



FOOD SECURITY EQUITY IMPACT FUND

Community-Led Solutions for a Food Secure Future

Prepared by
Feeding America

DECEMBER 2023





About the Fund

The Food Security Equity Impact Fund supports community-based solutions to address food insecurity by making multi-year grants to community partners and food banks engaged in food justice and equitable food access initiatives. It builds on our work to distribute food to meet immediate needs and our efforts to end hunger in partnership with communities.

Established in 2021 with a transformational gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, the Fund advances community-driven solutions to remove systemic barriers to food security and increase neighbors' access to nutritious and culturally preferred food. Ms. Scott's initial investment has yielded new and generous support for systems change work, which is enabling the Fund to extend its reach across the country, one community at a time. To date, Feeding America has raised an additional \$6.8 million to support the work of a growing cohort of Fund grantees. More than \$20 million has been awarded to food banks and their community partners since the Fund's inception. This includes \$10.6 million awarded to grantees during FY23 and \$4 million in supplemental funding awarded to grantees in the first quarter of FY24 to implement their plans. An additional \$1 million in supplemental funding may be awarded prior to June 30, 2024.

Using a trust-based grantmaking model, Feeding America along with visionary donors are supporting the expertise of community partners, food banks and people with lived experience of hunger. By proactively embedding confidence and transparency into our approach, we are advancing equity, shifting power and building mutually accountable relationships within communities. By fostering healthy risk-taking, shared leadership, creativity and innovation at the community level, grantees are expanding existing approaches and developing bold new ones to address food insecurity where they live and work.

The creation of the Fund is a major step in a shared journey to end hunger through trust-based philanthropy that is grounded in equity and centers community voices and leadership. The Fund is designed to keep the people most impacted by hunger at the center of our work, strives to eliminate the root causes of hunger and addresses unjust and avoidable race-based health and economic disparities. It also drives investments to solutions for people and places that have disproportionately faced food insecurity. We are pleased to share this report highlighting examples of community-led initiatives currently underway, which are making a significant difference in the lives of people who experience hunger.

**Total Amount
Granted**

\$20.4M

**Total Number
of Grants**

35

Award Range

\$250,000-\$500,000

FAST Blackfeet

“You can never reach food sovereignty if you do not have food sustainability. It is what we are doing at FAST Blackfeet” said Danielle Antelope, Executive Director at FAST Blackfeet in Browning, Montana. Browning is the headquarters of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The tribal land, which occupies 1.5 million acres in central Montana, is home to the state’s largest Native America tribe by population. In her role leading the Food Access and Sustainability team at FAST Blackfeet, Antelope is spearheading efforts to improve food security and access to healthy food for members of the Blackfeet Nation. FAST Blackfeet operates a food pantry, a nutrition education program and a food sovereignty program that brings people back to the land and their food sources. The group is using its implementation award to build a Community Food Resource Center on tribal land.

“We are reclaiming our health by connecting with food and the land,” she said, adding, “Addressing hunger is not just about giving people food. It’s helping them reclaim their health and think differently about food. It’s feeding minds.”



When People are Fed, Futures are Nourished

Feeding America is accelerating its work to address disparities and advance solutions for an America where no one is hungry. We are proactively broadening our operations and programmatic support anchored in equity. One of the ways in which we are vigorously pursuing an equity agenda is through the Food Security Equity Impact Fund. The Fund is driving investments to communities of color where high rates of food insecurity, along with racial, economic and social disparities, persist. It is designed to strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones at the community level that focus on people who are inordinately impacted by food insecurity. By addressing the root causes of hunger, overcoming barriers to food security, increasing neighbors’ access to nutritious and culturally preferred food—and giving voice to the insights of people with lived experience—we can make deeper inroads in our fight to end hunger.

NUMBER OF
PARTNER
FOOD BANKS

35

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY
BASED ORGANIZATIONS/
PARTNERS

75+

PERCENTAGE OF COMMUNITY
BASED ORGANIZATIONS
LED BY PERSONS OF COLOR


90%

COMMUNITY-LED
PROJECTS UNDERWAY IN

28

STATES, WASHINGTON, DC
AND PUERTO RICO





Today, the demand for charitable food assistance exceeds pre-pandemic levels throughout the country. COVID-era nutrition benefits have ended. Neighbors in communities large and small face a host of economic challenges. Inflation and the prohibitive cost of essentials like gas, food, medicine and rent—and low and stagnant wages—all contribute to high rates of food insecurity, as does the underlying impact of systemic racism, a root cause of food insecurity for communities of color. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently released its annual study measuring food security in America, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022*. **The findings show that food insecurity increased from 2021 to 2022 for nearly every subgroup and population that the report describes, including for Black, Latino and white individuals. However, food insecurity continues to be higher among communities of color.** The food insecurity rate for Black individuals last year was 22.7%, followed by a rate of 21.4% for individuals who are Latino. The rate for white individuals was 9.6%. The number of people living in food insecure households in the United States in 2022 increased to 44 million, including 13 million children. This is an increase of 31% for all individuals and 44% for children from the previous year, the highest rate and number of individuals and children since 2014 – and the largest one-year increase in food insecurity since 2008.

