



## New Jersey Agricultural Society

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## 2021 Grant Proposal

### Section 1: Overview

**1. Focus Area to Which You Are Applying (Women, Children & Families, Education or Community Health & Wellbeing)**

Community Health & Wellbeing Focus Area

**2. Organization's Name**

The New Jersey Agricultural Society (NJAS) / Farmers Against Hunger (FAH) Program

**3. Organization's Website**

<http://www.njagsociety.org/farmers-against-hunger.html>

**4. Name of Project**

Farmers Against Hunger Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center & *Grow for Good* Program

**5. County Where Organization is Headquartered**

Burlington County

**6. County(ies) Being Served With This Project**

The proposed project targets Burlington County specifically during the 24-month grant period.

It should be noted that Farmers Against Hunger currently also serves Camden County, Gloucester County, and Cumberland County. Initial expanded benefits will likely accrue to these counties during the first two years of start-up due to proximity of the proposed Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center ("the Center"). After the Center and its *Grow for Good* program take firm root in Burlington County, intentional effort will be made to expand service to the four-county region.



**7. Executive Director Name**

Mr. Alfred Murray

**8. Executive Director Email**

[njagriculturalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:njagriculturalsociety@gmail.com)

**9. Best contact phone number for Executive Director**

609-462-9691

**Section 2: Organization Information**

**10. What is the mission of your organization?**

Farmers Against Hunger is one of the New Jersey Agricultural Society’s signature programs. The overarching mission of the NJAS is to preserve and enhance agriculture, farming, and related activities and businesses in New Jersey through educational, informational, and promotional programs.

The specific mission of FAH is to connect healthy food from farms to families and, in doing so, to:

- Reduce food insecurity, by ensuring access to fresh and healthy produce for every family in New Jersey
- Reduce food waste, by helping farmers and wholesalers throughout New Jersey share their surplus produce with those in need
- Provide opportunities to help those in need to grow their own food, including in urban areas

**11. Who is your organization’s target population?**

FAH focuses its efforts on New Jersey families and individuals who lack ready access to healthy produce. The men and women whom FAH serves include those who are elderly, disabled, veterans, homeless, unemployed, underemployed, or otherwise economically disadvantaged due to a range of factors.

Generally, FAH serves a majority adult population, where 40 percent of program participants are ages 62 years or older. The remaining 60 percent of participants are divided roughly evenly between those from birth to age 25 years, and those ages 26 to 62 years. However, the pandemic has had an impact upon the age distribution of FAH program participants. Specifically, the participants are skewing younger. This is likely an effect of children being out of school and elderly individuals being housebound as a

result of their susceptibility to contracting the virus. (Note: FAH has also coordinated distributions directly to housing communities for the elderly to address the need and restrictions for safety to address these impacts.)

**12. Approximately how many individuals did your organization reach in each of the last two years through your program and services?**

In 2020, FAH supported the food needs of approximately 10,300 individuals weekly, providing a total of approximately 7.5 million servings, representing 2.25 million pounds of food (85% produce; 15% dairy and protein). Approximately 32,000 families benefited through pop-up emergency food distribution locations during this same time period.

In 2019, FAH supported the food needs of approximately 7,000 individuals weekly, providing a total of approximately 4.5 million servings, representing 1.35 million pounds of food (98% produce; 2% other).

For Burlington County specifically, the numbers of individuals supported by FAH over the past two years are as follows:

- 2020: More than 1,500 individuals reached weekly (equating to 337,425 pounds of food; 1.125 million servings)
- 2019: More than 1,000 individuals reached weekly (equating to 225,825 pounds of food; 752,750 servings)

**13. To what do you attribute any changes in these numbers?**

The data above show a marked increase in the number of individuals and families served in 2020 over 2019. Overall, there was a 73 percent increase in 2020, over 2019, in pounds of food distributed.

FAH attributes this significant single year jump to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic fallout of the pandemic dramatically increased the numbers of New Jersey individuals and families in need from 2019 to 2020. However, the impact of the pandemic also led to a significant increase in food and monetary donations to FAH, as well as emergency funding opportunities to meet the increased need. FAH mobilized quickly to take advantage of each of these opportunities to maximize its reach during the height of the pandemic and throughout.

**14. What makes your organization unique from other organizations that do similar work?**

There are approximately four to five leading gleaning/food distribution organizations in New Jersey. They do good and important work for their local communities;

however, the differences in the scope and scale of their operations compared to the operations of FAH are considerable. The following factors that have driven the scope and scale of FAH's work make it stand out as unique among all:

Organizational Backing and Program Longevity: As noted previous, FAH is supported by, and operated under the auspices of, the Burlington County-based New Jersey Agricultural Society—an organization that has served New Jersey's agricultural community since 1781. The NJAS is, itself, an organization of farmers—experts on the very frontlines of food production. It is important to note that the success of any gleaning (harvesting surplus crops) and food distribution operation relies heavily on the goodwill of these farmers, the ability to build lasting relationships with them, and the willingness to give due recognition to the value of their contributions that depend directly on their own physical labor. FAH has, itself, operated successfully since 1996 (25 years), whereas the few other New Jersey organizations that provide similar services tend to be in the more start-up phases of their operations.

Transportation and Logistics: Two of the most significant limiting factors in any gleaning and food distribution system are: (1) access to transportation, and (2) the ability to manage the flow of food goods between a point of origin and a point of consumption to meet the requirements of those in need. New Jersey's other leading gleaning organizations, lacking transportation and logistics resources and expertise, tend to be very localized, having the ability to reach on the local communities in which they are based. The FAH model for food collection, transportation, and distribution is unique among others. The program receives food from both its gleaning operations and direct corporate food donations, and efficiently transports it from the farm or wholesaler to more than 85 community partners. This diverse approach creates stability and enables the program to meet its annual commitments.

