



Community Thanksgiving Table Fund

2026 Request for Proposals

PURPOSE

Since 2016, the Harvest Youth Board has rallied the community around the W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Eve Dinner — bringing neighbors together to share meals, gratitude, and generosity.

Now, we're taking that spirit beyond one event. In lieu of the W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Eve Dinner, the *Community Thanksgiving Table Fund* will fuel community-led meal efforts, helping more organizations bring neighbors to the table and strengthen connections that last long after the holiday ends.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The Harvest Youth Board is excited to partner with local groups ready to serve their communities this Thanksgiving.

We welcome applications from:

- Community groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofit organizations

Applicants must be rooted right here in Martinsville–Henry County and serve the communities they call home.

If your organization or group has the heart to serve and a plan to bring people together, we'd love to hear from you!

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1. About The Harvest Youth Board

The Harvest Youth Board was established in 2015 to give young people in Martinsville-Henry County a meaningful voice in community change and leadership. Consisting of 13 high school students, it empowers local youth by creating leadership opportunities and supporting community health, education, and service initiatives. The Board awards grants (up to \$5,000) to nonprofit programs that benefit area youth and organizes community-building events like the Books & Bunnies celebration and the W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Eve Dinner. Since 2015, the Board has awarded over \$125,000 in grants to local organizations.

2. Background & Overview

The Harvest Youth Board has proudly hosted the W. Dan Prince III Thanksgiving Eve Dinner since 2016 to provide free Thanksgiving meals to the Martinsville–Henry County community. Named in honor of Dr. W. Dan Prince III, a respected local physician and dedicated member of The Harvest Foundation Board of Directors, the event reflects his legacy of service, generosity, and community care.

Each year, the Youth Board plans and executes the dinner in its entirety — coordinating logistics, recruiting volunteers, promoting the event, purchasing supplies, and organizing meal service and delivery. Volunteers of all ages join in this community-wide effort to ensure individuals and families have access to a Thanksgiving meal.

As the initiative has grown, so has the vision. In 2026, the Harvest Youth Board is transitioning from hosting one central Thanksgiving Eve Dinner to supporting multiple community-led Thanksgiving efforts across Martinsville–Henry County—trading a single event for a larger week of impact, intentionally meeting people where they are, and recognizing that many communities already host their own Thanksgiving gatherings. As a result, the traditional Thanksgiving Eve Dinner will no longer be held at Martinsville High School.

Instead, through the *Community Thanksgiving Table Fund*, the Youth Board will invest in and coordinate with local organizations, faith-based groups, and community partners to expand the reach of holiday meals throughout Martinsville-Henry County. This shift is designed to “stretch” the spirit and impact of Thanksgiving Eve beyond a single location—empowering neighborhoods, strengthening partnerships, and increasing access for families across the community

In addition to providing funding, the Youth Board will play an active role by hosting information sessions for prospective applicants, supporting community-wide promotion, helping coordinate volunteers as needed, and serving alongside partners at selected Thanksgiving dinners. These efforts will be vital in ensuring this initiative becomes a true community-wide effort rather than a collection of isolated events, fostering collaboration, shared ownership, and a unified commitment to making sure everyone has a place at the Thanksgiving table.

Through this approach, the Youth Board aims to amplify collective impact, deepen collaboration, and ensure that even more families experience the generosity and connection that define the Thanksgiving season.

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), the Youth Board aims to invest in community-led Thanksgiving initiatives that:

- Provide free Thanksgiving meals to individuals and families
- Foster connection and belonging within neighborhoods
- Encourage volunteerism and shared service
- Strengthen relationships that extend beyond a single meal

By supporting multiple community-based efforts, the Youth Board hopes to amplify impact, empower local leadership, and cultivate lasting connections throughout Martinsville–Henry County.

3. Funding & Budget

The Harvest Youth Board has a funding pool of \$30,000, from which multiple grants—up to \$3,000 per grant—will be awarded to support Thanksgiving meal initiatives across the community. It is highly recommended that organizations within the same community collaborate to maximize impact, reduce duplication of efforts, and strengthen overall coordination.