The national data reflects external factors impacting the overall rate of food insecurity and also reinforces what we have seen and heard from neighbors and food banks across the country. People facing hunger have told us that inflation and the high cost of groceries means there is less healthy food on their tables. Food banks have reported increased pressure from the growing demand for charitable food assistance, while feeling the compounded effects of continued supply chain disruptions and increased food and transportation costs. We are aware that ending hunger requires more than food. It requires economic opportunity for all. Which is why facilitating career opportunities for individuals to improve their financial well-being and connecting families to services to increase their incomes are essential components of our strategy to decrease food insecurity.

Today, Feeding America is committed to expanding its support of community-created solutions funded through the Food Security Equity Impact Fund; these bold approaches that can help mitigate economic, racial and social influences and bolster our mission to advance change in America. In the two years since the first round of awards were granted, the Fund has helped to **(1)** identify innovative, new community partnerships and strengthen existing ones; **(2)** grow our understanding of the unique role community organizations and partner food banks play in eliminating the need for charitable food assistance; **(3)** learn from successful community-led programs and practices which support food sovereignty and food justice in divested communities; and **(4)** support the development and implementation of systemic change at the local and community level.



It was such a bright spot to travel to the Houston Summit together with our Native American Advancement Foundation community partners. I learned so much more about them as individuals from that travel experience, including the opportunity to connect and reflect on things we were learning or inspired by other projects and groups present at the conference.

—
Audra Christophel, Community Food Bank,
Tucson, AZ



“
Through this grant opportunity,
Feeding San Diego and the
San Diego Food System Alliance
have had a chance to learn
more in depth about the other
organization and participate more
actively in supporting each other's
work within the county.

—
Becky Gower, Feeding San Diego,
San Diego, CA

While many of neighbor-centered projects and programs being carried out through the support of the Fund still are in the early stages of implementation and growth, we are heartened by the progress being made and by the major themes we have seen emerge as a result of their concerted efforts. They include:

- **Cultural Reclamation**, which includes redistribution of resources within communities, shifting norms and practices and reclaiming farm ownership as a wealth generator for farmers of color.
- **Forging Connections and Partnerships** to create the conditions for more collaboration within communities and broadening neighbors' connections to their local food systems, culture and history.
- **Honoring Community and Local Priorities** in order to cultivate and expand leadership within communities and increase economic opportunities, including job training and mentoring programs, as a means of decreasing food insecurity.

We believe America is capable of achieving a food secure future for everyone in partnership with food banks, policy makers, corporate and individual supporters and communities. As Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, Feeding America's Chief Executive Officer, said, "If as a nation, we revitalize our commitment to end hunger and work together, including the public and private sectors, we will continue to make substantial progress. We are not lacking in resources in this country, nor are we lacking adequate interest, but we do lack coordination and large-scale collaboration. So many creative people are out there doing things in isolation, which is wonderful, but sea change will require a movement with all of us working together."



Gullah Farmers' Cooperative Association

Growing up in rural South Carolina, the nearest grocery store was a 30-minute drive from Ashley Walker's home. In college, Walker spearheaded projects studying campus hunger and rural areas lacking grocery stores. Today, she serves as a Farmer Educator and Wholesale Specialist at the Gullah Farmers' Cooperative Association, where her work focuses on increasing access to fresh produce for people who are food insecure. Using sustainable methods, cooperative members grow produce on the Sea Islands of South Carolina. In partnership with network member Lowcountry Food Bank, and with the support of a \$500,000 implementation grant from the Food Security Equity Impact Fund, the Association is creating wholesale markets to support local farmers of color and increase neighbors' access to fresh fruits and vegetables in rural communities. "The work that we're doing gives everyone a chance to have a healthier way of life," Walker said, adding, "I believe that access to fresh food is the foundation of equity."



Robust Partnerships and Lessons Learned Take Center Stage at Annual Summit

What do an urban food production kitchen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a 'food as medicine' subscription program in Oahu, Hawaii and a first of its kind community food resource center on Blackfeet Nation land in Montana all have in common? These inspired initiatives were among those featured at the inaugural **Food Security Equity Impact Fund Grantee Summit** held in Houston, Texas in July 2023. Approximately 155 individuals from grantee community organizations and their partners, along with food banks, gathered in person for the multi-day conference hosted by Feeding America. Attendees were joined by thought leaders from Feeding America and other non-profits whose work touches on racial, social and food justice initiatives and by donors to the Fund. The Summit was designed to foster closer connections between grantees and allow them to share their learnings as they work to transform local food systems and increase equitable access to healthy food in their communities. Grantees also were encouraged to collaborate and share knowledge and expertise with one another, to help build resources and deepen the impact of their work in ways that leverage what is working successfully in other communities. Additionally, the Summit created an opportunity for grantees to celebrate their work and elevate existing impacts taking place in communities in partnership with food banks. Another Summit is planned for next summer.

