

Expansion of the Rampart Range Food Pantry

Pikes Peak Community College

English 122.129

Service Learning

Professor Jenna Benson

Captain: Alexis Prete

Secretary: Katherine Barden

Writers: Alexis Prete, Jeremy Roberts, Kat Barden, Joshua Gilbert, Hope Hamlin, Whitney McCoy, Walter Pasco, Anthony Turner, Kayla Warddell

Executive Summary

Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC) is the largest institution of higher learning in southern Colorado, serving over 19,000 students. For the past 52 years, PPCC has endeavoured to provide accessible learning opportunities to all.

PPCC established their food pantry, in conjunction with other organizations like Care and Share and United Way, to help students and other members of the Colorado Springs community get the food they need. This food pantry reaches 13,000 people and distributes 139,000 pounds of food.

Pikes Peak Community College Rampart Range Campus respectively request a grant of \$5,000 from Walmart to help in the expansion of the food pantry at the Rampart Range Campus. By continuing to better our community PPCC and Walmart can strive to accomplish our collective missions.

Introduction

Students enrolled in the English Composition 2 (ENG122.129) Pikes Peak Community College Rampart Range Campus are proposing the expansion, improvement of advertising, and bettering of the food pantry that the campus already offers as a part of their service learning and

community-based learning section of the course. The school is requesting \$5,000 that would go to getting a variety of food for the pantry, better advertisements through newsletters and posters, and increasing accessibility to the food pantry.

Organization Description and History

Pikes Peak Community College was founded in a Safeway grocery store in 1967. It was called El Paso Community College at its inception and currently serves more than 19,000 students in the Colorado Springs community. The downtown studio and rampart range campuses were created in 1986 and 1998, respectively, to help students access higher learning. PPCC's growth has focused on the Colorado Springs area community. Land for the Centennial Campus was purchased from Ft Carson for \$1 because of PPCC's dedication to military members. Rampart Range Campus was built in 1998, and programs that made it easy for students to transfer were developed throughout the 90s. According to Katherine Sturdevant, in 1986, when the El Paso County Sheriff Bernard Barry, a PPCC graduate himself, expressed a need for more manpower, PPCC developed its Pikes Peak Law Enforcement Academy (Sturdevant, 1).

PPCC has become the largest institution of higher education in southern Colorado with 19,000 students currently enrolled. Of these students, one third of them are currently, were formerly, or have relatives in the military (Instructional, 1).

PPCC's commitment to the community does not stop with offering affordable, quality education based on the needs of the community, or at establishing campuses, both physical and online, to give students access to the school they need. In 1981 PPCC established the Pikes Peak Community College Foundation. This foundation is a non-profit with the goal of providing scholarships to students while expanding on and creating new academic programs. Along with scholarships, PPCC created a food pantry where students struggling financially could receive food for free (The Foundation 1). Currently, the Centennial campus has the largest food pantry. There is also a community table where students can not only get the food they need, but also find resources to help them cope with their current situation.

In addition to the food pantry and community table, there is another program called PPCC Cares. With the help of Care and Share, the United Way, and over one thousand volunteers, PPCC Cares has distributed nearly one-hundred and forty thousand pounds of food to more than thirteen thousand people in need. The Office of Student Life at PPCC provides free hygiene materials to students at each of their offices while also maintaining satellite food pantries at the Downtown Studio and Rampart Range campuses. PPCC also hosts events at Centennial Campus known as the community table. Other than offering food to students and staff, these events have navigators from United Way 211 in place to help direct people to additional community resources. Care and Share helps PPCC put on monthly mobile food markets that distribute food from the donations that Care and Share receives (PPCC Cares - Food Assistance,1).

According to Care and Share Food Bank, they host Mobile Food Pantry distributions in areas across Southern Colorado with limited access to grocery stores and other food resources. Care and Share Food Bank also hosts special Summer Mobile Food Pantries to make nutritious food accessible to children and their families in the summer when school food is unavailable. PPCC's partnership with Care and Share has enabled the community college to have access to healthy

and affordable food to help supply out-reach programs like food pantries and the community table (Mobile Food Pantry,1).

