

Grant Template - Laramie Soup Kitchen

Description: Organization and their goals

The Laramie Soup Kitchen provides nutritious meals without cost to those who are hungry or alone and has done so for 40 years. It is a local source of community which connects everyone through food and a comforting place to meet. Their goal is to maintain and foster a better quality of life for the people of Albany county by continuing outreach to the hungry and those in need of a friendly and safe environment. They do not stand alone within the community: 154, 000 pounds of food was donated to the Soup Kitchen which was distributed either directly or through other local resources. This is largely due to donations from local businesses as well as the nearby University of Wyoming.

Need:

While the Laramie Soup Kitchen serves its community well, its broad mission limits engagement with University of Wyoming students. Unfortunately, U.S. college student food scarcity has been a steadily growing problem which has only been amplified by the Covid19 pandemic. Recent attempts to legislate change by including college students in existing relief programs (SNAP) to mitigate the 30-plus percent of college students facing food insecurity were unsuccessful. Add to this the fact that Albany county, with the highest rates of "limited or uncertain access to food" at 17.6%, is a food desert.

Food insecurity takes a terrible toll on students at the University of Wyoming. A further level of uncertainty is added to the lives of international students who must navigate this new and sparse landscape with limited resources and often with new families. They have been asked to journey across the world to our community with the expectation of success despite strained resources. The on-campus food pantry, a needed but limited on-campus resource, reports that the largest number of patrons are international students. Since the pantry and other community and campus resources do not fulfill the gap left by Albany county's food scarcity and the lack of federal assistance, the Laramie Soup Kitchen stands as a potential bridge to keep both international and other students from experiencing food insecurity.

The Laramie Soup Kitchen is and always has been available to students but there is little student awareness. The issue at hand, then, is a lack of awareness and on-campus engagement. With a small amount of funding, the Soup Kitchen could reach out to University of Wyoming students to increase engagement and awareness of both food availability and community access that otherwise goes unnoticed.

Project Description and Goals:

While the focus is outreach the primary means is through the hiring of three interns who will implement a series of coordinated events with the University of Wyoming. Two of these interns will be hired on at \$11/hr with no stipulation on their major or career goals. A third intern will be hired at \$12/hr and will be a business major. All three will represent the Soup Kitchen through outreach events that last approximately two school semesters. The cost will be \$3979 for 6 hours per week over the nine month-long period.

The lead intern will plan and set up events based on these plans and those agreed upon with Soup Kitchen leadership. Meetings will be held early in the Fall semester to detail and fund events with the goal of increasing university student turnout with an eye on establishing a permanent presence and reputation on campus. The ultimate goal is not merely to increase and track the number of students who visit the Soup Kitchen but also to create an ongoing campus narrative of partnership and acceptance.

Interns will target three to four campus-specific events such as union breeze-way events or international student gatherings where they will set up a booth or table. Interaction will consist of flyer or branded merchandise distribution. Meetings and partnerships will be formed with student organizations who best fit the model of building and maintaining connections with students in need. Included are all student governments, dean of students, and groups favoring international student concerns.

In addition, there will be one to two classroom presentations per month, wherein the lead intern will contact departments on-campus to give short speeches about the Soup Kitchen, its availability to students and its role bridging the gap between student need and community resources. In addition, student group meetings are targeted to visit. These class and group visits will include distributing student-targeted promotional merchandise.

Merchandising is intended to be focused on student-specific utility. This means that quality items are meant to be actually used by students rather than mass-promote using cheaper merchandising. This is in line with the ultimate goal of the grant project to build a long-lasting reputation on campus rather than meet a one-time goal of increased student attendance at the Soup Kitchen.

Evaluation

The first means of evaluating change will be in meals served. A month-by-month baseline will be established and set as a bar to improve. A general, informal observation and anecdotal reporting by staff to interns will give a sense of student participation. This gives both students and staff the opportunity to interact and socialize as part of the dynamic. It also allows staff to

assess the potential interests of international students in terms of requests for specific types of food.

On campus events will include signups that allow targeted messaging and announcements for further events or engagements. These are not tracked or retained beyond those newsletter-like emails but the number of set messages will give an indication of success.