FAH was begun by New Jersey farmers who sought to contribute their surplus produce to those in need. Prior to FAH's establishment, a few New Jersey farmers tried to donate produce to their local food banks or food pantries, but transportation of that produce proved to be a persistent and daunting problem. When farmers are in the midst of growing and harvesting, they do not have the capacity (i.e., time or resources) to store and transport those products to non-paying destinations. Most of the recipient non-profit groups also lack access to the necessary resources to collect and transport these perishable goods from the farms.

However, with the support of the Bonner Foundation and AmeriCorps program, FAH was founded, first with a leased truck and AmeriCorps students, and later with a purchased truck, funded in large part by Mrs. Bonner. Through the years, FAH has expanded its donor base—and its truck fleet—and now collects and transports nearly 1.5 million pounds of produce annually from more than 50 farms, grocery stores, and wholesale produce companies to more than 85 community organizations.

Since the purchase of that first truck in 1996, FAH has been working behind-the-scenes as a bridge between New Jersey's agricultural sector and hunger relief organizations. When farmers throughout the state call with produce to share, whether boxed and ready-to-go, or still out in the fields, FAH is ready to mobilize one of its iconic trucks. FAH is also able to dispatch a dedicated team of volunteers to harvest the surplus crops and transport it back to a dedicated FAH cooler for inventory and storage. During the off-season in particular, FAH supplements its stock with produce donations from various grocery stores and wholesalers. FAH then distributes the produce to a network of NJ food banks, churches, and other groups engaged in feeding their communities.

Low Operational Overhead/Efficiency: FAH's internal landscape has some noteworthy strengths and vulnerabilities. Without a doubt, the program's greatest strength is the talented and dedicated staff that run the day-to-day operation. This lean team is the engine that keeps the organization moving forward and meeting its commitments. The team also has a committed volunteer corps and enjoys a favorable reputation with its partners and the community they serve. FAH has an incredibly efficient model. The unit cost per pound of delivered food is a key performance indicator for the program. This unit cost varies from \$0.12 - \$0.15 per pound and indicates that FAH is operating at peak efficiency when compared to other New Jersey gleaning organizations.

Organization and Community Involvement: The history, experience, and size of FAH, as compared to the four to five other leading gleaning/food distribution organizations in New Jersey has led to a well-established network of hunger relief organizations, currently with a heavy concentration in Mercer, Burlington, and Camden Counties, as well as in Monmouth and Ocean Counties further east. The program distributes surplus produce to approximately 85 hunger relief organizations annually. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the program has expanded considerably in Cumberland and Gloucester Counties, which lack the hunger-relief infrastructure that is well-established in Mercer and Camden Counties (serving Trenton and Camden cities). The location of the proposed Land Stewardship Center is ideally centralized for the Impact 100 South Jersey focus, with major highway access enabling it to engage several of the most high-need communities, like Burlington City and Mount Holly, and Camden and Bridgeton further south, as well as communities in Gloucester County, particularly those bordering Camden City and across the Delaware River from Philadelphia.

When it comes to collaboration and serving better and more efficiently, FAH is a key player in the Trenton Food Stakeholders Group, participates in the Camden Food Access Work Group, and was recently invited to participate in the newly established Food Democracy Collaborative serving Atlantic, Ocean, and Monmouth Counties. The FAH team is recognized across New Jersey by state government, academic institutions, hunger relief organizations, and industry partners for its leadership in the hunger relief space.

FAH also recognized the value of gleaning as a community practice. Gleanings allow FAH to collaborate with church groups, youth groups, schools, universities, corporations, and community members to harvest surplus crops while educating them about food insecurity, food waste, and New Jersey agriculture. Princeton University and Rutgers University student groups have been actively engaged in gleanings, as well as local high schools and community groups such as AmeriCorps, PowerCorps, FoodCorps, scout troops, green teams, and others. Several recipient agencies, such as RISE in Hightstown, Pearson Memorial in Hamilton, and Parkside Community in Camden send volunteers to harvest, and we often deliver a portion of the produce directly back to them or allow volunteers to assist in this delivery.

Stable, Coordinated Volunteer Base: Organizations with more locally focused services necessarily have smaller, and often more changeable, volunteer bases. Those volunteer operations offer fewer opportunities for exposure to sophisticated development, transportation, and logistics operations that underscore the work of FAH.

FAH maintains a solid volunteer core that participates season after season, helping to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of operations. Typically, this volunteer corps consists of upwards of 1,000 individuals seasonally. These volunteers are readily deployed where need is greatest. As noted above, FAH is able to dispatch a dedicated team of volunteers to harvest the surplus crops and transport it back to a dedicated FAH cooler for inventory and storage. This ability comes from decades of experience in honing effective and well-coordinated outreach, training, and communication strategies among FAH staff and its expansive volunteer network.

Volunteers support gleaning activity at participating farms. Corporate groups, schools, service groups, families, and individuals are recruited from the community through regular outreach and by word of mouth. FAH conducts outreach activities at fairs and also attends workshops and networking events where educational materials are distributed. Communication with volunteers and general supporters occurs regularly via Facebook, Instagram, and an electronic newsletter. Over the past few years, FAH has enjoyed an overwhelming response when the call for volunteers is made.

Information/Education: FAH carries out the critically important and central task of food collection and distribution; however, in doing so, it also seeks to educate through the creation of a powerful intersection of farmers, food, the environment, and the consumer base. Access to fresh, healthy food is not enough. In 2018, FAH hosted several nutrition and cooking courses in Camden, educating children on how to deliciously, easily, and affordably prepare the fresh fruits and vegetables their families receive, often through FAH's efforts. These services help the community organizations we serve to stretch their budgets and enhance the quality of their food distribution programs. FAH partners with more than 85 organizations to help distribute the food, through direct deliveries and through various distribution sites, including sites in

Mount Holly, Browns Mills, and Camden. At these sites, congregation leaders help manage the division of produce to several registered churches or organizations, making food distribution more efficient.

