The Building for Kids will offer programming aimed at making meaningful change in the food culture of its community. Museum staff will host family cooking workshops as well as field trips for children and their grown-ups to develop knowledge and skills around sourcing, preparing, and consuming a variety of nutritionally valuable foods. A diverse advisory group will help guide project activities, while community stakeholders will inform the development of an exhibit about food culture. The museum will also hire local university students to serve as research assistants and assist in program evaluation. As a result, program participants will better understand how they view and engage with the food they eat and take pride in and ownership over their choices and preparation of healthy meals.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Performance Measurement Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.
Project Justification:

In Wisconsin, children and their grown-ups access and consume nutritious foods at a declining rate. In the Building for Kids’ service area of Outagamie, Calumet, and Winnebago counties, the percentage of children consuming vegetables three times a day dropped from 31% in 2015 to 23% in 2018 according to the Community Health survey conducted by local public health departments. This trend, combined with declines in the percentage of households reporting family meals 5+ times per week, correlates with continued increases in those individuals that are either overweight or obese.¹ In Wisconsin adults, a recent CDC study identified only one-in-ten who consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis.²

In response to this data, our community has come together to shift our food culture and food systems to address these challenges. Since 2020, a growing group of community members and organizations have been working to identify ways to support children and families in consuming a wide variety of nutritionally valuable foods. A result of these stakeholder conversations is the Food to Grow Initiative which will build on an existing evidence base while leveraging the power of a children’s museum’s play-based environment to make meaningful change in the food culture of our community. At the core of this work is developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes around sourcing, preparing, and consuming a variety of nutritionally valuable foods among children and their grown-ups.

The Food to Grow Initiative at the Building for Kids is in response to identified community need and the result of community-stakeholder planning which aligns closely with the IMLS Goal 2: Community Engagement by maximizing the use of museum resources to address community needs through partnerships and collaborations and all three underlying objectives.

In addition, Food to Grow will advance the museum’s mission and the museum’s strategic focus area to develop innovative partnerships to improve the physical, mental, and developmental outcomes among children and their grownups.³

Beyond this alignment, this work also supports the strategic plans of numerous community stakeholders and will extend collaboration among local/public health stakeholders, funding partners, food equity partners, and local school districts.

The Appleton Health Department has indicated that the Food to Grow Initiative has the ability to amplify the city’s work in addressing their priorities articulated in the most recent Community Health Improvement Plan. Their goals include helping residents to “achieve and maintain a

¹ Fox Valley Community Health Improvement Coalition, Tri-County Community Health Survey Report, 2018. https://www.outagamie.org/home/showpublisheddocument/64026/636857572901930000
² Lee SH, Moore LV, Park S, Harris DM, Blanck HM. Adults Meeting Fruit and Vegetable Intake Recommendations — United States, 2019. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2022;71:1–9. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7101a1
³ Building for Kids Board Designated Strategic Focus Areas. Reaffirmed May 2022.
healthy weight” and “improve access to healthy foods” through community partnerships and increased education about and utilization of a variety of sources of nutritionally valuable foods. 4

BeWell Fox Valley, a tri-county public/private partnership working to improve the health and well-being of individuals, not only helped initiate these community conversations, but has also identified that the status quo of youth struggling to maintain healthy diets and lifestyles is a barrier to achieving their vision of a Fox Valley where all people have the opportunity to live longer, healthier, and happier.

The Food to Grow Initiative’s target audiences are children ages 5-9 and their grown-ups in Outagamie, Calumet, and Winnebago counties. Children most often visit the Building for Kids with their families or as students with their educators. Grown-ups may exist in children’s lives as parents, caregivers, and/or educators.

