

Subject: New submission from Community Development Combined
Date: Friday, January 5, 2024 at 12:26:23 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: jnytko@govsol.org
To: jnytko@govsol.org

General Information
Date of application:
01/04/2024
Organization name:
FOCUS Churches of Albany, Inc.
Organization TIN or EIN:
30-0257933
If available, provide your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):
CSVXVLLW94J5
Organization physical address:
275 State Street FOCUS Churches ALBANY, NY 12210 United States Map It
Is the mailing address different from the physical address?
No
Contact Information
Primary contact name:
Fred Boehrer
Primary contact title:
Executive Director
Primary contact phone:
518 443-0460, ext. 5
Primary contact email:
fredb@focuschurches.net
What is the preferred method of contact?
Email
Website (if available):
https://www.focuschurches.net
Organization Info and Structure:
Is the organization a nonprofit?
Yes

If nonprofit, please attach to this application proof of your organization's Tax-Exempt Status

- [Tax-Exempt-Certificate-NYS-FOCUS-May-11-2022.pdf](#)

Date of establishment:

12/17/2004

Give a brief description of your organization. Please include information on the organization's activities or mission statement (150 words or less):

Our Mission: FOCUS is six covenant churches and several interfaith affiliates, doing together what we cannot do alone. Since 1967, FOCUS has created a community called to be a collective voice - and a helping hand - for those in need. With each meal, FOCUS serves a helping of hospitality. FOCUS also gives voice to critical issues of food insecurity, immigration, antiracism, and homelessness and joins with other organizations to raise awareness of the impacts of those living in poverty.

FOCUS Churches of Albany assists food insecure people in downtown Albany through our Interfaith Food Pantry (Emmanuel Baptist Church) and our Breakfast & Lunch Program (Westminster Presbyterian Church). Our Interfaith Food Pantry is open five days a week and our Breakfast & Lunch Program is open three days a week.

Upon being awarded a five-year Nourish NY Grant in April 2023, we created the FOCUS Food Network and shared this grant with ten other Albany County food pantries.

Provide the total number of full-time employees (if applicable):

5

Provide the total number of part-time employees (if applicable):

11

Provide the total number of volunteers (if applicable):

100

What is the organization's current annual budget?

\$728,605 for 2024

Have you or the organization ever received any form of COVID-19 relief funds or loans specific to the negative impacts of the Pandemic?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify type and amount.

We received Employee Retention Credit monies: \$86,188.89

We received ERC funds in August and September 2022.

The ERC covered employee expenses for 2020 and 2021.

Did your organization lose revenue as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic? If yes, provide the amount of lost revenue (2020-2022)

No.

Project Proposal

Applicants may choose to apply for up to 2 program areas. Please select the primary program area for which you would like to apply.

Food Access

What amount of funding is being requested (Must be at least \$100,000 and should not exceed program area totals)?

\$455,492

Is this a new project or expansion of an existing initiative, please describe.

This grant application for FOCUS Churches of Albany seeks to expand a recent initiative, the FOCUS Food

Network. In April 2023, FOCUS Churches of Albany was awarded a five-year Nourish NY Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and the NYS Department of Health. In our commitment to address food insecurity within Albany County, we chose to share this grant with ten other Albany County food pantries. Including our FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry and FOCUS Breakfast Club (soup kitchen serving breakfast and lunch), twelve emergency feeding programs are being funded by the FOCUS Food Network. We created the largest network of Albany County-based emergency feeding programs, by offering NY grown and NY sourced vegetables, fruit, dairy and meats. In this grant application, we are seeking to: (1) Increase our NY-based food purchasing by 50% for food pantries and (2) Link food pantries in our FOCUS Food Network with local farms (primarily with Albany County farms, secondarily with farms located within 50 miles of Albany County).

Please provide an executive summary of the proposed program or project for which you are requesting funds. Include a description of the target population, as well as the goals and objectives of your proposed project (500 words or less).