FAH works to address the issues of food waste and food insecurity on the farms where we glean by educating volunteers about food waste, minimizing their carbon footprint, and living a "green" lifestyle making these concepts and the concepts of regenerative agriculture, environmental sustainability, and climate change accessible to the individuals and families served by FAH. The focus on education carries through to end users who receive the produce donations, with FAH staff leading nutrition and cooking workshops to teach people how to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables in a quick, healthy, and affordable way.

Taken together, the experience, recognition, and unique operational advantages of FAH will position it well for making the proposed, community-embedded Land Stewardship Center a success for Burlington County and beyond.

**15. How long has the Executive Director served in this position?**

The current Executive Director has served in this position for the past 3.5 years. Prior to joining the New Jersey Agricultural Society, Mr. Murray served as Assistant Secretary to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

**16. What is the current number of full-time employees?**

Two (2)

**17. What is the current number of part-time employees?**

Six (6)

**18. What is the current number of active volunteers?**

Volunteers are engaged seasonally by FAH. During the 2020 season, approximately 1,500 volunteers served in various roles including as gleaners, drivers, food distribution center workers, etc. However, as noted previously in this application, the greatly increased need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic also greatly increased volunteer need. In 2019 and recently preceding years, FAH engaged approximately 1,000 to 1,200 volunteers each season.

**19. What is the current number of Board members?**

Currently, there are 27 active NJAS Board of Trustees members, which include five standing trustee positions representing the New Jersey Farm Bureau, New Jersey

Department of Agriculture, Rutgers University, New Jersey State FFA, and the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture.

**20. What is the number of these Board members who have provided financial contributions to the organization during the last 12 months?**

Two current Trustees have made financial contributions and another 11 Trustees have made in-kind contributions of significantly needed items, e.g., equipment, produce, dairy, and/or protein goods. It should be noted that, in operations such as FAH, in-kind contributions can be at least as significant as cash contributions.

**21. Please list your current Board members, including board position, professional affiliation and number of years served.**

The New Jersey Agricultural Society 2021-22 current Board of Trustees members are as follow below. The number of years of service is noted in parentheses following last name of the regular members.

**Rich Norz (6)**  
*President*  
Norz Hill Farms  
Hillsborough, NJ

**Timothy Willmott (6)**  
State Agriculture  
Development  
Committee  
Trenton, NJ

**Judi Marino (6)**  
*Secretary*  
Sun Valley Orchards  
Swedesboro, NJ

**Mark Kiriluk (2)**  
*Treasurer*  
Farm Credit East  
Bridgeton, NJ

**David Specca (6)**  
Past-President  
Specca Farms  
Springfield Twp, NJ

**August Wuillerman (2)**  
Immediate Past  
President NJ State  
Board of Ag.  
Hammonton

**Donna Bouchelle (2)**  
Columbus Farm &  
Market  
Columbus, NJ

**Chris Cirkus (1)**  
Trenton Farmers  
Market  
Lawrence, NJ

**Andrea Chu (2)**  
Campbell Soup Co.  
Camden, NJ

**Scott Daum (2)**  
Four Seasons Nursery  
Englishtown, NJ

**Laura DePrado (6)**  
Final Touch  
Plantscaping  
Branchburg, NJ

**Joni Elliott (5)**  
Ewing, NJ

**Caroline Etsch (6)**  
Etsch Farms  
Monroe, NJ

**Jim Giamarese (6)**  
Giamarese Farms  
East Brunswick, NJ

**Bill Griffin (6)**  
W.V. Griffin Nurseries  
Plainsboro, NJ

**Larry Kuser (6)**  
Fernbrook Farms  
Chesterfield, NJ



**Peter Pascale (2)**  
Robert Wood  
Johnson  
Somerset, NJ

**Matthew Puskas (1)**  
Puskas Farm  
Somerset, NJ

**Marilyn Russo (2)**  
Russo Farm  
Chesterfield, NJ

**Jennifer Taylor (3)**  
NJ State Legislature  
Office  
Merchantville, NJ

**Jeff Tober (3)**  
Fernbrook Farms  
Chesterfield, NJ

**Bob Von Thun (6)**  
Von Thun Farms  
Monmouth Jct. NJ

**Abigail Goodenough**  
NJ State FFA (Non-  
voting Trustee)  
**Erik Doyle (1)**  
State Board of  
Agriculture President  
Readington, NJ

**Ryck Suydam Ex-  
Officio**  
President  
NJ Farm Bureau  
Somerset, NJ

**Douglas H. Fisher Ex  
Officio**  
Secretary of  
Agriculture  
NJ Dept. of  
Agriculture  
Trenton, NJ

**Laura Lawson Ex  
Officio**  
Executive Dean  
Agriculture & Natural  
Resources Rutgers  
University  
New Brunswick, NJ

**22. What is the date of the organization’s last strategic plan and years it encompasses?**

The current NJAS Farmers Against Hunger strategic plan, “*Our Way Forward*,” was finalized in February 2021. It encompasses the years 2021 – 2023.

**23. Please describe your organization’s long-term goals or vision.**

FAH envisions a New Jersey where all people have access to fresh produce.

FAH seeks to put its vision into practice through the implementation and fulfillment of the following three long-term goals:

1. Establish a headquarters site to solidify and scale the FAH operation;
2. Increase food donation, community awareness, engagement, and education; and
3. Further diversify the donor portfolio and establish more partnerships.