4. Grant Requirements & Eligibility

Funded events must:

- Provide a free cooked Thanksgiving meal
- Be open to the public
- Take place during the week of Thanksgiving
- Encourage community connection and volunteer engagement
- Serve individuals and families within Martinsville-Henry County
- Take place in Martinsville-Henry County

Grant funds may be used for:

- Food and ingredients
- Disposable food containers and packaging
- Plastic utensils, napkins and paper goods
- Limited event-related supplies necessary to execute the dinner
- Marketing needs specific to the Thanksgiving dinner

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Pots, pans, cooking equipment or kitchen appliances
- Permanent equipment or capital purchases
- Salaries or stipends
- Religious materials or proselytizing activities
- Expenses unrelated to the Thanksgiving meal

5. Submission Requirements & Eligibility

To be considered for funding, applicants must:

- Schedule a time to meet with HYB representative(s)
- Submit a completed grant application form that includes:
 - A brief narrative outlining the proposed Thanksgiving Dinner, including:
 - Event format (dine-in, take-out, delivery, or hybrid)
 - Target community and anticipated number of meals
 - Volunteer involvement
 - Partnerships and/or collaborations
 - A timeline detailing planning, promotion, and event implementation
 - A budget outlining how grant funds will be used
- Attend an Information Session
- Attend a post-event meeting with the Harvest Youth Board

- Applicants must designate one primary contact person who will serve as the organization's main point of contact with the Harvest Youth Board throughout the application, award, planning, and event implementation process.

The Harvest Youth Board welcomes applications from:

- Community groups (defined as 5 or more individuals working together to host the dinner)
- Faith-Based Organizations
 - Religious messages, materials, or activities may not be included as part of the funded event, and participation may not be conditioned on any religious belief or activity.
- Nonprofit organizations

Applicants must be located in Martinsville-Henry County and within the communities they plan to serve.

Organizations that do not have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status are eligible to apply; however, they must secure a fiscal sponsor. A fiscal sponsor is a nonprofit organization that agrees to receive and manage grant funds on behalf of the applying group.

6. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by The Harvest Youth Board and evaluated based on the following:

- *Community Impact*
 - Number of individuals and families anticipated to be served
 - Clear demonstration of community need
- *Accessibility and Inclusivity*
 - Event is free and open to all (no requirements to receive meals)

- *Event Plan and Feasibility*
 - Clear, realistic, plan and timeline
 - Demonstrated capacity to successfully execute the dinner
- *Budget Clarity*
 - Funds are allocated appropriately and align with allowable expenses
 - Budget reflects cost-conscious planning
- *Volunteer Engagement*
 - Meaningful opportunities for community members to serve
- *Collaboration and Partnerships (Highly Encouraged)*
 - Evidence of partnership among community groups, churches, or organizations
 - Shared resources and coordinated efforts to maximize impact
- *Sustainability of Relationships*
 - Potential for relationships and community connections to extend beyond the Thanksgiving event

7. Promotion

The Harvest Youth Board will develop a coordinated, city/county-wide promotion and community awareness campaign for all funded Thanksgiving dinners, working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders. The Harvest Youth Board will develop and disseminate a unified listing of all dinners through social media, local media outlets, and other outreach channels. This also pertains to volunteer recruitment and engagement efforts, to ensure seamless participation and maximize community involvement.

Grant recipients are responsible for coordinating and executing promotional and community awareness efforts within their designated service areas.

8. Role of the Harvest Youth Board

The Harvest Youth Board emphasizes that its role extends beyond grantmaking. In addition to awarding funds, Youth Board members will actively support selected organizations to help ensure successful and impactful Thanksgiving dinners throughout Martinsville–Henry County.

The Youth Board will:

- Volunteer at selected dinner sites to assist with meal preparation, serving, and event support
- Support promotion and community awareness efforts for funded Thanksgiving dinners
- Support and coordinate the volunteer sign-up process in partnership with participating sites, as needed.
- Host information sessions for potential applicants to answer questions and provide guidance about the grant opportunity

Through this hands-on involvement, the Youth Board aims to reduce the administrative burden on host organizations, strengthen collaboration, and build meaningful community connections that extend beyond a single Thanksgiving meal.

9. Timeline

- **July 15, 2026 - Request for Proposals Released/Application opens**
- **August 31, 2026 - Applications Due**
- **September 14, 2026 - Notification to Applicants**

***An Information Session will be held on Thursday, July 30th at 6PM
at The Harvest Foundation (134 E. Church Street, Martinsville, VA 24112)***

10. Main Contacts

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