Among the grantees who provided an update on their ongoing efforts were the **Chattanooga Area Food Bank** in Tennessee and its community partner, **The Bethlehem Center**. The Center is located in the middle of five inner-city communities. As part of their planning grant, the food bank and the Center, along with the **City Farms Growers Coalition** and the **Chattanooga Community Co-op**, joined together to launch the Chattanooga Food Equity Project (CFEP) in August 2022. They recently received an implementation award from the Fund that will support the CFEP's efforts to address disparities and food insecurity in low-income and low-resourced areas of the city, where decades of inequitable investment has left many communities with poor infrastructure and few places for residents to buy groceries. According to the Bethlehem Center, "Last year we re-envisioned how we think about food, the root causes of food insecurity and the urgent need for wraparound service delivery. We also were able to explore ways to better serve the community." In response to community feedback, the Center has created an onsite food pantry that will be stocked by the food bank and the Center's garden. Additionally, the Center has upgraded its commercial kitchen to provide more nutritional meals for children in an after-school program."



In Cincinnati, Ohio, community partners ***Freestore Food Bank, Queen's Mother Market Cooperative, Community Economic Advancement Initiatives, The Community Builders, Isaiah 55, Inc. and Your Store of the Queen City***, joined forces to address challenges similar to Chattanooga's in terms of creating easier access to healthy food. The partners recently launched a local food distribution hub which focuses on food sourcing, storage and distribution throughout nine neighborhoods in the city, where Black residents represent 68% of the population, there is strong community advocacy and where a high proportion of residents have limited incomes. During the planning process, the grantees gained community support to build a more local and sustainable food network, which includes a group of small community grocery stores that will work collaboratively to advance food access in these neighborhoods. "A myriad of barriers are present, rooted in structural racism, creating an inability to maintain culturally relevant food access, which is critical to the health and vitality of residents in our nine neighborhoods," reported the partners. "We need to implement bold policies with the long-term goal of advancing the health of people of color in Cincinnati. The support of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund provides the opportunity to strengthen and support independent community producers and distributors to form a sustainable network led by these champions."

Ivy Leaf Farms

In 2019, Ivy Walls launched Ivy Leaf Farms, a community garden and gathering space on the back acres of her family's Houston farm. She wanted to offer local, organic and nutrient-dense food to her neighbors in Sunnyside, a historically Black community with 29,000 residents. In addition to being a farmer, Walls also served as an infection preventionist at a local hospital. When the COVID pandemic struck, she knew how she could help. She loaded her truck with fresh produce, which she distributed throughout the neighborhood. As she served her community through the pandemic, she recognized a deeper need: a space where people can learn to grow food for others and to nourish themselves. "No one farm can feed thousands of people," Walls said, "but what we can do is call people back to feeding themselves." With support from the Food Security Equity Impact Fund and community partner, the Houston Food Bank, Ivy Leaf Farms is continuing to expand its outreach. The farm currently grows vegetables, helps to build gardens and maintains a space that allows neighbors to get in touch with sustainable growing practices. Today, Sunnyside residents are excited to start their own urban gardens and become a food source for themselves and their neighbors," Walls said, adding, "It goes beyond simply feeding people. We are not just surviving—we can thrive."





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We have been working with partners to develop a mini-grant program for food producers across the Black Belt region in Alabama. Soliciting input from stakeholders has begun to build momentum around the program.

—
Kristin Woods, Tuskegee University,
Linden, AL

THE CHANGEMAKERS

In Their Own Words

Collaboration, innovation and determination define the transformational work being carried out in communities with the support of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund. As part of a trust-based grantmaking model, grantees are asked to periodically share their progress, goals and challenges with Feeding America as a means to inform the work of other grantees, to seek input and advice and to provide an understanding of how other food banks can implement similar efforts in the communities they support. These intermittent check-ins also allow Feeding America's equity-centered strategies to evolve to become more aligned with successful community-led solutions.

Recently, grantees were asked to reflect on progress made to date, as well as to share perspectives and insights into their work. Although we could not include all of their feedback in this report, the following responses illustrate the broad range of strategies and solutions grantees are implementing to address the root causes of hunger in their communities. While their approaches may vary, their primary thrust is to ensure community members have access to resources that will help advance systems change and increase neighbors' food security. Initiatives include creating food hubs to increase distribution of healthy foods in low-resourced communities, growing the number of Black-owned farms and providing farmers of color with more resources, creating community-run gardens to help feed neighbors, facilitating job and educational opportunities in their communities—and developing connections to wraparound services for housing and other basic needs. Their responses have been edited for length and clarity.

To date, how is progress going throughout your community as it relates to this grant opportunity?

OurSpace World (OSW) and the Capital Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C. are addressing a combination of challenges faced by Black farmers and providing opportunities for a more resilient food system involving Black and underserved farmers in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

“Progress in our community has been significant. Our (OSW) progress is characterized by the formation of robust partnerships, the growth of our networks, enhanced access to valuable information, and, equally crucial, the mobilization of essential resources. **We have successfully completed one cohort of apprentices and interns** who have actively partnered with local farmers, chefs, business owners and food banks. Notably, we have also **added a refrigerated truck** at a key distribution site, with two more trucks currently in the works. Furthermore, we are in the process of **introducing our farmer survey in collaboration with track-and-trace software developers**, demonstrating our commitment to leveraging technology for impactful agricultural advancements. A standout achievement was convening all of our partners and stakeholders at Prince George Community College in Virginia for the successful, two-day **Black Food Black Futures Festival**. Right now, we collectively represent a transformative force within these caring [farm] communities, actively disseminating knowledge, solutions and the means to affect positive change.”