Merchandising will make up the final part of evaluation methods. Soup Kitchen logos on utilitarian items like notebooks, student bags, water bottles, and so on will keep the institutional awareness constant. It will also serve as a means of tracking the engagement with the student population in terms of items distributed.

These metrics, though soft, will serve as a month-by-month bar to give an indication of how well the outreach is going. The interns will be able to assess the effect their work is having and adjust by potentially shifting focus from general to specific events (union breezeway table to speaking engagements at international student functions, for example) or vice versa.

Future or Additional/Collaborative Funding

There should, ideally, be a future for this program. Student food insecurity must continue, in lieu of any interest by government bodies, to be addressed by whatever means necessary. What must be established at this time, however, is the viability of this particular method.

Should intern-based outreach methodology prove effective using the methodology and metrics outlined it makes sense to continue the program. This means stabilizing the funding sources to particularly suited grantees who are amenable to a consistent bridging program.

Further, it might be necessary to broaden the particulars in ways which address multiple nonprofits in the Laramie area which address food insecurity. In this way, we can bring students to all available resources that need addressing.

It may also be used as a pilot program to engage students with other resources necessary for their educational success. These might include, but are not limited to: healthcare, childcare, transportation, feminine products, etc.

Budget

Intern salaries

The primary cost and the most vital element in the funding is for the intern salaries. This is pivotal to the ethos and success of the project mission. Interns are more than mere employees and their funding more than the cost of doing business. Interns are college students who are beginning a productive and humanitarian career path. They are bridging the gap between

community resources and university engagement. As an accepted work/education model of engagement it demonstrates the rationale of providing students with resources for current and future success.

Two students, based on the current suggested practice, will be paid \$11.00 per hour at approximately 6 hours per week for approximately 16 weeks spread over two university semesters. Taxes of 12% mean that the cost for two general interns will be \$2,366.

The third intern is meant to be a business major and, as such, a scheduler, planner, and point of contact with several of the university departments. They are also meant to continue the activities, planning and wrap-up past the end of the Spring semester, providing an assessment of the program's successes and misses. This increases their participation to 20 weeks and their hourly pay to 12 dollars an hour. This equals \$1,613.

The total for all three interns would equal \$3979.

Print materials

Flyers will be used as the main point of print contact and information. A generic design should be implemented to allow for continued use of both the flyers and the graphics file for future promotions. A first print run of two thousand copies should cost around \$100 (based on an aggregate of local and online sources). Another run should be necessary with the likely potential of graphics adjustments either for specific events or focused demographics, adding another \$100. Total cost for flyer should be \$200.

A small run of larger versions of the flyers will be needed for announcement boards and similar targeted advertising. The likely print run should be 500 copies and the graphics should be broad enough to indicate the program intentions but not as specific as flyers. The aggregate cost for these larger items is \$150.

Total projected print costs amounts to \$350. However, due to the potential for further print runs and more specific graphics for events, a \$600 budget would be necessary. This allows for mistakes, larger event turnouts or other unanticipated variables.

Merchandising

There will be three primary promotional product lines will be handed out to students: water bottles, custom notebook/journals, and cotton canvas grocery tote. While this accounts for a bulk of the expense, the durability and presence of useful items will echo the message of the events and student-representative interactions into the daily lives of the students. Disposable swag is broadly targeted, while quality, utilitarian products continue to promote the Soup Kitchen's availability to students through their academic lives not only to them but to their peers who see those products.

A print run of 200 of each aggregated would cost around \$600 each, totaling \$1800.

These will be handed out at the targeted on-campus events rather than in the union breezeway or in-class speaking engagements.

Miscellaneous costs

A general budget of \$250 will be necessary to provide for unplanned or general expenses. This includes, but is not limited to, office supplies, excess mileage around Laramie, etc.

Conclusion

The Soup Kitchen's mission is to provide meals and community for Laramie. Yet many at the University of Wyoming experiencing food insecurity have no idea that it exists as a resource. The proposed plan for the Laramie Soup Kitchen's outreach will connect students with that resource through a series of events and engagements designed to encrease awareness. Though it is in part through the events, the promotional merchandise and email notices, the main connection is through the activities and networking of the interns. Their goal is to create a long-lasting reputation on campus which establishes the Soup Kitchen as a reliable safety net to ensure that students can complete their educations without concern for where their next meal is going to come from.