

**Addressing Food Insecurity on ASU Campuses with Pitchfork Pantry**

A Pitchspoon Project - Marissa Ruiz, Eliana Burns, & Haley Hernandez

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Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

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### **About the Project**

This project is a requirement for the completion of the Masters of Sustainability Solutions (MSUS) program at Arizona State University's (ASU) School of Sustainability at the College of Global Futures (CGF). The program is designed to address complex human and environmental challenges, utilizing the School of Sustainability's core sustainability competencies, which include: systems thinking, future thinking, values thinking, strategic thinking, collaborative competency.

### **Meet Team Pitchspoon**

Pitchspoon consists of three Masters of Sustainability Solutions in the Julie Ann Wrigley College of Global Futures at Arizona State University: Eliana Burns, Haley Hernandez, and Marissa Ruiz. Our different backgrounds aid us in creating a unique perspective on intersectional sustainability issues. Our mission is to be able to serve and improve the ASU community by ensuring adequate food access and promoting food security with the Pitchfork Pantry. As a team, we strive to collaborate effectively through open communication, shared/agreed upon deadlines, aligned worldly values, and differing perspectives in order to accomplish our goals. We desire to make progress towards developing a campus where no student goes without access to nutritious food.

### **Executive Summary**

Food insecurity is an issue prevalent in the United States. Food insecurity causes several negative physical and mental concerns. These include disordered eating, risk of chronic illness, and increased risk of depression and anxiety. Food insecurity results from unreliable access to adequate food supplies, often stemming from financial insecurity. This issue is extremely pervasive in college campuses, though it is often left unaddressed. Pitchfork Pantry was created to address this issue at Arizona State University.

The goal of this report is to summarize the work done by Team Pitchspoon to promote Pitchfork Pantry's mission of addressing campus food insecurity, which is prevalent at ASU. Over the past year, Team Pitchspoon has worked to help Pitchfork Pantry create a more sustainable food system, increase accessibility to the pantry, and address labor concerns. Team Pitchspoon has completed a number of deliverables in order to accomplish this plan. These deliverables include: plans for a Zero Waste composting partnership, a completed website, addition of Pitchfork Pantry locations to Google and Apple Maps, an application to the Council of Academic Advisors Digest, plans for a division of labor and duties within Pitchfork Pantry, and an AmeriCorps Vista sponsor site application.

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### **Food Insecurity Among College Students**

Food insecurity is defined as a lack of reliable access to safe, healthy food as a result of household financial vulnerability (USDA, 2021; Bruening et al., 2016). Food insecurity is an ongoing global challenge, highlighted as Goal 2: Zero Hunger in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.). In 2021, approximately 33.8 million people lived in food-insecure households within the United States, with 8.6 million adults living in households with extremely low food insecurity (U.S. Department of Agriculture, n.d.). While many studies have been conducted on how food insecurity can affect children and adults, one population remains largely excluded from the conversation — college students.

In 2019, it was discovered that 39% of students who attended four-year and two-year schools had experienced food insecurity (Rowan, 2021). This is because first-year college students experiencing new financial stressors, such as high tuition costs and increasing costs of living, were more likely to experience hunger (Henry, 2017; Bruening et al., 2016). For many that rely on microwave meals and instant ramen, it's important to recognize that "adequate food" must be nutritious and meet one's dietary needs. Fueling your brain and body with non-nutritious foods can severely impact organizational, planning, and memory skills (Guerithault et al., 2022). Food insecure students have demonstrated low academic performance, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and minimal campus involvement (Henry, 2017). Thus, these young adults are reportedly 43% less likely to graduate and 61% less likely to earn a professional or graduate degree (John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2021). However, many of these students are not likely to seek aid offered by food banks and pantries, social services, or other forms of aid (Henry, 2017; Bruening et al., 2016). It is possible that the commonly depicted broke, struggling college student has led to normalized food and financial insecurity. Food

pantries aimed at serving young adults in college can be more accessible than community food banks because they require little to no transportation and better understand the needs of their target population.

Food insecurity has also been linked to racial and ethnic disparities since the concentration of economic and social disadvantages are significant among people of color. In a study from 2001 to 2016, Hispanic households and non-Hispanic black households were two times as likely to experience food insecurity than that of non-Hispanic white households. A similar trend, documented from 2000 to 2010, displayed that those who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native were also twice as likely to be food insecure than white households (Odoms-Young, 2018). If populations of color are more likely to experience food insecurity, then they are also more likely to have impaired academic performance as a result of hunger. This systemic issue should be viewed from an equal opportunity lens, especially since higher education actively promotes the concept of sustainability to foster inclusion, diversity, and equity (White, 2020).

### **About Pitchfork Pantry**

Pitchfork Pantry is a student-led non-profit food pantry that works to supply resources to food insecure students at Arizona State University. The organization was founded in 2017 in response to a study from the College of Health Solutions, revealing that 37% of ASU freshmen experienced food insecurity within the last three months - a metric significantly higher than the 12.7% national average for children and adults from the same year (Bruening et al., 2016; Coleman-Jensen et al., 2016). The study also found that food insecurity is associated with many long-term consequences, such as chronic illness, unhealthy eating habits, and lower productivity

(Bruening et al., 2016). These findings are what led students to found and operate a free resource for members of the ASU community to easily access nutritious food.

They currently operate on four of the ASU campuses (Tempe, Downtown, Polytechnic, and West), with regular distributions at the Tempe and Downtown Phoenix campuses. The main location is at the Tempe First United Methodist Church on the Tempe Campus. Pitchfork Pantry hosts weekly distribution events, pop-up events, and farmers markets. Leadership consists of a faculty advisor, as well as a student leadership board. They also work to provide additional support, such as access to sanitary products or assistance with Arizona's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Pitchfork Pantry strives to eliminate campus food insecurity and join the fight for sustainability. They are actively working to close the food system through distributing surplus food - which would otherwise rot in landfills, releasing methane and contributing to the greenhouse effect - to those lacking the financial support necessary to sustain a healthy diet.

Pitchfork Pantry has made tremendous progress in increasing the percentage of the ASU population that they service, despite numerous setbacks to reaching its target audience and accessing necessary resources - such as a functional space, funding, and advertisement. Pitchfork Pantry believes that the objectives and values of Pitchfork Pantry are aligned with not only ASU's sustainability goals, but also the UN's SDGs. Our report details the work our team has done to support the Pantry, as well as strategies for becoming a deeply ingrained, sustainable, and accessible student resource. We see that it is in our community's best interest to support Pitchfork Pantry's hunger-driven mission to provide FOOD FOR ALL!

