Starting a Truck Ministry
We empower communities into a lifestyle of service with the homeless

- Mobile Loaves & Fishes, Inc. (MLF) is a faith based social outreach ministry providing food and clothing, cultivating community and promoting dignity to our homeless brothers and sisters in need.
- Founded in 1998 at St. John Neumann Catholic Church (Austin, TX)
- In 2000, MLF officially became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- To learn more, please visit www.mlf.org
**Truck Ministry** 365 days a year, volunteers hit the streets - stopping at street corners, under bridges, in parks, at weekly rate motels, housing projects - in catering trucks to serve the homeless, delivering food, clothing, hygiene products, and other necessities.

**Community First!** A powerful new movement in the United States providing affordable, permanent housing and a supportive community for the disabled, chronically homeless.

**Community Works** Micro-enterprise opportunities, such as gardening, art, blacksmithing, woodworking and concessions, enable our friends who have experienced homelessness to earn a modest living income. This program empowers volunteers to serve alongside our friends as they develop new skills, while also building relationships.
Seed Planting

MLF Board approval needed for Austin locations only

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Each prospective community must discern whether they are being called to start a Truck Ministry

- Discernment process can take 6 or more months
- Discernment must be affirmed by community leadership (ie. church pastor)
- Representative(s) from prospective community must travel to Austin or nearest MLF commissary to actively participate in the full truck run process: Web-based Volunteer Management and Mapping System, Make Ready, Truck Run and Clean Up
- Representatives(s) share experience with community leadership
- A MLF representative will gladly travel to your location for further discussions and training. Consulting and travel fees will apply.
Discernment Questions

- Will the leadership of the prospective community support this ministry? This support is the key to a successful ministry!

- Does the prospective community have a spiritual renewal program in place? Spiritual renewal and growth is vital to a thriving truck ministry!

- Does the prospective community have a competing endeavor that may make fundraising and volunteer recruitment challenging?

- What is the proximity of the prospective community to the central business district?
• Does the prospective community have a commercial kitchen available for food preparation? You will need to check with your local health department regarding requirements for permitting a *cold* kitchen operation. A mobile vending permit may also be required.

• Do you have refrigeration? A two-door commercial refrigerator is ideal. Approx. cost is $1,500 (used) to $3,000 (new).

• Do you have an ice machine? A large volume ice machine producing up to 500 lbs. per day is ideal.

• Can you assemble a core team of volunteers willing to contribute a **SIGNIFICANT** amount of time as well as financial resources to this ministry?
MLF PHILOSOPHY:

The most effective operational strategy on a Primary Community level is that of the Volunteer Core Team Circle
The Core Team will empower 500-800 volunteers to go out into the streets of their community almost every night to deliver 25,000 meals per year.

The Core Team should be comprised of volunteers operating under community leadership (i.e. church pastor). Often times community will also assign a staff person to help facilitate the ministry.

The Core Team structure is collaborative and entrepreneurial - not hierarchical and not dictatorial.

A well-balanced Core Team should be comprised of individuals with complimentary skills and behavior styles.

In addition to specific core team responsibilities, the Core Team will meet weekly during startup phase, twice per month for two months then once per month, resulting in a significant time commitment.

Subcommittees, if any, to meet as needed then report to the core team.
Volunteer Core Team Roles

Core Team Catalyst(s)

- Role is established early in the discernment process. A Catalyst by definition is a person who precipitates change.
- Inspire and empower others into a lifestyle of service with the homeless through the MLF truck ministry.
- Strong collaborative style of leadership
- Interface with leadership in other Primary Communities
- Travel to Austin to actively participate in the full truck run process and share experience with community leadership
- Recommend this role be shared by at least 2 people
- 15-20 hours/week service for 2 months until ministry is stabilized

Accounting/Bookkeeping

- Accounting/bookkeeping experience
- Familiar with accounting software to be used
- Estimated time commitment is 5 hours per month
Fundraising/Stewardship
  • Implement stewardship strategy developed by core team
    • Sample Strategy
      • Major gift asks
      • Online fundraising
      • Direct mail
      • Corporate sponsorships
      • Grant writing
    • Significant time commitment raising ~$84,000 per year

PR/Communications
  • Inform local media of special events/activities
  • Estimated time commitment is 3 hours per month

Spiritual Director
  • Ensure core team and other volunteers are provided spiritual support and guidance
Volunteer Coordinator(s)

- Shall steward 500-800 volunteers
- Must be internet/computer literate
- Responsibilities include:
  - Maintaining MLF Volunteer Database and Mapping System (if you choose to license)
  - Creating volunteer teams
  - Assigning volunteers to teams
  - Communicating with volunteers
  - Training volunteers
  - Cord maintenance
- Most intensive role of the core team. Therefore, we recommend 3 volunteers share this role.
- Initial commitment >15 hours per week, tapering to 3-4 hours
Commissary Management
• Maintain commissary facilities
• Ensure adequate food and supplies are available for each run
  • Maintain relationship with wholesale food supplier and coordinate weekly food orders
  • Ensure that all products are prepped for Make-Ready teams.
• Estimated time commitment is 3 hours per week

Truck Maintenance
• Regular truck maintenance
• Least intensive role
~$250 per run x 28 runs per month
= $7,000/month or $84,000/year

- Prices are estimated based on past MLF experience and may fluctuate and vary by community.
- Above cost includes food, supplies, fuel, insurance, licensing/permits, utilities, repairs, and maintenance.
- Above cost does not include salaries or facility rental, if applicable.
- MLF typically operates on a four week month or 28 evening runs.
Letter from Community Leadership to MLF

- After discernment is completed, a letter must be sent from your community leadership inviting MLF to plant a truck in your community.

Licensing Agreement(s)

- MLF Board must approve Agreement Execution. Applies to Austin locations only.
- Should you decide to use the Mobile Loaves & Fishes name and branding, a licensing agreement must be executed ($100/yr). Same if you wish to use our online volunteer management and mapping tools ($500/yr). Applies to non-Austin locations only.

Volunteer Core Team Recruitment and Training

Secure Start-Up Funds and Operational Support

- $50K for purchase of Truck and Catering Bed
- Outfit commissary for permitting
- Equipment (Refrigerator, Ice Machine, other supplies)
- $84K for annual operating costs
God of the poor and afflicted, soften the hard edges of my heart that I might see Your image in the eyes of those who are outcasts in our world. Open me to embrace those who are hungry and abandoned. Soften me to understand the angry and desperate. Enliven me to offer my gifts and treasures to the stranger and alien. Empower me with compassion toward the imprisoned and forgotten. Enflesh my heart with the loving heart of Jesus, Who lived among us to point the way to Your reign of justice and dignity. Amen.