**24. Please list the organization's top five funding sources for each of the last three fiscal years, including the names of funders and amounts.**

The top five funders by year (with amounts) are as follow:

2019/20:

- (1) NJDA Gleaning Grant (\$89,000)
- (2) Statewide Jar Fundraiser (\$33,000)
- (3) Sands Foundation (\$30,000)
- (4) Burke Foundation (\$30,000)
- (5) Bonner Foundation (\$25,000)

2018/19:

- (1) NJDA Gleaning Grant (\$58,000)
- (2) Sands Foundation (\$30,000)
- (3) Statewide Jar Fundraiser (\$30,000)
- (4) Bonner Foundation (\$25,000)
- (5) Holman Foundation (\$8,000)

2017/18:

- (1) NJDA Gleaning Grant (\$74,000)
- (2) Sands Foundation (\$30,000)
- (3) Bonner Foundation (\$25,000)
- (4) Statewide Jar Fundraiser (\$22,000)
- (5) Campbells Soup Foundation (\$15,000)

Overall, funding for FAH comes from multiple sources. Foundations and the State of New Jersey are the main sources of income. For several years, FAH has received a portion of the State Food Purchase Program Gleaning Support Program funds. One-hundred and fifty-thousand dollars (\$150,000) of state budget allocation is shared by up to four New Jersey gleaning organizations each year. The amount allocated is based on several factors including the annual volume of gleaned produce and number of counties reached. Funding has also come from specific projects that promote New Jersey crops and agriculture through the state Specialty Crop Block Grant.

**25. In the next 6-12 months, do you foresee any significant changes taking place within the organization? If yes, please provide details.**

Over the next six to 12 months and beyond, we foresee considerable opportunities for positive organizational changes. In October 2020, the parent organization of FAH, the New Jersey Agricultural Society, elected a new board president, Mr. Rich Norz. The president's term is for two years. Mr. Norz is an active, engaged president who seeks overall positive organizational growth on all fronts. Further, NJAS will implement a new board member orientation program to ensure that all board members are fully

knowledgeable of the organization's signature programs, including FAH.

With regard to FAH specifically, the agreement with Burlington County to lease to NJAS three acres of land to create the Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center in Delran Township will bring about considerable positive changes in the coming months. This agreement includes FAH use of existing agricultural infrastructure and three acres of land to establish a Center that will be the operations center for the *Grow for Good* program. The significance of this to the FAH program ranges from the practical to the transformative, as follows:

- First, food donations to FAH have increased considerably in response to greatly increased need. As a result, FAH outgrew the relatively small cooler storage facilities that had been available. The cooler facility at the proposed Land Stewardship Center in Burlington County will provide considerably greater food storage capacity allowing FAH to continue to expand its donation program.
- Additionally, the three acres of arable land at the Center will, for the first time, allow FAH to grow its own food, thereby increasing the volume of food available for donation to meet increased need. This will also allow FAH to function not only as a gleaning and distribution operation, but also as a food production-for-donation operation. As a significant added benefit, the establishment of FAH's own grow-for-donation operation will also help with volunteer retention. The Center will provide a stable site for volunteer work as an alternative to gleaning, which is often unpredictable. FAH will, thus, be able to further strengthen its connection to its volunteers.
- Finally, the *Grow for Good* program that will be implemented at the Center will fundamentally change the work of FAH from being largely a decentralized gleaning and food distribution operation, to a centralized operation that will also teach those in need how to grow their own food, including in urban areas, and how to prepare nutritious meals using that food. This new work will be transformative. Through the Center's *Grow for Good* educational programming, FAH will help to embed in local communities with the greatest need the knowledge and skills necessary for those communities to become self-sufficient.

### Section 3: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Information

**26. Has your organization made efforts in the last 2 years to diversify the racial, cultural or gender composition of the staff and/or Board membership? If so, please describe.**

The NJAS has made focused efforts to diversify the composition of its board and staff in the past two years. To this end, the NJAS Board of Trustees was honored to

welcome to the Board Ms. Andrea Chu, an Asian-American woman representing the Campbell Soup Company.

FAH, itself, was very pleased to have hired Ms. Nupur Mital, an Indian-American woman, who serves as the FAH Events and Gleaning Coordinator.

Additionally, FAH has worked informally over the past four to five years with Ms. Margaret Reddick, an African-American woman and retired social worker. Ms. Reddick has been instrumental in helping FAH to gain access to Camden communities in need of its services. Approximately two years ago, FAH was proud to have engaged Ms. Reddick in the role of formal liaison between FAH and the Camden Housing Authority. Ms. Reddick also serves as a FAH committee member and continues in a pivotal outreach role for FAH with the Camden community.

Most recently, the NJAS hired Ms. Lori Thompson, a hearing-impaired woman, as its new Grants and Program Development Coordinator. Ms. Thompson brings with her a particular sensitivity to the needs and challenges of communities of individuals with disabilities.

#### **27. Have these efforts yielded any identifiable changes?**

Most notably, the creation of the formal liaison role for Ms. Margaret Reddick has helped FAH to significantly expand its reach into those communities most in-need and to a wider range of organizations within Camden County. Her involvement as a FAH committee member has also helped to solidify her role with our program.

### **Section 4: Project Information**

#### **28. Project Summary (Please clearly define the project, the population it will serve and an overview of your plans to carry it out.)**

##### Project Definition:

The project proposed herein would help to formally establish the Farmers Against Hunger Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center in Burlington County, to include three acres of land and former farm building infrastructure, including a large food storage cooler. The project addresses the very visible problems of food insecurity, lack of access to healthy food, and inequitable distribution of food across certain populations and geographic regions.

The nature of the proposed project focuses on readying the site for growing and fitting out the on-site farm buildings to support the *Grow for Good* program to be operated through the Center. *Grow for Good* encompasses the production and programmatic foundation of the Center, to include vegetable crop production and

community education on topics such as growing healthy foods and preparing delicious and nutritious meals from those foods, improving soil health, addressing environmental impacts on food quality and availability, and implementing agricultural practices that help to ensure sustainable and accessible supplies of nutritious foods.