### **Pitchfork Pantry's Role in a Sustainable Food System**

By turning rescued, surplus food from grocery stores and local restaurants - which would otherwise become waste - into easily accessible, free groceries for ASU students, Pitchfork Pantry fulfills a crucial role in multiple stages of the food system (stages of which are production, processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal) (IFPRI, 2020). The newly-implemented reusable bag policy also discourages students from relying on the plastic bags typically associated with grocery shopping. This system efficiently reduces food waste from the disposal stage, as well as plastic waste, packaging costs, and transportation emissions from the processing and distribution stages. Sustainable consumption is further promoted by offering nutritious, adequate food to students. It is evident that Pitchfork Pantry has done tremendous work in upholding sustainability values, but there's always room for improvement!

We recommend turning unsafe food (i.e. rotten or expired) into compost - what's more innovative than turning grocery store waste into free food, then back into free food? There are many benefits to introducing composting to the daily operations of Pitchfork Pantry; we've put together this guide to make it as easy as possible for student volunteers to embark on their own composting project and fulfill a vital role in the sustainable food system. Previous attempts to turn food waste into compost exposed the need for a locking space to prevent vandalism. We offer multiple recommendations that account for this barrier, function as a learning opportunity for student volunteers, and promote community values through collaboration.

#### ***Partnering with Composting Facilities***

The Arizona State University Zero Waste department aims to establish zero waste campuses by 2035 - this entails designing out waste, keeping materials in use, and regenerating natural systems - and is currently working to service all of the Tempe campus by Spring 2024



(ASU, n.d.). To meet the needs of Pitchfork Pantry, we recommend applying for the Residential Compost program (figure 1).

**Figure 1:**

*Residential compost bin offered through ASU's Zero Waste facilities.*



In addition to the interactive training, weekly service, and smell-proof bins, these bins are placed inside of a locker and prevent any external parties from interfering with the integrity of the compost. With this option, only members of Pitchfork Pantry who have completed the certification process will be able to access the bin, making it easier for student leaders to deposit large amounts of food waste without having to trek across campus with a heavy bag. Given the University's goals of reducing waste, we believe that this is a fantastic opportunity for Pitchfork Pantry to collaborate with ASU and take advantage of the services being offered. This option, however, asks that Zero Waste are flexible with where they put these bins because they have, thus far, only been used outside of student living buildings. In lieu of this potential barricade, we offer another option for third-party composting: Recycled City (R.City).

R.City offers on-site consultations and composting services for businesses, churches, and schools with a variety of bin sizes to choose from, including 5, 20, or 60-gallon bins (R. City, n.d.). This program also comes with detailed instructions and lists of what can and cannot be composted. No matter the needs of the business, R.City will work to create a customizable plan.

The primary downside of subscribing to R.City is the fee; as a non-profit, the Pantry is always seeking new funding sources. Because it is funded by ASU, utilizing Zero Waste facilities is the preferred method when considering external composting services. Regardless, R.City is an excellent alternative that is guaranteed to suit Pitchfork Pantry's needs (see Appendix A for contact information).

### ***On-Site Composting Initiatives***

Our third and final option for Pitchfork Pantry to begin its composting journey is to guide student volunteers through the construction of an on-site composting project, which can be tailored to meet every specific

One way of doing this is through buying a locking compost tumbler, though prices for these can be steep for a non-profit organization. While typical compost tumblers run anywhere from \$70-200, those that come with locking features are scarce - the most compatible option we have found is the Jora Composter JK125 33 Gallon Dual Chamber Galvanized Steel Backyard Composter Tumbler Bin for High Temperature Outdoor Composting, priced at \$459.

A more affordable option for creating compost on-site is to simply do it yourself (DIY). A project like this would be a fantastic hands-on experience for student volunteers! Options for this are as follows:

- 1) Invest in a locking outdoor storage unit large enough to hold a plastic 30 gallon bin; materials should allow for air flow and be able to withstand the high Phoenix summer temperatures. This option is similar to the residential lockers provided by Zero Waste; cost of materials varies depending on the organization's preference.

- 2) Modify a standard metal trash can by drilling additional locks from a hardware store onto the lid (typically priced under \$20) and obtaining properly-sized tools for drilling into metal.
- 3) Build a wooden compost bin from scratch (instructions for this can be found at <https://www.practicallyfunctional.com/how-to-build-a-diy-compost-bin/>). Cost of materials for this project is estimated around \$165. A major benefit to this option is the hinging bottom compartment, allowing for the finished soil at the bottom to be easily accessed.

Finally, on-site composting comes with the additional power of deciding what to do with your fresh, healthy soil. For this, we recommend developing a vegetable garden through collaborative efforts of Pitchfork Pantry and the Tempe First United Methodist Church. This would be an amazing opportunity for students and community members to gain hands-on experience with food production and land stewardship. If an enclosed area that limits public access is not available, we recommend donating finished compost to university organizations and community gardens (see Appendix A for relevant contact information).

### **Improving Accessibility**

In order to improve accessibility and expand the marketing scope of Pitchfork Pantry, Team Pitchspoon took Pitchfork Pantry's existing shell for a website, which was not previously published for the public, and revamped it for maximum marketing potential. The purpose of nonprofit marketing is to sell your audience on a cause, rather than a product. In order to be a sustainable organization, nonprofits must be in constant communication with their donors and community. Nonprofit marketing should promote the nonprofit's events and services, attract and encourage support from the community, appeal to their specific audience and donors, convey a

clear need that the nonprofit is working to meet, encourage donations, maintain a clear brand, attract volunteers, and distinguish itself from competitors (Henderson, 2014). Websites for nonprofits are particularly important because they are a central online location that contains any relevant information relating to the nonprofit, as well as help to raise awareness and maintain the relationship with the community.

### ***Pitchfork Pantry Website***

The Pitchfork Pantry Instagram and Facebook posts had already established a clear brand following the Arizona State University colors. We continued this branding throughout the website.

