



Why AmpleHarvest.org

AmpleHarvest.org is exactly the type of program that many funders would be interested in supporting if their “why this nonprofit” questions could be answered. So we did.

AmpleHarvest.org is a well-established award winning national non-profit with a mission to provide food insecure people with a sustained source of fresh, nutritious produce by educating and enabling America’s gardeners to donate their surplus harvests to local food pantries. Our ultimate goal is to bring about an awareness and a behavioral shift in America’s home gardeners that will ultimately eliminate the waste of surplus homegrown garden produce.

The questions we often hear are

1. Are you actually solving a problem or are you reacting to it? Is this a sustained solution?
2. Tell me how you make my \$1 donation create more than \$1 of impact.
3. Do you collaborate with other organizations?
4. How easily do you scale your operations and at one cost?
5. What funding challenges do you encounter?
6. Lastly, why you? What makes your nonprofit unique in the space (are you doing the same thing that other nonprofits do and possibly do better?) Why is your program better than others?

This document answers these questions.

Imagine encountering someone on the street who extends their hand, asking for spare change. As you reach for your coins, you notice a trail of money falling from a hole in their pocket. You could give them the loose change you have, or you could first help them mend the pocket – ensuring your generosity makes a lasting impact.

America’s hunger programs raise billions of dollars annually to buy food for hungry families, yet they largely overlook the staggering 50% of big agriculture produce lost to waste each year, and they have totally overlooked the 11 billion pounds of surplus harvests in America’s 62 million gardens. This is nutrient dense food that could help prevent or alleviate diet-related illnesses such as Type II diabetes and obesity in America’s most vulnerable populations. Analysis done by Cisco Systems calculated that this wasted food could save Americans over \$58 billion in health care costs every year had it were instead donated to a food pantry. This is a missed opportunity that could help food-insecure families at a near-zero cost.

AmpleHarvest.org is uniquely focused on helping local food pantries nationwide receive freshly harvested, locally grown, and often culturally relevant food. We achieve this by educating and enabling gardeners to donate their surplus, year after year.

Much like Uber and Lyft solve transportation problems using information, AmpleHarvest.org uses information to address garden food waste and hunger. Uber and Lyft do not own cars or employ drivers; similarly, AmpleHarvest.org does not own gardens nor help gardeners garden, employ gleaners, manage food pantries or even transport food. Instead, this logistics free solution connects gardeners and nearby

food pantries, leveraging information for a highly efficient, scalable solution with zero logistical overhead.

A significant shortfall of America's food safety net is its focus on feeding people rather than systemically ending hunger. AmpleHarvest.org's flattening of the food bank network architecture by enabling donations to bypass regional food bank chokepoints, something Feeding America and its member food banks can't do, represents the pivot needed in the food safety net. Our partnership with Feeding America and their promotion of AmpleHarvest.org underscores this shift; one of our early board members was the Executive Director of Feeding America San Diego, and recently, Feeding America has supported our Native American program.

America's food programs respond to people being hungry by buying/distributing mostly processed food. AmpleHarvest.org addresses the problem by enabling freely available fresh food to get to these families on a sustained basis, which exponentially increases our impact. A \$100 donation to a food bank yields \$100 worth of food. However, the same donation to AmpleHarvest.org provides \$496 worth of food in the first year alone. Unlike food bank donations, which are consumed and gone, a contribution to AmpleHarvest.org continues to grow over time. For instance, that \$100 donation will grow to \$107,273 worth of donated food by the 20th year, totaling \$148,517 cumulatively over the two decades. This is because once a gardener learns they can donate their surplus, they will continue to donate for the rest of their lives, share this awareness with neighboring gardeners (which contributes to scaling) and many even grow more just so they can make larger donations. Our impact tool, created by a Harvard Business School alumni team, illustrates this at www.AmpleHarvest.org/ourimpact.

Collaboration is key to our efficiency. AmpleHarvest.org partners with over 8,200 food pantries, connecting them with millions of gardeners nationwide. We collaborate with Feeding America and all of its member food banks, the USDA's Master Gardener program, numerous gardening organizations, the entire faith community (which houses 70% of all food pantries), and Native American reservation-based food programs.

Our collaborative efforts not only enhance AmpleHarvest.org's reach, but also benefit nearly all food waste and hunger programs as we make our resources freely available to them. This allows these organizations to focus on their specialties, creating a synergistic impact.

AmpleHarvest.org's approach addresses two critical information gaps: misinformation about gardeners' ability to donate food, and the lack of information on where and when to donate. As we close these gaps, we foresee a future where our operations could scale back or even cease, unlike traditional food programs that must continually raise funds to move food as long as hunger exists.

Challenges we face in the funding landscape include:

- The common misconception that more food is the solution to hunger, whereas we believe in utilizing surplus food more effectively
- The oversight of 11 billion pounds of surplus produce in 62 million gardens across America.
- The underestimation of gardener's frustration with seeing surplus harvests go to waste and their passion to do the right thing. AmpleHarvest.org makes food donation as easy as donating used clothing.
- Most people think our food comes only from farm and food manufacturers while overlooking the 11 billion pounds of surplus harvests in 62 million gardens across America.
- Lastly, many hunger funders are locally or regionally focused while AmpleHarvest.org is most efficient and effective on a nationwide level.

AmpleHarvest.org is unique in this space because our target audience is backyard gardeners, whose harvests are frequently overlooked. Our 15-year partnership with Google and more recent partnerships with Bonnie Plants and Home Depot help us reach these gardeners. Another unique aspect of our work is that we have recently expanded, with support and leadership from Tribal elders and Indigenous food sovereignty experts, the program to work on Native American reservations where people do more gardening per capita than any other segment of America.

AmpleHarvest.org operates efficiently in any community, similar to Uber and Lyft, due to its information-based model, which scales in real-time at a near-zero cost. Currently, AmpleHarvest.org covers 5,600 communities across all 50 states, with a staff of only four.

AmpleHarvest.org is unmatched in its space because no other program operates on this scale. We are the only solution addressing the root cause of backyard garden food waste impacting hunger and nutrition on a national level.

Support AmpleHarvest.org for a truly sustainable solution to hunger and food waste in America.