

Cultivating
Community and
Strengthening
Systems







s Interim Executive Director of FRESHFARM, I am proud to present the 2024 Annual Report. This past year has been full of remarkable achievements, milestones, and powerful connections as we shape an equitable, resilient, and sustainable local food system. Together, we have expanded access to fresh, local food while supporting small farmers and producers across the Mid-Atlantic.

This report marks a bittersweet transition for FRESHFARM as we bid farewell to Executive Director Hugo Mogollon. Over the past five years, his leadership has propelled us to new heights, and he leaves knowing the organization will continue to thrive. I have no doubt he'll be cheering us on from afar.

2024 was a banner year, with significant growth across our programs. The Pop-Up Food Hub (PUFH) doubled its impact, generating over \$1.1 million in revenue for small- and mid-sized farmers, with 26% of those farms being Black or Brown-owned. And the Mid-Atlantic Grain Stand completed its first full year of operations in partnership with Common Grain Alliance. These numbers are not just metrics; they represent meals on tables, livelihoods supported, and communities strengthened.

Together, we've helped thousands of families in need stretch their food budgets while simultaneously supporting our local growers. We've provided joyful hands-on food education to 7,600 elementary students at Washington, DC public schools, empowering them to make healthy decisions for themselves and the planet. Our network of more than two dozen farmers markets and farm stands fueled the local economy, served as community gathering spots, and provided vital food access points for our neighbors.

In a departure from previous years, this Annual Report is structured around the objectives outlined in our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. By aligning our reflections and achievements with this guiding document, we aim to clarify how FRESHFARM is advancing our mission of creating a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food system. This new format highlights our progress and reinforces our commitment to transparency and accountability as we work toward long-term impact.

This report is a testament to the power of collaboration and the incredible dedication of our farmers, producers, partners, staff, and supporters. Together, we are not just imagining a better food future—we are building it.



Jecquelyn Studey

Jacquelyn Lendsey Interim Executive Director

# **2024 BY THE NUMBERS**



t FRESHFARM, we nourish our food future. We create systemic change by addressing crucial issues at every level of the food system through transformative programs. These 2024 metrics are powerful snapshots of how our innovative programs impact the entire regional food system.

FRESHFARM markets & farm stands generated \$29.8 million in sales for 244 local farmers & food producers

**100+** Pop-Up Food Hub partners generated \$1.1 million in revenue for local farmers

\$1.53m in Produce Plus, FreshMatch & Senior
Farmers Market Nutrition Program benefits
administered by FRESHFARM & redeemed by
community members

\$169K in SNAP/EBT benefits spent at FRESHFARM farmers markets & farm stands

ProofPrints schools serving 7,600 students across 7 District wards

Early Childhood Education centers supported by FoodPrints food education programming & community engagement

# **OUR STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES**

## **Our Strategic Framework for Change**

he specific objectives and benchmarks we set for ourselves in our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan are all designed to help us achieve two complementary goals for our regional food system: 1) to promote a thriving food economy that prioritizes producers, consumers, and the environment and 2) to give all people and communities agency and knowledge to access nutritious, local food.

FRESHFARM's work touches every aspect of the regional food system.

**Production:** Our network includes 244 farmers and food producers who sell their products at more than two dozen FRESHFARM markets and farm stands; 34% of these farmers and food producers identify as Black or Brown.

**Distribution:** Our produce aggregation and distribution arm, the Pop-Up Food Hub, is a local procurement partner for restaurants, nonprofits, and community organizations.

**Consumption:** An average of 20,000 people shop at our markets each week, and thousands redeem nutrition benefits and matching incentives each season. More than 7,600 children learn to grow, cook, and eat local produce in FoodPrints classrooms each year.

**Recovery:** We work with over a dozen food recovery partners to recover unsold produce at our markets each week and also host six community composting drop-off locations.

We leverage our ability to connect the dots across the food system to cultivate and support communities, grow individual agency, and sow systemic change on the foundation of an effective, efficient, and human-centered organization. You will see these strategies at work in the pages that follow. Our impact is thoughtful and intentional, not only wide but deep.



## **Vibrant Economic Outlets**

Increase the vibrancy of economic outlets for local agricultural products.

