

# City of Burlington / 2016 CDBG Application Form

Project Name: FRESH Food

Project Location / Address: O'Brien Community Center, 32A Mallets Bay Avenue, Winooski, VT 05404

Applicant Organization / Agency: Vermont Works for Women

Mailing Address: 32A Mallets Bay Avenue, Winooski, VT 05404

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EIN #: 22-2894557 DUNS #: 193718228

<p><b>CDBG Funding Request: \$30,000 (or \$15,000 per year)</b></p> <p><b>Check <u>ONE</u>:</b>      <u>      </u> <b>1 year</b>      <u>  X  </u> <b>2 years</b></p> <p>(Equal Access, Health,      (Housing, Homeless, Hunger) Development Projects)</p>
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**1. Type of Organization**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization (please provide copy of your |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For-Profit Organization  | <u>IRS 501(c)(3) tax exemption letter</u> )  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith-Based Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution of Higher Education                                 |

**2. Conflict of Interest:**  Please complete and sign attached form.

**3. List of Board of Directors:**  Please attach.

***Certification***

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data in this proposal are true and correct.

I have been duly authorized to apply for this funding on behalf of this agency.

I understand that this grant funding is conditioned upon compliance with federal CDBG regulations.

I further certify that no contracts have been awarded, funds committed or construction begun on the proposed program, and that none will be prior to issuance of a Release of Funds by the Program Administrator. In addition, this project is ready to proceed as of July 1, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Authorized Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Refer to NOFA for required information for each question.)

## **I. Demonstrated Need**

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### **1. What is the need/opportunity being addressed by this program/project and how does that contribute to CDBG's national objectives?**

FRESH Food is a social enterprise program of Vermont Works for Women (VWW) with a dual mission to equip women and youth who have barriers to employment with skills to succeed in long-term employment, and to simultaneously address childhood hunger. FRESH Food grew out of an identified community need to address food insecurity, which limits the learning, growth, health and potential for nearly one in five Vermont children. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey, 22.5% of all families with children under age 18 live in poverty. Within FRESH Food's service area, 62% of Burlington students qualified for free or reduced-priced meals last school year, and Winooski met Community Eligibility criteria, enabling all students to receive free breakfast and lunch. The childcare centers FRESH Food serves do not have the facilities or staff capacity to provide wholesome meals made from scratch on their own. Nutritional deficiencies in early childhood can interrupt children's cognitive development and increase risk for obesity and ill health at every stage of life. Studies have shown that low-income children who get nutritious meals through USDA Child Nutrition programs are less likely to be obese than peers who do not have access to these meals. Meals provided under the guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provide children with early exposure to fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and lean protein. In some cases, a FRESH Food meal is the only balanced, nutritious food a child will eat that day. By collaborating with FRESH Food, childcare programs become eligible for federal meal subsidies, bringing \$25,000 to \$50,000 a year in reimbursements to Chittenden County that previously went unclaimed.

## **II. Program/Project Design**

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### **1. Describe the program/project activities. [UWCC]**

FRESH Food increases low and moderate income children's access to food and nutrition through an innovative social enterprise job-training program for vulnerable women and youth with barriers to employment. Trainees work in a centralized kitchen to prepare and deliver 150 fresh, nutritious meals each weekday to thirteen childcare and Head Start centers, and youth programs in Burlington, Essex, Williston, and Winooski. Meal sites that will be supported through CDBG funding include: Trinity, Robin's Nest, Franklin Square, Sara Holbrook, and Heartworks.

FRESH Food encourages children and trainees to "eat across the rainbow" and sources high-quality meat, dairy, and produce from more than 25 local farms. Meals are made from scratch, and emphasize a wide variety of vegetables, textures, and tastes that encourage children to develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime. All meals exceed federal meal pattern requirements to ensure ample nutritional value.

