**HUMAN SERVICES GRANTS PROGRAM (HSGP)**

**FY 2023-24 PROGRAM STATUS REPORT**

Westside Food Bank

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Food Distribution

Program: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

###### FY 2023-24 SUBMISSION CALENDAR

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **REPORTS** | **REPORT PERIOD** | **REPORT DEADLINE** |
| Mid-Year Program and | 7/1/2023 - 12/31/2023 | Monday, February 5, 2024 |
| Fiscal Status Reports |
| Year-End Program and | 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 | Monday, August 5, 2024 |
| Fiscal Status Reports |

|  |
| --- |
| **SELECT** |
|  |
| X |

**Instructions:**

* All reports submitted to the City are considered public record. Please note that staff will use the information provided in the mid-year and year-end reports to provide Council and the public with summary reports of agency performance highlighting key outcomes, successes, findings, and concerns.
* Please be concise. For example, do NOT copy and paste repetitive content from your Mid-Year to your Year-End. In most cases, a complete program status report will be no more than 8-10 pages in length.
* When preparing your report, please be sure to refer to your current Program Plan (Exhibit A) Program Budget (Exhibit B) and Special Funding Conditions (Exhibit C), of your executed Grant Agreement with the City.
* To submit your completed report to the City, upload the file to your agency’s SharePoint folder **as a Word document** and notify your grant analyst once you have done so.
* Please contact your grants analyst or [humanservices@santamonica.gov](mailto:humanservices@santamonica.gov) for any issue with accessing your agency’s SharePoint folder.

**SECTION I: PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES**

Provide a brief summary of your program accomplishments, challenges, and changes that occurred during the reporting period. Please also provide information or observations related to population or service trends.

Accomplishments

* Westside Food Bank (WSFB) distributed 4,305,649 pounds (equivalent to 3,588,041 meals) of nutritious food to communities throughout West LA County including 2,154,617 pounds of produce. Of the 4.3M pounds of food we distributed, we estimate that 1,238,745 pounds (equivalent to 863,630 meals) reached SMPPs. We estimate that this food reached 19,058 SMPPs.
* We projected that 65% of the food we would distribute to SMPPs would be fresh produce, protein (meat/fish), and dairy products. We exceeded that projection with 70% of the food that we distributed to SMPPs being fresh produce, protein (meat/fish), and dairy products.
* We exceeded our original projection that 45% of the food we would distribute at our Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry site would be produce by 30%, resulting in 75% of the food we distributed being produce. This was due to having less nonperishable items available for the first half of the year, fresh produce made up 75% (compared to our 45% original projection) of food distributions at Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry.
* A major accomplishment this reporting period was the purchase of a 10,000 square foot warehouse at 1914 14th Street in Santa Monica in January 2024. This is the first property we have owned in our 43-year history, and we are grateful to have found a warehouse located in Santa Monica. We used $3M of a $3.3M state grant for food bank capacity building and infrastructure for the down payment on a $6M purchase price. We will use 1914 14th Street as our annex warehouse to store perishable items and dry goods. We are in the midst of securing the remaining funding needed for us to install a 1,000 square foot walk-in cooler and freezer unit so that we can accept donated accept donated fresh produce, frozen foods and nonperishable staples that we previously had to turn away due to lack of space at our headquarters at 1710 22nd Street that we have rented for over 30 years. As soon as we complete this project, we will relinquish the lease at 1710 22nd Street, which will save us $14,000 per month in rent.
* We would like to highlight in this report that our President and CEO, Genevieve Riutort, was appointed by Los Angeles Supervisor Lindsey Horvath to serve a two-year term on the LA County Public Social Services Commission where she will be one of 15 private citizens who meet monthly to discuss, examine, and evaluate public welfare issues and programs administered by DPSS.
* We participated in the Financial Freedom Fair Tabling event hosted by Haven Neighborhood Services at Virginia Ave. Park on April 13th and the Spotlight on Community Organizations in Santa Monica at the Main Library at 601 Santa Monica Blvd. on March 14th.

