



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191  
[jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org)

## **Jewish Relief Agency Proposal to Friends Foundation for the Aging** *March 2022*

### **I. Executive Summary**

Jewish Relief Agency (JRA) respectfully requests \$30,000 from the Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) to help us make our community a healthier place for older adults by reducing food insecurity, providing basic health essentials, and fostering connection. Funding will allow us to provide nutritious food for approximately 3,400 food-insecure older adults in Greater Philadelphia. Nearly 75% of JRA's clients are over the age of 65, and about 40% are over the age 80. The pandemic has hit older adults hard. For nearly two years, they have been experiencing the negative economic and physical and mental health impacts of COVID-19. Funding will be used to purchase nutritious food, fresh produce, and essential hygiene products that will be delivered directly to the households of older adults by dedicated volunteers. We are grateful for your consideration of our request that allows us to continue serving the community during these uncertain times.

### **II. Project Details**

#### **Amount of grant request**

JRA respectfully requests \$30,000 from the FFA in support of serving older adults in Greater Philadelphia through our Monthly Food Distribution Program.

#### **What is the problem you have identified? Who will be served?**

As pandemic-safety net programs end, higher food prices and supply-chain disruptions are hitting food-insecure households in Philadelphia hard. Prior to the pandemic, one in five Philadelphia residents was unable to afford sufficient food for their household (Philadelphia Hunger Report, 2018). Now, pandemic-related unemployment combined with inflation has placed additional pressure on households struggling to meet their basic needs for food. SNAP (food stamps) enrollment is still way up—two million more than last year and six million more than in 2019—an indicator of ongoing need for assistance. Further, food banks are seeing a steady-to-increasing demand for assistance, while continuing to grapple themselves with the rising cost of food and labor as well as supply chain disruptions, ballooning fuel costs, and fewer donations and volunteers (The Washington Post, December 2021). If current events mirror the extended recovery that followed the Great Recession of the late 2000s, the increased need will continue for many years in a post-COVID world (Feeding America, March 2021).

In the years leading up to the pandemic, Greater Philadelphia experienced a growing percentage of older adults experiencing food insecurity (Philadelphia Inquirer, 2019). The underlying issue of poverty drives this problem in Philadelphia, where the senior poverty rate is higher than other major U.S. cities. The older adult population is more likely to experience



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191  
[jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org)

health issues, and this is a heightened issue among the food insecure. These older adults experience high rates of malnutrition and related complications such as heart disease and diabetes (Feeding America, 2019). Loneliness and social isolation in older adults are also linked to serious health conditions (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)

JRA's clients struggle to obtain enough food for their households for a variety of reasons. The population we serve includes the unemployed, individuals with disabilities, holocaust survivors, persons suffering from temporary illness or injury, recent immigrants, and persons experiencing housing instability. Our delivery model eliminates potential barriers to acquiring food—clients do not need to know English, organize transportation, or leave their homes to get help from JRA. Our model has been a critical asset during the pandemic, ensuring underserved households receive assistance safely.

#### **What is the solution you propose to address the problem?**

JRA's goal is to reduce food insecurity and increase access to healthy food for vulnerable households in Greater Philadelphia. With support from FFA, JRA will work towards the following objectives:

- Safely deliver 14-15 pounds of nutritious food assistance directly to the doorstep of approximately 3,200 households, each month, 12 months per year.
- Distribute fresh produce to all recipients during the eight months of the year when it is safe to store produce in our warehouse without refrigeration.
- Give clients access to hygiene products and household supplies, delivering around 150 Everyday Essentials Bags a month;
- Ensure that over 90% of recipients report satisfaction with JRA's food assistance through the Recipient Satisfaction Survey. JRA is currently in the process of survey evaluation, as clients have just returned over 600 surveys to the agency.
- At least 84% of clients will report that "because of JRA's monthly box of food, I feel more food secure", as measured through our Recipient Satisfaction Survey.

#### **What actions will you take?**

The Monthly Food Distribution Program, JRA's primary commitment, mobilizes thousands of volunteers to pack and deliver nutritious food directly to 3,200 low-income households every month, increasing access to healthy food. Each of the households on JRA's Monthly Distribution List receives a box of food weighing 14-15 pounds, including fresh produce, proteins, carbohydrates, and staple pantry items that are whole grain and low in sodium and sugar. JRA provides fresh fruits and vegetables in each food assistance box from October to May, when it is cool enough to safely store produce in our warehouse without refrigeration.