### **2. Why is the program/project designed the way it is? Explain why the program activities are the right strategies to use to achieve the intended outcomes. [UWCC]**

Child care settings have been shown to support healthy eating and obesity prevention, yet only a quarter of Burlington's childcare centers provides meals, and only 16% participate in the CACFP. Preschools, Head Starts, and youth afterschool and summer programs frequently lack adequate kitchen space and staff capacity to prepare meals on-site, and lack the administrative capacity to effectively gather the data needed to seek reimbursement for the cost of meals through the USDA CACFP. As a result, providing daily meals and snacks falls to individual families. For families with limited financial means and those experiencing food insecurity, providing healthy lunches can add to their financial and practical hardship. When children reach school age, they become eligible for school-based free or reduced-cost lunches—but for children ages 2-4, when nutrition is strongly linked to physical growth, behavioral and cognitive development, and lifelong health, many programs provide no similar option. FRESH Food addresses these concerns by preparing meals in a centralized kitchen following the USDA meal pattern requirements, and by establishing and maintaining tracking systems that enable childcare and youth programs to receive CACFP reimbursements for the meals they provide. For women in the FRESH Food training program, contracts for childcare meals ensure that there is a consistent, year-round food production need, which is essential to building a training curriculum where trainees gain 'real world' experience. The fact that women are

preparing food for low and moderate income children is a source of pride as trainees experience caring for members of the community, and relate to their own experiences of poverty and hunger.

**3. How will this program/project contribute to the City’s anti-poverty strategy?**

FRESH Food’s two primary objectives are to help low-income women with barriers to employment gain the skills and support they need to earn a sustainable income, and to ensure that low and moderate income children have access to at least one high-quality, nutritious meal each day. Last year, 83% of graduates became employed, often in positions that paid \$2 to \$4 per hour more than their previous wage. Graduates frequently gain health insurance, paid leave, and other benefits for the first time in their lives.

**4. How do you use community and/or participant input in planning the program design and activities? [UWCC]**

Women who participate in the FRESH Food Culinary Training develop monthly menus for childcare meals that exceed the USDA nutritional requirements while making use of whatever local produce is seasonally fresh and abundant. Through this process, they learn to plan balanced meals, manage food inventory in a commercial setting, and engage in the creative work that comes with jobs in culinary and food service settings. During the early years of FRESH Food, childcare meals families, children, and educators gave regular feedback about meal quality, taste, and diversity. Based on the daily ‘reviews’ of hundreds of children, FRESH Food has developed, tested, and adapted kid-approved menus and recipes.

**III. Proposed Outcomes**

**1. What are the intended outcomes for this project/program? How are people meant to be better off as a result of participating? [UWCC]**

FRESH Food has three key outcomes: 1) low and moderate children and youth in Burlington will gain daily nutritious meals and snacks that exceed USDA nutritional requirements; 2) women and youth with barriers to employment will gain employability skills; and 3) child care and youth programs gain CACFP reimbursements as a result of participating in FRESH Food. For the sake of this proposal and administrative reporting requirements, only the first outcome will be measured and reported for this proposal, however Vt Works for Women measures all results.

**2. List your goals/objectives, activities to implement and expected outcomes (# of units, # of individuals, etc.)**

Goal	Activities Funded	Outcomes
Increase access to nutritious meals in Burlington for low and moderate income children and youth.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan monthly menus to ensure that meals exceed USDA nutritional guidelines; manage inventory; maintain relationships with local farmers and suppliers.</li> <li>2. Maintain annual contracts with area childcare and youth programs for meals and delivery.</li> <li>3. Prepare and deliver meals to childcare sites each weekday.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-5 Burlington childcare centers served;</li> <li>-400 weekly meals</li> <li>-150 unique children fed (anticipated 85 in one year, with some duplicates in year 1 and 2 totaling 150 in the grant period)</li> <li>-120 low/ moderate income children served in the grant period</li> </ul>

**IV. Impact / Evaluation**

**1. How do you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you assess project/program outcomes; your description should include: what type of data, the**

**method/tool for collecting the data, from whom you collect data, and when it is collected.  
[UWCC]**

For the purposes of this grant, VWW will demonstrate that the children beneficiaries who eat our meals are better off through increased access to nutrition for children in Burlington. Please note that FRESH Food uses Results Based Accountability (RBA) to monitor many other socially beneficial outcomes including employment rates and hourly rate of pay for graduates, numbers of childcare meals prepared, demographics of children who receive meals, and percentages of purchases bought from local farmers and vendors. Program stakeholders (childcare centers, farmers/producers, parents) are invited to provide satisfaction surveys annually. For the CDBG grant, using daily meal production records, FRESH Food will measure the number of meals delivered, preschool / youth program contracts per year, and individuals fed.