Challenges

* Due to less funding from other sources, WSFB was unable to obtain as much nonperishable food this year so we fell short of our original poundage projection of 1,588,456 pounds to SMPPs by 349,711 pounds.
* Because of less funding, we fell short of our original projection to distribute 125,000 pounds of food to SMPPs who access this food at our Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry in Santa Monica by 19,090 pounds for a total distribution of 105,910 pounds of food.
* It is very challenging operating from three facilities at the moment.
  + 1710 22nd Street in Santa Monica - We have rented our current headquarters at 1710 22nd Street site for more than 30 years but have outgrown the space. This is the only location of the three we currently operate from that has cooler and freezer space, which is very limited.
  + 1914 14th Street in Santa Monica – We purchased this property in January 2024 with state funds.
  + 11800 W. Olympic Blvd. in West LA - We began renting 11800 W. Olympic Blvd. in February 2023 and we are currently in a capital campaign to raise the necessary funds to buy this building and make it our new, permanent headquarters where our staff will be housed in one location and where our agency partners will come to pick up their food orders. We will use 1914 14th Street as our annex warehouse to store perishable items and dry goods.

As stated in the section above, as soon as we complete the installation of the walk-in cooler and freezer unit at 1914 14th Street, we will relinquish the lease at 1710 22nd Street.

Changes

* We changed models midyear at our Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry site in Santa Monica to have clients shop for produce rather than being handed pre-packaged produce boxes, and provided nonperishable boxes on request to minimize food waste from unwanted items.
* The biggest change that occurred during the reporting period is also a challenge. Overall for FY 23-24, we budgeted $2.6M for food purchases, and ended up spending $1,695,980 (unaudited) on food purchases due to post-COVID private and government funding reductions and wholesale food price inflation. While the City of Santa Monica’s grant was fixed at $175,000 for the FY 23-24 year, other funding sources were not as dependable, which affected our bulk food purchasing power and options.

Information or observations related to population or service trends

* At our first-ever agency forum in May 2024, we heard from our partner food pantries:
  + That they continue to see more people seeking food assistance than ever before and how challenging it is to have to reduce the amount of food each household receives because of the reduction in Westside Food Bank’s supply.
  + They would like a greater variety of products even if it means having less poundage in their food orders.
  + They would like us to improve our online ordering system, make it easier, make the pick-up process smoother.
  + They would like to have access to more protein options, recipes, more pop-top can items, more cans with meat, chili, etc. and more paper and hygiene products.
* It is worth noting that during the report period the 99 Cents Only Store on Pico and Stewart ceased operations. WSFB entered into talks with the City of Santa Monica in April 2024 to supply cleaning supplies, toiletries, paper towels, toilet paper, additional fresh produce, and tortillas to neighborhood residents affected by this store closure who would access these extra supplies and food from WSFB’s Virginia Ave. Park in Santa Monica a few shorts blocks away from the 99 Cents Only Store. We received $10,000 in funding from The We Are Santa Monica Fund of the California Community Foundation to fund some of these purchases to alleviate the burden on SMPPs.

###### SECTION II: COLLABORATION EFFORTS

Please highlight any new efforts to collaborate with other service providers and/or leverage services, if applicable. Please include the agency name(s) and service(s) provided.

This reporting period, we added the following nonprofits to our list of partner agencies:

* Bandini Foundation - Provides food to veterans. Along with the food pantry they offer golf course, music, gardening, and fitness classes. They were previously a produce-only agency, this change to full partner status allows them to receive all the types of food we provide.
* CASS (Christian Association for Social Services) - Provides food, mobility loans, emergency family support to needy families in Los Angeles and Egypt.
* Grass Roots Neighbors - Serves families experiencing food insecurity within a 10-mile radius. They currently deliver groceries to 70 local families.
* Inglewood Community Table - Offers 24/7 open table to anyone in need.
* St. Joseph Center Training Kitchen - Prepares participants for careers in the food service industry.
* St. Joseph Center - 697 Witmer - Houses disabled clients who have experienced homelessness and/or became housed through the office of diversion and reentry program for clients coming out of custody.
* Step Up VA 205 and Step Up VA 208- Provides permanent supportive housing on the West LA VA Campus. Also provides supportive mental and physical health services and life skills programs for Veterans in other Step Up communities.