FOCUS Churches of Albany seeks to expand our recent initiative, the FOCUS Food Network, as mentioned above. In April 2023, FOCUS Churches of Albany was awarded a five-year Nourish NY Grant through the NYS Department of Agriculture and the NYS Department of Health. In our commitment to address food insecurity within Albany County, we chose to share this grant with ten other Albany County food pantries. Including our FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry and FOCUS Breakfast Club (soup kitchen serving breakfast and lunch), twelve emergency feeding programs are being funded by the FOCUS Food Network. We created the largest network of exclusively Albany County-based emergency feeding programs, by offering NY grown and NY sourced vegetables, fruit, dairy and meats. In this ARPA grant application, from May 1, 2024 to October 31, 2026, we seek to: (1) Increase our food purchasing by 50% for food pantries and (2) Link food pantries in our FOCUS Food Network with local farms (primarily with Albany County farms, secondarily with farms located within 50 miles of Albany County). Our primary target population will be the twelve emergency feeding programs in our FOCUS Food Network: a mix of urban and rural, neighborhood-based and school-based food pantries. All of them are located in Albany County. Our secondary target population will be New York farmers and food producers: primarily those located in Albany County, and secondarily those within 50 miles of Albany County. Objective (1): We are seeking emergency food expenditures by increasing our Nourish NY food budget (\$202,300/year) by 50% (\$101,150) over the course of 2.5 years (\$253,750 for 30 months). This total food budget of \$253,750 will be available for all the members of our FOCUS Food Network. Objective (2a): During Year One of this grant (May 1 2024 to April 30, 2025), we aim to spend at least 20% of these funds locally: 10% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 10% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County. During Year Two (May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026), we aim to spend at least 25% of these funds locally: 12.5% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 12.5% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County. During Year Three (May 1, 2026 to October 31, 2026 [six months]), we aim to spend at least 30% of these funds locally: 15% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 15% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County. Objective (2b): The FOCUS Food Network prepares Albany County farms and food producers to become more aware and compliant with NNY guidelines issued by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture guidelines. As result, we will ultimately prepare a system by which CSA farm shares - typically purchased by middle-class and upper-middle class households, and not typically available for food insecure households - will become accessible to food insecure residents of Albany County. Some ARPA funds will be used to purchase CSA shares from local farms for local households. At the conclusion of this ARPA grant period, we will have an accessible process by which local businesses, houses of worship, and concerned individuals will be able to donate CSA shares for food insecure households. This process will benefit both Albany farmers and food insecure households. N.B. The project end date is October 31, 2026. In the section below, the software does not allow us to enter any dates beyond 2025 (even though we are required to complete all grant expenditures by December 31, 2026).

Please explain why this program or project is needed within the County.

A study released on December 29, 2023, by the NYS Dept. of Health, states that 21.5% of Albany County adult residents self-identify as food insecure (https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/docs/2023-12_ifa_report.pdf). The FOCUS Food Network proposal creatively addresses this need by: (a) increasing food funding for Albany County emergency food providers already well-versed in NYS Dept. of Agriculture guidelines for ordering NY sourced/grown food; (b) supporting farms and food producers located in Albany County; (c) supporting farms and food producers within a 50 mile radius of Albany County; (d) preparing Albany farms and food producers to become more aware and compliant with NNY guidelines issued by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture guidelines, if they so choose; (e) preparing a system by which CSA farm shares - typically purchased by middle-class and upper-middle class households, will become accessible to food insecure residents of Albany County.

All funded activities must meet the objective of responding to the public health and negative economic impact of the pandemic. Please describe how your proposal will help address this objective and assist with recovery (250 words or less).

As previously stated, a study released on December 29, 2023, by the NYS Dept. of Health, finds that 21.5% of

Albany County adult residents self-identify as food insecure (https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/prevention/injury_prevention/information_for_action/docs/2023-12_ifa_report.pdf). After the COVID-19 emergency period, food insecurity remains a public health issue and a social justice matter. The FOCUS Food Network proposal creatively addresses food insecurity within Albany County by addressing households through urban, rural and school-based food pantries. The NYS Dept. of Agriculture initiated the Nourish NY Grant Program as a way to immediately support struggling NY farmers and food producers. The FOCUS Food Network proposal extends and amplifies this statewide approach by using ARPA funds to focus on farms and food producers in Albany County and our local region.