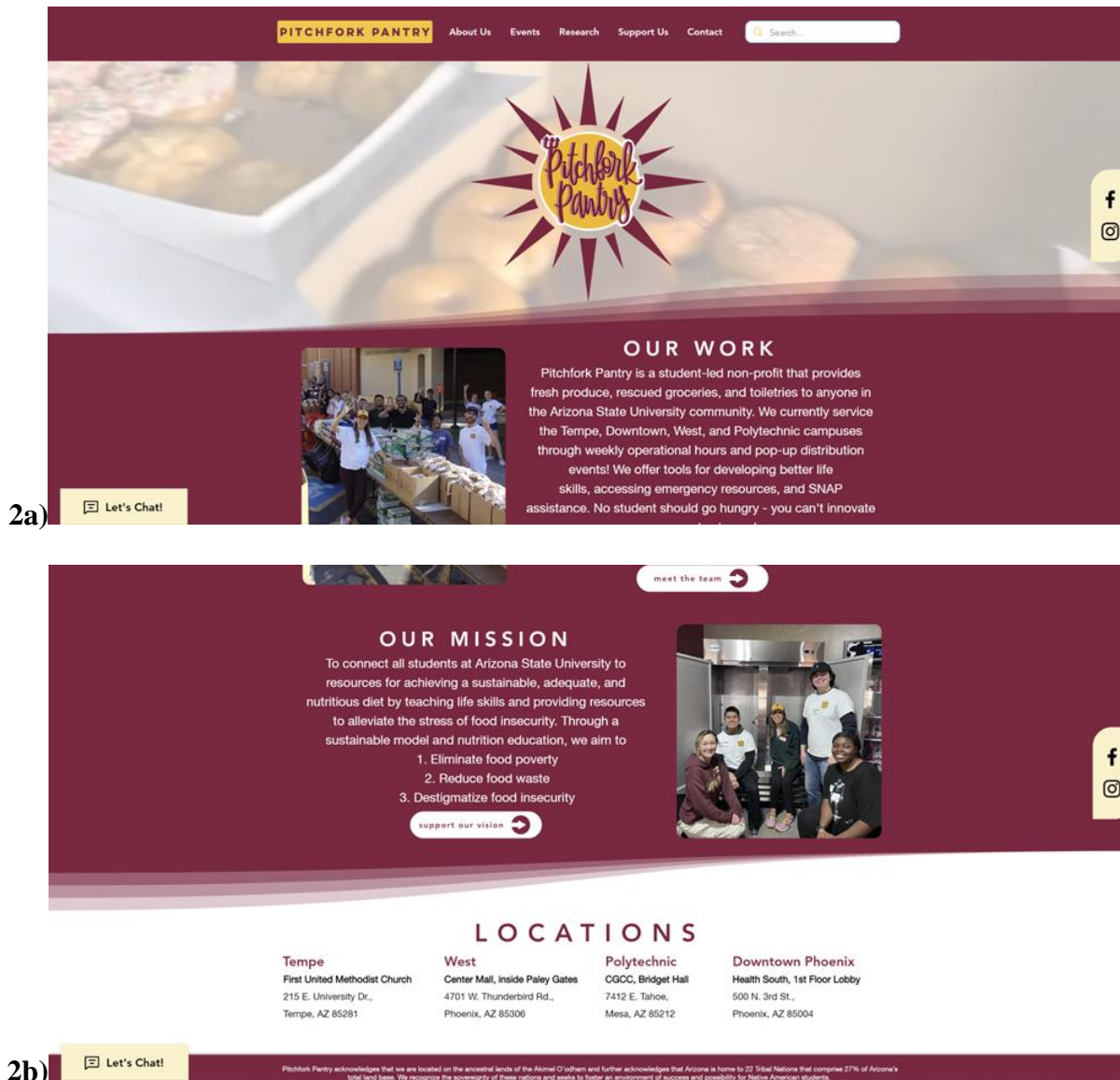
**Home Page.** As soon as you access the Pitchfork Pantry website, a pop-up box appears allowing visitors to enter their email in order to subscribe to updates. On the home page, we displayed the Pitchfork Pantry logo over a video taken during one of the food distributions (figure 2a). Throughout each section of the website, especially on the home page, we maintained the existing branding and color scheme established by ASU and Pitchfork Pantry's existing social media accounts. This led to our main color scheme consisting of maroon, gold, black, and white. We created two small sections describing the work and the mission of Pitchfork Pantry. Under the statement of the work done by Pitchfork Pantry, there is a button linking to information about the Pitchfork Pantry team behind the work.

Under the mission statement section, there is a button linking to the 'Support Us' page, allowing potential donors to provide support and easily navigate the website, even simply from visiting the home page (figure 2b). At the bottom of the home page, each of the Pitchfork Pantry locations are easy seen. On each page, there is a menu to access each page of the website. Additionally, every page has two container boxes. The first, along the side of each page, links to

the Facebook and Instagram social media pages of Pitchfork Pantry. The second, located at the bottom of each page, is a chat function, allowing visitors to easily send messages and inquiries. Finally, at the bottom of each page is an acknowledgement of the indigenous lands on which ASU campus is located.

**Figures 2a-b:**

*The Pitchfork Pantry website home page*



**About Us.** On the About Us page, we created several different sections. On the main About Us page, we wrote a brief history of Pitchfork Pantry, the global issue Pitchfork Pantry addresses (food insecurity on college campuses), and explains how it operates today. In this written section, there is an embedded link that leads to the research page, for anyone who would like more information about campus food insecurity (figure 3a). Under this section and a picture of the student board, there are buttons linking to a Meet the Team page (figure 3b), a Partnerships page, and once again links to the Support Us Page (figure 3c). Further down on the About Us page, we linked the Pitchfork Pantry Instagram account, since it is consistently updated with graphics providing additional information about Pitchfork Pantry.

### Figures 3a-c:

*Images of the “About Us” page from the Pitchfork Pantry website.*

## ABOUT US

Pitchfork Pantry is a student volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit under ASU Foundation whose goal is to raise awareness of financial and food insecurities among the Sun Devil Community. The pantry provides fresh and non-perishable food items as well as hygiene and clothing items to ASU students.

Pitchfork Pantry began in January 2017 after [research](#) had shown that 32% of students living in the dorms at Arizona State University (ASU) reported inconsistent access to food.

This led a group of students to form a student club that they named the “Pitchfork Pantry”.

The club started on the ASU Tempe campus in a small space in one of the dorms, and at the ASU Downtown campus in a shared space. At the time, this started to meet the needs of the students, but more support was needed.

After establishing community connections, the pantry began to operate out of a shared space in Tempe with First United Methodist Church off Forest and University. At this location, the pantry is able to provide fresh and non-perishable food items as well as hygiene and clothing items to any ASU student.

Pitchfork Pantry also expanded to the Downtown ASU campus. The Downtown ASU Pantry is located in Health Solutions South building.