###### SECTION III: STAFFING PATTERN

If applicable, please describe how staffing changes during the report period have impacted service delivery, caseload, and redistribution of work among other staff to ensure service levels are maintained. please also describe recruitment efforts and an anticipated hire date

Please indicate how volunteers or interns were used during the reporting period. Provide the total number of volunteers or interns. If interns were used, please indicate their program level (e.g., undergraduate, masters).

In August 2023, we hired a new Development Manager for an existing position. In October 2023, we hired a new Warehouse Assistant for a new position to assist with deliveries and other warehouse duties in light of the overall workload increasing with more new agencies and multiple facilities In November 2023, we hired an Administrative Assistant for a new position. In April 2024, we hired a new Warehouse Order Picker for an existing position and we brought on a temporary Warehouse Assistant for an existing position.

We are pleased to report that 950 individuals volunteered at WSFB during our FY 23-24 reporting period. Volunteers sorted produce and donated food from food drives and packed food in boxes for distribution to the public through our nonprofit partner agency network and our own five direct service mobile pantries. The additional volunteer support was needed to sort produce now that we are relying exclusively on donated produce, which often comes in large totes rather than small cases like purchased produce.

**SECTION IV: GRIEVANCES & GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENT (GNA)**

Please provide the total number of grievances recorded by your program during the reporting period. Discuss trends in the number and types of grievances and any action taken to address common or recurring issues.

Please detail any additional changes or issues regarding your agency’s GNA (if applicable).

There were no grievances recorded by Westside Food Bank during the reporting period.

**SECTION V: SPECIAL FUNDING CONDITIONS**

Provide a status report on how the agency is meeting its funding conditions listed in Exhibit C of your Grant Agreement for the current fiscal year, clearly addressing each individual funding condition in bullet point format.

In Exhibit C of our Grant Agreement, the following Standard Funding Condition is listed:

1. Agency will assist eligible participants in submitting applications to applicable relief and housing sustainability programs, including local, state, and federal rental assistance programs, including but not limited to: Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Below Market Housing (BMH) Waitlists, Preserving Our Diversity (POD), Continuum of Care (CoC), and HOME voucher programs.

Westside Food Bank is not a social service direct service provider. We do not assist any people in completing any applications to applicable relief and housing sustainability programs; however, we do save households an average of $300.00 per month on groceries that they receive from our nonprofit partner agencies that serve SMPPs and from our mobile pantry at Virginia Ave. Park. A recent state-wide survey conducted by the University of California, San Francisco Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative found that 70 percent of the survey respondents said a monthly subsidy of $300 to $500 would have prevented them from being homeless for two years. WSFB is helping to keep families housed by providing free nutritious food that frees up their limited funds for other necessities like rent.

###### SECTION VI: BOARD INVOLVEMENT (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)

Please indicate:

* Number of Board meetings conducted during the reporting period

5

* Board vacancies and plans to fill those vacancies, if applicable

Our bylaws state the number of board members on our board should not be less than 20 and no more than 30. We reserve two spaces on the board for representatives from partner agencies, and we currently have a representative on our board from one of our largest partner agencies, St. Joseph Center. We currently have 25 Board members. We have paused filling vacancies because in April 2024, our Strategic Planning and Governance Committee agreed that the board needs to fine tune criteria for selecting future members. At the February 2024 meeting, the committee identified food, health care, entertainment, tech, marketing/communication, and sports as target areas for future members.

* Significant policy actions or development activities taken by the Board during the program year

Significant actions taken by the Board during this report period include approving moving forward with a Capital Campaign, revising the frequency and time of board meetings, reviewing the board handbook/onboarding materials, and implementing a regular schedule of Committee meetings, with each Board Committee meeting at least two times during the year.

**SECTION VII: PROGRAM PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)**

Share examples of how feedback from program participants was incorporated into program design during the program year.

We do our best to incorporate feedback that we get from our partner agencies on types of food their clients would like us to have. Please see below for feedback from an All Agency Survey conducted in August 2023.