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin (FAEW) and its community partners are using their grant to expand the Tribal Elder Food Box project, which provides nourishing food boxes to seniors. The boxes contain fresh produce and healthy, culturally preferred food grown by Indigenous farmers in Wisconsin.

“FAEW is partnering with all 11 tribes in Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Indigenous Law Center, University of Wisconsin-Healthtide, Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council, Great Lakes Intertribal Council and several others. So far, FAEW has been able to **support sending stipends to all of the tribal partners** to support the distribution of Tribal Elder Boxes. Tribal leaders were able to use these non-discretionary funds to support everything **from staff time to purchases of coolers and racking to help store food**. We were able to **hire two consultants** to help determine the feasibility of building an Intertribal Food Hub to support the Tribal Elder Food Box program in the future, in addition to several other tribal-run food projects. The Food Finance Institute created a study assessing the financial viability of an Intertribal Food Hub. They assessed all the potential options for business ventures that could be sustainable. Lastly, we **supported travel, conference and meeting registration costs, and training fees for many partners and Indigenous producers**. We were able to get all partners together in-person multiple times throughout the last year to plan for implementation. We were also able to attend multiple conferences across the country to spread awareness of our work and engage with other tribes and partners. We are currently **looking into hiring an Indigenous architect to help the coalition better understand the costs involved in building a food hub**. By the end of the year, we plan to begin the implementation portion of the grant.”





The Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund and Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana are using their award to support Black farmers, ranchers and landowners in Louisiana, providing training and workshops in sustainable crop production and food safety and marketing—and expanding direct assistance opportunities to prevent Black land loss.

According to the Federation, "Progress is going quite well. We hold weekly meetings with farmers and landowners throughout the state **to make them aware of USDA programs and opportunities**. We also are helping farmers apply for assistance through the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) and **connecting farmers with food banks to sell their produce through programs like the USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative (LFPA)**, in addition to helping farmers develop other market channels. We also are using our meetings as an opportunity to **support applications to the Heirs Property Relending Program**. All of these efforts continue to support farmers of color in Louisiana with land retention, continued financial success and financial recovery from discrimination. Lastly, we are close **to establishing a new, Louisiana State Association of Growers**. Today, there are five full-time permanent employees and four full-time contract employees working for the Federation in Louisiana. In the coming months, they will add a Forester and a Land Retention Specialist to their staff. The staff members who have joined the Federation are very mission aligned and appreciate the opportunity to support Louisiana farmers. **Many of the farmers who have experienced discrimination have very emotional stories to share**. Not only is the Federation able to support their progress toward financial restitution, but we also serve as empathetic and understanding listeners."



Our farmers market support and coaches are working hard to educate market attendees on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Massachusetts Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) use—and navigating markets in their language and with culturally relevant recipe and produce recommendations. All partners are furthering their respective objectives with Feeding America funds.

—
LMHC 5210 Collaborative and the
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

In what ways were you able to address the root causes of food insecurity through the funding you received to date from the Food Security Equity Impact Fund and how will you continue to address root causes through your ongoing work?

In, Texas, AYUDA INC., the Kelly Center for Hunger Relief, The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank used their planning grant to develop a series of community-centered strategies, including creating a multi-faceted plan for engaging clients and people with lived experience, actively recruiting people of color/lived experience to be part of the food bank's Anti-Hunger Advocates group, and conducting in-depth interviews of community members with low-incomes (in English and Spanish) to illuminate the causes of poverty from the perspective of people with lived experience.

"We (AYUDA INC.) were able to address root causes by **scheduling a food pantry twice per month** at the San Elizario Community Center. This community center serves our east county colonias which border Mexico. (Colonias are unincorporated areas that often lack basic services such as potable water, electricity, paved roads, proper drainage and waste management.) During the food pantry, **information on programs that could benefit neighbors is provided**, including services such as rental and/or mortgage assistance. One of our grant partners, the Kelly Center for Hunger Relief, is bringing their services to the colonias. Through local partnerships, we continue **to offer programs such as technology workshops and English as a Second Language courses**. These assist community members in being able to apply and land higher paying jobs.

To-date, we (UTEP) have addressed the root causes of food insecurity in several ways. First, we identified the root causes of poverty in other communities by conducting an extensive review of previous studies, which revealed that **education and employment opportunities** are two main paths to achieving food and financial security. We extensively engaged community members with lived experience throughout the planning process, including **the establishment of the UTEP Student Food Equity Council** and via interviews, focus groups and surveys. Our research revealed that UTEP students are a vulnerable population with extremely high rates of basic needs insecurity, including access to food. Our ongoing work will address root causes by removing key barriers to college graduation among UTEP students, which in turn will generate higher lifelong incomes, create increased food and financial security and build food security equity in our community. Our research studies also will create an infrastructure for ongoing measurement of basic needs insecurity and barriers to food and financial security, and **this data will be shared with community and local/regional decision-makers**. By informing community members and leaders of the scope of the challenges and collaborating to identify solutions, we will inform and shape the policy-making process and further address root societal causes of poverty and food insecurity."



Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) and Forgotten Harvest Food Bank are partnering to bring critical resources to the development of the Detroit Food Commons (DFC), a project of the DBCFSN, which will be a model for effectively engaging and empowering residents in communities of color to play a more active leadership role in the local food security movement and design solutions that will work for them.

“DBCFSN is building food sovereignty in Detroit’s African American community and addressing the root causes of food insecurity through **the creation of the Detroit Food Commons**. This work focuses on building the power and capacity within Detroit’s African American community to define and shape key elements of the system that provides its food. The Detroit Food Commons will be a community hub where **local growers will be able to sell produce in a co-operatively owned grocery store**; local food entrepreneurs will be able to rent space in the shared-use kitchens to scale up their businesses; and lectures, meetings, and workshops will take place on **building community health, power and agency**. While community members from across Detroit will be able to shop at the co-op, this grocery store will primarily serve residents in the North End, where 94% percent of residents identify as Black. The work of building and developing the Detroit Food Commons should be viewed as an important part of DBCFSN’s larger effort **to build greater food sovereignty for Black Detroiters in particular**, and Detroiters in general. Established in 2006, DBCSN has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to community self-determination and the belief that Black farmers and people of color can work together to shape the communities where they live and work. The organization’s effort to build greater food sovereignty include the work of establishing the Detroit Food Policy Council, **their leading involvement in Detroit urban agriculture** and public education around what a fair and just food system might look like.”



In Harmony Farm (IHF), in collaboration with the Food Bank of Iowa in Des Moines and Urban Dreams, is building a more equitable food system in central Iowa through their support of urban farmers of color, including immigrants from other countries.

“Our mission (IHF) is to work with our farmland and its organic resources to feed our neighbors, demonstrate regenerative and climate-smart agriculture and protect native habitat. Located 25 miles west of Des Moines, **we provide land access to historically underserved urban farmers** to scale production in a sustainable farm ecosystem and market their harvest to food assistance agencies and other outlets. As they learn, they feed their families and their communities directly, while also generating income through individual and commercial sales. Our centerpiece program is the **Beginning Farmer/Rancher Program**. Now in its second year of operation, it is supporting eight small farm businesses **owned and operated by Burundian refugees** as they learn sustainable agriculture practices and build entrepreneurial skills that will lead to independent production. During the first year of our grant, **IHF farmers harvested thousands of pounds of fresh produce**, feeding their families and their communities, and building a livelihood. They planted a combination of African crops including Lenga Lenga, Isogo, and African Eggplant, as well as American crops, including tomatoes, peppers, and salad greens. They worked the fields in the traditional way with their families and adopted sustainable practices at the forefront of climate-smart agriculture. **They also made their first large commercial sale to local food assistance agencies**. Today, IHF farmers are moving toward their second full harvest. They have guaranteed agreements with food assistance agencies to purchase 50,000 pounds of produce, 25 times the amount they sold to the same agencies last year. Fareway Foods, which operates more than 100 groceries across Iowa and surrounding states, has agreed to market IHF farmers’ produce in-store and mentor farmers in produce selection and delivery requirements. **Every participating farmer has a business plan**. They are making concrete steps toward independent production with the first farmers expected to graduate to their own independent fields in 2025.”



The Oregon Food Bank, Mudbone Grown/Feed'em Freedom Foundation, a Black-owned farm enterprise, and the Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT) in Portland, are creating opportunities for Black farmers to own land and build generational health and wealth. Grown/Feed'em and BOLT are working together to launch a Black Community Food Center and agricultural hub for community members, providing access to a food pantry, commercial kitchen space and a greenhouse. The Center will cultivate community wealth by connecting small producers to institutional markets. BOLT is addressing the barriers that Black farmers have faced in land and farm ownership.

“At the Feed'em Freedom Foundation, food security and food sovereignty are the foundation of our work. Which is why the **Black Community Food Center is a critical infrastructure in the BIPOC food economy**, activating solutions and connections that will lead to the growth of BIPOC-led farms and businesses and supporting emerging Black farmers who are growing culturally specific ancestral foods. Currently, one in five Black families in Oregon experience hunger, with 18% of Black families experiencing high food insecurity – a statistic that is three times higher than white, non-Hispanic families. This funding has allowed us to **launch two new food pantries** serving more than 600 primarily BIPOC community members each week. We have also prioritized **food purchase from BIPOC communities and Indigenous fisherman**, including fish, herbs and fresh produce. One of our pantries funded by the grant is located in Rockwood Village, which includes five residential buildings, a community center, a public park and our urban farm. With our partners, **we offer wrap around services, including workshops on farming, health and wellness and financial literacy**. This center was greatly needed in the area with poverty levels estimated to be as high as 40%. Our farm has grown over the years, adding several workshops and youth engagement programs. Another one of our programs is Propagating Produce For The People. This apprenticeship program is **an agricultural training program for Black youth** who are interested in careers in agriculture. The program includes hands-on instruction, mentorship and technical assistance in starting a business. Additionally, we (BOLT) were able to make a down payment on a 10-acre property with a portion of the grant, which serves as the nonprofit's headquarters and where we offer adult and youth education programming, raising livestock and are developing a regional Black agricultural ecosystem to support our local food system. We are now under contract for our second property, a 20-acre farm. The new property has become home to a Black farming family, allowing them to steward regenerative livestock. In addition, our site has become headquarters for our operation, which addresses the root causes of food security through **bridging Black families to relationship with land and food**; preparing Black farmers with financial readiness to have thriving agricultural businesses; and **offering opportunities for aspiring and current farmers** to build their sustainable agriculture skills.”



