

HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE

School of Political  
Leadership

# ALUMNI REPORT

2018-2021

[healfoodalliance.org](http://healfoodalliance.org)



# INTRODUCTION

“If we’re not prepared to govern,  
we’re not prepared to win.”

~ MOVEMENT GENERATION



When we first conceived of HEAL, we recognized the enormity of the task ahead: our current food and agriculture systems are controlled by a handful of powerful corporations whose ethos of extraction and exploitation is rooted in a history of chattel slavery and genocide. By design, the very laws that established the United States excluded Black, Indigenous, and other people of color from power over the decisions that impact our lives.

When 55 organizations came together in February 2017 to ratify [HEAL’s Platform for Real Food](#), and formally launch an alliance, our communities swiftly responded to the call of the moment: it was time to train our leaders to run for office and organize for comprehensive policy in their communities. HEAL needed to launch the School of Political Leadership (SoPL).

True transformation requires the diverse skills, roles, and resources of each of us, working together to build our collective power for change. SoPL is truly a collaborative effort, tapping into the wisdom of long-time organizers in frontline communities and honing the skills of powerful people across generations and communities.

Every one of HEAL’s members, partners, participants, donors, and funders has contributed to making SoPL magic. Thank you to each and every one of you for seeing and adding to the power and potential of our collective effort.

As you read this report, we hope you feel as proud as we do of our work to date! Together, we are creating futures where all of us can thrive.

For joy & justice,



**Navina Khanna**

Co-Founder & Executive Director  
HEAL Food Alliance





# HEAL MISSION & VISION

## Our Mission

HEAL is building our collective power for food and farm systems that are healthful for all families, accessible and affordable for all communities, and fair to the working people who grow, distribute, prepare, and serve our food—while protecting the air, water, and land we all depend on.

## Our Vision

For all people and all communities to have the right and the means to produce, procure, prepare, share, and eat food that's nutritionally and culturally appropriate, free from exploitation of themselves and any other people, and to be in their full power in harmony with the rest of the natural world.

## Our Alliance

HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance is a national multi-sector, multi-racial coalition **led by our member organizations**, who represent over 2 million rural and urban farmers, ranchers, fishers, farm and food chain workers, Indigenous groups, scientists, public health advocates, policy experts, community organizers, and activists. We are organizing to move from an extractive & exploitative economic model towards community controlled food systems rooted in care.



# About the School of Political Leadership

HEAL School of Political Leadership (SoPL) is primarily for frontline, majority Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) leaders working towards democratic food and agriculture systems that work for people and our planet. SoPL equips these leaders with the tools, knowledge, and skills they need to lead campaigns and drive political change.

Through interactive training including power analysis, campaign strategy, communications, and field and base building, SoPL prepares teams to rise to the political, social, and economic challenges that are facing our food and farm systems today.


HEAL's SoPL leaders are community activists, organizers, educators, agroecologists, social entrepreneurs, land stewards, farmers, fishers, researchers, advocates and much more.

From 2018-2022, HEAL has graduated 46 leaders from SoPL. This report covers the first three years, through 2021.





# METHODS AND CURRICULUM



Over the years we've adapted SoPL to meet the needs of HEAL's membership. Members' feedback informs the design and curriculum and helps us meet our goal of developing political leadership for our communities.

**2017-  
2018**

## **10 LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

**Goal:** Support individuals interested in running for political office.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Expand the SoPL curriculum to include policy advocacy and community organizing campaigns, along with electoral.
- Build support network to enable SoPL participants to reach campaign milestones sustainably.
- Coordinate SoPL sessions around the growing season to increase farmer participation.

**2019-  
2020**

## **11 INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING 3 TEAMS**

**Goal:** Support teams interested in winning community organizing, policy advocacy, or electoral campaigns.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Team model is successful in addressing turnover and fostering accountable leadership.
- Transitioned SoPL curriculum from in-person to virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.


**2020-  
2021**

## **14 INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING 4 TEAMS**

### **Goals:**

- Support teams interested in community organizing, policy advocacy, or electoral campaigns.
- Execute a virtual program and modify curriculum to focus on developing and implementing campaigns during the pandemic.

### **Lessons Learned:**

- Incorporate alumni and community members into various aspects of SoPL curriculum.
  - In future years, build understanding of how to influence policy change in the many branches of government.
- 

# Agenda Snapshot

## COMMUNITY HOST:

Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) in Lindsay, CA

This is a snapshot of our 2019-2020 in-person session in Tulare County, CA prior to adapting to a virtual pandemic context:

### DAY 1

#### PM

Welcome & Recognition of Whose Ancestral Lands  
Agenda Review & Group Agreements  
HEAL Purpose: Vision, Mission & History  
Political Leadership Life Mapping & Storytelling  
Central Valley Context  
Dinner & Site Visit: Lindsay Night Market  
Rest & Relaxation

### DAY 2

#### AM

Grounding Practice/Ice Breakers/Team Building  
Campaigns 101 - Local Organizers Speak to State Level Wins  
Site Visit: "Quadrilla" Farmworker Team & Lunch on Field

#### PM

Movement Timeline & Root Problems  
Dinner & Site Visit: Resident's Family Home - Panel with Local Electeds and Residents re: pesticide use by industrial agriculture, impact on local communities and solutions  
Continuing the Conversation & Social Time

### DAY 3

#### AM

Group Photo  
CA, Water Issues & More Organizing Perspectives  
Share on Your Communities  
Next Steps & Evaluation  
Closing Ceremony

