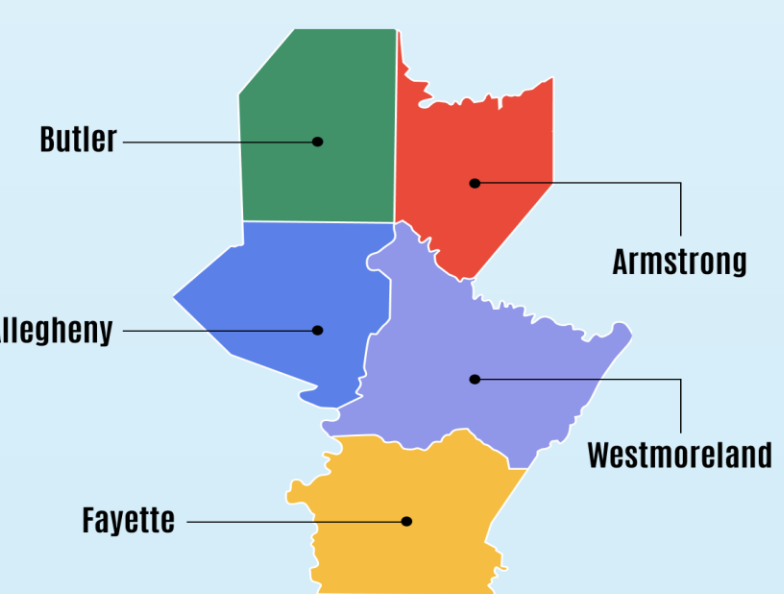


## BACKGROUND

- United Way of Southwestern PA serves in five counties
- United Way of Southwestern PA has launched Community Food Solutions to address food security concerns at a local level
  - For example, in Allegheny County in 2023, >150,000 people experienced food insecurity
- From Aug 2023 - April 2025, a total of 57 grants have been funded for a total of \$259,220



Cohort	# Grants Funded	Total Amount
1	7 grants	\$35,000
2	10 grants	\$48,600
3	11 grants	\$49,820
4	9 grants	\$40,500
5	13 grants	\$57,700
6	7 grants	\$27,600

## OBJECTIVES

- Highlight the importance of each section of the application rubric
- Identify trends and common patterns in denied applications
- Offer feedback and recommendations on what can strengthen future applications

## METHODS

- Evaluate grant applications using a standardized scoring rubric
- Collect and analyze data from both accepted and denied applications, focusing on responses to questions
- Review feedback given to organizations

### Sections of the Rubric

Section	0	1	2	3	4
Location/Target Population					
Project Description					
Obtainable Outcomes					
Overall Impression					

## RESULTS

### KEY INSIGHTS

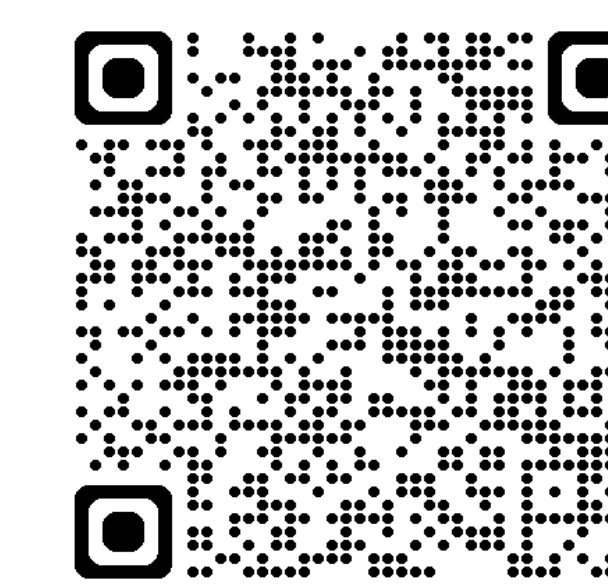
- **Community Capacity Building**
  - Strengthening and immersing the members of the community to lead and support their own program development
- **Long Term Sustainability**
  - Involves considering how the \$5,000 can lay the foundation for continued food security within the community and create a long-term impact
- **Comprehensive responses**
  - The responses should explain why (purpose of the program), for whom (people involved or impacted), and how (methods or actions) funding can lead to effective program development