The grant has given us the opportunity to hire local small, Black-owned businesses, like a women/Black owned construction company, a self-employed plumbing contractor and a local chef. It's just the beginning of the impact of this fund. We are starting to negotiate and solidify the commitment to purchase produce from local Black-owned farms and from farmers of color.

—
Lucero Martinez-Donato, Faith Farms CDC,
Gary, IN

Please describe any emerging shifts in policies, practices, resources, or power structures related to food insecurity that you are seeing in your organization and/or in your community as a result of receiving support through the Food Security Equity Impact Fund.

The Native American Advancement Foundation and the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona are partnering to ensure Native American children and their families living in the GuVo District—a remote rural area in the Sonoran Desert along the U.S.-Mexico border—have easier access to the foods they need to be healthy and thrive.

“Based on significant learning from this project and other existing relationships, our food bank is beginning to implement new policies and procedures that help us more meaningfully use equity as a driver in how we prioritize the needs of partners. We are currently finalizing a data-driven partner tiering/priority system to ensure our tribal and partner agencies led by people of color are prioritized when we have limited resources and are not able to cover all partner needs across our network. **In many ways, we are also re-thinking how we nurture and steward our partnerships** - and recommitting to key partners that we will do better to listen and act on their feedback. In that spirit, we are in the process of implementing a new inventory system that allows for demand-driven ordering, ensuring partners have more agency and decision-making power. **We have recently piloted new partner agreements with some of our closest tribal partners**, which explicitly lay out our commitments to THEM—not just theirs to us—including our commitment to purchase and source more culturally relevant foods as requested by their community members.”



Camden Dream Center Technology Training School and Food Bank of South Jersey are collaborating to conceptualize and realize the Camden Dream Center Food Justice Innovative Hub, which will focus on building a local food system infrastructure for Camden and vicinity. This sustainable food strategy will center around an indoor vertical farming solution that will provide produce for Camden residents experiencing food insecurity.

“We (Camden Dream Center) are excited about strategic partnerships, community alignment of resources and many opportunities to partner on community grants, working groups and local action efforts. **This drives our place-based approach and pushes our collective impact.** This also raises our voices, which is key to building a national movement. Increased awareness and chances to share our work are important to our collective success. We have observed and experienced emerging shifts as a result of receiving support through the Fund, including hiring people to address food insecurity and increasing the local workforce. **We also are able to train students and adults around local and culturally relevant farming practices.** We have established new and strengthened existing partnerships. This has led to new opportunities to participate in the efforts of our partners. We also experienced a shift in practice in which our partners reach out to us to discuss new funding opportunities and to contribute to larger systemic conversations and coalition building. **Co-creation of efforts to transform our communities has expanded at the neighborhood level.** We have also seen shifts at the regional and state level. We are developing additional articulation agreements for high school youth to support our AgSTEM training with colleges and our AgSTEM curriculum developed during our planning phase. This is a growing shift in practice. Shifts in policy include better understanding of and opportunities for farmers of color to possibly participate in Local Food Purchasing Assistance and state and federal programs. **We are actively working to demystify prices and identify state resources to maximize community impact.** It is important to understand the statewide context of our work and the potential for real and systemic change which has developed since our initial grant from the Fund. In August 2022, Governor Murphy of New Jersey announced **the creation of the Office of the Food Advocate, the first in the nation.** Now, much attention is given to food insecurity given the commitment by the State to end hunger through comprehensive legislation.”



Multiple community partners and the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank are partnering to support local food sovereignty efforts in the Bay Area. Funding will support the RALLY Marin Project (The Root Cause Action Learning & Leading to achieve Food Security in Marin Project), an engagement initiative that will create a Community Plan and Peer Leadership Model developed with, by, and for people experiencing food insecurity. Learnings will inform the implementation of a new three-year Strategy Roadmap for the food bank and planning for the first Food Empowerment Market in San Francisco—a “next generation” food pantry centered on food sovereignty.