If an award is made, describe how Albany County stakeholders will benefit. Where possible, please use measurable outcomes to quantify impact.

Stakeholders who will benefit from this grant include Albany County residents who visit the following food pantries within our FOCUS Food Network: St. Vincent's Church (Albany), Blessed Sacrament Church (Albany), St. James' (Albany), Welcome Chapel (Albany), Hackett Middle School (Albany), Sheridan Preparatory Academy (Albany), First Church -Reformed (Albany), St. Patrick's Church (Ravena), Venture Churches (Selkirk), Trinity United Methodist (Coeymans Hollow), as well as the FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry and FOCUS Breakfasts Club (soup kitchen).

Additional stakeholders who will benefit include local farms and food producers, primarily those located within Albany County and secondarily those farms and food producers located within 50 miles of Albany County. While Nourish NY funds are used specifically for NY-based food, the FOCUS Food Network will use ARPA funds to emphasize more locally grown/produced food. It is win-win for Albany County residents and Albany-based farms and food producers.

Please describe your organization's ability to implement the project you propose including organizational structure, staff members involved, a summary of similar initiatives you have undertaken and the date they were completed:

FOCUS Churches of Albany is prepared to fully implement this program by May 1, 2024. Our leadership team is comprised of: Executive Director, Director of Programs, Office Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, Food Pantry Director and Breakfast Program Coordinator. We are able to quickly implement this ARPA grant because we are building on the excellent foundation we have through our FOCUS Food Network. Since July 1, 2023, our network has been participating in the Nourish NY grant program. This has been the first time FOCUS has collaborated with the Dept. of Agriculture as a direct contractor. The recently awarded five-year NNY and HPNAP twin grants have doubled our FOCUS budget. We created new positions and hired staff to adapt to the requirements of these grants. We have exceeded benchmarks provided for us by the Dept. of Agriculture (for example, we were required to spend at least 40% of the NNY grant [year one] by December 31, 2023. We actually spent over 55% of the NNY funds, exceeding this six-month benchmark.)

Awarding FOCUS with this ARPA grant will allow us to continue our natural growth as become an Albany-based regional hub promoting food security for county residents and supporting local farms and food producers.

How will you track performance goals and define success? Include at least two key performance indicators and expected annual outcomes/impact?

We will track our goals by ongoing monitoring and communication among our FOCUS Food Network partners. Milestones, dates, and task descriptions are found in the following section.

We will regularly assess spending percentages of food budget and update spending allotments for each food pantry partner. We will examine how much food purchases come from Albany County farms and food producers. We will focus on these two areas, specifically:

Objective (1): Monitoring emergency food expenditures by \$101,150/year over the course of 2.5 years (\$253,750 for 30 months). This total food budget of \$253,750 will be available for all the members of our FOCUS Food Network.

Objective (2): During Year One of this grant (May 1 2024 to April 30, 2025), we aim to spend at least 20% of these funds locally: 10% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 10% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County. During Year Two (May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026), we aim to spend at least 25% of these funds locally: 12.5% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 12.5% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County. During Year Three (May 1, 2026 to October 31, 2026 [six months]), we aim to spend at least 30% of these funds locally: 15% will be spent at Albany County farms or food producers and 15% will be spent at farms or food producers within a 50 miles of Albany County.

Project start date:

05/01/2024

Project End date:

Please provide key project milestones inclusive of the anticipated timelines and descriptions

Milestone	Anticipated Timeline	Task Description
Pre-Grant Preparations	April 1, 2024	Determine financial allotments for each food pantry within the FOCUS Food Network. This will cover a 30 month period (May 2024 to October 2026).
Start date for ARPA Grant	May 1, 2024	FOCUS Food Network Coordinator initiates the purchase and reimbursement process
Three month Program Review	Aug 1, 2024	Assess spending 10% of food budget; update spending allotments for each food pantry partner; invite new food pantries to join our network (as needed)
Six month Program Review	Nov 1, 2024	Assess spending 20% of food budget; update spending allotments for each food pantry partner; invite new food pantries to join our network (as needed)
First Year Program Review	April 30, 2025	Assess spending 40% of food budget; update spending allotments for each food pantry partner and send MOUs for 2nd year; invite new food pantries to join our network (as needed)
Second Year Program Review	April 30, 2026	Assess spending 80% of food budget; update spending allotments for each food pantry partner and send MOUs for remaining six months; invite new food pantries to join our network (as needed)
Final (30 month) Program Review	October 31, 2026	Assess spending 100% of food budget; finalize spending allotments for each food pantry partner

At the top of this page is a downloadable project budget. Please download the budget form and upload it here.