**2. How successful has the project/program been during the most recent reporting year for your CDBG project? Report the number of beneficiaries you intended to serve with which activities (as noted in your last Attachment A) and your final outcomes (as noted on your Attachment C) from June 2015 (or June 2014). For non-CDBG participants – just report on your achievements from the previous year.**

In the most recently completed program year, FRESH Food served more than 28,000 meals to children in Chittenden County. Two-thirds of meals were served to children whose families are low-income.

Per our 2014 “Attachment A”

- People assisted: We intended to serve 100 people in total with 95 of those being of low or moderate income.
- Activities: The grant covered our food costs and delivery, as planned, for our daily preparation of meals for Burlington centers. One center discontinued service when they improved their own in-house kitchen.
- Benchmarks: We expected to deliver a weekly average of 435 meals to 100 children at 5 centers – instead our weekly average has been approximately 350 meals to 47 children at 4 centers. It is worth noting that this report only counts our Head Start clients and does not count other centers with Burlington residents who are not low/moderate income including children at Trinity and Robin’s Nest who are not enrolled in Head Start and Heartworks which joined our program in the most recent school year.

**3. How does this data reflect beneficial outcomes of this project/program? Has this impacted your program planning at all? [UWCC]**

While the average number of children served in the response above was smaller than projected at the outset of the project, over the funding period, FRESH Food served 130 unique children who were enrolled in Head Start. Our weekly average number of meals was higher in year one than in year two. King Street Center discontinued its meals contract in FRESH Food when it became able to provide meals in-house, which enable us to add Heartworks as a new site this school year. The reduction in the number of meals provided each week was the result of an intentional strategic decision to reduce delivery to a single route, thereby cutting VWW’s financial loss per meal from \$0.76 to \$0.69. This decision was made with tremendous care, in order to preserve our ability to provide meals to the centers that serve the highest percentage of low and moderate income children, including those that are the focus of his proposal. While it resulted in a reduction in the total number of meals served, we are able to maintain a healthier bottom line for the program, which is necessary to ensuring its sustainability and ability to meet the needs of the community over the long-term.

## ***V. Experience / Organizational Capacity***

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**1. What is your agency’s mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?**

Vermont Works for Women (VWW) helps women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue, and excel in work that leads to economic independence. Each year, VWW’s innovative training and education programs assist 1200 women and girls in thinking about their lives in the broadest terms, cultivating long-term economic independence and wellbeing. FRESH Food began in 2011, and is unique among VWW’s programs because it has a dual mission to provide training to women with barriers to employment and to feed low and moderate income children. By focusing on alleviating child hunger, FRESH Food supports families with young children. By ensuring that every meal is wholesome, FRESH Food helps kids meet developmental milestones that are the foundation of

lifelong health and growth. Each of these results support VWW’s commitment to advancing economic vitality for women in Vermont.

**2. Please describe any indications of program quality, such as staff qualifications and/or training, adherence to best practices or standards, feedback from other programs or organizations you partner with, etc.**

VWW recently joined Catalyst Kitchens, a national network of social enterprise food/ training programs. Through their guidelines, FRESH Food is working to meet defined standards for program quality, training results, and operational efficiency. VWW strives to use evidence based best practices in all of its programs. FRESH Food bases its work on: 1) *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Aligning Dietary Guidance for All*, November 4, 2010, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences; 2) *Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs*, 2010, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education; and 3) *Child Care Food Program Wellness Tool Kit*. This web-based tool kit gives innovative and effective CACFP best practices and strategies for implementing good nutrition standards at the state and local level. Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). FRESH Food employs two highly skilled chefs who oversee meal quality and safety. Robin Burnett has worked with the program since 2013 and Maria Carabello recently joined the team upon completion of a Master’s Degree in Food Systems at the University of Vermont.

**3. What steps has your organization/board taken in the past year to become more culturally competent?**

VWW has an active Diversity Committee. The Committee conducted an organizational assessment, shared findings, and opened a dialogue about critical diversity and inclusion issues at VWW. The committee has hosted guest speakers and discussion sessions at staff retreats. VWW is a current participant in the City of Burlington’s We All Belong cultural competency training series to increase organizational capacity for diversity and inclusion in operations and programs. In the year ahead, the Diversity Committee will finalize a committee charter; revise non-discrimination policies; assess hiring practices to increase diversity among staff; and continue efforts to increase cultural competency and remove barriers for the communities we serve.