#### **Record-breaking Growth for Farmers and Producers**

"No farms, no food" is not just a slogan — it's the basis on which FRESHFARM was founded in 1997 and continues to be a guiding mantra today. We know that farms don't last if farmers can't make a living on the land. This knowledge drives our work to create robust economic outlets for farmers and local food producers through our network of farmers markets, farm stands, and wholesale food hub programs. In 2024, 101 farmers and 143 food producers generated more than \$29.8 million in gross revenue through these combined channels.

Results from 2023 and 2024 put us halfway to our goal of generating \$120 million for farmers and producers over the five years of our Strategic Plan.

Moreover, the Pop-Up Food Hub (PUFH) doubled its impact, generating over \$1.1 million in revenue for small- and mid-sized farmers and connecting restaurants and nonprofits—including schools, health clinics, Early Childhood Education centers, and senior centers—with local food.

#### Beyond the Transaction: Building a Community-Driven Food System

Revenue for farmers is only the start of the farmers market story. FRESHFARM's markets foster community engagement, creating opportunities to deepen the connection between farmers and shoppers and to change narratives about the value and importance of good food for all.

Thanks to the strength of community support, our FRESHFARM H Street NE Market became the 12th year-round market in our network. Year-round markets extend the economic season for farmers cultivating winter and greenhouse crops, farmers offering meat and dairy, and businesses producing baked goods, jams, and other prepared foods.

FRESHFARM's markets hosted over 120 community-based organizations in 2024 through our Community Partner program, helping transform streets, sidewalks, plazas, and parking lots into dynamic neighborhood gathering spots. More than 40 neighborhood businesses contributed to the scene as Market Sponsors. FRESHFARM hosted food waste drop-off at six locations and weekly food recovery activities at 14 locations, channeling produce to organizations serving residents in need and diverting tens of thousands of pounds of food from landfills each week.

Furthermore, most of FRESHFARM's outlets also host community engagement activities, cooking demonstrations, and educational events throughout the year to enhance the market experience and cultivate a deeper appreciation for fresh, local food.

FRESHFARM shoppers showed their generosity and care for the community by contributing more than \$26,000 to our largest-ever Fresh Food Drive in November, tripling donations from the previous year. By donating to the Fresh Food Drive, our market shoppers partner with FRESHFARM to provide fresh market produce and turkeys to families receiving Thanksgiving food assistance from community organizations.



# **Equitable Food Access**

Increase the level of convenient, equitable access to nutritious, local food in the Washington, DC region.

#### A Leader in Expanding Equitable Food Access

Ever since FRESHFARM H Street NE Market became the first in Washington, DC to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—widely known as SNAP/EBT—benefits in 2008, we have been a leader in ensuring that all residents of our region have convenient and dignified access to fresh, nutritious, and culturally relevant food. As the convener of a nutrition incentives coalition of 90 markets across the region, we have spearheaded a 73% increase in the redemption of SNAP benefits over the last four years. In the same time frame, over \$2.4 million in SNAP and SNAP matching incentives were spent at coalition market and partner locations. Matching incentives and private donations provide a deep discount on our weekly Market Share produce bag for SNAP beneficiaries, who make up more than one-third of the program's subscribers.

Last year, FRESHFARM successfully enrolled 8,000 residents in DC's Produce Plus, a program we administer. These residents redeemed \$990,000 in Produce Plus benefits on fresh fruits and vegetables, a 13% increase over 2023. We also administer the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program in Washington, DC, and Virginia's Fairfax and Loudoun counties; redemption held steady in the District, whereas in Fairfax and Loudoun counties, there was a dramatic increase of 294% in redemption. Bringing our organizational expertise and capacity to these programs has resulted in a streamlined user experience and resources that help shoppers navigate the programs to ensure they receive and redeem their full benefits.





#### Farm Stands Bring New Options to Underserved Communities

A core component of FRESHFARM's food access strategy is ensuring that fresh, locally grown food is available in areas with limited traditional grocery options. Farmers markets and farm stands can be an attractive neighborhood amenity anywhere. Still, it can be economically challenging for farmers to participate in disinvested neighborhoods where their sales may be modest. FRESHFARM takes the risk off the farmers by providing the administrative and staffing infrastructure to support the operation of farm stands, which provide high-quality, affordable produce to the community and serve as crucial sites for redeeming nutrition benefits.