MEET THE TEAM

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

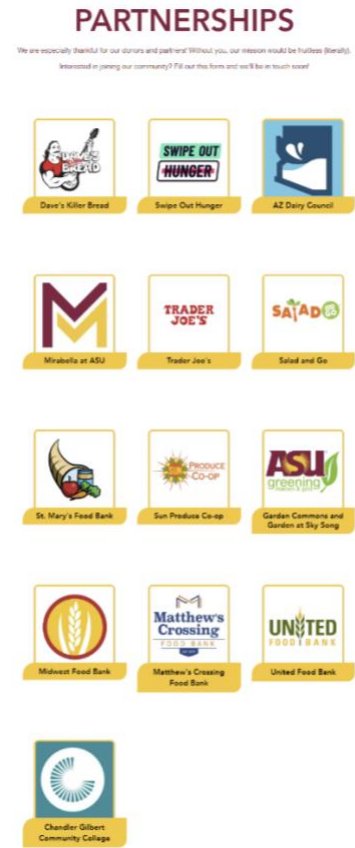
SUPPORT US

3a)

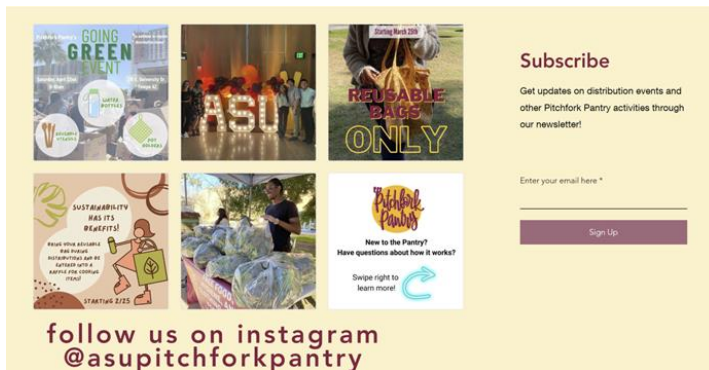
## Meet The Team



3b)



3d)



3c)

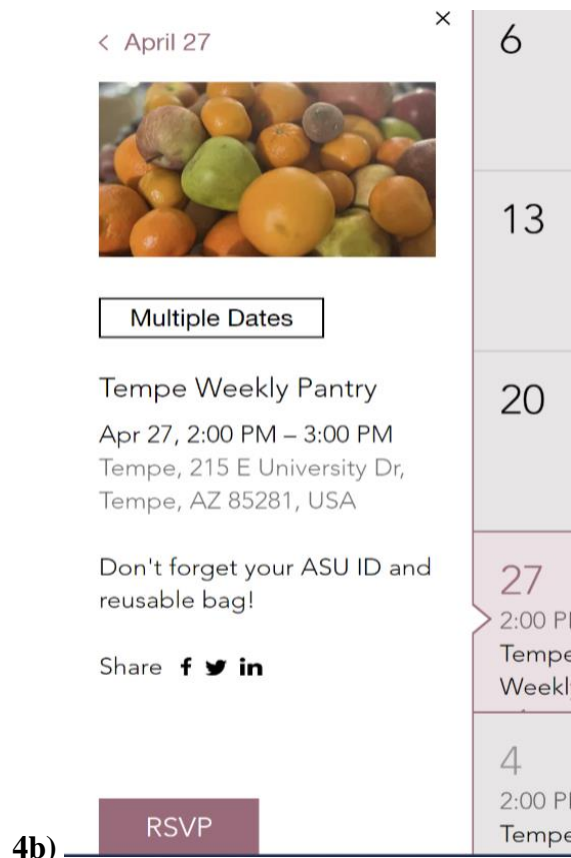
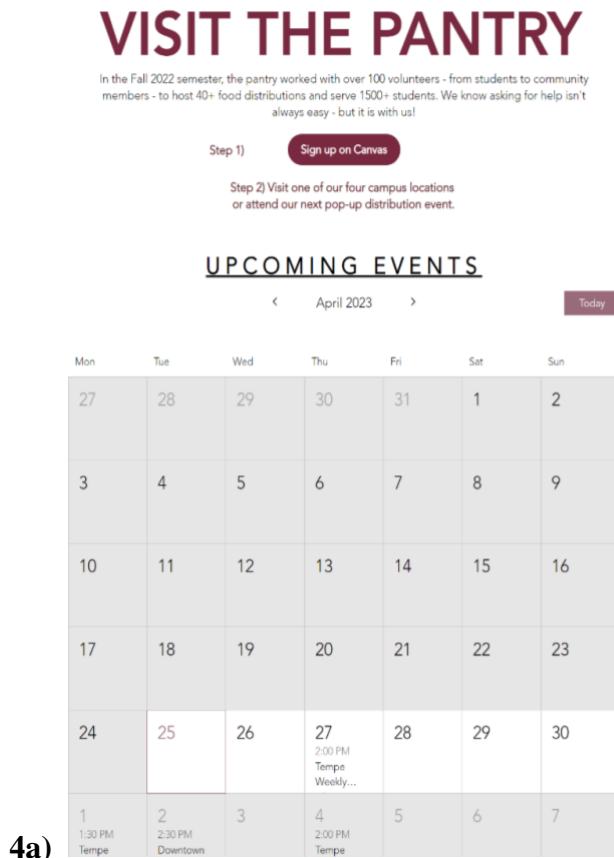
On the Meet the Team Page, each of the members on the student board are listed with their name, position, and picture. This allows the pantry to be more personable and for potential donors to visualize the dedicated students that they will be supporting. On the Partnerships page, each partner of Pitchfork Pantry is listed in a similar format (figure 3d). Each partner's name and logo is shown. Clicking on each partner's name or logo redirects the visitor to the partner's website. Displaying the partnerships allow for partners to benefit from their contribution through recognition and additional marketing. The partnership page also attracts future partners. Finally the button linking to Support Us makes donating as clear and accessible as possible for possible donors.



**Events.** On the events page, there are instructions to sign up for the Canvas shell, which signs students up for a ‘class’ through Canvas, which allows them to get access to more resources and information about how to best overcome food insecurity (figure 4a). This feature is primarily aimed toward food insecure students, so we placed it on this page for anyone looking to attend a distribution event. Each upcoming event is listed in a calendar format. These events include weekly distributions at different campus locations, farmer’s markets, and pop-up distribution events. Once you click on an individual event, a pop-up appears that gives further details including the date, time, address, important information, and a picture of food they might find at the distribution (figure 4b).

**Figures 4a-b:**

*Images of the “Events” page from the Pitchfork Pantry website.*

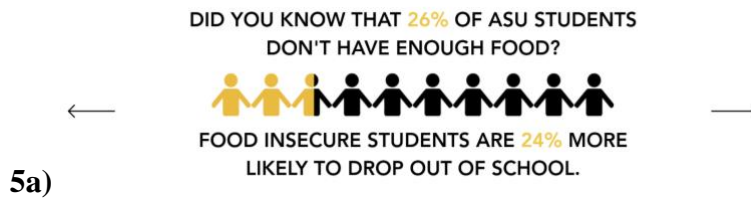




**Support Us.** On the Support Us page, we wanted to list as many ways to provide support for Pitchfork Pantry as possible. At the top of the page, we created graphics outlining important statistics relating to campus food insecurity; these graphics display demographic information for those most likely to be affected by food insecurity, along with additional problems that food insecurity can lead to (figure 5a). We also created and embedded a six-question quiz from the United States Department of Agriculture on food insecurity that visitors can take directly through our website to find ways of alleviating hunger. These graphics and the quiz aim to help eliminate some of the stigma around food insecurity and allow students to have a better understanding of how widespread of an issue it is.