“This project has been a shift in the way that we (San-Francisco-Marin Food Bank) have worked historically, going from using research and anecdotal learnings to make decisions about our direct-to-community programming, to now beginning to **share power and support lifting up the voices of our community partners to co-create solutions** to systemically make change within CalFresh (the state’s food assistance program). This shift has been important as nationally resourced nutrition allocations have returned to pre-Covid priorities and communities with high food insecurity are once again a lower priority. Related to this work, the Food Bank has begun moving towards addressing root causes of hunger within our new partnership framework, one such example being **our community markets project**, which is aimed at providing a community hub model in a pantry setting.”

To date, what 'bright spot' moments are you experiencing through your initiative(s)?

Saba Grocers Initiative and Alameda County Community Food Bank in Oakland, California are implementing a more equitable food system in East and West Oakland neighborhoods that will reduce food insecurity, increase access to healthy food, support Black- and immigrant-owned corner stores and invest in Black, Asian, Latino and immigrant farmers and distributors.

"Our (Saba Grocers) Centralized Distribution Hub has completely bolstered our operations. We are now able to receive, pack and ship out produce **at a level of both scale and efficiency that was not possible before**. We are moving thousands of pounds a week with a small staff of just three to four. Last October, we distributed 11,771 pounds of food; this October, we distributed 18,264 pounds, increasing our distribution by more than half! We also consider the Fund's support to be a bright spot. The support has been wonderful, and our organization has felt the impact of Feeding America's implementation of a more trust-based giving model. **When we are able to focus more on executing a grant's goals/deliverables and less on the application, reporting and other administration of a grant, it not only enables our work but empowers it.**"

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) and its affiliate Elepaio Social Services, community partners of Hawai'i Foodbank in Honolulu, used their award to expand the Food is Medicine Makeke Food Voucher Program. The program provides WCCHC patients who are identified as food insecure with \$250 per month for six months in vouchers to purchase local produce and food items.

"We (WCCHC) are receiving amazing feedback from participants who completed the program. Participants have shared that **they are eating healthier, have been able to pay their bills and truly appreciate the help** since they typically do not qualify for other assistance. One participant who completed the program shared: 'I just wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart to whoever started this program and to everyone who worked as a part of it. I have three kids and work two jobs and therefore do not qualify for food stamps. **After monthly expenses for rent, gas, electricity and diapers, it leaves very little for food.** I go to food banks to make ends meet. Most food banks, however, do not have fresh produce. This program literally changed our lives. It changed the way we eat. I made so many amazing dishes using fresh vegetables and produce. **I have truly never felt healthier.** We got to try local honey, fresh meats and eggs as well. My babies would eat poi and cereal every morning. My middle son finally gained weight. Words will never be able to express how grateful I am. It is just the biggest relief to have such healthy and wholesome foods.'"





Your Philanthropy is Reshaping the Future of Hunger Relief

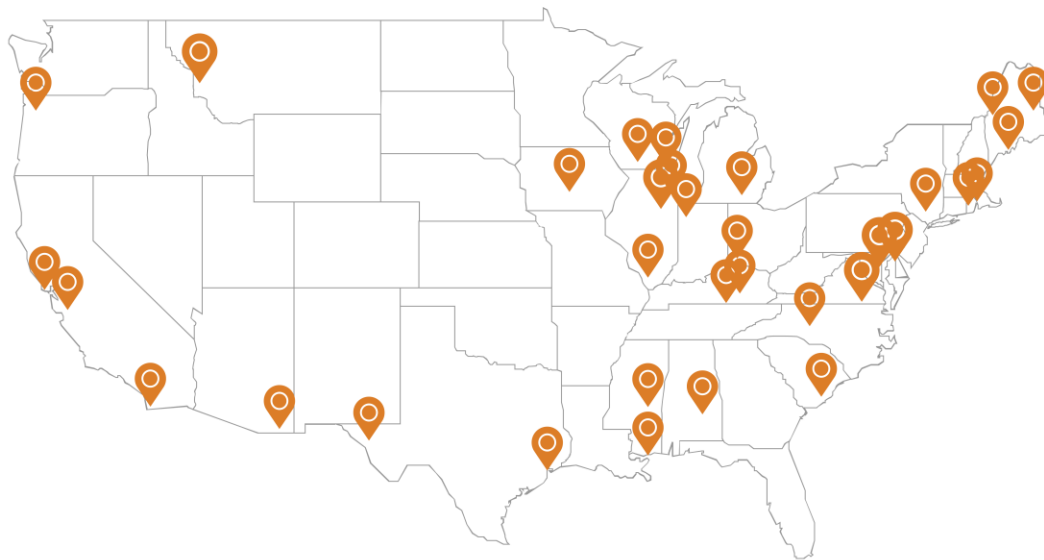
We deeply appreciate the generous donors who have contributed to the growth of the Food Security Equity Impact Fund. At Feeding America, we believe in leading with trust. We believe that in order to end hunger, we must support community-led solutions that not only will lessen food insecurity but also will inspire the creation of sustainable food systems in communities where barriers to food security have existed for generations. And we believe that with the help of our most ardent advocates and supporters, new public policies will be enacted to better meet the needs of the millions of people who experience hunger in this country.