According to the most recent American Communities Survey, there are an estimated 26,069 children between the ages of 5-9 in the museum’s core tri-county area.5 Over the performance period, the Food to Grow Initiative will impact much of this audience of children and their grownups through public programming. We estimate of over 8,500 professionally facilitated program participants and 168,000 total participants in self-facilitated learning during the performance period. One important sub-sets of this audience include students from the Appleton Area School District that will attend during their 3rd grade year. This sub-group consists of 1,974 students (based 21-22 enrollment data for upstream classes).6

Long-term beneficiaries of Food to Grow will include the residents across the museum’s core service area which has a total population of 413,173 people. This benefit will be achieved through sustained community conversation and multi-sector collaboration utilizing Food to Grow and the outcomes of this work as a platform for engagement.

The Building for Kids has a long history of engaging the community in the development of exhibitions and activities at the museum. Over the past year, the Building for Kids has convened two task force groups made up of public health leaders, funding partners, food equity partners, leaders in our local school district, and other community stakeholders. These task force groups have provided their unique perspectives to help us ensure we reach and engage our target groups. One group focuses on the design of the Food to Grow exhibit’s physical components and the other group focuses on the activities that will engage our community through the Food to Grow Initiative.

Project Work Plan:

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4 Appleton Health Department, Be Well Be Healthy: A Plan for a Healthier Tomorrow, 2016. https://www.appleton.org/home/showpublisheddocument/12055/636136129813270000
The *Food to Grow Initiative* is built upon a platform created by a new permanent exhibit inside the Building for Kids Children’s Museum. This exhibit is the result of these same initial stakeholder convenings and is the result of a community-driven exhibit design process conducted in 2022. While critical context and precursors to this work, the design and fabrication of the exhibit are outside the scope of the performance period and are therefore not included in this proposal.⁷

*Food to Grow Initiative* activities are as follows:

1. **EXHIBIT:** Install and maintain an immersive play-based learning space that generates cross-generational learning and conversation around food choice, sourcing, and preparation while combating stigma to improve food equity.
   - **Multi-Ethnic Advisory Group:** Diverse groups of farmers, grocers, farm market vendors, cultural heritage organizations, and chefs/restauranteurs will assemble to facilitate discussion about how the exhibit design and props can represent a diverse set of foods and recipes. The group will gather several times each year to share a meal, learn about the seasonal and cultural significance of food traditions, and generate open discussion about ingredients and their cultural significance. These conversations will inform and advance seasonally changing food props and recipes in the exhibit.
   - **Recipe Exploration Extension:** Through utilization of RFID tags and a custom software program, the play-pattern of the exhibit will be extended to include a rotating selection of recipe prompts for families to source necessary ingredients and create together. Families will also be able to analyze composition of foods sourced in exhibit to evaluate the variety they are including in their diets.

2. **PROGRAMMING:** Facilitate interactive experiences where knowledge, skills, and attitudes address needs and become behaviors. Programming will occur in four primary formats:
   - **Discovery Classes (field trips):** Field trips at the Building for Kids have been critical, celebrated elements of the educational system in our region for over 30 years. These Discovery Classes are hands-on, facilitated experiences that meet learning standards for local school districts. The *Food to Grow Initiative* will feature immersive field trip experiences that utilize the Food to Grow exhibit. These Food to Grow Discovery Classes will be adaptable to any grade level. In the Appleton Area School District, the human body, nutrition, and physiology are part of third-grade’s required curriculum. Reaching these third-grade students will set the foundation for our research and evaluation activities as well. Students will be evaluated on their knowledge, skills, and attitudes around nutritious foods prior to experiencing Food to Grow, then receive a follow-up evaluation shortly after their visit, and further follow-up one year later.