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191  
[jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org)

To further alleviate the burdens of poverty, JRA clients can request items like incontinence supplies, soap, and shampoo through our Everyday Essentials Program. These items are delivered alongside their food box. Throughout the pandemic, we have also added critical household items to the boxes, such as toilet paper and hand sanitizer. In the first 18 months of the pandemic we distributed more than 60,000 face masks to our clients.

Food deliveries are supplemented with the following client services designed to meet the needs of our significant older adult population:

- **Volunteer Programs:** JRA has developed several volunteer programs as part of our strategy to relieve isolation among older adults and promote intergenerational communities. The **Route Owners Initiative** is a long-running program made up of volunteers who commit to delivering to the same households every month. One hundred and three volunteers are currently Route Owners and they deliver to over 1,200 households. This has led to continuity of volunteers and allowed for meaningful relationships to form between recipient and volunteer. The socialization and warm connection brought by volunteers is just one way our agency is helping to combat isolation in older adults. JRA started the **Friendly Phone Calls** program during the pandemic to connect vulnerable seniors coping with feelings of anxiety and isolation with volunteers for a weekly phone call. Currently 20 older adults are matched with 20 volunteers. We have no intention of discontinuing the program now that pandemic related restrictions are being lifted as we have received positive feedback from participants in the program. Lastly, community members have been making artwork and cards to add a special touch to JRA food boxes. JRA has delivered thousands of cards since the pandemic started.
- **Referrals:** JRA has deep partnerships with local social service agencies and frequently provides referrals to clients who need highly specialized assistance, for example free legal services or hoarding disorder.
- **COVID-19 safety and vaccine information:** Throughout the pandemic, JRA has been providing educational materials on COVID-19 prevention in English and Russian in each of its monthly food boxes and through email. When vaccines became available, we added information on vaccine safety and effectiveness, and helped our clients overcome barriers to obtaining the vaccine. Through a community partnership, we assisted Holocaust survivors and large numbers of seniors with receiving COVID-19 vaccinations. We continue to work with our partners to alleviate as many barriers facing older adults to obtaining a vaccine as possible, including language, technology, and transportation.

**Do you have other partners for implementation or funding?**



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191  
[jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org)

JRA maintains strong community partnerships in order to respond to the varied needs of our recipients. For example, JRA utilizes the Greater Philadelphia Diaper Bank for incontinence supplies, and CVS had donated items for health and safety kits. Our volunteers deliver these supplies alongside food boxes to our recipients. JRA regularly works with other human services agencies, referring clients whose needs exceed our scope of services. We also receive referrals from over 40 partner agencies, including Jewish Family and Children Services, Meals on Wheels, and Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging. Further, our delivery model enables us to effectively provide food assistance to homebound older adults and individuals with limited mobility. For this reason, local human service agencies also refer individuals with physical limitations to our agency.

Additionally, JRA has a robust funding strategy, engaging with partners who share our vision and commitment. Major institutional donors for FY22 include the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia (\$100,000), Anonymous Foundation (\$54,000), McLean Contributionship (\$26,771), WSFS Cares Foundation (\$25,000), the Patricia Kind Family Foundation (\$15,000), and the Leo and Peggy Pierce Family Foundation (\$15,000).

#### **How will you know your actions are having an impact?**

JRA's goal is to reduce food insecurity and increase access to healthy food for vulnerable households in Greater Philadelphia through our Monthly Food Distribution Program. In order to evaluate this program and track progress towards the solutions stated earlier in this proposal, JRA uses the following tools:

- Monthly Data Collection – tracking the number of households served each month, boxes, pounds of food, volunteer turnout, and delivery routes in our database, Salesforce.
- Recipient Intake and Self Declaration of Need Form – collecting demographic information on the recipients we provide food assistance to upon initial inquiry; clients are recertified every two years by completing similar forms.
- Recipient Satisfaction Survey – assessing recipient satisfaction with the food assistance provided every 20-24 months (Survey in progress during the first quarter of 2022);
- Recipient/Volunteer Feedback – evaluating the Monthly Food Distribution Program through both formal and informal feedback from recipients and volunteers.

#### **Brief statement of organization history and competence for this project.**

JRA was born over 20 years ago as a volunteer-led hunger relief organization working to inspire volunteerism in Philadelphia. At the time, JRA focused on serving the Jewish population but has since grown to serve anyone in our service area in need of food assistance. Since our first food distributions, JRA has grown from 15 volunteers to a volunteer base of 10,000 and from serving 50 households to 3,200. JRA continues to teach even the youngest members of our community the values of generosity and service, as we work together to relieve the burdens of poverty for



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191  
[jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org)

members of our community. Overall, JRA impacts the greater Philadelphia area community by providing critical access to food and nutrition, human services, and engaging volunteer opportunities.

