



RECOVERY & INNOVATION

*In Our Regional
Food System*

 **FRESHFARM**
nourishing our food future

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS:
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Twenty twenty-one was a year marked by recovery as we slowly emerged from the first year of the pandemic and reckoned with the challenges that still face our local communities and regional food system. Across our programs, FRESHFARM started taking cautious steps toward a return to “normal”: farmers markets lifted masking requirements and space restrictions, FoodPrints students returned to their school gardens, and our food distribution efforts reached more families than ever before.

The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses of the industrial food system, affecting producers’ and consumers’ ability to be healthy and self-sufficient. We envision a more just and decentralized food system that is responsive to the needs of its community and resilient in times of crisis. Our organizational culture of innovation and strong community partnerships will guide us in developing transformative solutions needed for our food future.

The successes of 2021 included increasing our staff and expanding our programs, with special emphasis in the areas of food access and community engagement. We continued to examine and reform our internal systems and policies and involved more voices in the design and evaluation of our programs as we work toward becoming an anti-racist organization.

We are proud of all that we accomplished in 2021, and we could not do this without the commitment and hard work of our staff and Board, and the support and collaboration of our donors, partners, farmers and producers, customers, and many more stakeholders. As we look ahead to our 25th year in 2022, we are so grateful to everyone in our community who shares our commitment to nourishing our food future.



Hugo Mogollon
Executive Director

FARMERS MARKETS

GLEANER SPOTLIGHT | *Rescuing Food To Feed Our Neighbors*

At each of our markets, FRESHFARM works with gleaners to recover unsold food that farmers and producers don't sell and donate it to emergency food organizations. Since 2020, FRESHFARM has partnered with Food Rescue US-DC as one of our gleaners. In 2021, they gleaned at Dupont Circle, Mosaic, Mount Vernon Triangle, Reston, and Springfield markets and delivered food to community organizations across the region. Food Rescue estimates that they recover tens of thousands of pounds of food over the course of the year across all markets, and often 2,000 pounds per week at Dupont Circle alone.

Food gleaned from the farmers market makes a real impact in the lives of food-insecure

neighbors. Robin Parker, who organizes Food Rescue volunteers at the Reston market, shared how meaningful gleaning is to the community members who receive this food. She explained that in the first week of gleaning at the market, "three neighbors from the retirement home nearby who were regular clients of the pantry happened to walk by as we pulled up to the pantry after market. When they realized what we were doing, they started grabbing the huge, heavy bags from our car and insisted on carrying them inside for us. They were thrilled to be able to give something back in gratitude for the fresh fruits and vegetables recovered from the market and brought to the pantry each week, and became part of our regular volunteer team."

In a year of pandemic recovery, farmers markets served as inclusive and welcoming community spaces, local economic drivers, and vital food access points.

FRESHFARM farmers markets started 2021 with COVID-19 safety policies fully in place. Thanks to high vaccine rates in the region, we were able to relax many of these policies, and markets took on a more back-to-normal community feel that included the return of live music, cooking demos, and community partner tabling throughout the year.

Farmers markets are vital food access points and in 2021, we expanded our number of markets and farm stands from 22 to 27, debuting three new locations and reopening the CityCenterDC market after a one-year hiatus. We also converted three of our markets into year-round operations.

As our region continued to face acute food insecurity, we met the needs of at-risk



community members by maintaining the unlimited Fresh Match incentive implemented in 2020, providing more than \$261,996 in matching funds in 2021. Our incentive match on federal food benefits spent at market is highly effective, particularly at empowering vulnerable seniors and mothers to access nutritious food; in 2021, 45% of Washington DC's total spending in WIC and Senior FMNP checks happened at FRESHFARM markets. Additionally, each of our farmers markets worked with local gleaning organizations to recover leftover food at the end of the market day to help nourish food-insecure neighbors.

Finally, in 2021, FRESHFARM received two major grants that will transform our food access work for the next several years: a **\$1.4 million four-year USDA grant** to create a regional incentive system and a **\$1 million annual grant to administer DC Health's Produce Plus Program** for the next five years. The USDA grant will support the creation of a regional SNAP incentive coalition, which will bolster food access capacity with over 80 partner farmers markets and CSAs across Washington, DC, Maryland, and Northern Virginia.



CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT | *Fresh Match — Alleviating Food Insecurity*

Everyone deserves the ability and autonomy to buy the fresh fruits and vegetables they want. But for so many, the pandemic recovery has been uneven, and underserved community members throughout the Washington, DC region continue to struggle to make ends meet, let alone prioritize purchasing fresh, local produce.