⁷ Cost share for some Phase II elements which will occur within the performance period of the exhibit are included as they are essential components to the program goals of the *Food to Grow Initiative.*
• **Family Cooking Workshops:** Numerous benefits have been documented for families consuming meals together including mental and physical health outcomes for children and adults. Local community health data demonstrates a decline in the percentage of families consuming meals together with rates dropping from 64% to 59% in just a few years.\(^8\) Community stakeholders have identified cost, knowledge and skill gaps, and attitudes as perceived barriers for families to prepare and consume nutritionally valuable meals together. Family Cooking Workshops will be aimed at serving children and their grown-ups with free programs that will feature local chefs and food experts to lead families through the process of preparing a nutritious and budget friendly meal. Families will follow a recipe, prepare food, and share a meal together. The goals of the workshops are to create positive experiences for families, expose them to new ways to prepare meals using nutritious foods, and to build their confidence in purchasing and preparing nutritionally valuable meals. We will work with BeWell Fox Valley to support the development of these workshops. The museum will facilitate quarterly family dinner events through partnerships with local chefs, restaurants, and school districts. Each workshop will be designed to serve up to 20 families.

• **Food Exploration:** Early exposure, hands-on learning, and experiential nutrition education has been documented to increase knowledge and attitudes as well as consumption of fruits and vegetables among children in an evaluation by University of Wisconsin Madison researchers. Leveraging this evidence-base, we will develop on-going, facilitated programming adjacent to the Food to Grow exhibit that will feature a variety of topics including food trial, food prep, food safety, and food sourcing. The goal of Food Exploration is to expose kids and families to new foods and build confidence. Food Exploration programming will be facilitated in part through a partnership with BeWell Fox Valley’s Public Health AmeriCorps Program.\(^9\) AmeriCorps service members will provide health education and capacity building services to support the Food to Grow Initiative’s goals and strategies.\(^10\)

• **Story Collection:** The collection and sharing of community members’ food experiences, traditions, and memories are critical to capture, measure, and shift food culture in our community. The Food to Grow Initiative will feature a variety of ways in which families will be able to record and share their reflections on the exhibits through video, pictures, writing, and digital tools, such as survey apps on tablets. We will incorporate the stories into the exhibit. Long term result of the Food to Grow Initiative is to see a culture shift in how our community views food and how we can learn about and connect with others through our experience with food. Through these stories, we will learn about families’ traditions, help our community learn from

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\(^8\) Fox Valley Community Health Improvement Coalition, *Tri-County Community Health Survey Report*, 2018. [https://www.outagamie.org/home/showpublisheddocument/64026/636857572901930000](https://www.outagamie.org/home/showpublisheddocument/64026/636857572901930000)


\(^10\) Since this is also a federal program with cost-share requirements, costs associated with this AmeriCorps partnership are not included within the grant budget or cost-share allocations.
one another, and inform decisions made around future programs. The stories will reveal and amplify how food is an experience we all share and how food impacts our overall physical, mental, and emotional health.

3. **EVALUATION:** The work of this project is part of a long-term effort to impact food culture, food choice, and food sourcing in our community. The *Food to Grow Initiative* will demand robust evaluation to ensure on-going interventions in our community are informed by the elements that produce the greatest impact. Nutritional anthropologist Dr. Mark Jenike from Lawrence University will oversee the evaluations across the programmatic interventions in the first two years to maximize impact within the grant period and inform on-going efforts over the 10+ year run of the Food to Grow exhibit. During evaluation, we plan to track visitors’ actual consumption of nutritionally valuable foods featured in Food to Grow programs, and the shift in knowledge, skills, and attitudes around the sourcing, preparing, and consuming of nutritionally valuable foods. Based on this research, we will be able to refine our programming to produce the desired results. Dr. Jenike has extensive experience in the field academically and has led several other similar evaluation projects in the region.

4. **COLLABORATION/CALL TO ACTION:** Stories, data, and community voice collected through the *Food to Grow Initiative* will be leveraged in conversations hosted at the museum. These convenings will be aimed to discuss next steps as a community and to rally a broader group of community stakeholders to make significant upstream investments in healthier outcomes for our entire community, with the goal of increasing kids and families’ consumption of nutritious foods. A long term goal of this call to action is to expand our broader community’s understanding of food to seeing it as a way to connect with others through a common experience.

