxes provide families with culturally relevant food items such as dried pinto beans, white rice, masa, cilantro, nopales, onions, tomatillos, and jalapeños. We purchase the produce boxes from Cooperative Tierra y Libertad, a local farm workers cooperative in Everson, WA. The cooperative is also a transitioning organic farm.

This program addresses two primary community needs. First, it provides a necessary and crucial service to the migrant farm community as they are playing an integral role in our local agricultural system. Providing culturally relevant food items through delivery directly to this population breaks down barriers of access to healthy, nutritious food. Second, purchasing the produce boxes from Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad allows us to support a small-scale, BIPOC owned, transitional organic farm. These purchases amount to 324 produce boxes over the course of the program as well as 200 pounds of nopales and 350 pounds of chilacayotes. This program allows us to be a part of breaking down access barriers to food for underserved communities and support local BIPOC farming in the process.

The short-term measurable outcome of the program is successful and sustained healthy food provision for the farm working community, who otherwise experiences significant barriers and challenges to consistent healthy, culturally relevant food offerings. The long-term measurable outcomes are the sustained and meaningful patronage of Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad's mission.

The program costs \$25,000 per summer. \$20,000 is for six weeks of produce boxes, culturally relevant produce, and eggs purchased from Tierra y Libertad. \$5,000 is for six weeks dried goods for the summer. The \$25,000 from this award would be used to purchase all the food for the program.

8. **Program Status.** How long has this program been in operation in Whatcom County? Since your last application, have you made any changes in how you offer services? If this is a new program, how far along is your agency in the planning process? What resources has your organization already invested?

For the last four summers, in partnership with Agape Service Project Whatcom County, we have provided food deliveries for a farm worker camp at Sunrise Farms. We have incorporated food purchasing from Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad for the last three years. In planning for this year, we are preparing to provide the same food deliveries for 56 households. We have begun contracting with TYL for this summer as well.



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UNITED WAY FOCUS AREAS

1. To support financial stability in Whatcom County, we have identified three funding priorities below, basic needs, economic mobility, and breaking the cycle of poverty. Choose **one** category below that best aligns with your agency/program:

Basic Needs

- Food security
- Stable, attainable, affordable housing
- Health and mental health care access

Economic Mobility

- Financial literacy and training
- Vocational readiness training and support
- Adult education programs

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- Affordable child care and early learning programs
- Academic programs to increase student attendance and achievement
- Parenting support
- Addiction treatment and recovery
- Abuse prevention

2. Please describe how your program/agency services align with the category you selected above.

The Ferndale Food Bank is committed to the mission of distributing food and support to all community members in need with dignity, respect, and understanding. Shoppers are able to come to the food bank once a week and go home with at least five meals for the week. We aim to provide this number of meals for each household every distribution, based on the Feeding America Meal Gap Map, that estimates this is the average number of meals each week that food insecure homes experience food shortages for. The Ferndale Food Bank recognizes the role of food beyond its caloric value: it is nutrition but also connection, nourishment, sustenance, and culture. The Food Bank aims to be a place where people can come and get an immediate solution to a resource need while feeling welcomed as a member of our community.

Twenty percent of the clients we serve are seniors and 34% are children. In the last two years we have seen an 118% increase in the number of clients served.



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The Migrant Farm Worker Delivery project that we are requesting this funding for specifically delivers food to a farm workers' camp in Ferndale. For six weeks during the high summer season, we deliver boxes of dried goods, protein, and produce to 56 households and around 260 people. The boxes provide households with culturally relevant food items such as dried pinto beans, white rice, masa, cilantro, nopales, onions, tomatillos, and jalapeños. This project aims to address food security for Latinx populations in our area, who experience food insecurity at a rate of 1 in 5 compared to white populations that experience it at a rate of 1 in 10 according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2024 Report. We also purchase the produce for this project from Cooperative Tierra y Libertad, a local farm workers cooperative in Everson, WA, further aiming to support local food security in the area for the Latinx farm worker population.

3. Please provide two or three key outcomes you measure that indicate progress toward your mission. List the number of clients being served, what you track, and the most recent results.

We use data on overall shopper satisfaction, health outcomes, and food preferences to measure progress toward our mission. We also particularly measure these factors among demographics of underserved populations. These are done through shopper surveys every six months. Our most recent survey measuring these factors occurred in January of 2025. It revealed a 15% increase in overall client satisfaction, from 73% to 88% from our last survey, due to distribution model changes to a shopping model. From this survey, we also saw a 14.7% increase in guests coming to the food bank specifically due to changes to the distribution model and the addition of diapers and baby formula available at the food bank, with 65% of new guests in these groups identifying as Hispanic, Non-White. This survey also reported that 84.5% of guests were satisfied with the amounts and types of food being offered at the food bank.