The mission statement of the PPCC Foundation is to "Raise awareness of the critical impact of PPCC on individuals, families and communities in the region AND to generate the resources required to further enrich PPCC's academic programs, launch new initiatives and provide scholarships for tens of thousands of deserving students" (About the PPCC Foundation,1).

PPCC's mission is to provide high quality, educational opportunities accessible to all, with a focus on student success and community needs, including occupational programs for youth and adults in career and technical fields, two-year transfer educational programs to qualify students for admission to the junior year at other colleges and universities, and a broad range of personal, career, and technical education for adults (Vision & Mission, 1).

PPCC values a community built on learning, mutual respect, and diversity. Teaching and Learning: with a primary commitment to student learning, success, and achievement, while promoting open and universal access to an affordable education and affirming the importance of our facilities and learning environments Mutual Respect and Accountability: Because people are our greatest resource, we foster a culture rooted in civility, mutual trust, and support, and hold ourselves accountable for our decisions and actions. Community and Diversity: We engage and support our community while embracing diversity, as it enriches lives and educational experiences (Vision & Mission,1).

According to Walmart.org, businesses exist to serve society. For Walmart, the belief that their grocery store should be a service to society is accomplished in many ways. Because they are the world's largest grocer, Walmart is capable of providing convenient access to affordable food. They do so in ways that help create economic opportunity, enhance long-term environmental sustainability, and strengthen local communities. This shared value approach is complemented by Walmart.org's philanthropic investments. Those investments focus on areas where strengths and expertise are used to collaborate with others to bring about system-wide change. Walmart.org and PPCC have shared goals within the scope of their mission statements. We hope that by partnering with Walmart.org, Pikes Peak Community College can expand on its efforts to provide food for people in need (What We Do,1).

Current Situation

A humanitarian crisis is characterized as an event or series of events that represent a critical threat to the health, safety, security, or well-being of a community or large groups of people (What is a Humanitarian Emergency, 1). Humanitarian crises have affected people throughout history. While the causes of these tragic events vary from case to case, one of the main obstacles that presents itself when a humanitarian crisis arises comes in the form of a food shortage in the affected area. Whether the crisis is the result of a natural disaster or because an entire country found itself torn apart by a war fought by people, it becomes extremely difficult for the area suffering through the ordeal to gain access to enough fresh food that provides nutritional value. North Korea suffered from a debilitating famine during the nineteen nineties, and as a result of losing access to fresh food, the civilians living there suffered horribly.

According to a report published in nineteen ninety-eight (Smith, 1), a steady decline in harvest production throughout the decade resulted in as many as 2.4 million deaths accredited to malnutrition. Food is a necessity essential to a person's survival, and even if death is not the ultimate result of someone suffering from food insecurity, it is the most serious concern. This famine was created by a mixture of natural disasters decimating the agricultural infrastructure already in place as well as the political landscape, not only in the country suffering from the famine, but from other countries threatening to withhold aid unless changes were made to the way North Korea was governed. Regardless of the factors creating the crisis, the result remains the same. People died because they lost access to a sustainable amount of food. More recently, Venezuela found itself in the middle of a destabilizing humanitarian crisis.

Like North Korea in the nineteen nineties, Venezuela has been suffering from food shortages throughout the country for years. A report from the Human Rights Watch (Venezuela Events of 2018, 1) lists the causes of the humanitarian crisis taking place in the country, but one of the most disturbing figures comes when the report lists the numbers related to food shortages and malnutrition. With seventeen percent of children under the age of five, suffering from moderate to severe malnutrition. Eighty percent of households within the country reporting themselves as food insecure, food stability is a major concern affecting nearly an entire country's population. Hunger and the effects of being forced into a subpar diet are topics of immense importance to the people living through a crisis of this scale, but people living in a situation as dire as this are not the only ones worried about having enough food to eat. Even in a country as prosperous as the United States, many Americans find themselves worrying over where their next meal will come from.