The land and infrastructure for the Center represents a significant partnership between Burlington County and the New Jersey Green Acres Program in support of FAH's efforts to address local food insecurity. The land is made available to the NJAS through an in-kind five-year management and operation agreement, with option to renew. It represents also an important opportunity to integrate open space and community benefit in Burlington County. The agreement will also allow FAH to use the commercial kitchen and office space at the Burlington County Agricultural Center in Moorestown to support the programmatic (educational) component of *Grow for Good*.

Immediate plans will feature the establishment of raised vegetable beds and perennial gardens to benefit the community through hands-on activities to rebuild soil health and soil fertility. Near-term plans also include planning and implementing educational activities and workshops related to agriculture and nutrition.

Early improvement of soil health and fertility will support longer term plans to cultivate a portion of the three acres for vegetable production and the establishment of a teaching farm on a portion of the acreage to provide access to fresh, healthy produce access by food-insecure families. Longer term plans will also include the development of teaching gardens, including those designed to attract bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to native trees and plants. All of these activities will serve to engage the surrounding local communities in New Jersey agriculture. The Center's large farm building will also serve as a hub for guest/visitor and donor gatherings and events to advance long-term support for the operation.

Overall, the land allotted to FAH for the Center and its *Grow for Good* program will support increased access to, and affordability of, local food for low-income families in Burlington County, as well as help to ensure that the entire parcel of land remains open for public enjoyment. As such, the Center and the *Grow for Good* program will serve as a working model designed to increase engagement and add value to community groups that focus on green initiatives, such as area faith-based organizations and school groups. It will also help to build understanding of and appreciation for food – from soil to seed to plate.

It is important to note that the Center immediately abuts a public park, which will greatly enhance the visibility and accessibility of the Center. The park supports passive recreation like hiking and wildlife observation. It also has a picnic pavilion, grills and parking area. This exciting new initiative helps keep the garden in "Garden State" while, ensuring that farmland in New Jersey remains an important and

productive part of the landscape.

#### Population to be Served:

Through the Burlington County-based program, FAH seeks to expand its food donation and outreach to those local populations that are most vulnerable and most in need, i.e., the elderly, disabled, veterans, homeless, unemployed, underemployed, or economically disadvantaged due to other circumstances. These populations are best reached and most effectively served through the active engagement of collaborating community-based organizations such as churches, social services agencies, shelters, etc. As such, the Center will expand FAH's outreach to these organizations in the Burlington County area with produce that it grows itself on site.

The Center, through its *Grow for Good* program, will also seek to expand outreach to schools, youth-serving organizations, and young farmers in the Burlington County area to provide educational programming. An investment in this land must include an investment in future generations who will continue the Center's *Grow for Good* program, and similar programs, generations henceforth. Therefore, actively seeking out these groups will be central to the efforts to root the Center's *Grow for Good* program in the local communities.

It is important to note also that, over time, FAH's base of operations at the Center in Burlington County will significantly enhance its ability to reach deeper into Southern New Jersey, i.e., to Camden, Gloucester, and Cumberland Counties.

#### Implementation Plan:

The first and most critical step in the establishment of proposed FAH Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center, i.e., the securing of the land and basic infrastructure, has been achieved. In December of 2020, the Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders took formal action to execute an agreement to approve the use of the Land Stewardship Center. As noted above, this includes three acres of land and a farm building and a larger cooler facility located thereon.

FAH is now in the process of transitioning its base of operations from Hightstown, New Jersey, to the Delran site to the proposed Land Stewardship Center in order to fully embed its *Grow for Good* program within Burlington County. This transition process is deliberate, methodical, and collaborative. The physical site must be addressed first. Central to this is the readying of existing infrastructure, to include the rehabilitation of the large cooler facility, as well as the purchase of essential supplies and equipment for start-up operations.

Soil testing, readying the soil for planting, installing raised beds and deer fencing, and designing the farmland layout are crucial next steps. Burlington County officials have

marked out the physical land that will support the Center and its *Grow for Good* program, and a map/diagram of the marked site has been made available to FAH. FAH leadership held a preliminary meeting with FAH staff to begin layout of production operation, i.e., raised beds, perennial gardens, and greenhouse locations.

The assignment of individuals to staff the Center is a critical next step. It is anticipated that the FAH Director of Programming will have oversight responsibility for the Center. This individual has successful experience working on a similarly sized family farm. The Director of Programming will also supervise the Farm Manager. The Farm Manager holds a degree in Plant Science and Agriculture and has many years' of experience working on her family's farm. The Director of Programming, together with the FAH Director of Operations, have 20 years of experience with FAH. During that time, they increased FAH's annual volume distributed by approximately 56 percent, and its annual gleaning events by more than 150 percent.

Through this grant, FAH seeks to add a part-time seasonal Community Intern. The Intern will support the *Grow for Good* educational component designed to teach agricultural practices that can be replicated in the local communities. Additionally, the Intern will support efforts to connect with local communities of need, helping to bring the Center's *Grow for Good* program to new beneficiaries and new collaborators. The intention is to hire for this Community Intern position from within Burlington County.

As the Center develops over time, FAH will seek to employ a diverse staff on the farm from communities that will benefit from leaders with expertise in community engagement and urban farming practices.

## **29. What is the need or problem that this project will address?**

As noted above, this project addresses the very visible problems of food insecurity, lack of access to healthy food, and inequitable distribution of food across certain populations and geographic regions. However, this project seeks also to expose and address the underlying causes of those visible problems to help bring about pervasive and lasting change. As such, the project will also address the disproportionate disconnect between many economically disadvantaged populations and the land/soil—the source of food and health. It will dig deep to expose how lack of knowledge of what constitutes healthy, sustainable food production contributes to negative environmental and nutritional impacts on health. With knowledge of how food is grown and what makes it healthy, consumers can take greater control over their diets and, consequently, their health.

Thus, there is a need to expand the availability of healthy foods, but there is also the need to expand knowledge of and demand for sustainable access to such foods across all economic/income and geographic sectors.