The Building for Kids and our partners have worked to leverage our extensive experiences in designing and facilitating community-based educational initiatives to maximize the impact of this project. However, one key risk in developing and facilitating programming through the *Food to Grow Initiative* exist is in ensuring programming is inclusive. Considerations the programming task force continues to discuss include:

- Acknowledging cultural differences in food sourcing, preparing, and consuming.
- Acknowledging economic differences in food sourcing, preparing, and consuming.
- Using language that breaks stigma around food – cautious to label foods as “good” or “bad,” “healthy” or “unhealthy” – and focusing on properties of food and how they make us feel physically, mentally, and emotionally.

The Building for Kids and its partners plan to mitigate these risks by engaging members of our community who represent various cultural and economic groups in our on-going programming. This may look like inviting chefs from restaurants with ethnic cuisines to hosting food preparation demonstrations, featuring recipes in the exhibit that are common among other cultures, and capturing stories from members of our community that represent different cultures.

The Building for Kids will lead the planning, implementation, and management of the *Food to Grow Initiative* with key partners. Staff responsible will primarily be the Director of Programs & Community Engagement and the Education Team, made up of experts in STEM, art, and
community access programs. Evaluation of the project will require involvement from local educational institutions, including Lawrence University and the Appleton Area School District. Programming support will come from groups including BeWell (a United Way Fox Cities hosted initiative), AmeriCorps, Feeding America, Oshkosh Food Co-op, Food Wise, and Fork Farms a local hydroponics manufacturer.

Personnel needed will include museum staff, as well as AmeriCorps members in partnership with BeWell Fox Valley, and a professional nutritional anthropologist to lead our evaluation efforts. We anticipate needing 3-4 months to plan out our activities and then implement them with grant support over the course of the exhibit’s life. We will start with the planning and implementing our Discovery Classes, Family Dinners, and some of our Food Exploration programming, and then move on to incorporate the building for the collection of stories, with the evaluation of participants across all of the Food to Grow Initiative’s activities.

Project Results:

The Food to Grow Initiative will impact children and grown-ups in how they view food as a source of fuel or energy, as a shared experience with others, and as a source of pride as they take ownership over their choices and preparation of healthy meals. Target results include:

- Improved physical and mental health among children and their grownups as observed through programs like Family Cooking Workshops, during which children and their grownups will work together to create a meal.
- Improved understanding of food systems, food choices, and the role of food in our bodies as measured by evaluations conducted with students who participate in the Food to Grow Initiative’s Discovery Classes. Students will get an in depth look at the Food to Grow Exhibit through hands-on engagement and reflecting on the exhibit’s concepts.
- Decreased stigma of accessing nutritional supports and increased knowledge of what supports exist, as observed through visitors’ feedback using the exhibit’s tablets.
- Increased skills for preparing and incorporating healthy food choices into meals, as measured by feedback and evaluation of families who participate in the Food Exploration programming and the Family Cooking Workshops.
- Increased consumption of a variety of nutritionally valuable foods, as measured through the evaluation of students who participate in Discovery Classes and families who participate in Family Cooking Workshops.
- Deeper understanding and engagement in new or diverse foods, and appreciation of the variety of foods represented by our community’s ethnic groups, as observed through the stories the community shares through the Food to Grow Initiative’s Story Collection.

Food to Grow Initiative supports the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will serve as solutions to the needs of the audience:

- Knowledge: children and grown-ups will gain an understanding of where their food comes from and the different ways to secure food. They will also learn what food does for our bodies and how it impacts our physical, mental, and emotional health. Finally, food will be seen as a cross-cultural, cross-generational, shared experience.
• Skills: children and grown-ups will gain the skills necessary to accessing and identifying healthy foods. They will also gain the skills to confidently prepare healthy meals, maximize the health benefits food has to offer and ultimately increase their consumption of nutritionally valuable foods. Finally, children and grown-ups will be able to talk about food through its properties and their senses, as well as the story behind the food.

