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GRANT WRITING · WORK SAMPLE

Foundation Grant Proposal

Sandbar Community Kitchen to the Eldridge Family Foundation
Request: $25,000 for Second Shift, a paid culinary training program

PREPARED FOR	Sandbar Community Kitchen, Westhaven, Massachusetts
FUNDER	Eldridge Family Foundation · Community Investment Grants
REQUEST	$25,000 · one year · program support
PREPARED BY	Jesika Davis, Founder & Principal Consultant

About this sample. Sandbar Community Kitchen, the Eldridge Family Foundation, the town of Westhaven, and every person, statistic, and source named here are fictional. They were created to show how I structure and write a full foundation proposal. The format, the level of detail, and the plain-language style are the same ones I use for real clients; the facts are not real.

A proposal should read like the organization wrote it on its best day: specific, honest about what is new and what is proven, and clear about exactly what the money buys.

01

Summary of request

Sandbar Community Kitchen requests $25,000 from the Eldridge Family Foundation to run two cohorts of Second Shift in 2027, our paid 12-week culinary training program for adults who have been shut out of steady work.

Sandbar is a nonprofit community kitchen at 41 Water Street in Westhaven. Since 2018 we have served a free hot dinner five nights a week to anyone who walks in, about 31,000 meals in 2025. Second Shift grew out of that dining room. The people cooking those meals are our trainees: adults returning from incarceration, in recovery, or re-entering the workforce after years away, who are paid $17 an hour to learn the trade in a working kitchen and leave with a ServSafe certificate, a résumé, and a job interview we arranged.

We ran our first full year of Second Shift in 2025 with 19 trainees across two cohorts. Fourteen finished. Eleven were working in food service within 90 days of graduation, at an average starting wage of $18.40 an hour. This request pays the trainee wages, instructor time, and certification costs for 24 trainees in 2027.

> $25,000 pays 24 trainees for the first three weeks of their 12 weeks in the kitchen, the hardest weeks to fund and the weeks when most people decide whether they will stay.

ORGANIZATION AT A GLANCE

Legal name	Sandbar Community Kitchen, Inc. · 501(c)(3), EIN on file
Founded	2018, by three former restaurant workers after the Westhaven Soup Kitchen closed
Mission	To feed Westhaven and to train the people who feed it
Executive Director	Renata Oliveira, 11 years in restaurant management, Sandbar since 2019
Operating budget	$642,000 (2026); $588,000 actual (2025)
Staff	5 full-time, 4 part-time, 2 contract instructors, about 120 volunteers a year
People served	About 900 unique diners and 19 paid trainees in 2025

02

Statement of need

Westhaven is a working harbor town of 29,000 people with a median household income 22 percent below the state's and a poverty rate of 17 percent (Westhaven Community Health Needs Assessment, 2025). Two things are true at once here: restaurants and food processors cannot fill line and prep positions, and hundreds of adults in town cannot get hired for them.

The gap is not skills alone. It is a record, a gap in a résumé, a lapsed ID, or no one who will vouch for you. In our 2025 intake interviews, 16 of 19 trainees said they had applied for kitchen jobs in the past year and heard nothing back. Twelve had been incarcerated. Nine were in recovery. Seven had not held a job of any kind in more than three years.

- **Local demand is real.** The Westhaven Chamber of Commerce's 2026 employer survey counted 84 open kitchen positions across 31 food businesses, most paying $17 to $21 an hour.
- **The region's reentry numbers are high.** Bristol County returns roughly 1,100 people a year from county and state custody; about one in five lists a Westhaven-area address (Massachusetts Department of Correction, 2025 reentry data).
- **Training programs exist, but not here.** The nearest culinary job-training program is 40 minutes away by car, and 38 percent of Westhaven households below the poverty line do not have one (ACS 2020–2024).

Second Shift answers the gap with the one thing an employer cannot get from a résumé: a reference from a working kitchen that has watched someone show up for 12 weeks.