**Figures 5a-c:**

*Images from the “Support Us” page on the Pitchfork Pantry website.*



**WAYS TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT**



**Volunteer With Us**

We are most active on the Tempe and Downtown campuses, but if you search "Pitchfork Pantry", you can choose multiple campuses as well! Follow these steps to get started:

1. Join the club on [Sun Devil Sync](#)
2. Sign up for days you want to volunteer on [Sign-up Genius](#)

[SEE OUR EVENTS](#)

**Host Your Own Food Drive**

The Pitchfork Pantry is currently accepting donations! All non-perishable items, hygiene products, and cleaning products are accepted. Feel free to contact one of our student leaders by emailing us at [asupitchforkpantry@gmail.com](mailto:asupitchforkpantry@gmail.com) for guidance and to answer any questions about our [list of donation items](#).



5b)



5c)

We then provided instructions for how to volunteer with Pitchfork Pantry (figure 5b). This included directing visitors to Sun Devil Sync, which is ASU's club website. All volunteers are managed through Sun Devil Sync, so we linked the club account on Sun Devil Sync so visitors can easily register through there. Also, we added a button linking to the events page so that potential volunteers can see which upcoming events they could volunteer for. Further down, we wrote instructions for any outside organizations to host their own food drives to support Pitchfork Pantry. In these instructions is the email address for Pitchfork Pantry, for other organizations to reach out to coordinate food drives. We also provided a list of items that are needed by the pantry to provide a guideline of items for the organization hosting the food drive. Further down the page, we linked the Arizona State University Foundation, which is the organization that oversees donations at ASU (figure 5c). When clicking on the donate button, visitors are redirected to make a financial donation through ASU Foundation.

**Contact.** On our Contact page, we listed several different ways to contact Pitchfork Pantry, including a phone number, email address, and the locations of the pantries (figure 6a). We also included a form that visitors can fill out with their name, email, phone number, and a message. Further down, we placed a map with both the main locations of the pantry, so visitors can have a better visual of where each pantry is located (figure 6b).

**Figures 6a-b:**

*Images of the "Contact" page from the Pitchfork Pantry website.*

CONNECT WITH US TODAY

<p>📞 602-496-1612</p> <p>Tempe Campus: 215 E University Dr, Tempe, AZ 85281</p> <p>📍 Phoenix Campus: 50 N 3rd St, Phoenix, AZ 85004, first floor lobby</p> <p>✉️ asupitchforkpantry@gmail.com</p>	<p>Name _____ Email _____</p> <p>Subject _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Message _____</p> <p style="text-align: right; color: orange;">Submit</p>
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6a)



6b)

**Website Maintenance.** The website has been created through Wix, which can be somewhat difficult to use. We had to overcome a bit of a learning curve. However, we successfully set up what should be needed to continually update the site. All of the basic coding and formatting has already been done, but there will still be maintenance required. We currently added all events through the end of the Spring 2023 semester to the calendar and events page, as those are all that have been scheduled. At the beginning of next semester, and possibly over the summer if events are created, new events will need to be added to the website. The basic formatting for events has already been created, so most of what will need to be done is simply duplicating an old event and updating its date and time. We added as much student information and pictures to the Meet the Team page as we were provided. However, we are still missing a few. This will need to be added as it is received. Additionally, after the student board changes over to a new generation of students, the names and headshots will need to be updated. Similarly,

partners will need to be added and removed as Pitchfork Pantry's partnerships change throughout the years.

Existing pictures throughout the website can easily be switched to newer photos, if wanted. Updated research and statistics could be added to the research page, if needed. If any of the contact information or location information changes, the information on the website will need to be updated as well. Luckily, Wix makes it very easy to edit basic information and text after you have finished the layout and coding of the website. We suggest that these updates and maintenance are passed to the same student who is currently running the Instagram and Facebook pages. The graphics and information on the social media was used to model the website, so it would help with consistency in branding and information to have the same person responsible for all of the web presence.

### ***Putting the Pantry on Google Maps***

Per our client's request, we have also made progress towards putting Pitchfork Pantry on Google Maps. This process entailed accessing the organization's Google Business account to then add information regarding the location's address, operational hours, and accessibility features. The final step was to submit a brief verification video to demonstrate proof of ownership. The process itself was simple, yet being able to find Pitchfork Pantry on commonly-used mapping services allows potential visitors to easily view the location and contact information is a big step towards the overarching goal of increasing accessibility. Our hope is that being findable on Google Maps will encourage more students to view the Pantry as a viable resource for alleviating hunger and ultimately increase the amount of students served each semester. In continuing this work, we believe that it would be beneficial to repeat this process with the three other campus locations, create a phone number for the organization to add

Pitchfork Pantry to Apple Maps, encourage students to leave reviews on both Google and Yelp, and incorporate professional pictures into each description. Once the Wix website is published, we further recommend adding the proper link to each location on Google or Apple Maps.

### ***Council of Academic Advisors Digest Application***

In order to increase the reach of Pitchfork Pantry and raise awareness to more students potentially in need of food assistance, we submitted information for the Council of Academic Advisor's Digest. The CAA Digest is a weekly publication sent out to the ASU academic community by the Council of Academic Advisors. We completed the application for information and requested that the following announcement be run through April 28th (see Appendix B). In future semesters, this could be resubmitted with extended run times for increased publicity.

### **Reducing Workload for Pantry Leaders**

In reviewing the leadership structure of Pitchfork Pantry, Pitchspoon has identified multiple opportunities for growth. Our suggestions are tailored around the idea of transitioning this structure from that of a student organization to an independent non-profit organization. Recommendations range from elevating the current leadership board to a model of executive governance and deferring daily operational tasks to lower-level volunteers, to becoming a sponsor site for AmeriCorps VISTA. In applying these recommendations, we hope to re-allocate a portion of the daily workload to lower levels of volunteers - which has been shown to foster feelings of pride and ownership - and progress towards a leadership structure that is more able to prioritize long-term sustainability.