Fear of running out of enough food to eat has become a serious issue for many people living today. That fear is not one that only worries people living in third world countries. Americans living all across the country have begun acknowledging that limited access to food is now a real threat to their future. During a poll taken by the guardian newspaper in 2016 (Milman, 1), it was revealed that the most pressing issue Americans worried about resulting from global warming was access to food. According to people who responded to the survey, presidential candidates must be prepared to accept the topic of food shortage as a very serious problem. Well-defined plans about how to combat this serious threat to human health and safety must also be introduced by the men and women running for the highest levels of elected office, if they want to have any hope of gaining the trust of the people they are working to represent. In Colorado, like the rest of the country, worrying about finding enough food to eat has been a serious problem for a large number of residents.

In Colorado, like many other areas throughout the world, food insecurity affects many people. A document released by the department of agriculture lists the number of people suffering from food security between 2015 and 2017 at 9.2% (Coleman, 20). A problem clearly exists when

one in eleven people spend a portion of the year unsure about where their next meal will come from. The number of people suffering from food insecurity decreased to the lowest rate between 2015 and 2017, but nine percent is still a large percentage of the population to have fearing this problem. Food insecurity can be a difficult concept to grasp for someone who has never found themselves worrying about where their next meal will come from, but for someone struggling with the issue on a daily basis, a helping hand could mean the difference between succumbing to the reality that this struggle will be a part of their daily lives forever and striving to defeat it. With so many of its citizens struggling to provide themselves with a staple necessity for individual survival, the state legislature in Colorado has passed bills through the state's congress to make it easier for people in need to gain access to food.

Bill HB19-1171 expands the school lunch program in Colorado to include even more students whose families are having trouble providing them with lunch every day (Colorado, 1). The bill now makes it possible for high school aged children to participate in a program to receive either free or reduced cost lunches. This expansion of the school lunch program was signed into law in 2019 which makes it the most recent state legislation to tackle the issue of food insecurity. While it is nice to see state level representatives taking the initiative to provide school aged children with food on a daily basis, more needs to be done at the college level to provide people looking to further their lives through higher education with more access to nutritional meals while the expensive bills of college put a strain on their resources.

Food insecurity is a major problem for many of the people who choose to attend college. Seventy-three percent of enrollees listed as non-traditional students and fifty-two percent living at or below the federal poverty line (College, 6), the daunting task of seeking further education while still being able to afford the rest of the bills one accrues while going to school becomes increasingly challenging. The amount of money a person makes is directly proportional to the access they have to quality food and with so many college students living in poverty, a sacrifice they find themselves making comes in the form of the food they are able to buy. While furthering one's education to provide themselves with a quality education and increased opportunities in the business world is an important aspect of life, making themselves less healthy in the process should not be considered an acceptable risk. Many students try to offset the high costs of education with aid programs and by working. However, this rarely amounts to enough money to cover all their bills and provide themselves with sustainable access to nutritional meals.