What food would you like to see at the WSFB on a regular basis?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bananas | 27% |
| Cheese | 9% |
| Meat | 55% |
| Yogurt | 3% |
| No Answer | 6% |
| Total | 100% |

What is your agency's opinion on the overall QUANTITY of food available from WSFB?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Don’t know | 3% |
| It is more than we need | 9% |
| It is sufficient for our needs | 67% |
| We need more food than is available | 21% |
| Total | 100% |

What is your agency's opinion on the overall VARIETY of food available from WSFB?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| It is more than we need | 3% |
| It is sufficient for our needs | 52% |
| We need more food than is available | 45% |
| Total | 100% |

If you have a choice between quantity or variety, what would your agency choose?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Variety | 73% |
| Quantity | 18% |
| Don't know | 9% |
| Total | 100% |

If asked to choose one type of food item which WSFB should acquire more varieties of, it would be…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Canned meat/soups/stews | 12% |
| Canned or frozen meat or fish | 12% |
| Canned vegetables/fruits | 6% |
| Dairy | 12% |
| Fresh fruits | 15% |
| Fresh vegetables | 39% |
| Rice or Grains | 3% |
| Total | 100% |

In response to these survey results, we adjusted our food purchases when possible to obtain more of the most requested items.

We also incorporated feedback we received from the City of Santa Monica with regard to the closing of the 99 Cents Store on Pico and Stewart and its impact on residents in the neighborhood by adding cleaning supplies, toiletries, paper towels, toilet paper, additional produce and tortillas to our weekly distributions at Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry site.

**SECTION VIII: SUCCESS STORIES (COMPLETE AT YEAR-END ONLY)**

Please include no more than three success stories that illustrate the impact of your program on individual participants or households. When doing so, please take care to avoid any personally identifiable information that could compromise the privacy of any program participants. Please also note that staff will use the information provided to update Council and the public on agency performance.

R has been visiting Westside Food Bank’s Virginia Avenue Mobile Pantry with her grandson for the past year. She’s originally from El Salvador and lost her job three years ago. She considers the food from the pantry a blessing, especially the fresh vegetables she receives every week. “I got plums and what I do with the plums, I learned how to make plum jelly for the kids. With less sugar, it’s good. With all the fresh vegetables, we can make salads and prepare sandwiches with fresh lettuce and stuff that we use.” She says she is extremely grateful for the Mobile Pantries, as they allow her to save money that she would have otherwise spent on food. She also appreciates the warm and kind atmosphere at the pantry, and she is happy to have a dependable source of food.

J is a client at our Virginia Ave. Park Mobile Pantry. Three years ago, J was diagnosed with diabetes and fatty liver disease. It was the start of the COVID- 19 pandemic, and he was no longer working, so he began coming to one of Westside Food Bank's Mobile Pantries for assistance. Over time, he began consuming more fresh produce and vegetables from the Food Bank. "Fresh food is a lifesaver. I completely changed my diet – I no longer eat stuff from boxes, cans, or microwaves. I started making fresh salads. I would get enough fresh vegetables to make five salads a week and steam other vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, kale, and healthy things that were really helping me. Transitioning to this diet, I lost over 40 pounds. Now that did take a long time, and it yo- yos up, and it's still a certain amount of yo-yo there. But I'm pretty good now about how I'm eating. Because I've been coming here, I'm learning more about the natural environment of food, what you can do with it, and what there is of it." J is no longer diabetic, and he attributes this to a change of diet because of the food from Westside Food Bank and being more active.

S is a first-generation college student at Santa Monica College. Not only does she take classes, she does this all while being the oldest daughter, the sole provider for her family of five, and having a disability. She says the Bodega Food Pantry at SMC has been essential to her success in school. Westside Food Bank provides 60% of the food provided there. S says, “I'm also lucky that the college itself actually gives a way for first-generation people or adults who have children or siblings to have a way for us to continue going to college. The clothes that they give, the donations that they give, the gift cards that they give provide for many families like mine.” S goes on to say how grateful she is for the Bodega. She accesses the food pantry for resources at least once a week and has been going since it first opened. S appreciates the wide range of fresh produce available at the Bodega, which enables her Mexican family to cook traditional dishes such as Arroz con pollo while also experimenting with new kinds of food. After she graduates, she hopes to become a forensic photographer or work in the criminal justice system

while helping her family the best that she can.

**By submitting this report to the Human Services Division, I certify that this report is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that all disbursements have been made in compliance with the conditions of the Grantee Agreement and for the purposes indicated**