4. How does United Way's investment help meet the funding needs of the organization or program? Please give specific examples of how United Way funds are/will be utilized.

The Ferndale Food Bank is requesting \$20,000 for our Migrant Farm Worker food delivery program. All of the funding will be used for food purchasing directly part of this project. \$15,000 is for the produce boxes, culturally relevant produce, and eggs purchased from Tierra y Libertad. \$5,000 is for the dried goods. The remainder of the project would be paid for through community funding.

We are honored to be a part of the program for the two objectives it accomplishes that align with our mission. First, it provides a necessary and crucial service to the migrant farm community as they are playing an integral role in our local agricultural system. Providing culturally relevant food items through delivery directly to this population breaks down barriers



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of access to healthy, nutritious food. Second, purchasing the produce boxes from Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad allows us to support a small-scale, BIPOC owned, transitional organic farm. These purchases amount to 392 produce boxes over the course of the program as well as 200 pounds of nopales and 392 dozen eggs. This program allows us to be a part of breaking down access barriers to food for underserved communities and support local BIPOC farming in the process.

Item	Cost per Item	Cost x 56 boxes x 7 weeks
Oatmeal	\$0.97	\$380.24
Canned Corn	\$0.77	\$301.84
Canned Fruit	\$1.01	\$395.92
Canned Chicken	\$1.17	\$458.64
Masa	\$3.71	\$1,454.32
Dried Pinto Beans	\$0.83	\$325.36
White Rice	\$0.56	\$219.52
Produce Boxes	\$40.00	\$13,500.00
Nopales	\$5/lbs.	\$500.00
Half Dozen Eggs	\$3.00	\$1,000.00
Total	\$56.50	\$22,150.00



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5. Briefly describe how your agency/program will utilize community partnerships or coordinate with other agencies (UW partner agencies, other community non-profits, government agencies, local companies, schools, etc.) to advance your work/mission. This program relies heavily on partnerships with over 20 local non-profits a part of the Viviendo Bien Coalition that work together to serve the farm working community in Whatcom County. These partnerships, specifically with Agape Service Project and Northwest Educational Service District 189, help build trusted relationships with families that the food bank can then partner with to be liaisons to get food to folks who need it. These partnerships also help deliver the food as well as build access to the farm working camps to bring service directly to farm workers for increased accessibility. The program also relies on partnership with Cooperativa Tierra y Libertad to purchase produce and source culturally relevant items for the food boxes.

6. United Way focuses on ALICE households in Whatcom County. ALICE refers to households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford the basic cost of living in our community.
 - a. What percentage of your program recipients are below the ALICE threshold based on the survival budget for Whatcom County? Though we do not collect specific incomes for individuals we do participate in the TEFAP program that requires all shoppers receiving food be below the state income guidelines for the program. These guidelines are 400% of the FPL threshold. 100% of the participants a part of the Farm Worker delivery program qualify for the TEFAP program. The percentage of ALICE in Ferndale specifically is 21% and we know that 1 in 5 people in Whatcom County use food banks. Furthermore 1 in 5 Latinx households in the area are food insecure.
 - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? We do not track incomes specific for each recipient of the program but know that 100% of program recipients are 400% or lower of FPL. This is less than \$60,000 a year for a single household.
 - c. Do you collect client data by zip code? Yes

Visit the [United for ALICE](#) website for the most recent (2024 report) Whatcom County data to determine the survival budget guidelines for ALICE households.

7. Please share an example of a client who was helped by your services.
**Note: if you receive a 2025 Community Impact Grant, this story may be shared on your behalf by United Way for the purpose of our community fundraising. Names and details may be altered for privacy.*

This year, we had a guest volunteer session at the food bank. After the shift, we gathered to answer questions about our work, and one volunteer shared a powerful experience:



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During the pandemic, this individual cared for two sick family members and faced significant challenges in maintaining steady employment. They turned to the Ferndale Food Bank for support during that difficult time, which made a crucial difference for their family. Thankfully, they have not only regained stability but are in position to give back to the food bank, and their journey highlights the importance of our mission.

Application Checklist:

The United Way Addendum and all materials listed below must be submitted by **5pm on Thursday, March 6, 2025.**

Please submit all materials by email to hello@unitedwaywhatcom.org