The Fresh Match program doubles every dollar spent in federal nutrition benefits including SNAP/ EBT, P-EBT, WIC, and Senior FMNP benefits so that shoppers on a tight food budget can enjoy locally grown produce without worrying about the cost. "I almost always run out of food stamps at

the end of the month and have to use my credit card to buy food, so with the matching program I'm able to afford what I like instead of having to go into debt," noted market regular Adrian.

By offering customers an unlimited match on their benefits, FRESHFARM helps to alleviate the food insecurity that so many still face and empowers customers with agency and flexibility in their market purchases. In 2021, FRESHFARM partnered with seven other farmers markets in DC and six in northern Virginia to implement matching programs at their markets, reaching food insecure customers across the region.

FARMERS MARKETS

by the numbers



27 **FRESHFARM markets
& farm stands**

213 **farmers & producers participated
in FRESHFARM markets**

\$20m **revenue for farmers & producers**

493k **customers shopped at
FRESHFARM farmers markets**

\$681k **spent in nutrition benefits,
FRESHFARM match, & Produce Plus**

860 **market days hosted**



“Farmers markets are my favorite rescues. The food is healthy, beautiful, and fresh. The farmers and vendors have pride in what they’ve grown and made and feel it’s an honor to donate it to people in need rather than wasting it.”

— Kristina Filipovich, Dupont Circle
gleaning captain for Food Rescue US-DC

POP UP FOOD HUB

COLLABORATION SPOTLIGHT |

Empowering Partners Through Food Education & Food Access

Since 2016, FRESHFARM's Pop Up Food Hub has partnered with Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers across the DC Metro Area, providing fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables to young children. In 2021, we launched the Community Food Educators (CFE) program, which trains and employs parents in early childcare communities as peer food educators.

At the heart of this program is empowerment: FRESHFARM's Community Food Educators work with ECE communities on topics including how to prepare and serve local foods, cooking skills,

nutrition education, and how to incorporate food education into ECE curricula. Our Community Food Educators also focus on strategies for communicating the importance of trying and enjoying fresh fruits and vegetables as early as possible in a child's life. As one ECE provider shared, "exposure to new foods — and especially how we talk about food — are opportunities to elevate the roles that nutritious food can play in our life." Collaboration that helps bridge the gap between food access and education is key to building an equitable food future that works for everyone in our community.



The Pop Up Food Hub facilitated

pandemic recovery by connecting communities to local farmers through robust food distribution and education.

After a year of pandemic emergency response operations, in 2021 the Pop Up Food Hub shifted to growing our operations and capacity to better serve the needs of our partner organizations. Despite receiving less emergency funding than in 2020, we sustained the scale of our operations, reaching the same volume of produce and people served in 2021 as we did the year before.

Key to our recovery efforts was the intentional strengthening of the links between our food access and food education programs. In 2021, we launched the transformative Community Food Educators program, knitting together the Pop Up Food Hub's food distribution work with our robust FoodPrints program to support Early Childhood Education centers in accessing and utilizing fresh local produce.





Lack of transportation continues to be one of the biggest barriers for community members trying to access fresh food, a problem exacerbated by the pandemic. In response, 2021 marked the first year that the Pop Up Food Hub hired a team of drivers to deliver directly to people's homes, making more than 2,000 deliveries.

Produce orders from the Pop Up Food Hub continue to bring in much-needed income to local farmers at a time of continued economic uncertainty. We're proud to work with farmers from often marginalized groups, buying the majority of our wholesale produce from first-generation farmers, small family farms (less than 100 acres), and BIPOC farmers.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT |

Helping Families Make Ends Meet with Healthy Food

Many families experiencing food insecurity at the start of the pandemic continued to struggle to make ends meet in 2021, making access to nutritious, fresh food even more critical. The Pop Up Food Hub works with dozens of community partners across the city to connect individuals and families to fresh food, including La Clínica del Pueblo, our partner since 2019.

Rosalynn Trujillo, the Senior Health Promotion Program Coordinator at La Clínica del Pueblo, works directly with the families and individuals who receive produce bags from the Pop Up Food Hub.

She knows how dire circumstances can be for the clients who receive these bags — like for Rosa, a grandmother in La Clínica's Diabetes Prevention Program, whose daughter had lost her job and who had nothing to feed her grandchildren except a can of beans and rice. Rosalynn and the team at La Clínica delivered Rosa's bag of FRESHFARM produce right when she needed it most. "Rosa's story is not unique," said Rosalynn. "It's a barrier for [so many in our community] to access a healthier lifestyle, which is why we're providing these bags to our clients, in partnership with FRESHFARM."