### **30. How will this project address this problem or need?**

Establishment of the Land Stewardship Center and its *Grow for Good* program is a transformative initiative for FAH, taking FAH to a new level of service by providing land and physical infrastructure (farm building, cooler space, and indoor/outdoor meeting, event, and activity space) to create community-embedded farm wholly operated by FAH. As noted previously, FAH has functioned largely as a decentralized gleaning and food distribution operation. Prior to the availability of the land and facilities in Delran, FAH housed its distribution trucks and made use of a small cooler facility at a leased location in Hightstown, Mercer County. This location provided neither land nor facilities beyond cooler space to support a direct grow and food storage operation, making the site unfeasible to support the envisioned *Grow for Good* model program proposed herein.

With the land and infrastructure available at the Land Stewardship Center, FAH can begin to address a variety of challenges and needs for the communities immediately surrounding the property and the larger, extended network of food-insecure individuals throughout Burlington County. Supplementing its hallmark, statewide gleaning donation program, the Center and its *Grow for Good* program will allow FAH to go from expanding the breadth of its operation to expanding the depth, i.e., growing to produce and distribute for the benefit of the local communities within the county in which the program is based. Supplementing the grow and distribution operations will be an educational component that will further tie the local Burlington County communities to the site, thereby increasing the Center's overall visibility, recognition, and support.

The Center will provide a base of needed produce for hunger relief organizations in Burlington County initially, and increasingly for those organizations in Camden, Gloucester, and Cumberland counties. Educational programming at the site will also support increased consumption of fresh and healthy produce backed by a deeper understanding of the intersection of land/environment, food, economics, nutrition, and overall health. As noted above, it is this educational component that will fundamentally change the work of FAH from being primarily a gleaning and distribution operation to now include a greatly expanded educational component to teach those in need how to grow their own food, including in urban areas, and how to prepare nutritious meals using that food. This new work will be transformative. Through the *Grow for Good* educational programming, FAH will help to embed in local communities with the greatest need the knowledge and skills necessary for those communities to become self-sufficient.

### **31. Please describe how this project specifically improves your organization's ability to more effectively carry out its core mission.**

As noted, through the Land Stewardship Center, FAH will for the first time have the



opportunity grow its own food for donation and to host the public (neighbors, corporate groups, local foundations, volunteers, and school groups, among others), while continuing its regular decentralized gleaning programs and volunteer opportunities on local farms throughout the state. Thus, the most persuasive benefit of the Center is the establishment of a physical base of operations that focuses more deeply on serving the needs of surrounding local communities and becoming a part of those communities. It is important to note also that locating the base site for this model program in Burlington County will, over time, enhance FAH's ability to extend its reach into Camden, Gloucester, and Cumberland counties as well.

FAH has functioned largely on a decentralized basis made possible by its highly sophisticated and proven successful transportation and logistics operation. While FAH has developed strong connections with local community groups throughout the state with this model, the decentralization has largely precluded it from developing deep roots in any one community with individuals and families directly. A hub of operation at the proposed Center will allow FAH to streamline its work and make more compelling, effective, and efficient its outreach and communication to a more locally defined geographic region. It will also create a physical space that will help to establish a more widely recognizable identity or "brand" for FAH.

The Center will do all of these things while also allowing FAH to engage directly in farming pursuits for increased food supplies for distribution, as well as implement educational programming to inform and sustain eating habits that are healthy for the individual and the environment. Additionally, the Center's physical facilities will provide a place for funders/donors and prospective funders/donors to gather—a place where they can readily see firsthand the work involved in food growing, storage, and preparation for distribution. This direct experience can be a powerful motivator for new or expanded support of FAH's mission.

Finally, the physical infrastructure of the Center will support the creation of indoor and outdoor learning sites where local community members can explore how care for the environment affects a community's ability to feed itself. It can also provide learning opportunities for farmers with hands-on training in regenerative agriculture practices – practices that restore and sustain the health of the soil. Through community and farmer training, the Center's *Grow for Good* program will tie together on a local level the issues of environmental sustainability, social justice, climate change, and food sovereignty in a very practical and approachable manner.

**32. How does this project fit into your organization's current strategic plan or long-term vision?**

The proposed Land Stewardship Center and its *Grow for Good* program will address the FAH mission-driven issues of education, community engagement, regenerative farming practices, and providing fresh and healthy produce access to food-insecure

families in New Jersey's communities. The program, with a centralized base of operations, will allow FAH to integrate all of these mission-driven goals and pursue them simultaneously in a coordinated manner.

**33. Approximately how many individuals do you expect that this project will reach over the 24-month grant period?**

In the first 12 months of operation, the focus will be on establishment of the farm site and readying of the infrastructure. Food production for distribution generated during the first 12 months will be limited as work focuses on readying the soil for planting. However, we anticipate serving approximately 600 individuals during the first 12 months through educational site visits by school and community groups (200 individuals), one major donor/volunteer event hosted on site (100 individuals), and by visits by the general public (300 individuals). (The Center abuts public park land and sits along a heavily traveled road. Both of these factors will significantly increase the potential for casual exposure of the site by the general public.)

During the second 12 months, FAH anticipates serving up to 1,500 individuals, including 300 individuals in groups, 200 individuals at hosted events, 800 members of the general public, and 200 individuals served through produce generated at the site for donation. The volume of such produce, as well as the number of individuals benefiting from the donated food, will be determined by progress made in the readying of the site and on weather conditions. Ultimately, it is anticipated that produce grown at the Center will be comparable to adding one new farm partner to FAH's network of donor/gleaning farms.