- [Budget-ARPA-Grant-FOCUS-Jan-4-2024.pdf](#)

If you are funding a multi-year initiative, please provide a breakdown of funding level per year below:

2024	2025	2026
\$121,465 (26.7%)	\$182,198 (40%)	\$151,839 (33.3%)

Use this space to provide a narrative supporting and clarify anything from the proposed project budget above. In addition, if "Other Funds" or "Other Uses" are included above, please specify the source(s) below.

Expenditures, Line 16 "Other Costs Not Listed":
 We are using this line to list food being purchased during this grant period. We are requesting \$253,750 of the ARPA grant to cover food costs. In the "Other Uses," we list \$505,750 on Line 16, to show food purchases which will be covered by the Nourish NY grant.
 Also, in Lines 1 and 2 of "Other Uses," we are listing Personnel (\$65,164) and Fringe (\$21,007) to be covered by non-ARPA sources (e.g. HPNAP grant, NNY grant, self contributions, etc.)

Other Funds:
 Nourish NY Grant: \$559,921 (NNY Grant is distributed by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and managed by NYS Dept. of Health)
 Self contribution: \$30,000
 Fundraising event: \$2,000
 Total of matching funds: \$591,921

Explain why ARPA funds are needed to complete the proposed program/project. Would the proposal be possible

without ARPA assistance? Describe how your proposal would be impacted if you are awarded a smaller grant than requested?

Unlike some direct contractors with the Dept. of Agriculture, FOCUS Churches of Albany chose to share NNY funds with ten other food pantries in a spirit of collaboration as we tackle food insecurity. There is no other regional network - exclusively serving Albany County - which is as large and as collaborative as ours. However, in our spirit of cooperation, we have concluded that we all need additional funds to purchase more food to keep up with the increasing needs at our food pantries. Our request for \$455,492 in ARPA funds, of which \$253,750 is exclusively for food purchases, will help us to better meet the needs of our neighbors. Of course, we are flexible, and we can adjust to a different amount of ARPA grant award -- whether you choose to grant us more or less funding. Either way, we can adapt. We are here to serve.

ARPA funds must be expended by December 31, 2026. Please describe how your project will be sustained if it will continue beyond this date.

Our plan is to have Albany County farms and food producers, as well as regional ones, adapt to the needs of Nourish NY grant funding, so that they will be certified to benefit for this Dept. of Agriculture program. To be clear: Our ARPA Grant proposal is for 30 months. It would overlap with the five-year Nourish NY grant for which FOCUS is a direct contractor with the Dept. of Agriculture. So, at the conclusion of the ARPA grant period, there will still be a balance of 20 months of Nourish NY funding for the FOCUS Food Network. For sustainability, it is planned that newer Albany farms and food producers -- not currently certified through the Dept. of Agriculture and not currently participating in the Nourish NY program -- will be able to onboard with Nourish NY during the 30 months of this ARPA grant period. Ultimately, this would allow food pantries within our FOCUS Food Network to continue purchasing food from Albany farms and food producers after the ARPA grant period (by using NNY grant funds). In this win-win scenario, Albany County residents get locally grown nutritious food, while Albany farms and food producers eventually onboard to the Nourish NY certification, with the ARPA funds as an incentive. Additionally, at the end of our ARPA grant period, we will prepare a system by which CSA farm shares - typically purchased by middle-class and upper-middle class households, and not typically available for food insecure households - will become accessible to food insecure residents of Albany County. Some ARPA funds will be used to purchase CSA shares from local farms for local households. At the conclusion of this ARPA grant period, we will have an accessible process by which local businesses, houses of worship, and concerned individuals will be able to donate CSA shares for food insecure households (beyond the ARPA grant period). This process will benefit both Albany farmers and food insecure households. Relationships between our local food pantries and local farms will continue beyond the ARPA grant timeframe. Win-win.