POP UP FOOD HUB

by the numbers



62 wholesale
organizational partners

27 farmer partners

7,578 people served

22,086 bags of produce distributed

\$413k in wholesale order for farmers

2,000 direct home deliveries



“We value FRESHFARM’s approach in listening to our perspectives and crafting training and support activities that reflect our needs and wishes.”

— Andrea Lopez, Food & Wellness
Program Officer at CentroNía, an Early
Childhood Education partner

FOODPRINTS

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT | *FoodPrints is Fully Back, Cooking & Gardening At 19 Schools With 7,000 students*

After two years of COVID pivots, the FoodPrints program came back in full swing in 2021. We added new partner schools, hired new staff, and got back to in-person, COVID-safe gardening, cooking, eating, and learning with our students.

We prioritized outdoor education in our school gardens with lessons that bring classroom lessons to life in meaningful ways. In their lesson on Square Foot Gardening, third graders at Payne Elementary used painter's tape and measuring tools to plan and build model square foot garden beds, fusing their knowledge of perimeter, area, and measuring with gardening.

We focused our cooking with students on preparing individual portions of nutritious recipes with seasonal produce. At Kimball Elementary, students made Sweet Potato Quesadillas by grating individual portions of sweet potato, chopping onions using kid-safe knives, and tucking the sweet potatoes inside tortillas once the vegetables had been sautéed. Each student got a turn to sauté with the help of a FoodPrints teacher. When each student excitedly tasted their own quesadillas, their eyes lit up, many said, "Oh!" "Ah!" and "Yum!" — and all were proud of their own delicious creations.



Students discovered a love of vegetables and built an understanding of and appreciation for the natural world.



As our community charts its pandemic recovery, FoodPrints played a vital role at DC Public Schools. We were thrilled to be fully back in our partner schools — cooking, gardening, and learning together. Through our program, students are discovering a love of vegetables; engaging in real-world, meaningful work; and building an understanding of and appreciation for the natural world.

In 2021, FoodPrints teachers and students were busy planting in their school gardens, learning about food justice and activism, and practicing chef skills through COVID-safe cooking projects. Our program grew to 19 DC Public Schools across the city serving 7,000 students. After a year of social isolation and learning from home, our focus in 2021 was on:

- **Academically Aligned Lessons** that bring science, math, social studies, and literacy

to life through engaging explorations in classrooms, teaching kitchens, and school gardens.

- ▶ **STEM & Outdoor Education In Gardens** where our students plant seeds, harvest vegetables to bring home or try in their FoodPrints classes, dig in the soil to discover earthworms, and gain enriching experiences with the natural sciences.
- ▶ **Social-Emotional Learning & Healing** with providing a safe, special place for students to de-stress through hands-on exploration and joyful, teamwork-based learning.
- ▶ **COVID-Safe Cooking & Eating** with creative strategies to continue in-person cooking classes in COVID-safe ways and build positive relationships with nutritious food.



CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT | *FoodPrints Resources Available For Educators, Students, & Parents Everywhere*

In 2021, FoodPrints launched FoodPrints TV: high-energy videos that put the FoodPrints curriculum into action for students and educators. FoodPrints TV is a key part of our academically aligned experiential food education curriculum that is available free to educators around the country, featuring 63 flexible lessons with ready-to-use investigations and materials.

Our videos for students spark curiosity, wonder, and joy by exploring the vast world of plants, habitats, life cycles, food (and more) all around us. In *Seed Dispersal*, viewers learn how seeds travel

(they soar, they fly, they float!) and come away able to notice different seeds in schoolyards and neighborhoods.

Our videos for educators support teaching the rich FoodPrints content, from how to distill plant reproduction for young learners to tips for teaching in gardens and outdoor spaces. In *Investigating Plant Traits*, viewers learn how to execute the FoodPrints lesson on inheritance of traits for young students with finesse and ease.

FOODPRINTS

by the numbers



19 FoodPrints schools

3 new FoodPrints gardens

7 DC Wards with a FoodPrints school

7,000 DCPS students learning with FoodPrints

63 standards-based lessons in the FoodPrints curriculum

54 videos published on FoodPrints TV



“FoodPrints is one of the best investments I made this school year.”