Garfield Community Farm-Compost Workshop



Lawrenceville United-Farmers Market



Full Application

### KEY SECTIONS OF THE RUBRIC

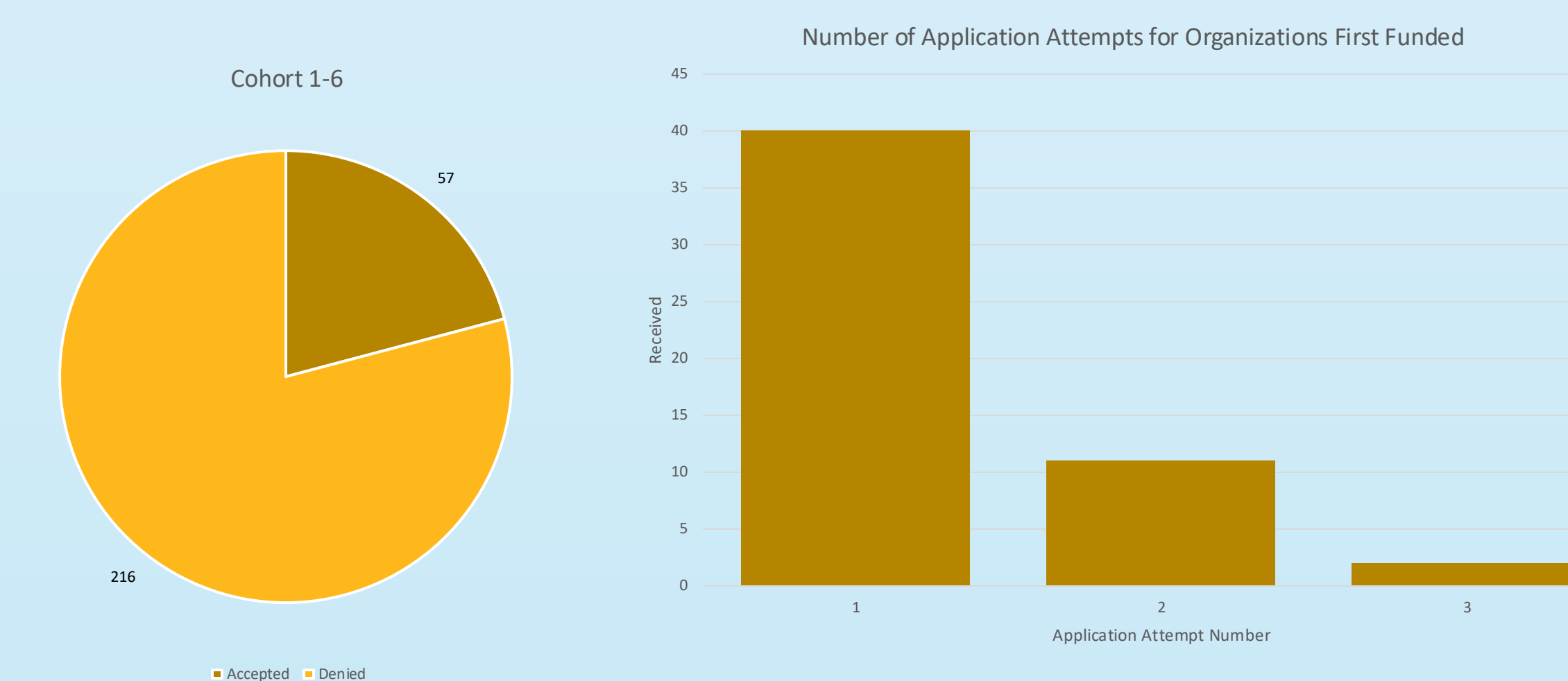
Section	Description	Examples	
		Denied	Accepted
<b>Target Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The specific population is defined and identifies <i>who</i> is in the population and <i>where</i></li> <li>- Describes <i>why</i> this group requires support</li> </ul>	<p>"We do not have a target population to serve, as our doors are open to all"</p>	<p>"Currently serve 1200 households monthly across the McKeesport area. There are 16 neighborhoods across McKeesport. Each neighborhood as part of the SDOH plan has a neighborhood resident healer"</p>
<b>Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide a detailed breakdown of the total amount requested, including specific items and associated costs</li> </ul>	<p>"[We will] apply this grant to the operating expenses associated with our emergency food delivery services"</p>	<p>"\$2,000 – Materials &amp; Infrastructure: Purchase soil, compost, seeds, plants, raised beds, tools, fencing, and water access supplies."</p> <p>\$1,000 – Outreach &amp; Education: Print flyers, host community meetings, and run workshops on gardening, nutrition, and sustainability."</p>
<b>Overall Impression</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project is well considered and well thought out</li> <li>- Project is likely to create a meaningful increase in food access/equity for the neighborhood being served</li> </ul>	<p>Score: 2</p> <p>Feedback: "More of a social engagement and connection than a food access program. Does not inherently fit the small community-based idea of this grant"</p> <p>"More of a one-day program. Unclear goal and objectives"</p>	<p>Score: 4</p> <p>Feedback: "This project is one that will allow many more people to access benefits they may not be accessing"</p> <p>"Well run and highly accountable to residents, extremely engaged, and a wonderful resource for the community"</p>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Providing a resource guide for applicants embedded into the application
- Including a community building and long-term sustainability question to the application to understand future goals
- Incorporating an outreach and engagement plan for community members

## LIMITATIONS

- Limited funding restricts the number of accepted applicants to approximately 10
- Receiving feedback *does not* guarantee acceptance in future application rounds



## PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

- In southwestern Pennsylvania, 41% of households struggle to afford basic needs, including access to nutritious food
- In the 2023-2024 cohorts, 6,188 members of the Allegheny County community were served through Community Food Solutions

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Thank you to Dr. Haley Grant and the PHUSP staff for the continued help and support.
- Thank you to Sara Noel, United Way of Southwestern PA, and the Community Food Solutions team for this opportunity

## REFERENCES