Who we serve

Adults 18 and over living in Westhaven and the four surrounding towns who face a documented barrier to employment: a criminal record, recovery from substance use, long-term unemployment, homelessness, or limited English. In 2025, trainees were 63 percent men, 37 percent women; 42 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino, 11 percent as Black, 5 percent as Cape Verdean, and 42 percent as white; all were low-income by the state's definition. Referrals come from Westhaven Probation, the Tidewater Recovery House, the Westhaven Housing Authority, and our own dining room, where about a third of trainees first came as guests.

03

Program description

Second Shift is a 12-week paid apprenticeship inside a kitchen that produces 120 meals a night. Trainees are W-2 employees of Sandbar from the first day.

How it works

- **Weeks 1–3: Foundations.** Knife skills, sanitation, station setup, and the dining-room service rhythm. Trainees work 20 hours a week at $17 an hour alongside two instructors. Attendance is the only thing we measure in these weeks.
- **Weeks 4–8: Stations.** Trainees rotate through prep, line, and plating, and take the ServSafe Food Handler course on Friday mornings. Each trainee sets two kitchen goals and one personal goal with the lead instructor; those are reviewed at week 8.
- **Weeks 9–12: Placement.** Trainees lead a station, cook one dinner service on their own, and complete a résumé and two mock interviews with our employment coordinator. Every graduate is introduced to at least two of our 14 employer partners before week 12 ends.
- **After graduation.** Thirty, sixty, and ninety-day check-ins by phone or at dinner. Graduates can come back to cook a shift any time; four from 2025 now volunteer as peer mentors.

What is proven and what is new

The 12-week structure, the pay rate, and the employer-partner model are proven: we ran them with 19 people in 2025 and 14 finished. Two things are new in 2027, and we say so here so the Foundation can judge them as plans rather than results. First, we are adding a part-time employment coordinator (10 hours a week) so placement no longer depends on the executive director's personal network. Second, we are opening six of the 24 seats to referrals from the Tidewater Recovery House's sober-living program, which asked us for them after two of its residents graduated in 2025.

Staff

- **Marcus Bell, Lead Instructor.** Twenty-two years as a line and sous chef, most recently at a 90-seat waterfront restaurant in Westhaven. ServSafe Instructor and Registered Proctor. Sandbar since 2020.
- **Dolores Fontes, Instructor (part-time).** Former school-nutrition director for the Westhaven Public Schools; leads the sanitation and food-safety curriculum.
- **Employment Coordinator (to be hired, January 2027).** 10 hours a week; funded in this request.

04

Goals, outcomes, and evaluation

We track four numbers for every cohort and report them to our board quarterly. The 2025 results are our baseline; the 2027 targets are what we are committing to with this grant.

MEASURE	2025 ACTUAL	2027 TARGET	HOW WE MEASURE IT
Trainees enrolled	19	24	Payroll records; two cohorts of 12
Completion (finish week 12)	14 (74%)	18 (75%)	Attendance log; graduation roster
ServSafe Food Handler certificate earned	13	18	Certificates on file
Employed in food service within 90 days	11 (79% of graduates)	14 (78% of graduates)	90-day check-in; employer confirmation where possible
Average starting wage	$18.40/hr	$18.50/hr	Self-reported at 90-day check-in
Still employed at 6 months	not tracked	10	New in 2027; six-month call added to the check-in schedule

We also collect three things that do not fit in a table: a short exit interview with every trainee, including those who leave early; a one-line note from each employer partner after a graduate's first 30 days; and the reason anyone left before week 12. In 2025, the five people who left did so in weeks 1 through 3, and three of the five told us it was transportation. That is why this request includes bus passes.

Reporting to the Foundation

We will send a mid-year update after the first cohort graduates in June 2027 and a final report within 60 days of the grant period's end, with the table above filled in, the budget actuals against the lines below, and two trainee stories cleared for use.

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Budget and budget narrative

The full program costs $118,600 for two cohorts of 12. This request covers the lines that are hardest to raise from other sources: trainee wages in the first three weeks, the new coordinator's hours, certification fees, and transportation.