List any project partners/subrecipients:

The FOCUS Food Network is created and managed by FOCUS Churches of Albany. Partners in the FOCUS Food Network, who would benefit from this ARPA Grant include food pantries operated by: St. Vincent's Church (Albany), Blessed Sacrament Church (Albany), St. James' (Albany), Welcome Chapel (Albany), Hackett Middle School (Albany), Sheridan Preparatory Academy (Albany), First Church-Reformed (Albany), St. Patrick's Church (Ravena), Venture Churches (Selkirk), Trinity United Methodist (Coeymans Hollow), as well as the FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry and FOCUS Breakfast Club (soup kitchen).

Please list any matching funds:

Nourish NY Grant: \$559,921 (NNY Grant is distributed by the NYS Dept. of Agriculture and managed by NYS Dept. of Health)
Self contribution: \$30,000
Fundraising event: \$2,000
Total of matching funds: \$591,921

Tax Information or Additional Information

Please upload Federal tax returns for tax year 2019

- [FOCUS-2019-IRS-990.pdf](#)

(OPTIONAL) please feel free to upload anything which you feel would strengthen your application.

- [Letters-of-Support-FOCUS-ARPA-Grant-Jan-2024.pdf](#)

Risk Assessment:

Has the organization adopted and/or implemented policies relating to: records retention, conflict of interest, code of ethics, and/or nondiscrimination policies

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

FOCUS monitors compliance with the policy by the FOCUS Board President requiring each individual covered by the policy (for example, members of the Board of Directors, and the Executive Director) to disclose, on an annual basis, any relationships with people doing business with the organization that could give rise to a conflict of interest. In addition to annually reviewing and requiring signed Conflict of Interest Forms, the FOCUS Board President requires each board member to review and sign Code of Ethics Forms.

Is the organization properly insured?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify the types of insurance held and the limits:

FOCUS has a commercial general liability insurance policy through Church Mutual Insurance Company, with limits of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence; \$1,000,000 for personal injury; \$3,000,000 for general aggregate.

Does the organization have a financial management system?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

Executive Director, Office Manager, and Bookkeeper maintain the financial system, with oversight from the Comptroller and FOCUS Board of Directors Finance Committee. Annual IRS 990 forms, and other related tax forms, are filed by an independent CPA.

Has there been any change in your organization's key staffing positions in the last 2 years?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

Current Breakfast Program Coordinator was hired in September 2022. A new position has been created, to assist with increased services: Director of Programs (started in September 2023). Otherwise, we have the same persons in the senior staff positions: Executive Director, Office Manager, Volunteer Coordinator, and Food Pantry Director.

Has the organization previously done work for the Federal government (i.e. Is the entity experienced in managing Federal funds)?

Yes

If you selected "Yes" above, please specify:

For many years, FOCUS has been a direct contractor for EFSP grants and HPNAP grants (federal funds issued by/through NY State Department of Health).

Certifications

Acknowledgment 1

I Have Read and Understand the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (see below link)
U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds:
<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Compliance-and-Reporting-Guidance.pdf>

Acknowledgment 2

Should the County Allocate ARPA Funds, I am Able to and Pledge to Adhere to ALL Compliance and Reporting Requirements of the U.S. Treasury as it relates to any State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Acknowledgment 3

I Understand the County Will Contact me if/when Additional Information is Needed and that Information will be Promptly Provided to the County to Support Reporting Requirements

Acknowledgment 4

If for Any Reason I am Unable to Comply with the U.S. Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Requirements I will Immediately Notify the County in writing by email or letter

Acknowledgment 5

All Information Submitted in this Application is True & Accurate

Electronic Signature Agreement

I agree

By checking the "I agree" box, you agree and acknowledge that 1) your application will not be signed in the sense of a traditional paper document, 2) by signing in this alternate manner, you authorize your electronic signature to be valid and binding upon you to the same force and effect as a handwritten signature, and 3) you may still be required to provide a traditional signature at a later date.

Type name

Fred Boehrer