

Rooted in Resilience



2020
Year in Review

healfoodalliance.org

This year, the world as we know it, was shook up.

Many of us foresaw the magnitude of climate chaos that we'd encounter – like the 800+ wildfires that raged on the west coast this summer, storms like Derecho in the Midwest, Eta in the south-east.

Some of us imagined mass public health crises on the scale of a pandemic. And many of us knew that a power struggle would erupt in the face of ecological and public health crises – that those with power would do everything they could to hold onto it.

I don't think any of us could have imagined the collision of these tectonic plates at this scale, at this pace. But here's the thing – when tectonic plates collide, magma rises to the surface, and something new emerges. It's time to let that newness thrive.

When we released our [strategic plan](#) – our three year roadmap – in February, we had no idea what was in store for 2020. We're pleased to share that while our tactics may have changed, our core methods haven't. Now, more than ever, we know the value of HEAL's work.

At HEAL, we get to facilitate an unprecedented collaboration of farmers, fishers, ranchers, Indigenous leaders, food system workers, public health advocates, scientists, and community organizers connecting and uniting across the country, coming together across race, sector, and geography – because we all have a stake in a better future.

And in the face of the chaos of 2020, while greedy corporate CEOs and power-hungry politicians sought to grow their profits off the backs of working people and the planet, our people turned to each other. We know that we can't just try to win reforms in an economy that was never designed for life to thrive, and that our survival depends on our ability to see ourselves as interconnected. Each of us brings our skills, resources, and expertise to create something more beautiful than we ever thought possible.

I couldn't be more proud of the ways that our alliance has grown through the magma of 2020. As you read our end of year report, I hope that you feel similarly inspired. We are in the fight of our lives, and the fight for generations to come. We are rooted, we are resilient, and we are ready for whatever comes next.



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Connecting and Uniting Groups

HEAL exists to build collective power for transformation by uniting across race, sector, and geography. Through the pandemic, our alliance found creative ways to strengthen relationships between our members and community:

We launched a webinar series to highlight our members' organizing strategies.

March:

Dignity for Workers and Their Families

May:

Webs of Support – Navajo Nation

June:

Sowing the Seeds of Liberation (Opportunity for BIPOC producers)

September:

Elections 2020: What's Food & Agriculture Got to Do with It?

October:

Rooted & Ready: How BIPOC Communities are Cultivating Crisis-Proof Food Systems

We collaborated with Soul Fire Farm, Castanea Fellowship, Black Farmer Fund, and the Northeast Farmers of Color Network to organize **bi-weekly bilingual calls for hundreds of BIPOC-identified farmers and organizers** to learn from each other about the impacts of COVID-19 on supply chains, and communities.

We welcomed 8 members to our alliance:



Including 4 new members from the Food Chain Worker Alliance!



Political Education & Analysis

HEAL's School of Political Leadership (SoPL) is generating the political power we need to transform our food and farm systems. We graduated 11 leaders, training them in power mapping, campaign strategy, policy advocacy, and communications. HEAL continues to support SoPL grads in running their regional campaigns and securing victories in their communities.

We know that the transformation we seek is not yet politically possible – it is up to us to make it so. In 2020, our alliance took powerful action together as political opportunities emerged.

We created advocacy toolkits for two planks from our Platform for Real Food:

- Dignity for All Workers and their Families
- Opportunity for All Producers

We pushed back against corporate interests leading the USDA.

With the Union of Concerned Scientists, we released a brief to educate policymakers about opportunities for BIPOC producers.

HEAL responded to Congress' COVID-19 aid package, and successfully energized food and agriculture groups to lobby Congress to invest in food workers, under-resourced farmers, and local communities.

And we mobilized to #ProtectTheVote!

Advancing a Shared Narrative

Through our narrative work, HEAL centers the value of life, labor, and the land.

With members and allies, we created **Routed, Ready & Resilient**, a values-based messaging guide to invite more people to reimagine and reinvent our world through crisis-proof food systems.