Effective and long-lasting solutions for addressing barriers to food security are being rolled out in communities across the country, including the extraordinary work underway by the influential community leaders and advocates highlighted in this report. We are incredibly grateful to the Fund's supporters for their inspired vision, leadership and trust in our mission. At a time of continuing economic uncertainty in our country, Feeding America and the charitable food assistance network are a resilient source of food and hope for millions of neighbors. While we still have a long road ahead of us, together, we are making tremendous strides in the fight to end hunger.

Thank You



Grantees as of July 2023



HAWAII



PUERTO RICO



FOOD BANK PARTNER

COMMUNITY PARTNER

ARIZONA

Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Native American Advancement Foundation

ALABAMA

Montgomery Area Food Bank, Montgomery, AL

Tuskegee University: The Carver Integrative Sustainability Center; The Tuskegee University Urban Agriculture Innovation Center; The Black Belt Marketing & Innovation Center

CALIFORNIA

Alameda County Community Food Bank, Oakland, CA

Saba Grocers Initiative

Feeding San Diego, San Diego, CA

San Diego Food System Alliance

San Francisco - Marin Food Bank, San Francisco, CA

En2Action; Community Action Marin; North Marin Community Services; West Marin Community Services; Canal Alliance; YWCA Golden Gate Silicon Valley; Multicultural Center of Marin

HAWAII

Hawaii Foodbank, Honolulu, HI

Waiānae Coast Comprehensive Health Center; Elepaio Social Services

IOWA

Food Bank of Iowa, Des Moines, IA

In Harmony Farm; Urban Dreams

ILLINOIS

Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago, IL

Growing Home

Feeding Illinois, Geneva, IL

Urban Growers Collective; The Conservation Fund, Working Farms Fund Program

INDIANA

Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, Merrillville, IN

Families Anchored In Total Harmony, Inc.

KENTUCKY

God's Pantry Food Bank, Inc., Lexington, KY

Black Soil KY

LOUISIANA

Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana, New Orleans, LA

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund; Chenier Farms

MARYLAND

Maryland Food Bank, Baltimore, MD

Aaron's Place, Inc.; Rebirth, Inc.; Around the Bay Farmers' Alliance, Inc.

MASSACHUSETTS

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Hatfield, MA

Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts; Let's Move Hampden County 5-2-1-0 partners including Holyoke Health Center; City of Holyoke Office of Planning and Development; Springfield Food Policy Council; Pioneer Valley Planning Commission; Holyoke Food Equity Collective; Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture; Nuestras Raíces; Holyoke Chamber of Commerce

MAINE

Good Shepherd Food Bank, Auburn, ME

Ummah Farm Food Hub; Presente! Maine

MICHIGAN

Forgotten Harvest, Oak Park, MI

Detroit Black Community Food Security Network

MISSOURI

Southeast Missouri Food Bank, Sikeston, MO

Faith Temple Complex, Inc.

FOOD BANK PARTNER

COMMUNITY PARTNER

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Food Network, Jackson, MS

Reuben V. Anderson Center for Justice

MONTANA

Montana Food Bank Network, Missoula, MT

FAST Blackfeet

NEW JERSEY

Food Bank of South Jersey, Pennsauken, NJ

Camden Dream Center Technology Training School

NORTH CAROLINA

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina, Winston-Salem, NC

Turning Everything Around, Inc.; True Salvation Christian Fellowship Food Network

OHIO

Freestore Foodbank, Cincinnati, OH

System to Achieve Food Equity (SAFE) Network; South Avondale School of Cincinnati Public School system; Cozy Home Childcare and Learning Center; The Community Builders, The Pointes at Avondale; Isaiah 55, Inc.; La Soupe, Inc.; The New Bond Hill Market by Community Economic Advancement Initiatives, Inc.; Your Store of the Queen City; Queen Mother's Market Cooperatives

OREGON

Oregon Food Bank, Portland, OR

Mudbone Grown/Feed'em Freedom Foundation; Black Oregon Land Trust

PENNSYLVANIA

Philabundance, Philadelphia, PA

North Philly Peace Park of CultureTrust

PUERTO RICO

Banco de Alimentos de Puerto Rico, Carolina, PR

Para la Naturaleza; Trito Agro-Industrial Services, Inc.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Providence, RI

West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, Sankofa Initiative

SOUTH CAROLINA

Lowcountry Food Bank, Charleston, SC

Gullah Farmers' Cooperative Association

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga Area Food Bank, Chattanooga, TN

The Bethlehem Center; City Farms Growers Coalition

TEXAS

El Pasoans Fighting Hunger, El Paso, TX

St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council of El Paso; Kelly Center for Hunger Relief; El Paso Matters; The University of Texas at El Paso

Houston Food Bank, Houston, TX

Harvest for the Hungry, Inc.; Plant It Forward; Small Places; Ivy Leaf Farms

VERMONT

Vermont Foodbank, Barre, VT

SUSU CommUNITY Farm

VIRGINIA

Feed More, Richmond, VA

Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Capital Area Food Bank, Washington, D.C.

OurSpace World, Inc.

WISCONSIN

Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, Madison, WI

REAP Food Group; Roots4Change Cooperative

Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin Food Bank, Milwaukee, WI

Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin