

Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee
11 Inman Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear CRA Board Members:

I'm so sorry that I can't be there with you tonight as you announce the 2019 Forward Fund awards. I have been stranded in airports in New Orleans and New York City for the past 22 hours trying to get back to Cambridge. I am writing this letter to share my heartfelt appreciation and that of CEOC's Board of Directors, staff and participants for your support in renovating CEOC's Food Pantry.

The grant award will provide CEOC with technical assistance needed to begin the process of designing a more welcoming space for individuals who utilize it on a weekly or monthly basis. As the City's largest food pantry, we provide services to approximately 1,200 individuals and families each month. In addition, as the Coordinator of the Cambridge Food Pantry Network, we maintain the inventory for the nine other pantries in the City and for the Food for Free's home delivery program.

Our dream is to renovate the pantry so that we are able to offer a "grocery store" shopping experience for our pantry patrons. It is hard enough to rely on a food pantry on a regular basis, but having more control of the visit so that individuals can choose the foods that meet the needs of their family will make it a little easier. In addition, by widening the entrance of the pantry, CEOC will be able to accept more nutritious food from the Greater Boston Food Bank so that the amount that families receive at each visit can increase.

CEOC will solicit input from pantry patrons and other Network pantries so that we can ensure that we are designing a pantry that addresses the community's needs and that residents feel that they have been a critical piece of the process.

In closing, I want to thank you again for selecting CEOC as one of your awardees this year. We would love for you to visit the pantry as we are moving forward with this process and when the renovation is complete. The work that we do together in this project will help to reduce food insecurity in Cambridge.

Sincerely,

Tina Alu
Executive Director