In 2024, THEARC farm stand joined the FRESHFARM network as our sixth location East of the River in Wards 7 and 8. We celebrated the second year of our farm stands at Simon and Whittier Elementary Schools, a pilot project to create school-based food hubs and deepen the impact of our FoodPrints food education program at schools.

## **Food Education**

Sustain and grow meaningful food education that increases consumption of nutritious, local food.

#### Nourishing the Soul of Schools and Communities Through Gardening, Cooking, Eating, and Learning Together

"FoodPrints not only feeds our students' and teachers' stomachs, but it really feeds the soul of our school." – Mr. Chandler Denard, teacher, Kimball Elementary

In 2024, FRESHFARM's signature FoodPrints program continued to connect students to food and each other in a unique and powerful way. FRESHFARM provided plentiful opportunities for students to do real-world work in the garden and kitchen through a standards-based curriculum that helps address learning gaps and improve student well-being.

In typical FoodPrints sessions, students learn about plant parts (stems, leaves, and roots) and cook Plant-Part Pasta. They also explore decomposition by 'feeding,' counting, and caring for worms. They harvest kale from the school garden, tear the leaves, and prepare the dressing for Tuscan Kale Salad. They eat seconds and thirds and share the recipe and their excitement to eat it again with their families.

Since 2005, FoodPrints has expanded to 21 schools through longstanding partnerships with District of Columbia Public Schools and the District government. These partnerships are as critical as ever—building connections to nutritious food—as economic uncertainty looms and federal support for food programs declines.

#### **Building Community Around Food Beyond the Classroom**

FRESHFARM engages communities beyond the classroom, turning schools into hubs for food education and access. Our presence and interventions build positive food cultures; we are part of school events like back-to-school night and math night. In 2024, we worked with a school lunch vendor to gather student feedback through taste tests before produce-based recipes were added to school lunch menus. At Whittier and Simon Elementary

Schools, our farm stands increase access to fresh, local produce for families, staff, and surrounding neighbors.

We also bring the FoodPrints approach to nutrition education to community settings, primarily Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers. In 2024, we worked with 14 ECE centers to bring sensory-rich food exploration for young children, recipe demos and cooking workshops for families and staff, and increased access to fruits and vegetables for snacks and meals.

When stakeholders such as elected officials, funders, donors, and community members visit or participate in our classes, they see and appreciate first-hand the value of FoodPrints' meaningful and positive experiential food education.





# **Thought Leadership**

Cultivate policies that foster a strong local food system through increased thought leadership, data, and engagement.

#### Leadership and Advocacy

A resilient local food system requires strategic advocacy, cross-sector partnerships, and data-driven decision-making to shape critical policies. As FRESHFARM has grown into one of the region's largest food system organizations, we are committed to using our voice and embracing opportunities for collaborative leadership.

By building coalitions and mobilizing public testimony, we successfully engaged with DC Council members to expand funding for Produce Plus and ensure continued funding for DC Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) benefits, redeemable at both FRESHFARM and non-FRESHFARM markets citywide. We led a coalition to expand FreshMatch programming in Virginia, and our advocacy efforts secured more sustainable FoodPrints funding in the District.

#### **Amplifying Our Expertise for the Benefit of All**

FRESHFARM leadership and senior staff members bring region-wide, cross-sector experience and strategic perspective in service of several external organizations including: the DC Food Policy Council, the Montgomery County Food Council, Virginia FreshMatch, and the Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee and Regional Agriculture Working Group, both part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG).

Several organizations invited speakers from FRESHFARM to set the tone for impactful conversations around food equity, economic resilience, and sustainable agriculture. For example, Director of Education and founder of FoodPrints, Jenn Mampara, spoke at the first-ever US Department of Health and Human Services "Food Is Medicine" conference. Director of Strategic Investments Renee Catacalos delivered the keynote address to the Resilient Food Systems Summit hosted by American University's Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities Lab.

More than 70 articles and stories featuring FRESHFARM appeared in print, broadcast, and online media in 2024. These included a story on restoring local grain economies featuring our Grain Stand program in Civil Eats, and an extensive FoodPrints story broadcast locally on NBC4 and nationally on the Spanish-language Univision network.