**4. Have you received Federal or State grant funds in the past three years?  Yes  No**

**5. Were the activities funded by these sources successfully completed?  Yes  No**  
 N/A

If No, please explain:

**VI. Proposed Low & Moderate Income Beneficiaries / Commitment to Diversity**

**1. Will the program target a specific (solely) group of people? If so, check ONE below:**

Abused Children  Elderly (62 years +)  People with AIDS  
 Battered Spouses  Homeless Persons  Illiterate Adults  People with Severe Disabilities

**2. For your proposed project, please estimate how the Burlington residents will break out into the following income categories during the total grant period. Use the Income Table at <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/2015-HUD-Income-Limits>**

Service / Activity	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington HH / Persons to be Served	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income
Eliminating hunger by providing meals to Burlington children	150	45	26	49	30

**3. a. Who is the project/program designed to benefit? Describe the project/program's target population, citing (if relevant) specific age, gender, income, community/location or other characteristic of the people this program is intended to serve. [UWCC]**

FRESH Food's two groups of beneficiaries are children who receive meals (and their families and childcare programs), and women and youth with barriers to employment who receive training. Among children served, 26% of families were extremely low income, 28% were low income, and 38% were moderate income. 47% of children who received meals at Burlington Head Start sites were white, 30% were Black or African American, 4% were American Indian, and 19% were Asian. Adult women in the culinary training program were 18 to 59 years old. 37% have been incarcerated and 51% have a criminal record; 63% receive public assistance; 42% have a history of substance abuse; and 8% did not complete a high school diploma and 49% have only high school diploma or equivalent certification. All had a low income or no income at the time they entered the program.

**b. How do you select and reach your target population?**

The childcare centers that we serve all share a common theme in that they do not have the kitchen facilities onsite to provide well-balanced, nutritious meals that can be served warm to the children in their care. We choose centers that are within a delivery radius that will get the meals to the children by the time they are normally accustomed to eating lunch. Finally, we serve all of the centers in Chittenden County that access CACFP funds that do not have the infrastructure to provide the meals on their own due to staff capacity or facility constraints.

FRESH Food trainees are recruited from a wide range of public agency and social service partners. Trainees complete an orientation, interview, and reference check, and must complete VWW's Step In to Work employment readiness training program before joining FRESH Food.

**4. Describe the steps you take to make the project/program accessible, inclusive and culturally appropriate for the target population. [UWCC]**

We work closely with Champlain Valley Head Start and the Directors at each of the childcare centers we serve to understand any food related restrictions facing the children we feed, and whether a restriction is medical in nature or is related to cultural or religious beliefs. The FRESH Food menu addresses dietary restrictions by removing pork and seafood as protein options. Vegetarian options are offered daily, and we accommodate allergies as they arise. Feedback, meal suggestions, and input from parents of the children we serve ensures that menus meet their needs. Lastly, providing delivery to the childcare centers makes the service more accessible to our clients.

Women who join the FRESH Food training program generally have case managers who have referred them to FRESH Food. Our staff works very closely with case managers to discern and address any challenges that might hamper trainees' success. For example, we might work with the Department of Labor to obtain a voucher for slip-resistant shoes or uniform pants if this is a hurdle for a potential trainee. If transportation is a challenge, we work with agencies to provide bus passes for the duration of the training program. Finally, we work with translators to ensure that language barriers do not limit enrollment by New American trainees.

## ***VII. Budget / Financial Feasibility***

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**1. Budget Narrative: Provide a clear description of what you will do with CDBG's investment in the program. How will you spend the money? Give specific details. [UWCC]**

A CDBG grant of \$15,000 each year for two years would enable us to fully cover the food costs and delivery of meals we prepare and deliver to five childcare centers in Burlington (Trinity Children's Center, Sara Holbrook, Robin's Nest, Franklin Square, and Heartworks) plus YMCA in Winooski which serves Burlington students. Because our meals are made from scratch and include nutritious proteins and vegetable-infused recipes like very veggie lasagna or carrot-based catsup, the food cost that goes into these meals is higher than the federal reimbursement rate.