— Principal Tiffany Johnson,
Whittier Elementary, a new FoodPrints
partner school in 2021

ADVANCING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT FRESHFARM

In 2020, FRESHFARM worked with the Center for Nonprofit Advancement's Center for Race, Equity, Justice and Inclusion to establish a baseline for our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and create an action plan across our organization. This work has guided the progress we made in 2021 and will continue to inform our efforts to advance racial equity and inclusion within the organization.

In 2021, we redesigned our farmers market application and evaluation process to increase transparency and control for bias. Each application is reviewed for eligibility, scored by a panel, and submitted for final consideration by a roundtable of the FRESHFARM Senior Markets team, Market Managers, and other staff that are experienced in farmers market management, local food systems, and food business development. The data collected in 2021 is being used as a benchmark for improvement in the diversity and equity of our markets moving forward. Applicants from groups that have been historically excluded from agriculture, as determined by the USDA, were invited to self-identify in their application. These groups include farmers and producers who identify as BIPOC, immigrants, LGBTQIA+, military veterans, and

women. FRESHFARM also tracked applications from first-generation farmers.

Through our food access work, FRESHFARM has made an intentional effort to center and empower stakeholder voices in order to identify barriers to local procurement and utilization of fresh produce within historically marginalized communities. With a focus on authentic community engagement, we have built meaningful relationships with new and existing partners and community members to help create innovative opportunities for holistic solutions to food insecurity. These community-directed solutions include food education training, technical assistance, and community-driven councils.

Our FoodPrints team worked with the Kinder Group to define racial equity goals. We wrote a Racial Equity Outcome plan with the following core objective: *that experiential food education is an embedded element of education for all children and the communities they exist in. And that children are provided with the equitable opportunities and access they need to develop a positive relationship with nutritious, culturally relevant food.* We also identified ways that FoodPrints programming may perpetuate white



supremacist frameworks so that we can shift toward a more anti-racist, stakeholder-directed approach to our work. After a year of training and reflection, FoodPrints formed racial equity working groups covering Family and Community Engagement, Cultural Competency, and Food Access that all staff members participate in. FoodPrints' goal is that these working groups will help us to achieve our Racial Equity Outcome objectives and create equitable opportunities for experiential food education for all children.

Finally, we revised our hiring practices across FRESHFARM teams to standardize our processes, create more robust and accurate job descriptions, and increase transparency. We implemented standardized evaluation rubrics for interviews, broadened our recruitment efforts to reach underrepresented candidates, and ensured that two staff members participate in every interview to minimize bias. Additionally, all new hires participate in a self-directed anti-racism learning module.

We strive to become an anti-racist organization and recognize that our diversity, equity, and inclusion work is ongoing. The work we have done in 2021 has established a solid foundation for FRESHFARM's continuing efforts to break down the barriers that prevent equitable access to fresh, local food and limit participation in a robust regional food system.

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT | *Reflecting On FRESHFARM's Progress On Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

Edwina "Eee" Arenas, owner of LemonadeLove, recently reflected on the steps FRESHFARM has taken to make our farmers markets and organization more inclusive and equitable for farmers and producers across the region:

"Being a part of FRESHFARM for ten years has prompted many conversations among vendors in reference to inclusion, diversity, equity, and financial opportunities. The FRESHFARM culture and environment had failed us all. However, the new management sharing their perspectives, collaborating, and making a commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion has made a difference. Now, we vendors are having conversations and recognizing the changes that

have been made to include us all, meaning BIPOC vendors. I feel the current FRESHFARM culture possesses the tools to empower us all, paving the way for us to connect, belong, and grow.

"As I walk around the markets, it's nice to see that FRESHFARM's words have changed to action to fight racism and inequality. It is pleasing and promising to see and meet new vendors who look like me, especially in the markets with greater financial opportunities. Talking with my fellow vendors, we have noticed so many new changes that benefit us all—however, there is still lots of work to be done. Thank you, Hugo, and your staff, for acting, leading, and driving change."