• Attitudes: children and grown-ups will feel less stigma around where to find food and accessing food supports. They will feel empowered to make healthy food choices and will find a sense of pride in knowing how to prepare healthy foods to provide meals that fuel and energize. Finally, they will feel a sense of community as they form connections with others by experiencing food together, talking about their experiences, and learning about foods that are significant to ethnicities different from their own.

The Food to Grow Initiative will result in the production of a number of important interventions and a robust set of local quantitative and qualitative data. New, innovative learning opportunities and curricula will be made widely available to the target audiences and beyond. These innovative, deeply-engaging, and long-lasting learning opportunities for children and their grown-ups are inspired by the needs identified in our community, reflect understanding of the existing evidence-base to maximize success of interventions, and includes a robust local evaluation to guide necessary pivots/developments as well as long term planning for beyond the grant period.

The availability and accessibility to the target population will be ensured through federal funding in the first two years (and local funding in year three) which will guarantee that all pre-registered experiences (field trip Discovery Classes and Family Dinner Workshops) will be offered without cost to children and families in our core service area during the performance period. Regular, drop-in programming (exhibit extension, story capture, and food exploration) will be offered without additional cost above admission or membership.

The Building for Kids has a long-standing and robust commitment to access and offers $0-$20 annual memberships through support of our Access Scholarship fund to families that face financial barriers to participation. In addition, we take proactive measures to recognize and address the more pervasive barriers of invitation, communication, transportation, and accommodation. These organizational principals will help ensure that the experiences produced will be accessible to our target audience.

The culture shift that will be a result of the Food to Grow Initiative will make the benefits of this project long-lasting. This level of change is a process more than a project. In addition, this project proposal is, in itself, a key element of ensuring that the change our community seeks will be sustainable and long-term. The corresponding exhibit will have an expected lifetime of 10+ years and a rapid launch and evaluation of these interventions will inform and support local investment in their continuation following the grant period.
**Building for Kids Food to Grow Initiative: Schedule of Completion**

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Applicant Name: Building for Kids Children’s Museum  
Project Title: Food to Grow Initiative