**III. Please also address how your organization is addressing DEI and how the project aligns with FFA values**

JRA has an inclusive model committed to serving anyone in the area experiencing food insecurity, regardless of race, religion, or background. We know the importance of having leadership that is reflective of our client demographics. Our full-time staff of seven is majority female and Jewish. Our Director of Client Services is from the former Soviet Union and a native Russian speaker, which helps JRA better serve the large percentage of clients who speak Russian. We also have another staff member who is from Ukraine and speaks Russian.

Almost all of JRA's recipients have a household income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and represent a diverse range of backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, and abilities. Our clients identify as White (70%), Black (10%), Latinx (2%), and Asian (1%) with 17% not providing this information. A large portion of the individuals who identify as white are refugees from the Former Soviet Union and specifically Ukraine.

While the pandemic has contributed to the rise in food insecurity in BIPOC communities, the disparity has long existed due to systemic barriers, including economic barriers and wage gaps resulting from racial discrimination. JRA has taken steps to expand awareness of our services to new communities. In September 2020, JRA served as a location for a weekly city-wide feeding site sponsored by the City of Philadelphia, Share Food Program, and Philabundance, which increased awareness of our services across the city. We also listed JRA with United Way's "211" assistance hotline to make the broader community aware of JRA's services.

Like the Friends Foundation for the Aging, JRA aims to serve older adults with the dignity and respect this valued population deserves. JRA brings together individuals of all means, ages, and backgrounds to address our community's physical, social, and spiritual needs, satisfying our unique desire to take care of each other and do good in the world. Built on the foundation of our monthly food distribution, our programs relieve the pangs of hunger, bring meaning to our recipients and volunteers, and build a caring and connected community.

ATTACHMENT: Program budget

**Jewish Relief Agency  
Program Budget  
FY 9/2021-8/2022**

		Program Budget	
		2021-2022	
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Grant Income		\$	455,446
Individual Contributions		\$	957,000
Corporate Contributions		\$	135,000
Other Income		\$	21,000
In-Kind Donations		\$	45,000
Prior Year Grants Awarded Released from Restriction		\$	35,750
<b>Total Revenue</b>			<b>1,649,196</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
<b>Personnel</b>			
	Full Time Employees (7)	\$	366,248
	Part-Time Employees (1)	\$	15,600
	Payroll Taxes	\$	33,440
	Employee Benefits	\$	46,966
	Misc Personnel Expense	\$	1,300
<b>Contractors</b>			
	Warehouse Team Leader	\$	10,000
	Warehouse Contract Employees	\$	12,000
<b>Total Personnel &amp; Fringe</b>		<b>\$</b>	<b>485,554</b>
<b>Distribution Program Expense</b>			
	Food for Distribution	\$	743,750
	Everyday Essentials (Toiletries and Diapers)	\$	60,000
	Boxes and Bags	\$	25,000
	Other Direct Program Expenses	\$	12,860
	Warehouse Supplies	\$	9,500
	Waste management	\$	8,000
	Box Inserts/Route Printing	\$	5,000
	Warehouse Cleaning	\$	4,500
	Volunteer Refreshments	\$	1,000
	Warehouse PPE	\$	1,000
	Volunteer Program Expense	\$	1,000
<b>Total Distribution Program Expense</b>			<b>871,610</b>
<b>Client Services Program Expense</b>			
	Crisis Fund Expense		15,000
	Client Supplies and Services		4,000
	Client Transportation		2,100
<b>Total Client Services Program Expense</b>			<b>21,100</b>
<b>Building and Occupancy</b>			
	Warehouse Lease	\$	83,000
	Office Lease	\$	25,920

Warehouse Utilities	\$	14,500
Office Utilities	\$	7,200
Use and Occupancy Expense	\$	3,456
<b>Total Building and Occupancy</b>		<b>134,076</b>
<b>General and Admin. Expense</b>		
Insurance	\$	11,680
Fees for Subscription Tech Services	\$	6,192
Office Supplies	\$	5,040
Postage	\$	2,000
Payroll Processing Fees	\$	2,920
Printing and Reproduction	\$	990
Equipment Purchase - Office	\$	2,160
Web Hosting and Apps	\$	750
Travel	\$	800
<b>Total General and Admin. Expense</b>		<b>32,532</b>
<b>Other Operating Expenses</b>		
Marketing Expense	\$	41,324
Grant Writing Consultant	\$	49,000
Security Services	\$	14,000
<b>Total Other Operating Expenses</b>		<b>104,324</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,649,196</b>
<b>Net Income/Loss</b>		<b>-</b>