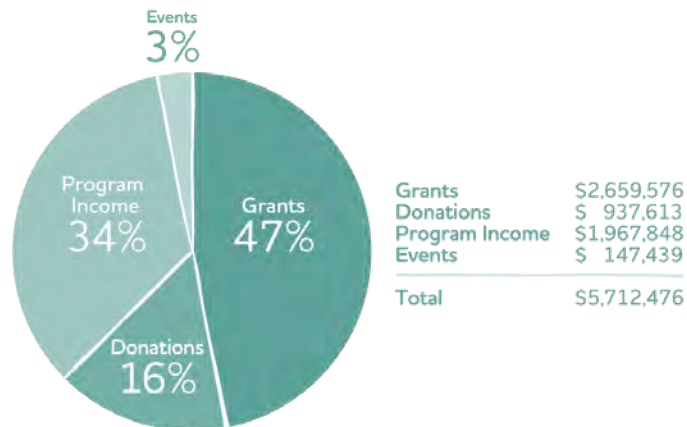


2021 FINANCIALS

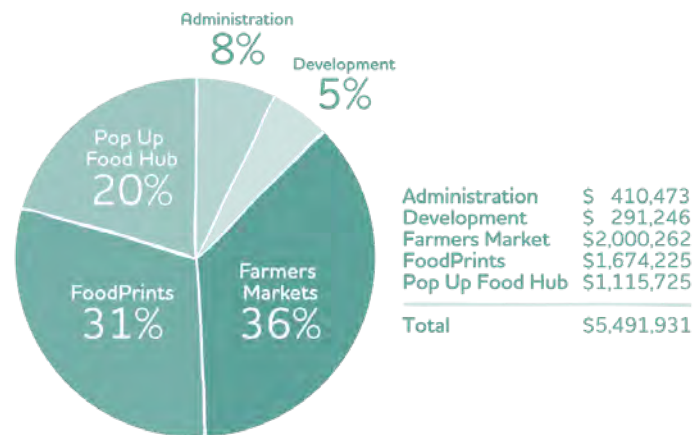
FRESHFARM's focus on recovery in 2021 netted a 35% increase in program revenue as we opened more markets and kept more open all year long. Of our total revenue, 63% came from public support in the form of grants and donations, with grants growing 46% this year. We strive to keep our administrative costs low: 87% of our funds went directly to our core programs promoting sustainable agriculture and improving food access, education, and equity in the Mid-Atlantic region.



REVENUE



EXPENSES



PLEASE NOTE: these are preliminary numbers and subject to change once the 2021 Financial Audit is complete.

FUNDERS

Twenty twenty-one marked a significant increase in grant funding, which accounted for 47% of FRESHFARM's revenue, compared to 34% in 2020. These grants included two major multi-year awards of \$1 million+ in funding each to expand our food access work in the region. We were pleased to welcome back the FRESHFARM Feast as an in-person, outdoor event after hosting the event virtually in 2020. With a lower ticket price and more casual atmosphere, guests enjoyed gathering and celebrating the farmers, producers, chefs, and programs at the heart of FRESHFARM. We are immensely grateful to our corporate, government, and private funders, partners, and other supporters who helped us grow our programs and build a stronger and more equitable food system.

\$25,000 +



Ina Kay Foundation



**Whitehead
Foundation**



\$20,000–\$24,999

Chef José Andrés
Herb Block Foundation
Montgomery County Community Access Program
The Nancy Peery Marriott Foundation
National Landing BID
The William S. Abell Foundation

\$15,000–\$19,999

Office of the Montgomery County Council
(MoCo)
PTA/HSA Ludlow Taylor
Robert & Maureen Sievers Family Charitable
Gift Fund
The Share Fund

\$10,000–\$14,999

Aramco Services
Ballston BID
Evergreen II Fund
James McWhorter
The Max & Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.

The Meridian Group Boro Master TRS LLC
Penn State Extension
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development
Commission
Susan Buffone
Tech Impact
Tony Bowen & Mike Kohn Fund

\$5,000–\$9,999

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4C
Alice Shaver Foundation
Anna Salzberg
Annette M. & Theodore N. Lerner Family Foundation
City National Bank
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Cordes Foundation
DowntownDC BID
JBG SMITH
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National Capital Bank Foundation
Nora Pouillon
Olivia Suter
Pamela R. Johnson
Robin Burton
Sparkjoy Foundation
Tammy Gill
Thomas Beline
The Venable Foundation
William Baker



GET INVOLVED



FRESHFARM believes that local food transforms communities. As a regional and national leader on local food, FRESHFARM works to create a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food future. We develop innovative ways to solve critical problems across our regional food system and connect people to their food through hands-on education, farmers markets, and food distribution programs. We invite you to join us in this work in 2022 — our 25th anniversary year! Here are some ways to connect with FRESHFARM:



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Get the latest FRESHFARM news, market updates, recipes, farmer features, and more in our newsletters.

freshfarm.org/newsletter



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A monthly donation is the best way to have a lasting impact on FRESHFARM's work. Set your monthly contribution amount and join the S.E.E.D. Circle monthly giving program today!

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