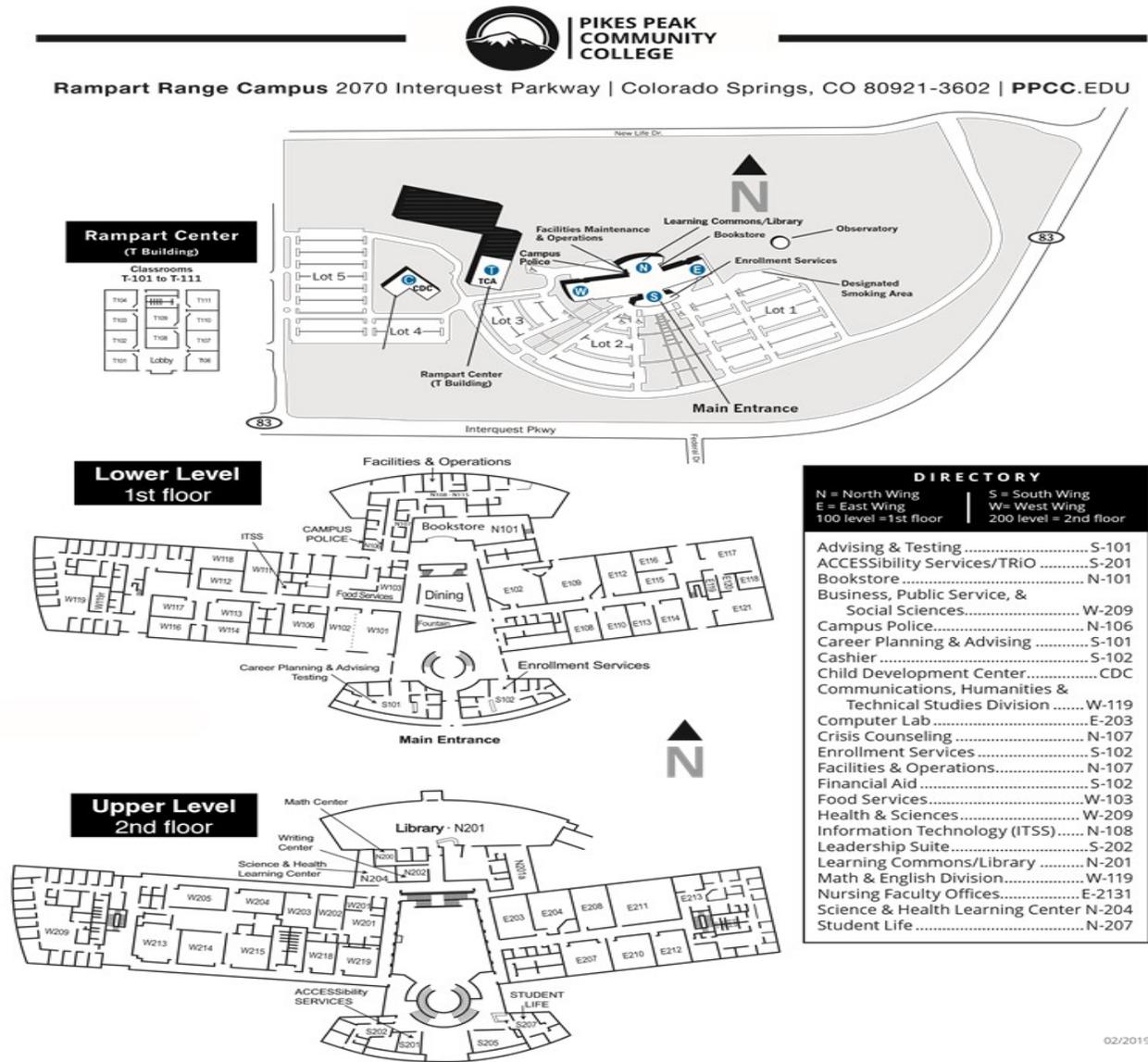
Tuition rates continue to rise, and with the amount of financial aid students can receive unable to keep up with the increasing costs, more than forty percent of students now work full time or part time jobs as they attempt to alleviate the costs of advanced education (Pollard, 1). A study in 2017 found that thirty-six percent of university students and forty-two percent of community college students suffer from some form of food inadequacy (Pollard, 1). With such an emphasis placed on attending college to further one's position in life, finding ways for those students to feed themselves should not be such a prevalent problem for the institutions taking charge of

shaping the minds of tomorrow. Food pantries do a great job addressing the pressing issue of food security on college campuses.

Food pantries operate at more than 640 university and college campuses across the country (Levitan, 1). These places provide a haven for students having trouble finding a way to feed themselves to seek the help they need. Those students who are finding it difficult to come up with the money to afford food because the other expenses associated with college have forced them to make sacrifices, a food pantry can be like a beacon calling someone in out of the darkness. To go home at the end of the night with the knowledge that they are going to go to bed with their bellies full, at least for that day, can have a great positive impact on a person. While there are numerous benefits to feeding someone unable to provide for his or her self, expanding to be able to reach more people becomes vital for a food pantry to meet the needs of the growing number of students suffering from food insecurity.