The results of a study by George Washington University, in collaboration with FRESHFARM, demonstrated that the FoodPrints program has lasting impacts on students' skills and empowerment to choose and cook nutritious food for themselves and their families. The research was published in January 2024 in the peer-reviewed Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior. Also, in 2024, FRESHFARM successfully supported a school district in Kentucky in integrating the FoodPrints curriculum into a school in their elementary school system. This milestone marks an essential step in establishing how our food education model is adaptable for other schools and districts nationwide.





# **Social Justice & Equity**

Apply a social justice and equity lens in decision-making, resource allocation, and staff development to mitigate the impacts of racism in the food system.

#### A Journey of Continual Improvement

To achieve our mission, we believe that we must do our work in community with others, discover ways to share ownership and power, and bring respect and transparency to our programs, policies, and operations.

FRESHFARM works to continually improve our processes for requesting and receiving input from community members, farmers, and partner organizations to ensure our initiatives are accessible, effective, and culturally relevant. In 2024, we hired Spanish- and Cantonese-speaking food access associates and a Farsi language translator to better serve shoppers navigating our farmers markets and nutrition incentive programs.

In 2024, the FoodPrints program deepened engagement with school partners by maintaining an ongoing dialogue with administrators, staff, and families to tailor programming to each school's specific needs and goals. This work included participation in family events and PTA meetings, distribution of family newsletters, and collaboration with classroom teachers on lessons and extensions back into the classroom. Similarly, through focus groups with Produce Plus and FreshMatch participants, we updated program materials based directly on community feedback, making them more accessible and user-friendly.

#### Leading From the Inside Out

Hiring from historically excluded communities is one way to share resources and power with the communities in which we work. In 2024, we continued working with seven Market Champion FRESHFARM employees whose lived experience using Produce Plus informed how we help residents navigate food access in our markets. Market Champions represent both FRESHFARM and their communities with authenticity and empathy. The critical role they played in helping FRESHFARM increase Produce Plus enrollment and redemption last year allowed us to secure additional funding to significantly

expand the Market Champions program to support larger numbers of people in navigating a wider range of food and nutrition benefits, ultimately ensuring more people get the food they need to thrive.

Finally, FRESHFARM's first-ever union contract was ratified in 2024 by a Collective Bargaining Unit consisting of market staff, operators, and senior market operators. This milestone underscored FRESHFARM's commitment to fair wages, worker protections, and ensuring that frontline food system workers have a voice in shaping their workplace.



# **Organizational Stewardship**

Increase the health and vitality of FRESHFARM to ensure our ability to achieve our goals.

#### A Foundation of Resilience

To effectively serve farmers, markets, and communities, FRESHFARM must be a strong, resilient organization firmly rooted as a regional food system anchor no matter what is happening in the world around us. Our Strategic Plan recognizes the need to take care of ourselves to ensure that we can be of service to others. Driven by our mission and aligned with our values, we prioritized financial sustainability, staff engagement, and cross-department collaboration to build our infrastructure for a more cohesive, sustainable, and impactful future.

#### **Investing in People**

After several busy years kicked off by the 2019 merger with Community Foodworks and the 2020 crisis response to both COVID-19 and demands for racial justice, we made a conscious effort to break the cycle of expanding programs without expanding organizational support capacity. Our work at every level of the food system is relationship-based, dependent on the more than **150 talented, motivated staff members** who occupy every position at FRESHFARM throughout the year. We committed to investing in the support our staff deserves by expanding our administrative core – adding positions to the Human Resources, Finance, and Development teams in 2024.

Continued codification of our personnel policies and procedures, as well as new channels of communication to discuss strategic priorities, decision-making processes, and organizational finances, has resulted in a growing number of staff responding to internal surveys that they feel more integrated into the broader mission of FRESHFARM. More cross-departmental initiatives ensured that team members had opportunities to engage beyond their immediate roles, strengthening internal collaboration and increasing the collective impact of FRESHFARM's work.

FRESHFARM's Finance team has improved the on-time collection of market revenue by 62% over the previous year, strengthening our cash flow position and our ability to reinvest in programs. We transitioned to a new bank that offers increased security and stronger controls over how our resources move.

Once again, we received a clean audit, maintaining compliance with best practices in nonprofit financial management.

Our Development team worked with key institutional and individual supporters to secure capacity investments that made organizational improvements in infrastructure and technology possible. Expansion of the Development team has also allowed us to revitalize our individual donor outreach, inviting thousands of loyal FRESHFARM market shoppers to help us achieve more equitable access to the joy of fresh, local food throughout our community.





# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

RESHFARM's school-based farm stands at Whittier and Simon Elementary Schools connect farmers, families, and students to strengthen the local food system. These stands provide fresh, affordable produce while fostering food literacy and community engagement. All FRESHFARM teams—FoodPrints, Food Access, Markets, and Pop-Up Food Hub (PUFH)—work together to empower families and support local growers.

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The farm stand is a beautiful meeting spot.

Everyone is sharing in the experience –

Whittier students are applying their math or communication skills, our garden club is getting involved, and Coolidge High School students are helping, and FoodPrints students are sharing their excitement for produce or recipes they made at school.

Lisa Washington, Speech Pathologist,
 Whittier Elementary





# Collaboration in Action: Strengthening the Local Food System Through School-Based Farm Stands

At FRESHFARM, we recognize that a resilient local food system is built on strong, interconnected partnerships. When farmers, families, educators, students, and food access champions all come together, communities flourish. Nowhere is this collaborative model more evident than in the school-based farm stands at Whittier Elementary School (Ward 4) and Simon Elementary School (Ward 8). These farm stands are a powerful example of how FRESHFARM's Markets, Food Access, and PUFH teams collaborate with FoodPrints' education and community-building efforts to create meaningful food system change.





These farm stands provide more than just food; they expose students and families to local seasonal produce and give them direct purchasing power to participate with dignity in a stronger, more inclusive local food economy. By sourcing produce directly from small and mid-sized regional farmers via the PUFH and selling that produce at wholesale prices, these farm stands provide families with fresh, affordable seasonal ingredients while creating economic opportunities for local food producers.

At the heart of the Whittier and Simon Elementary farm stands is the idea that access to healthy food should be local, educational, and empowering. These farm stands connect multiple FRESHFARM initiatives:

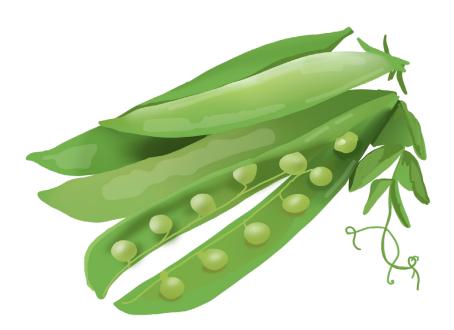
- Students get excited about—and learn how to prepare—seasonal produce by growing, harvesting, cooking, and eating it in their **FoodPrints** classes. They then bring that excitement home to their families, who shop at the farm stands or other outlets for fresh ingredients for simple, low-cost, and produce-forward recipes.
- The **Markets** and **PUFH** teams provide the operational muscle to run the school-based farm stands. The PUFH aggregates and delivers the food each week, while the Markets team is the boots on the ground—setting up the stand, selling the produce, and breaking everything down.
- The **Food Access** team ensures that our farm stands can accept SNAP/EBT, FMNP, Produce Plus, and FreshMatch, making fresh fruits and vegetables affordable for all community members. In 2024, 27% of transactions at farm stands were paid with federal nutrition benefits and incentives (much higher than the 4% average at our farmers markets).
- Parents, caregivers, and nearby neighbors who may not regularly visit farmers markets due to transportation barriers, limited time, or the perception that fresh, local food is not affordable now have an easy way to purchase produce while picking up children in their neighborhood.

The interconnectedness of this model is what makes it so successful. The farm stands are not just about food access; they are food hubs that build food literacy, support local growers, and strengthen the community fabric.



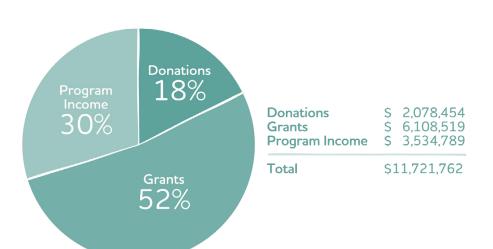
# **2024 FINANCIALS**

n 2024, our focus was on strengthening organizational infrastructure. We added much-needed capacity to our Administrative and Development teams to keep our growth sustainable and stable. With an enhanced Development team, our revenue from foundations and individual donations increased by 32% over the previous year. With a new staffer stepping into the Accounts Receivable position, we effectively worked with the Markets team to improve our management of market fees and payment collection; we showed a 62% improvement in our past-due balances at year-end. Finally, our people continue to be our most valuable resource; personnel expenses comprised more than half of FRESHFARM's 2024 budgeted expenses.