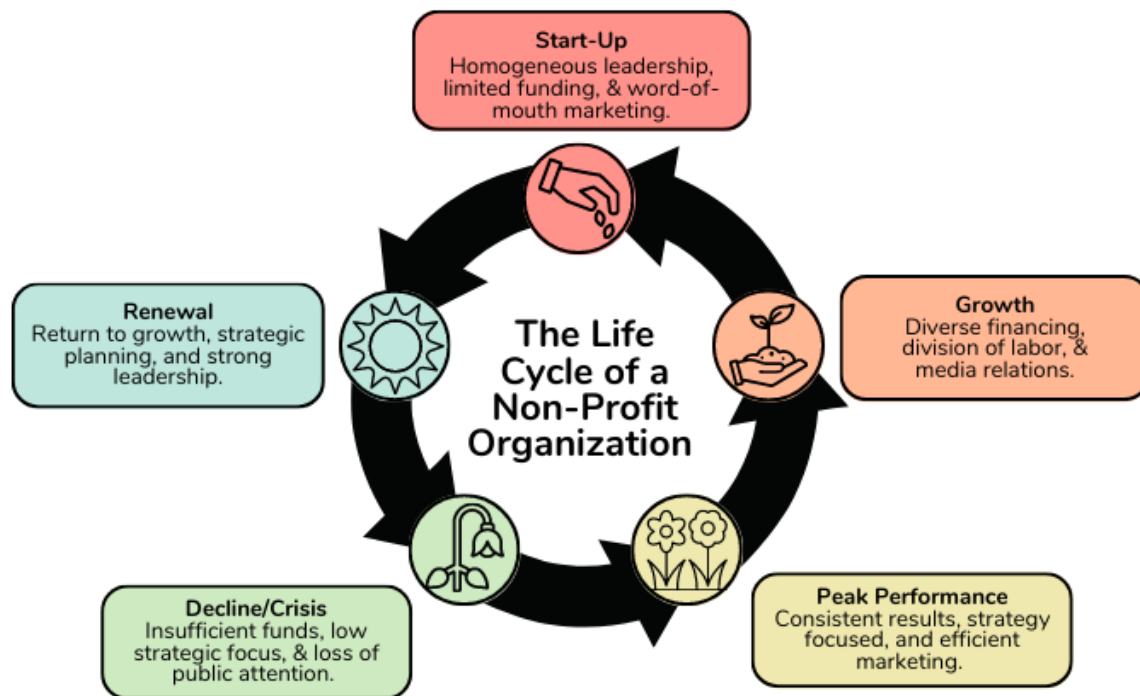
### ***Recognizing the Lifecycle of a Nonprofit Organization***

A clear understanding of an organization's life stage can aid in framing essential conversations, informing strategic decisions, and offer a starting point for capacity building

(Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). Organizations at critical transitions within the lifecycle process may require a change in management strategy or an intervention on how to navigate forward with order and clarity (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). For example, the future growth of a nonprofit organization “may be less determined by outside forces than it is by the organization’s history [and structure]” (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). Within the nonprofit lifecycle, there are five, distinct life cycle stages : Start-up, growth, peak performance, decline, and renewal (figure 7).

**Figure 7:**

*The five stages of the non-profit life cycle.*



Our team has identified Pitchfork Pantry between the start-up and growth stages of the nonprofit lifecycle. Notably, Pitchfork Pantry has limited funding, but contains high energy and motivation to move towards future growth (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). As a result,

their current board functions as a working board, rather than acting as a proper executive board, engaging in completing required necessities in comparison to organizational growth and governing. Thus, transitioning out of this phase will require an understanding of the difference between governance and management, including the roles and responsibilities required for an executive board and day-to-day management. Additionally, the organization should be highly concentrated on developing multiple strategic plans that focus on business, implementation, and fundraising (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019).

**Governance vs. Management.** Before assessing the roles and responsibilities within Pitchfork Pantry, it is important to acknowledge the terms, “governance” and “management”. While both words can be used interchangeably, there is a notable difference between the two (Boardable, n.d.). Governance is concerned with providing a set of rules and guidelines to steer the organization’s direction in relation to their mission statement – which in Pitchfork Pantry’s case is to connect all students at ASU to resources to obtain and manage a sustainable, adequate, and nutritious diet (Boardable, n.d.; Pitchfork Pantry, n.d.). In comparison to governance, management is concerned with carrying out the organization’s day-to-day operations, where individuals hired are expected to carry out the decisions made by the executive board (Boardable, n.d.). As an organization grows, it is imperative that the executive board should evolve along with it. In the start-up stage, the executive board is commonly composed of close friends and trusted colleagues (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). However, from this point onward, there is a need to standardize roles and increase the internal capacity within the organization (Georgia Center for Nonprofits, 2019). While we recognize that Pitchfork Pantry is a unique case facing unique barriers, as they are a student-led organization under the ASU

Foundation, any organization's success is dependent on its ability to fulfill its mission via proper leadership and experience.

**The components of a sustainable executive board.** The foundation of an outstanding executive board encompasses “three duties”: care, loyalty, and obedience (Boardable, 2021). The Duty of Care prioritizes the degree to which board members are actively participating within organizations, such as meetings. Next, the Duty of Loyalty addresses how each board member's actions are consistent with the organization and its mission. Lastly, the Duty of Obedience acknowledges the degree to which the board member's actions were in accordance with the organization's policies, procedures, and applicable law (Boardable, 2021). Each board member should be evaluated on the basis of the “three duties” as these foundational aspects help to aid in the development of the five effective hallmarks of a great executive board (Gerber, 2016) (see Appendix C for evaluation criteria).

If Pitchfork Pantry desires growth within the organization, the “three duties” and the five hallmarks must be addressed to ensure there is an appropriate executive board. While the organization already has an executive board, it functions primarily as a working board rather than a proper executive board, where members are taking on more operational responsibilities rather than future-thinking responsibilities (see Appendix D). Therefore, our team has provided a list of roles and responsibilities associated with a strong governing board; (this table can be used to assess the current and future executive roles within the organization (see Appendix E).

### ***AmeriCorps VISTA***

To further address labor concerns, we suggest pursuing an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer. The AmeriCorps VISTA program supplies volunteers for nonprofit and public organizations that work to provide services for impoverished areas in the United States. AmeriCorps VISTA



volunteers dedicate a year of service to the sponsoring organization on anti-poverty projects. VISTA provides a living allowance to its volunteers. Sponsoring organizations are responsible for providing project supervision and project supplies. We suggest applying to become an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsoring organization.

The AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer's duties would consist of assisting in organizing volunteers, applying for grants, and creating a program to assist Pitchfork Pantry recipients in receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, "SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency" (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2021).

In order to apply to become an AmeriCorps VISTA sponsor organization, Pitchfork Pantry would need to apply with a concept paper and an application. The criteria for sponsorship is that the organization is a designated nonprofit, possess resources for members to perform tasks, be able to train and supervise the VISTA volunteers, be committed to the mission of VISTA, and run a project that benefits the local community. Our team has created a concept paper for the application process (see Appendix F). Our draft concept paper can be found in the appendix. Cycle 4 deadlines for concept papers are June 7, 2023. If the concept paper is approved, AmeriCorps will request a project application, which consists of site information, performance measures for the member, legal documents, and a budget. The next cycle after this will likely be in November 2023.