According to the person who runs the food pantry at Pikes Peak Community College Rampart Range Campus, only five people visit the food pantry on a monthly basis (Ellard, 1). There are many reasons that could cause such a low turnout, and this grant proposal hopes to address some of the issues presently existing with the program at this campus to help more students. Expanding the pantry to include more items to appeal to more people is an important aspect of the food pantry which will be addressed. Outreach will be included in the expansion program, which means more students in need will learn of the benefits of the food pantry program. Sometimes, reading a poster stating that there is help available is all that is necessary to provide a person in crisis with hope. Hope is not only the ability to feed themselves for an evening, but instilling a belief that there is community surrounding that person willing to take personal responsibility for their well-being.

Hope is the true benefit expanding the food pantry at Pikes Peak Rampart Range Campus will provide to the recipients of the program, but there are unfortunately no quantifiable metrics to measure the positive benefits providing hope has on the individual receiving it. Helping to pick someone up when they stumble is a quality found in good people, and that is the final goal anyone running a food pantry should have. Providing someone in crisis with a nutritious meal to enjoy and instilling a hope that their future can be brighter.



Project Description

Pikes Peak Community College has three different physical campuses in Colorado Springs. At each campus there is a Student Life service which controls all of the activities outside the

classroom. One of the programs Life services is in charge of is the food pantry. The first food pantry at PPCC was started at the Centennial Campus in 2008. After seeing the pantry at Centennial become successful, the Downtown Campus opened its own pantry in 2009. Rampart Range Campus followed suit with a pantry of its own in 2017. Because the Centennial Campus food pantry was successful, that was the model used to open the other pantries. At the Rampart Range Campus, the need for the pantry has grown since the pantry opened. The food pantries at PPCC are crucial to students in need, and play a vital role in helping them cope when it becomes impossible to afford both college and food to eat.

The three food pantries were all designed with one goal in mind. To help the students of their school suffering from food insecurity. As stated in the mission statement and core values “We engage and support our community while embracing diversity, as it enriches lives and educational experience.” Additionally, the mission statement of the food pantries is to increase, collect, organize, and deliver to those in need in our college’s communities. In order to achieve this mission statement, the food pantry is helping to solve the food needs of the diverse student body. Food pantries provide students with food on a bi-weekly basis while also helping to reduce the stress that accompanies being forced to cope with food insecurity.

The current head of the food pantry, Cheryl Ellard, puts her heart and soul into helping others by running the food pantries. Ellard serves as the Administrative Assistant for Student Life at Pikes Peak Community College. She is also the point of contact for the food pantry at the Downtown Campus location.

The food pantry at the Rampart Range campus operates with money collected from students as a fee when they pay tuition. The student fees go to the student government which then allocates the money to different programs. A set amount is given to Life services to spend on food and other essentials. Ellard explained that in fiscal year 2018-19, the Downtown Campus spent an average of five hundred dollars per month on food for the pantry. She purchased the food from the local Care and Share food bank at a discounted price. There is also a specific list of what the students like and what is easiest for them to prepare. The list is important because it serves as a guide when deciding which food items will be purchased.

Ellard also explained the basics of how the pantry works. She states, “There are no specific qualifications for students to come to the food pantry. The only thing is that they need to be a student here at PPCC” (Ellard). This makes the pantry available to anyone who needs it, no questions asked. The minimal qualifications are implemented to help students feel comfortable with visiting the food pantry. The pantry has a certain allocation of the amount of items available for each person, and Ellard says, “Students are allowed to come inside twice a week and they can choose up to eight items per visit” (Ellard). She expressed that this new two-item policy was requested among the student body and has been much more promising since the change went into effect in August. Those eight items consist of staples that are easiest for college students to eat and prepare. On average, there are about five students per month that visit the food pantry at the Rampart campus. There

The downtown campus location receives twenty-eight visitors per month. Ellard also expressed that most of the food items purchased are non perishable food items which promotes more of a “food on the go” mentality that the students prefer. The open door policy makes it easier for the

students to receive the help that they need. The policy also allows students to not feel ashamed or reluctant to visit considering students from all walks of life can visit the pantry as well.