**2. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) in your Project/Program Design.**

No staff time will be billed to the CDBG funding.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG
N/A				

### 3. Program/Project Budget

Line Item	CDBG Funds	Other	Total
<b>Food Cost</b> (estimated 80 meals/day * 5 days/week *45 weeks = 18,000 meals)	\$ 10,000	\$ 13,304	\$23,304
<b>Delivery</b> (contracted with <i>Good News Garage</i> )	\$ 5,000	\$ 10,321	\$15,321
<b>Kitchen rent and utilities</b>	\$ 0	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,500
<b>Supplies</b> (supplies directly related to meals and meal delivery – cambros/coolers/hotel pans)	\$ 0	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
<b>Staffing</b> (directly related to meals for Burlington centers)	\$ 0	\$36,055	\$ 36,055
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 15,000 (=\$0.83/meal)	\$ 70,680	\$85,680 (=\$4.76/meal)

### 4. Funding Sources

	Project – Burlington only		Agency	
	Current	Projected	Current	Projected
CDBG	\$ 11,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 11,000	\$15,000
State (specify) VT Dept of Corrections VT Agency of Ed VT Office of Ec Opp	0	0	167,000 25,000 10,000	\$170,000 25,000 10,000
Federal (specify) – NONE	0	0	0	0
United Way	0	0	47,000	47,000
Private (specify) -- Philanthropic Individual Foundation Corporate	50,000	\$50,000	235,716 862,600 28,000	1,000,000
Program Income Sales Consulting/Conference Tuition	\$50,460 (Burlington center sales, only)	\$50,460	185,745 48,000 92,760	150,000 48,000 50,000
Other (specify) In Kind Donations Rental/Interest/Misc			49,500 219,350	50,000 100,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$111,460</b>	<b>\$115,460</b>	<b>\$ 1,981,671</b>	<b>\$ 1,665,000</b>

NOTE: The VWW fiscal year is July 1-June 30. Projected numbers are estimates and are not board approved. "Current" represents the board-approved budget for this current FY16.

### 5. Of the total project cost, what percentage will be financed with CDBG?

$$\frac{\$ 15,000}{\text{CDBG Funding}} \div \frac{\$ 115,460}{\text{Total Program/Project Costs}} = 13\% \text{ Percentage}$$

**6. Of the total project cost, what would be the total cost per person?**

$$\frac{\$ 115,460}{\text{Total Program/Project Cost}} \div \frac{150}{\text{\# Proposed Beneficiaries}} = \$769.73 \text{ Cost Per Person}$$

**7. Why should CDBG resources, as opposed to other sources of funding, be used for this project?**

FRESH Food is an innovative response to a need identified by Burlington childcare programs, families, and anti-hunger advocates for low and moderate income young children to have access to high quality nutrition. FRESH Food contributes to the reducing food insecurity in Burlington, and helps childcare programs by enabling them to meet children’s nutritional needs without detracting from their core focus on nurturing and educating children. Since 2011, FRESH Food has served more than 177,844 meals, and helped childcare centers receive over \$225,000 in CACFP reimbursements. Women who prepare meals for FRESH Food are primarily low income Burlington and Winooski residents with barriers to employment, and through FRESH Food, they gain skills and support to become employed, contributing to the economic stability of their own children and families.

**8. Describe your use of community resources, including volunteers. Include any resources not listed in your budget. Will CDBG be used to leverage other resources?**

In 2014, VWW began a new partnership with the City Market Co-op, where co-op members can meet their monthly working membership requirements by volunteering in the FRESH Food kitchen and garden. Since this opportunity began, an average of 20 volunteers have contributed approximately 45 hours each month. Volunteers work side by side with trainees to process the harvest for storage, weed the garden, chop veggies, and prepare meals. Volunteers are diverse, and most often have more education, a stable income, and fewer social and economic barriers than women enrolled in the training program. By working alongside trainees, they are role models who help trainees ‘normalize’ their work experiences and deepen community connections. They reinforce FRESH Food training and education practices that program staff introduce, and deepening trainees’ connection to the community at large.

**9. If your organization has experienced any significant changes in funding levels during the past year, please explain.**

In 2015, VWW’s longtime executive director, Tiffany Bluemle, left the organization, which generated multiple large gifts in her honor, ballooning our philanthropic income in the last year by approximately \$200,000. While VWW’s philanthropic income typically increases each year over the year before, these special one-time gifts resulted in a larger than usual increase last year.