LINE ITEM	ELDRIDGE REQUEST	TOTAL PROGRAM	HOW IT'S FIGURED
Trainee wages, weeks 1–3	$12,240	$12,240	24 trainees × 20 hrs/wk × 3 wks × $17/hr
Trainee wages, weeks 4–12	—	$36,720	24 × 20 × 9 × $17; funded by earned revenue and the Gull Rock Fund
Employer payroll taxes on trainee wages	$1,040	$4,160	≈8.5% of wages; request covers weeks 1–3
Lead instructor (Marcus Bell), program share	—	$38,500	50% of salary; operating budget
Instructor (Dolores Fontes)	—	$9,600	8 hrs/wk × 24 wks × $50/hr; operating budget
Employment coordinator (new)	$7,800	$7,800	10 hrs/wk × 26 wks × $30/hr
ServSafe Food Handler course and exam	$1,440	$1,440	24 × $60
Transportation: monthly bus passes	$2,160	$2,160	24 trainees × 3 months × $30
Knives, uniforms, non-slip shoes	$320	$2,880	24 × $120; request covers shoes only ($320 balance)
Food cost attributable to training	—	$3,100	In-kind from Westhaven Food Bank and two wholesalers
Total	**$25,000**	**$118,600**	

Budget narrative

Trainee wages and payroll taxes, weeks 1–3 ($13,280). Every trainee is a W-2 employee from day one, paid $17 an hour for 20 hours a week. The first three weeks are when people decide whether they will stay, and they are the weeks we have never been able to fund from earned revenue,

because trainees are not yet productive in the kitchen. This grant pays those weeks for all 24 trainees across two cohorts.

Employment coordinator ($7,800). A new part-time position, 10 hours a week from January through June 2027, covering the placement weeks of both cohorts. The coordinator maintains our employer-partner list, schedules mock interviews, and runs the 30/60/90-day check-ins. We have budgeted $30 an hour.

ServSafe certification ($1,440). Course materials and exam fees for 24 trainees at $60 each. Our lead instructor is a registered proctor, so there is no outside instructor cost.

Transportation ($2,160). A monthly regional bus pass for each trainee for the three months of the program. In 2025, three of the five people who left early said they could not get to the kitchen reliably.

What this grant does not pay for. Instructor salaries, trainee wages in weeks 4 through 12, food, and kitchen overhead are covered by Sandbar's operating budget, earned revenue from our catering line, and a pending $20,000 request to the Gull Rock Fund for weeks 4 through 12 wages. There is no overlap between that request and this one.

Sustainability

Second Shift is not designed to run on grants forever. Our catering line, staffed by trainees in weeks 9 through 12 and by graduates, brought in $41,000 in 2025 and is budgeted at $60,000 in 2027. Our plan is for catering to cover trainee wages in full by 2029, with foundation support focused on the coordinator role and expansion to a third cohort.

06

Timeline and attachments

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS
Jan 2027	Hire employment coordinator. Open applications for Cohort 1; intake interviews with Probation, Tidewater Recovery House, and Housing Authority referrals.
Feb–Apr 2027	Cohort 1 (12 trainees), weeks 1–12. ServSafe exam in week 7. Employer introductions begin week 9.
May 2027	Cohort 1 graduates. 30-day check-ins. Mid-year report to the Foundation in June.
Jun–Aug 2027	Cohort 2 (12 trainees), including six Tidewater Recovery House referrals.
Sep 2027	Cohort 2 graduates. 90-day check-ins for Cohort 1; six-month check-ins begin in November.
Dec 2027	Year-end review of outcomes with the board. Final report to the Foundation by February 2028.

Attachments provided

- IRS determination letter
- Board of Directors with affiliations
- 2026 operating budget and 2025 year-end financials
- Second Shift program budget (full)
- Most recent Form 990
- Letters of support: Westhaven Probation Department; Tidewater Recovery House; Dockside Grill (employer partner)

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Work sample. All organizations, people, figures, and sources in this document are fictional.