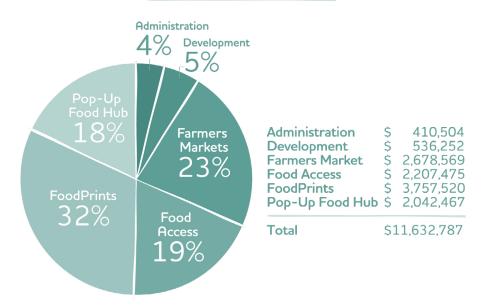




## REVENUE



## EXPENSES





# **FUNDERS**

e are fortunate at FRESHFARM to have a diverse mix of revenue sources for our work. In 2024, program income from market and food hub operations represented a healthy one-third of our revenue. Federal, state, and local government grants represented more than 50% of our revenue, while 20% came from donations from foundations and individuals. Our goal by 2028 is to bring these two revenue streams each closer to one-third, creating a more sustainable funding balance for our future.

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As a weekly shopper at FRESHFARM's Arlington Market for many years, I became familiar with the organization and their mission. I look forward to purchasing a variety of food items and getting to know and engaging with the producers and farmers there week after week. Supporting FRESHFARM is important as they play a vital role in promoting sustainable agriculture, raising awareness about healthy eating, and ensuring that communities have access to fresh, nutritious food.

Alice Feeley, Donor since 2019 &
 FRESHFARM Arlington Market Shopper

\$25,000+



















Ina Kay Foundation













Robert Percival in memory of Barbara Percival

The Morningstar Foundation







## \$20,000 - \$24,999

Bald Hill Foundation Lavin Family Foundation Ponce de Leon Stein Fund

## \$15,000 - \$19,999

Alice Shaver Foundation
Ann and Charles Yonkers
Robert & Maureen Sievers Family Charitable Gift Fund
Share Fund
Southern Maryland Agricultural Development
Commission (SMADC)
Susan Buffone

## \$10,000 - \$14,999

Alice and Brendan Feeley
Aramco
Guillermo Casasola and Chelsea Meiners
Joan Fabry and Michael Klein
John and Linda Costa
Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation
Kettering Family Foundation
Marie Reed Parent Teacher Organization
Nick and Gardiner Lapham
Stemwinder Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation
The Guagenti Family

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

Mary Challinor and Henry Richardson Robin Burton Sandra P. Buteau and Philip H. Budwick



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I shop at the Downtown Silver Spring market almost weekly. I support FRESHFARM because I appreciate the work they do to make the market and fresh food accessible to everyone in the community.

 Zenobia S, SEED Circle Member & FRESHFARM Downtown Silver Spring Market Shopper

# **GET INVOLVED**





s a regional and national leader in sustainable food systems, FRESHFARM builds a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient food future in the Mid-Atlantic region by producing innovative solutions in partnership with local communities and organizations. We create food access, economic development, and thriving communities through hands-on education, farmers markets, and food distribution programs.

Looking ahead to 2025, FRESHFARM is poised for significant strides forward. We are excited to continue expanding our reach and deepening our impact through innovative programs that foster food access, enhance economic opportunities, and build nourished communities. We are committed to advancing our mission with renewed vigor, guided by strategic priorities that ensure our resilience and adaptability.

# We invite you to be part of this transformative journey. Here are ways to get involved.



### **Subscribe**

Get the latest FRESHFARM news, program updates, recipes, farmer features, and more in our newsletters. **freshfarm.org/newsletter** 



## **Become a Monthly Donor**

Join a loyal community of donors committed to making a lasting impact on our local food system. **freshfarm.org/donate** 





## **Learn More**

Explore our blog to learn more about our impact and read stories about our community. **freshfarm.org/blog** 

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**FRESHFARM** is a nonprofit based in Washington, DC that builds a more equitable, vibrant, sustainable, and resilient food system in the Mid-Atlantic region by producing innovative solutions in partnership with local communities and organizations. We create food access, economic development, and thriving communities through hands-on education, farmers markets, and food distribution programs.