**34. Will you be collaborating with other organization(s) to carry out this project? If so, please list name(s) of organization, name of executive director, its 501(c)(3) status and describe their role in the project.**

Organization: County of Burlington, Department of Resource Conservation, Mt. Holly  
Executive Director/Organization Head: Mary Pat Robbie, Director  
Incorporation Status: Public/County Government Entity  
Role: Providing land for FAH at Laurel Run Land Stewardship Center and providing use of the nearby Burlington County Agricultural Center commercial kitchen and office space

Organization: Rowan Community College at Burlington County  
Executive Director/Organization Head: Dr. Michael A. Cioce, President; Erica Franklin, Service Learning Coordinator  
Incorporation Status: Public institution of higher education  
Role: On-campus pantry will be recipient of some of the produce grown at the Land Stewardship Center for donation; student volunteers and interns

Organization: Delran High School

Executive Director/Organization Head: Daniel S. Finkle, Principal; Aaron Fiordimondo, Teacher  
Incorporation Status: Public education institution  
Role: Agricultural projects that support the curriculum

Organization: St. Matthew Lutheran Green Team, Moorestown

Executive Director/Organization Head: Rev. Dr. Eric J. Trozzo, Pastor; Brian Lestini, Green Team Chair  
Incorporation Status: Religious Organization  
Role: Volunteers and educational program participants

Organization: Keegan Recreation Center, Burlington City

Executive Director/Organization Head: Nikisha Scott; James Thompson, Contact  
Incorporation Status: City/Public Community Center  
Role: Interns and educational program participants

**35. Please list the specific activities/components of the project and a projected timetable for each in the format indicated below. NOTE: The timetable for the project activities should begin on July 1, 2021 and go through June 30, 2023, which corresponds to the Impact 100SJ grant award period.**

<b>Activity/Project Component</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure: Building Renovations / Utility Upgrades</li><li>• Equipment: Purchase Yard Ramp and Forklift</li><li>• Equipment: Install Deer Fence</li><li>• Equipment: Purchase Lumber and Hardware for Raised Beds</li><li>• Equipment: Purchase Tools, Tarps, Row Cover</li><li>• Supplies: Purchase Soil, Compost, Amendments</li><li>• Raised Beds: Build, Plant Fall Crops, Amend as Needed</li><li>• Farm Plot: Till, Tarp, Plant Winter-Kill Cool Season Cover Crop</li><li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li></ul>	Jul-Sep 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure: Continue Building Renovations</li><li>• Raised Beds: Harvest and Distribute Fall Crops</li><li>• Greenhouse: Purchase and Build</li><li>• Compost Station: Design and Build</li><li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li></ul>	Oct-Dec 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hedgerow Gardens: Purchase Native Trees and Perennial Shrubs</li><li>• Education: Design Educational Signage</li><li>• Education: Design Programs and Materials</li><li>• Education: Design Data Collection and Evaluation Measures</li><li>• Greenhouse: Start seeds for Spring Raised Bed Crops and Perennial Flowers for Hedgerows</li></ul>	Jan-Mar 2022

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerow Gardens: Plant Native Trees, Perennial Shrubs and Flowers</li> <li>• Raised Beds: Plant Spring-Summer Crops, Amend as Needed</li> <li>• Farm Plot: Plant Warm Season Cover Crop</li> <li>• Greenhouse: Continue Seed Starts for Caterpillar Tunnel</li> <li>• Education: Install Signage</li> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	Apr-Jun 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff: Hire Community Intern</li> <li>• Raised Beds: Harvest and Distribute Summer Crops, Plant Fall Crops, Amend as Needed</li> <li>• Farm Plot: Terminate Warm Season Cover Crop, Plant Winter-Kill Cool Season Cover Crop</li> <li>• Greenhouse: Continue Seed Starts for Fall and Winter Crops</li> <li>• Caterpillar Tunnel: Purchase, Build, Plant Fall Crops</li> <li>• Wash Station: Design and Build</li> <li>• Education: Start Programming, Data Collection</li> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	Jul-Sep 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised Beds: Harvest and Distribute Fall Crops</li> <li>• Greenhouse: Plant Winter Crops and Microgreens</li> <li>• Caterpillar Tunnel: Plant Winter Crops</li> <li>• Education: Continue Programming, Data Collection</li> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	Oct-Dec 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenhouse: Continue to Harvest and Plant Winter Crops</li> <li>• Greenhouse: Seed Starts for Spring Crops and Perennial Flowers</li> <li>• Caterpillar Tunnel: Harvest Winter Crops and Plant Spring Crops</li> <li>• Education: Analyze Data</li> <li>• Education: Revise and Improve Programs and Materials</li> <li>• Education: Revise and Improve Data Collection and Evaluation Measures</li> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	Jan-Mar 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedgerows: Plant Additional Flowers, Cultivate, Amend</li> <li>• Raised Beds: Plant Spring-Summer Crops, Amend as Needed</li> <li>• Farm Plot: Plant Warm Season Cover Crop</li> <li>• Greenhouse: Continue Seed Starts for Summer Crops</li> <li>• Caterpillar Tunnel: Harvest Spring Crops, Plant Summer Crops</li> <li>• Education: Continue Programming, Data Collection</li> <li>• Communication: Release Social Media Updates/Newsletter</li> </ul>	Apr-Jun 2023

**36. Please list 2-3 specific outcomes that your organization hopes to achieve with this project. Include the ways you will measure each outcome in order to determine if the project was successful.**

This project will target the following three specific outcomes:

- (1) Complete preparation of the Land Stewardship Center, including land preparation and farm building infrastructure repairs.

Measure: This outcome will be measured by the completion of repairs to farm building infrastructure including making on-site cooler fully operational, construction/installation of raised beds, installation of deer fencing, installation of greenhouse, and planting of cover crops and greenhouse and raised bed crops.

- (2) Host one fundraising/donor appreciation event each year of the grant period on-site at the Land Stewardship Center with a target of 100 donors/prospective donors attending each event.

Measure: This outcome will be measured by donor/donor prospect registration required for each event. Donor/prospective donor monetary and/or in-kind commitment resulting from the event will be quantified and reported. A follow-up survey will be sent to attendees for feedback on the Center.