Our staff spoke at several **online events** reaching over 3,000 viewers across nutrition, public health, animal welfare, and wellness communities.

We organized **four communications trainings** for our members; more than 45 member organizations attended:

- Writing Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor
- Digital Organizing for Advocacy
- Solidarity Actions and Coordinated Social Media Strategy
- Changing the Narrative: Values-Based Messaging

HEAL received the **2020 Jean Mayer Prize for Excellence in Nutrition Science and Policy** from the Tufts School of Nutrition, along with the James Beard Foundation and World Central Kitchen.

We are **uplifting our stories and communities in the media**.

Our work was recognized in major outlets including the New York Times, the Washington Post, NBC, Forbes, Eater, Bloomberg, CBS, the Counter, and more.

Connecting & Nurturing Existing & Emerging Campaigns

By building relationships and organizing campaigns across organizations, sectors, and geographies – rooted in our shared vision for dismantling corporate control and racism – HEAL can achieve more than any one of our organizations can achieve alone.

Essential Workers Defense

Since the onset of the pandemic, HEAL members organized to defend food and farm workers forced to choose between their lives and their livelihoods. With leadership from the Food Chain Workers Alliance, Venceremos, Rural Community Workers Alliance, Warehouse Workers for Justice, ROC United, Farmworker Association of Florida, Idaho Organization of Resource Councils, Public Justice, and others, we:

- **Spearheaded actions resulting in Tyson receiving 1,000+ calls and emails** from consumers urging them to pass worker protections.
- **Collected thousands of petition signatures.**
- **Hosted two webinars to support meatpacking workers**, and supported lobbying efforts.
- **Organized 40 organizations in a week of action** against Tyson Foods
- **Drove the delivery of a Tyson Foods shareholder letter** signed by 122 organizations.
- **Filed a Civil Rights complaint with the USDA** in defense of working peoples' lives.
- **And we've made movement!** Our joint organizing work to protect people working in the meatpacking industry during the pandemic was recognized by Senators Elizabeth Warren (MA) and Cory Booker (NJ), and was covered by major media outlets this fall.

Real Meals Campaign

- The Real Meals Campaign and Real Food Generation released an intensively researched exposé: *Be-Trayed: How Kickbacks in the Cafeteria Industry Harm Our Communities – And What To Do About It.* The report inspired a letter to the Federal Trade Commission, led by Open Markets, requesting that it use its power to ban exclusionary contracting, including kickbacks.
- We've created a series of infographics to show how corporate food service giants Sodexo, Aramark, and Compass Group are fueling the Amazon forest fires, investing in Big Meat, and polluting the ocean by purchasing industrial seafood.

Good Food Communities

With the Food Chain Workers Alliance, we launched Good Food Communities (GFC) to re-invest public dollars in food systems that work for people and our planet. Through GFC, communities in Illinois, New York, Ohio, Florida, California and across the country are creating transparent food buying policies for cities, counties and schools that support Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) working on the frontlines while winning contracts for businesses owned by people of color.

Organizing Resources for a BIPOC-Led Grassroots Movement for Change

The deepest change is led by the people who are on the frontlines of social dysfunctions, and at the forefront of solutions, yet most BIPOC-led organizations are the ones most strapped for resources. In 2020 the HEAL Food Alliance mobilized to change this.

We published an Open Letter to three major foundations urging them to address the problematic practice of funding White-led organizations that subcontract – and often dramatically under-compensate – BIPOC-led nonprofits to conduct “engagement” activities with our communities. We've secured commitments from these foundations to change their harmful practices.

HEAL spoke on a series of philanthropic calls to drive attention and resources to BIPOC organizations mobilizing our communities in this critical moment.

And we're growing the pool & redistributing funding to our members. We've established a rapid response fund to support members when crises like COVID-19, civic unrest, or climate chaos elevate the urgency.

None of our work would be possible without your support. Thank you to HEAL's many generous individual donors and the following foundations – we couldn't do any of this without you!

blue of california
foundation