### **Conclusion and Acknowledgements**

Pitchfork Pantry, a student led nonprofit at Arizona State University, works to alleviate food insecurity among students at ASU. They currently exist as a successful and sustainable

organization, but there are a few ways they could increase their sustainability effects. Our suggestions to achieve a more sustainable organization is to focus on creating a more sustainable food system, increasing accessibility to the pantry, and addressing labor concerns with the pantry. Team Pitchspoon has provided a number of deliverables and resources in order to accomplish this mission. These include: plans for a Zero Waste composting partnership, a completed website, addition of Pitchfork Pantry locations to Google and Apple Maps, an application to the Council of Academic Advisors Digest, plans for a division of labor and duties within Pitchfork Pantry, and an AmeriCorps Vista sponsor site application. We hope that Pitchfork Pantry can use our research and project to become even more successful than they currently are.

Pitchspoon would like to thank Dr. Candace Carr Kelman and Dr. Nicole Darnall for all their knowledge and guidance throughout this project over the past year, and our fellow MSUS classmates for their continued feedback on our project. We would also like to extend a special thank you to faculty advisor Maureen McCoy and all of the board at Pitchfork Pantry for allowing us to assist in your noble cause and for your patience as we all learn what it takes to work collaboratively towards a larger goal!

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**Appendix**

**Appendix A:** Contact information for composting facilities, student gardening clubs, and community gardens.

<b>Composting Facility</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Website</b>
Zero Waste	recycle-q@asu.edu	cfo.asu.edu/zerowaste
R.City	info@recycledcity.com	recycledcity.com
<b>Student Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Instagram</b>
Gardens@ASU	gardensatasu@gmail.com	gardensasu
gardensatasu@gmail.com	arclar26@su.edu	barrettsustainabilityclub
<b>Community Garden</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Website</b>
Friendship Evergreen	FEcommunitygarden@gmail.com	friendshipevergreen.com
Clark Park	clarkparkgarden@gmail.com	clarkparkgarden.org
Escalante	escalantecommunitygarden@tempeaction.org	tempeaction.org/what-we-do/community-gardens

**Appendix B:** Submitted application for the Council of Academic Advisors Digest.

*Title:* Pitchfork Pantry Hours & Services

*Description (300 characters maximum):*

Pitchfork Pantry is a student volunteer-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit under ASUF whose goal is to raise awareness of financial and food insecurities among the Sun Devil Community. The pantry provides fresh and non-perishable food items as well as hygiene and clothing items to ASU students.

*Day/Time (if applicable):*

Mondays, 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Thursdays, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Tempe Pop-Up Market

Select Saturdays, 9:00 am - 10:00 am

(1/28, 2/25, 3/25, 4/22)

Tempe Pitchfork Pantry Farmer’s Market

Select Fridays, 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

(1/13, 2/10, 3/17, 4/14)

*Location:* First United Methodist Church - 215 E. University Dr., Tempe, AZ

85281

*Link for more info:* <https://canvas.asu.edu/enroll/B4CNX8>

*Contact information:* Maureen McCoy at [maureen.mason@asu.edu](mailto:maureen.mason@asu.edu)

**Appendix C:** The five great governing/executive board hallmarks

<p><b>Hallmark 1:</b> <i>An Effective Committee on Trustees</i></p>	<p>Executive boards may have different committee structures, but it is critical to have an effective committee on trustees or “board development committee” which leads the way with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potential board member identification</li> <li>● Recruitment</li> <li>● On-boarding and orientation of new members</li> <li>● Ongoing education of members</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluation of the board as a body and evaluation as individual members</li> <li>● Recognizing, honoring, and keeping departing board members engaged in the mission of the organization</li> </ul>
<b>Hallmark 2:</b> <i>Clear Member Expectations</i>	<p>From their recruitment to their departure, members should clearly understand the expectations included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expectations should educate and/or remind board members about the “Three Duties”</li> <li>● Expectations should include information about the responsibilities of the board and individual member expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Hallmark 3:</b> <i>Mission Centered</i>	<p>Great governing boards contain individuals who not only care about the organization, but also deeply value its mission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Board members should be able to articulate why and how the mission of the organization came to be important to them</li> <li>● Board service is also volunteer service</li> </ul>
<b>Hallmark 4:</b> <i>A Consistent Focus on the Right Issues</i>	<p>Great executive boards should be focused on three essential areas of governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><i>Fiduciary Responsibilities</i></b> – Understanding legal responsibilities and being knowledgeable about the data and facts of the organization</li> <li>● <b><i>Strategic Opportunities</i></b> – Asking questions about the future of the organization, its aspirations, and its strengths</li> <li>● <b><i>Generative Issues &amp; Values</i></b> – Understanding why an organization should make fiduciary and strategic decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Hallmark 5:</b> <i>Giving is Valued</i>	<p>Personal gift giving is evidence of greater care for and engagement with the organization. This is why grant applications almost always include questions regarding the degree to which the executive board has supported a project or program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The board’s philanthropic leadership is critical to receiving other funding</li> <li>● Great boards have giving goals for their members, who take responsibility for planned commitments</li> </ul>

#### Appendix D: Current Pitchfork Pantry executive board member roles & responsibilities

<b>Current Roles</b>	
<b>Executive Director(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The face of the pantry</li> <li>● Oversees all general operations in collaboration with the faculty advisor</li> <li>● Paid as student workers for their leadership work</li> </ul>
<b>Vice President(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assist with on-site distributions with the Executive Director(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Finance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oversees spending of all club funds for all four campuses</li> <li>● Point of contact for clothing donations</li> <li>● Assisting with future garden planning</li> </ul>

<b>Director of Nutrition Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides content on nutrition education weekly</li> </ul>
<b>Secretary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Takes notes during meetings and keeps meetings on track</li> </ul>
<b>Event Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oversees tabling events and opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media Coordinator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is responsible for social media</li> </ul>