**10. What cost-cutting measures has your organization implemented?**

In 2015, FRESH Food restructured its staffing which resulted in eliminating the Director of Social Enterprise position and addition of an Assistant Chef Instructor focusing labor “on the ground” in a direct-service role, rather than management. In addition, after a careful cost analysis, FRESH Food consolidated our meal delivery route to be served by a single vehicle, eliminating the need to contract for a second delivery van. Because of differences in CACFP subsidies and market rates, FRESH Food absorbs a loss of 0.69 cents for every meal it provides. The change in delivery routes reflects a savings of 0.07 per meal, or roughly \$2,100 annually.

## **VIII. Collaboration/Efficiency**

**1. Share specific examples of how your agency collaborates with other programs or agencies to address the needs of the people you serve. Do not just list organizations with whom you collaborate. [UWCC]**

FRESH Food’s benefits extend deeply into the community. A large portion of the program budget goes immediately back to the community through a meal delivery contract with Good News Garage, purchases from local farms, and rent for kitchen space in the O’Brien Community Center. The **City of Winooski** donated FRESH

Food's garden plot, is the landlord for our centralized kitchen, and operates the Summer Teen Employment Program (STEP) which supervises youth who work on behalf of FRESH Food. **The Intervale Center** donates nearly 1,000 pounds of produce to FRESH Food each year, gleaned by STEP youth workers. **REACH Up** connects women who are eligible for benefits to FRESH Food's Work Experiences training pathway, where FRESH Food is an approved work site for clients to complete required productive time. **Vermont Department of Labor** enrolls trainees in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program, which provides stipends for on-the-job training. FRESH food purchases and gleans produce from numerous farm partners including Diggers Mirth in Burlington and several in Chittenden County.

**2. Describe your agency's efforts at becoming more efficient in achieving your outcomes or managing your project/program.**

In addition to the cost-saving measures described above under #10, VWW recently overhauled our Transitional Jobs program in order to boost effectiveness by providing a stronger system of support for women with employment barriers. The new "Step In to Work" program is a pre-requisite for women to enter the FRESH Food culinary training program. We anticipate that this change will provide a solid foundation in soft skills, and give trainees additional support for personal needs (housing, childcare) which can interfere with employment success.

**3. What other agencies provide similar services or programs? [UWCC]**

There are a variety of employment training programs for workers with barriers through the VT Department of Labor, vocational and educational entities, and other community organizations. Most are not specifically designed to support women with barriers. The only other comparable program is the Burlington School Food Project, run by Doug Davis, who has supported VWW on developing these contracts for this audience. Childcare centers may provide congregate meals that they prepare on site, or provide time for children to consume meals that are provided by their families.

## ***IX. Sustainability***

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**1. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington? If this project ends, will that benefit continue?**

Through its central kitchen, FRESH Food partners with childcare and youth programs, and enables them to focus on the core education and support services they provide to families. FRESH Food is a valuable resource for programs that do not have adequate kitchen facilities or staff to meet the needs of families, and ensures that kids' lunches are not laden with sugar and empty calories. Each child who gains nutritious meals during early childhood increases her likelihood of reaching developmental milestones and maintaining health into adulthood. If the project ends, programs may have to seek other avenues to provide nutritious meals for children, but the benefit for those who have received FRESH Food will remain.

**2. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be able to continue?**

VWW has sustained training programs for women for more than 25 years, and is invested in developing program models that use community resources effectively, with lasting results. FRESH Food benefits from a "hybrid" social enterprise model, where catering, childcare meals and retail sales generate 50% of program revenue. FRESH Food is further supported by WIA worker training stipends, private grants and individual gifts. FRESH Food recently joined Catalyst Kitchens, a national, collaborative network of organizations that combine job training, social enterprises, and foodservice programs to address community needs. As a member, FRESH Food gains technical assistance in best practices and quality standards to support its work. FRESH Food enjoys tremendous community goodwill, and has tapped into an unmet need to help childcare centers serve low-income families. At present, every meal FRESH Food provides is subsidized by public and philanthropic funding to preserve their high quality and maintain accessibility for centers serving low income families. Meeting this deep community need requires collaboration across public, private, and philanthropic systems. VWW will continue to rely on smart business systems, innovative partnerships, and careful stewardship of resources to ensure its long-term sustainability.