Additionally, a volunteer of the food pantry named Anne Marie Manning gave another point of view to how the pantry is run. The interview included several questions about what the food banks at Pikes Peak Community College has to offer the community, students, and staff. Manning described the issue and gave statistics, “30% to 40% of college students are on the line of poverty and the mission is to address this issue”. This shows how success in school is tied directly to the spectrum of food insecurity. Manning also stated that “if students are not eating they are not learning. Providing food to those living on a fine line between poverty can affect many aspects of a person’s life.”

After reviewing the cost of food , Manning said “A \$20 donation can buy 100 pounds of food". That being said, the authors of this proposal believe that extra money coming in from grants and donations could drastically increase the amount of food given to the community, staff, and students. There is a demand for a more efficient food pantry at Rampart Range campus. An expanded food pantry will be very beneficial in the later winter months when Colorado Springs typically faces harsher storms and conditions.

When it came to the budget, the main focus centered around the expansion and sustainability for the Rampart Range campus. There is also a need for smooth continuity between the grant proposal to the student government. Ellard's setup at the PPCC downtown location was used as a guide for the budgeting and pantry setup. The goal is to begin by bringing awareness to the Rampart Range community for the food pantry, followed by providing a sustainable system for students in the future. Visiting Ellard’s operation at the other location played a key role in this grant proposals budgeting for the pantry at the Rampart Range location.

Ultimately, this group of writers came together to address a specific issue within the Pikes Peak Community College community. We sought out members of the food pantry from other campuses to discuss the function, operation, and demands of all locations in hopes to improve the Rampart Range location. It also became imperative to understand how and why the help would be beneficial to the school overall. Meeting pantry members Ellard and Anne Marie ultimately provided a deeper understanding and further insight into the history of the program, as well as a clear vision for the pantry’s future. Even though each pantry follows a slightly different system for functioning, they each have the same overall goal. These members also provided us with viable current feedback on the pantries current state and daily needs. The pantry at the Rampart location is fairly new and could greatly benefit from additional funding to help it become just as successful as the pantries at the other campuses. It is believed that once the student body becomes aware of and are educated on the food pantry, more students in need will visit and utilize the services provided. Additional funding will be required to meet the growing demand of students. There will always be people in need of food, and by continuing to work with members of the food pantry and the student government, more solutions to improve the pantry can be found. Ultimately, we want to turn the food pantry at Pikes Peak Community College Rampart Range Campus into a great success story.

Cost*Over an eight month period*

Expenditure Category	Student Fees Currently Being Spent	Grant Funds Being Requested	Total
Plastic Bags	\$0	\$75	\$75
Perishable Food	\$0	\$2,100	\$2,100
Non-Perishable Food	\$4,000	\$2,225	\$6,225
Add-Ons and Improvements	\$0	\$600	\$600
Totals	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$9,000

Timeline

- 01 November 2019 (Spending Allocations)
 - o Spend \$600 or food equivalent on non-perishable food for holiday season
 - o Spending \$600 on addition of shelving (\$100), a transportation cooler (\$100), and refrigeration (\$200) and annual electrical bill (\$200) in physical storage room
 - o Set up the new addition of shelves and refrigeration to be utilized for the next month
 - o In-house advertising and awareness of the food pantry to students in classes or in person events
 - o Spend \$75 or bag equivalent on plastic bags for students to carry food in
- 01 December 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$725 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food for holiday season
- 01 January 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
 - o Inhouse advertising and awareness of the food pantry to students in classes or in person events

- 01 February 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
- 01 March 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
- 01 April 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
- 01 May 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
 - o Inhouse advertising and awareness of the food pantry to students in classes or in person events
- 01 June 2019 (Spending Allocation)
 - o Spend \$500 or food equivalent on non-perishable, as well as perishable food
- Total: \$5,000 for 8 months