**Appendix E: Ideal Pitchfork Pantry executive board member roles & responsibilities**

<b>Ideal Roles</b>	
<b>Chairperson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oversees board meetings</li> <li>● Creates a purposeful agenda</li> <li>● Assigns committee chairs and appoints people to committees</li> <li>● Serves as the point of contact for board issues</li> <li>● Sets goals and objectives with the board and ensures they are met</li> <li>● Holds members accountable for attending meetings</li> <li>● A strategist with a deep well of knowledge about the organization</li> </ul>
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offers support for the board chair and other leadership when needed</li> <li>● Fulfills the board chair’s duties when the presiding officer is absent or if the office becomes vacant</li> <li>● Assists the board chair in the execution of his or her duties</li> <li>● Learns the operations of the board</li> <li>● Works closely with the board chair to transfer knowledge and history to prepare leadership</li> <li>● Must be filled by someone who possesses similar qualifications as the current chairperson</li> </ul>
<b>Board Secretary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensures that board members are given appropriate notices of meetings and proactively records these meetings</li> <li>● Assures that an agenda has been prepared and distributed in advance</li> <li>● Oversees the distribution of background information in relation to the agenda</li> <li>● Records motions, discussions, votes, decisions, and the official minutes of the meeting</li> <li>● Assures that documents are accessible to members</li> <li>● Schedules and notifies board members of upcoming meetings</li> <li>● Hold members accountable for their tasks</li> <li>● Should be well-versed in administrative work</li> </ul>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reconciles bank accounts and produces financial statements</li> <li>● Ensures tax-related documents and legal forms are filed on time, such as documents required to maintain nonprofit organization’s tax-exempt status</li> </ul>

**Appendix F: AmeriCorps VISTA concept paper and application**

### I. Applicant Info

**Title:** Pitchfork Pantry

**Project Director:** Maureen McCoy

**Timespan:** 10-12 months

**Service Act of America Focus Area:** Economic Opportunity, Education, Healthy Futures

**Target Population:** Low-income youth

### II. Application Info

**Geographic Area:** Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

### III. Narratives

#### Executive Summary

Pitchfork Pantry's mission is to connect all students at ASU to resources to obtain and manage a sustainable, adequate, and nutritious diet while teaching them life skills and providing students with emergency food in the process. The proposed VISTA project aligns with the Economic Opportunity, Education, and Healthy Futures focus areas. The VISTA project will seek to establish proper food pantry training and provide adequate volunteer organization to better address food insecurity at ASU and expects to benefit college students struggling with hunger. One VISTA member will contribute to the goals of the project by performing activities such as volunteer organization and management, expansion of SNAP benefit program, and organize food rescue from local grocery stores over the course of 10 to 12 months.

#### Needs

Pitchfork Pantry is a campus food pantry at Arizona State University, established to provide aid to college students struggling with food insecurity. In a study conducted in 2016, it was found that 33% of ASU freshmen struggle with hunger, directly influenced by socioeconomic status, with rates 1.5 times higher among African American and Hispanic students. College students are a highly vulnerable population often left unaccounted for, as most studies and forms of aid are usually conducted on adults and children. Food insecurity experienced by university students has numerous detrimental effects, such as poor academic performance and deteriorating mental and physical health relating to anxiety and depression. At the moment, Pitchfork Pantry has been the leading organization to provide assistance to such students at Arizona State University. However, limited funding, resources, and support from ASU Student Services has greatly affected the capacity of the student-run food pantry. Since the pantry has been mainly operated by students, there are also internal challenges, which include a lack of adequate food pantry training for student workers and issues with volunteer organization, especially with regards to obtaining and distributing food resources. Additionally, there are

concerns for the long term vulnerability affecting the students. Currently, we have resources available for students to learn more about Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

We believe an AmeriCorps member could assist in more directly helping recipients in signing up for SNAP benefits. Additionally, we hope an AmeriCorps member can help to train volunteers and create a better volunteer management structure. Finally, we would like the help of the AmeriCorps members to create a pick-up system for food rescue from local grocery stores.

Therefore, it is believed that AmeriCorps VISTA is a highly desirable opportunity for collaboration to help institute capacity building and community empowerment at ASU and for AmeriCorps members. Our project directly aligns with AmeriCorps principles of anti-poverty focus, community empowerment, sustainability solutions, and capacity building. The AmeriCorps member would help to alleviate the stress put on the local impoverished community through organizing community volunteer work. The AmeriCorps member's work to establish a better system for the pantry would continue after their service has ended.

### Strengthening Communities

Our project works to serve the local low-income community by assisting them with obtaining nutritional food. Pitchfork Pantry distributes food and meals directly to food insecure students at Arizona State University, and is currently the only organization at Arizona State University doing so. Many of these recipients also volunteer at the pantry. Pitchfork Pantry is currently a member of Arizona State University Foundation, which is ASU's philanthropic organization. Pitchfork Pantry has a board of students that assist with operations as well. We are partnered with several different local grocery stores and work with them on food rescue. Pitchfork Pantry utilizes these partnerships along with volunteers, to hold walk-in pantry hours three times a week at two different locations, pop-up distribution events every month, and farmer's markets for fresh produce once a month.

This project works to support food insecure students at Arizona State University in getting their education without worrying where their next meal will come from. This will set them up for greater success in the future. The AmeriCorp member will help to establish a more long-term sustainable plan for Pitchfork Pantry. Volunteers and the student board can be trained in the systems and structures established by the member. Once these structures are firmly established, they can be passed down after the VISTA project concludes. Additionally, our plan to increase SNAP assistance will help these students have resources long after they graduate. Both other major universities in Arizona have food pantries currently established (Louie's Cupboard at Northern Arizona University and UA Campus Pantry at University of Arizona). These pantries have been very successful and are a point of pride for both campuses. As of Spring 2022, Pitchfork Pantry serves over 850 students at Arizona State University. Pitchfork Pantry has successfully obtained grants from Kroger, Walmart Community, and Campus Cares. There have been several previous research studies conducted that point to the importance of food pantries on college campuses. Campus food pantries have been directly linked to better overall health among students at public universities (Martinez et al, 2022). Swipe Out Hunger, a national

nonprofit coalition focusing on college student hunger, reports that 29% of college students have missed a meal at least once a week since the pandemic, and 52% of all students used an off-campus food bank at least once (Metti, 2022).

### Organizational Capability

As previously mentioned, Pitchfork Pantry has been the recipient of several grants since they were first established. These grants have been managed and used to support Pitchfork Pantry for the last five years. Pitchfork Pantry currently serves a large population, over 850 students as of 2022. The VISTA project will be overseen by the leader of Pitchfork Pantry, Maureen McCoy. She is also a lecturer at the College of Health Solutions and oversees all operations. The student board consists of several members who are directly involved in distribution events. The AmeriCorp member would also be working closely with the Student Executive Director, Student Vice President, and Student Director of Finance. All positions on the student board are currently filled and have been trained, so they would be a resource, rather than an addition to the project. Pitchfork Pantry has two locations they operate out of on both the Tempe and Downtown Phoenix Campuses. Here those who work on the project have access to desk space and internet connection. We are hoping for at least one VISTA member to work on this project.