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<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)</th>
<th>Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)</th>
<th>Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)</th>
<th>Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)</th>
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| **Effectiveness:**  | Example: At the end of each month, using a report prepared by the registrar, we will compare the cumulative count of rehoused objects against the total number proposed for the project.  
Example: At the end of each project year, our external consultant will present results of the ongoing observation-based evaluation and compare them against our intended project results. | **Discovery Classes:** Third grade students in Appleton Area School District are our target audience and source of data for Discovery Classes. Following their engagement with Food to Grow, we will collect data on the students’ familiarity with diverse foods; knowledge of how food affects their minds, bodies, and overall wellness; and their interest in eating a variety of foods. This data will be collected using knowledge tests and pile-sorting exercises. Data collection will happen in the classroom before students experience the Food to Grow Discovery Class, again between two and six weeks after their Discovery Class, and then one year after their initial Discovery Class experience. Dr. Mark Jenike will lead much of the evaluation process and data collection to determine the effectiveness of the Food to Grow Initiative’s Discovery Classes.  
**Food Exploration:** The data collected from Food Exploration programming will include families’ familiarity with diverse foods, knowledge of how food affects their bodies and overall wellness, interest in eating a variety of foods, and reactions to the Food to Grow exhibit and programming. The source of our data will primarily be families who are members of the museum who regularly engage in the on-going programming the Food to Grow exhibit will offer. We will use various methods of data collection including pile-sorting exercises, interviews, and in-the-moment feedback using technology. Data collection will take place among member families a month before and a month after the exhibit opens, with post-visit data collection scheduled after a documented visit to the exhibit and participation in its programming.  
**Family Cooking Workshops:** Data we are looking to collect through Family Cooking Workshops are families’ confidence in food preparation techniques, understanding of where they can source their food, and during the programming – are they excited to make the meal? The source of our data will be families from the community who participate in the Family Dinner program. We will collect the data through surveys and behavioral observation during the Family Cooking Workshops. Surveys will also be administered before the program and one month after the program.  
**Story Collection:** The collection of our community’s food stories – with emphasis on stories from children and their families. Methods for collecting stories will include different media: writing, video, and sharing through an online community. Stories will be collected regularly as children and families engage with the exhibit. |  |
| Efficienciye | Example: Twice per year, we will assess our expenditures for program supplies on a per-person-served basis.  
Example: Each quarter, we will calculate the dollar value of volunteer hours contributed to the project as recorded in our online volunteer management system. |  |  |  |
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<th>Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group</th>
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| **Discovery Classes:** Throughout the school year, museum educators will evaluate how materials are being used in the Discovery Classes and ensure the museum has what is needed. This is already a current practice carried out by the museum’s education team.  
**Food Exploration:** Expenditures related to food costs and other materials will be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure quality, cost-effective programming. The project director, Beth Vanderloop, is part of the museum’s budget process each year and works closely with the museum’s finance staff to ensure program expenses are in line with the organization’s budget.  
**Family Cooking Workshops:** Meals prepared during the Family Dinner programs will be budget friendly. The cost of food and supplies will be evaluated before each program. With this being a new program to the museum, the Building for Kids will look to the experience of its partners, Be Well and the Oshkosh Food Co-op to advise on budget friendly meals that are nutritious.  
**Story Collection:** Since story collection will require different tools and media to collect the stories, education and program staff will evaluate monthly what tools are working the best for capturing stories. The museum’s education team has experience in collecting children’s play-stories and will draw from their knowledge to establish effective story collection from the *Food to Grow Initiative*. |

| Example: At the beginning, the mid-point, and end of the project, we will administer a satisfaction survey to staff who have participated in the training.  
Example: We will gather opinions about our online services through questionnaires provided to every 20th user. |
|---|
| **Discovery Classes:** The quality of the Discovery Classes will be assessed through a satisfaction survey administered to educators following their Discovery Class experience. This is the same method used for the museum’s current Discovery Class series. Lead educator, Abby Krueger, follows up with educators after their experiences at the Building for Kids and collects feedback. She will follow this practice for educators who experience the *Food to Grow Initiative*’s Discovery Classes.  
**Food Exploration:** The quality of the Food Exploration programming will be assessed through surveys and interviews with families who attend programming; administered on an on-going basis. The Building for Kids’ staff often collects formal and informal feedback from its visitors and will use existing methods as well as new methods that will allow for real-time feedback.  
**Family Cooking Workshops:** The quality of the workshops will be assessed through a satisfaction survey administered to a family following their participation in the program. For most pre-registered programming, the Building for Kids sends out surveys to families who participate. We will use the contact information received at the time of registration for the Family Cooking Workshops to ask for feedback.  
**Story Collection:** The quality of the experience of sharing stories will be assessed through a satisfaction survey at the end of sharing their story. The Building for Kids will use a simple satisfaction rating for visitors who choose to share their stories. |

| Example: Every six months, our Project Director will assess the fit between our proposed Schedule of Completion and actual activity completion dates.  
Example: Each quarter, each project partner will submit to our Project Director a templated report showing their progress on meeting project milestones. |
|---|
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The professional staff of the Building for Kids will leverage existing accountability, planning structures, and tools to ensure the timely execution of proposed grant activities. This will be accomplished by integrating the scheduled tasks and activities outlined in this project proposal (Discovery Classes, Food Exploration, Family Cooking Workshops, and Story Collection) into the exiting workplan of each of the key staff members. Our project director, Beth Vanderloop, will evaluate progress in an on-going basis with scheduled check-ins among the entire team quarterly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>