- (3) Invite a minimum of 10 school, faith-based, corporate, and community groups from within Burlington County to the Land Stewardship Center to engage in educational programming (including planting, maintenance, and harvesting crops) in 2021, 20 groups in 2022, and 30 groups in 2023.

Measure: This outcome will be measured by the number of invitations sent to targeted community groups, and the number of invitations accepted. Activity/workshop evaluations will also be completed by each participating group representative. Efforts will be made to establish ongoing collaborative opportunities with the participating groups. Such collaborations will be documented, identifying the nature and duration of each collaboration. Measures for this outcome will also include surveying for increased understanding of agriculture and related environmental issues.

**37. Please list the steps that your organization will take to achieve sustainability of the project beyond the 24-month grant period. If this will not be an ongoing project, please explain.**

As noted above, FAH has already secured the five-year agreement from Burlington County for the land and basic infrastructure (farm buildings), as well as the use of the commercial kitchen and office space at the Burlington County Agricultural Center. The

County of Burlington will also assist with ongoing maintenance of the site, to include mowing of public areas and maintenance of the outdoor restroom facility (until indoor restrooms are installed). Funding is also currently available to support the rehabilitation of the on-site cooler and to purchase some required farm equipment.

Beyond land and equipment, a farming operation requires considerable labor support. FAH has a solid, stable volunteer base on which to draw in order to meet the labor demands of a small farm operation. These are experienced volunteers who have worked in varied farm environments. FAH has a history of being able to secure and sustain highly engaged and committed volunteer teams, which will help to ensure sustainability of Land Stewardship Center and its *Grow for Good* program.

Plans to use the Center's facilities to host on-site fundraising/donor events are anticipated to yield promising results. The firsthand experience of the farm and learning environment will help donors and prospective donors to better see and understand the Center's impact on local communities and potential for replication.

Strategic publicizing of the Center and its *Grow for Good* program will attract attention from others in New Jersey and beyond who are interested in addressing food insecurity and environmental/climate issues in an integrated, community-embedded manner. The resulting attention will advance FAH's development/fundraising and grant seeking efforts.

A new focus of FAH for long-term financial sustainability of the Center and its *Grow for Good* program will be on revenue-generating initiatives. Such initiatives may include selling produce grown on Center's land at Burlington County farmers' markets (at reduced cost comparable to produce provided by other farms), selling promotional items that will also serve to publicize the Center and *Grow for Good*, charging fees for certain educational programs offered, charging fees for field trips to the farm (where appropriate), charging fees to corporate gleaning groups, and establishing a "sponsor a row" program for businesses to donate in support of the farm plot. Additionally, over the longer term, plans include using produce from the farm to support the operation of a food/soup truck. Proceeds from all of these activities would be reinvested in supporting upkeep of the Center and expanding its *Grow for Good* program.

FAH will also continue to seek grant funding and donor support from a variety of sources to support expanded programming and outreach, as well as some capital improvements over time.

Ultimately, financial sustainability will be achieved through a combination of donor support, sponsorship programs, grant funding, and revenue generating initiatives. The balance of these primary sources of support will be determined and will likely shift as opportunities and program needs shift.

## Section 5: Project Budget

38. What is the total budget amount for this project (including grant from Impact100SJ)?

Specific Expense	Additional Details	Total
<b>Personnel Wages and Fringe</b>		
*Elyse Yerrapathruni, Director of Programming and Outreach	\$26/hour x 400 hours/year x 2 years	\$20,800.00
*Sophia Buckalew, Farm Manager	\$19/hour x 700 hours/year x 2 years	\$26,600.00
*Community Intern, TBD (year 2 only)	\$15/hour x 640 hours/year x 1 year	\$9,600.00
*Elyse Yerrapathruni, FICA	7.65% x \$20,800	\$1,591.20
*Sophia Buckalew, FICA	7.65% x \$26,600	\$2,034.90
*Community Intern, FICA	7.65% x \$9,600	\$734.40
<b>Subtotal Personnel</b>		<b>\$61,360.50</b>
<b>Supplies and Equipment</b>		
*Greenhouse (30' x 48'), Hardware, Labor	1 unit at \$5,000/unit	\$5,000.00
*Caterpillar Tunnel and Accessories (14' x 100')	1 unit at \$2,000/unit	\$2,000.00
*Forklift Purchase (Used)	Flat	\$10,000.00
*Yard Ramp	Flat	\$8,000.00
*Electric Pallet Jack	Flat	\$2,139.50
*Deer Fence	\$500 per 164 linear feet x 20 164-foot sections (3,280 feet total)	\$10,000.00
*Site and Educational Signage (design & production)	\$1,500	\$1,500.00
Lumber and Hardware (raised vegetable beds, washing station with shade; compost station)	Varies	\$3,000.00
Wash Station Accessories and Plumbing	Varies	\$1,000.00
Soil (raised beds, gardens, hedgerows)	Flat	\$3,500.00
Soil Amendments and Initial Compost	Flat	\$2,500.00
Garden Tools and Equipment, Tarps & Row Covers	Varies	\$2,000.00
Native Trees & Perennial Shrubs	Varies	\$2,000.00
Starter Plants (for 2021 raised beds; then move to greenhouse)	Varies	\$1,000.00
<b>Subtotal Supplies and Equipment</b>		<b>\$53,639.50</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$115,000.00</b>

**39. If the total project budget amount exceeds \$100,000, please list all proposed additional funding sources and date you anticipate securing these funding sources. You may include in-kind support if applicable. (Please use the following format.)**

Funder/Donor	Amount/ Value	Date
George & Estelle Sands Foundation	\$5,000	Carryover funds balance available now
Farm Market Jar Fundraiser	\$5,000	Fund balance available now
Individual Donations	\$5,000	Fund balance available now