#### PM

Site Visit: Sequoia National Park  
Departures



# Overall Objectives & Outcomes

## SoPL AIMS TO:

- Cultivate a shared analysis of the dominant political and economic systems and identify opportunities for strategic interventions
- Understand food and farm policies and related federal, state and local legislative and electoral processes
- Assess participants' readiness for policy advocacy, community organizing and electoral candidacy

## AS INDIVIDUALS, SoPL PARTICIPANTS:

- Enhance skill sets & political acumen to design, initiate, and run strategic campaigns that deepen community, win policy change, influence policymakers, and/or run grassroots candidates
- Build a spirit of accountable leadership, solidarity and movement building

## AS A COHORT, MEMBERS:

- Launch regional campaign activities (power mapping, town halls, legislative advocacy) that advance their organization's work and HEAL's platform
- Develop a deepened sense of solidarity and support for each other and their communities as they work towards collective liberation



# DEMOGRAPHICS & COHORT DATA

## Organizations Represented



- Appetite for Change 2018
- Californians for Pesticide Reform 2018
- I-Collective 2018
- La Semilla Food Center 2018
- Massachusetts Avenue Project 2018
- National Black Food and Justice Alliance 2018
- Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance 2018
- Real Food Challenge 2018
- Soil Generation 2018
- Urban Creators 2018
- African Heritage Food Coop 2020
- Black Mesa Water Coalition 2020
- CoNect - Community Network for Engagement, Connection & Transformation 2020
- Diné Food Sovereignty Alliance 2020
- Just Food 2020
- Kelly St. Gardens 2020
- Real Food Media 2020
- Tolani Lake Enterprises 2020
- Urban Fruits & Veggies LLC 2020
- Cultivate Charlottesville 2021
- HOPE Collaborative 2021
- Idaho Organization of Resource Councils 2021
- Idaho Immigrant Resource Alliance 2021
- Midwest Farmers of Color Collective 2021
- Oakland Food Policy Council 2021
- Pesticide Action Network North America 2021
- Treasure Valley Community Garden 2021
- Toxic Taters Coalition 2021
- White Earth Tribal Community College 2021





# Graduation Rates

- 2017-2018: 10/10
- 2019-2020: 11/11
- 2020-2021: 13/14
- Percentage of graduates 97%

Graduated

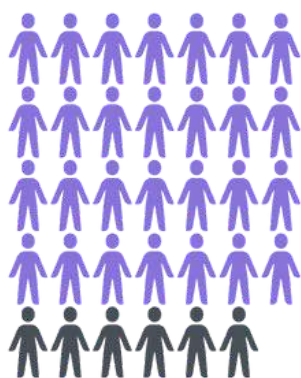
34

food systems  
leaders  
over 3 cohorts



29

alumni are  
actively  
engaged in  
HEAL's  
campaigns or  
programs

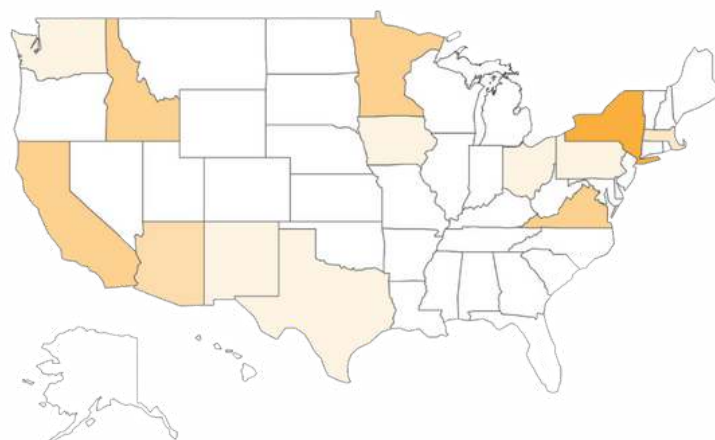


## Alumni Engaged in HEAL

- Yes (29)
- No (6)

## Geographies Represented

- CA (4)
- MA (2)
- WA (1)
- OH (1)
- IA (1)
- MN (4)
- NY (8)
- PA (1)
- TX (1)
- AZ (3)
- NM (1)
- ID (4)
- VA (4)

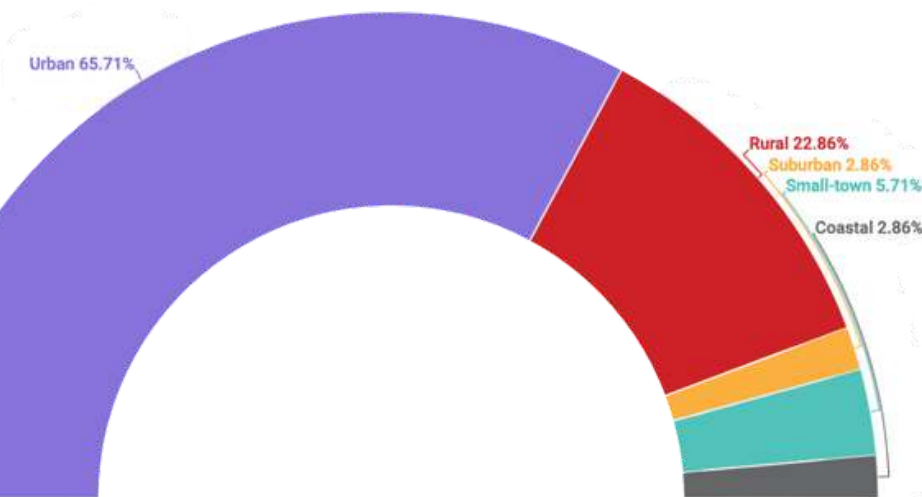
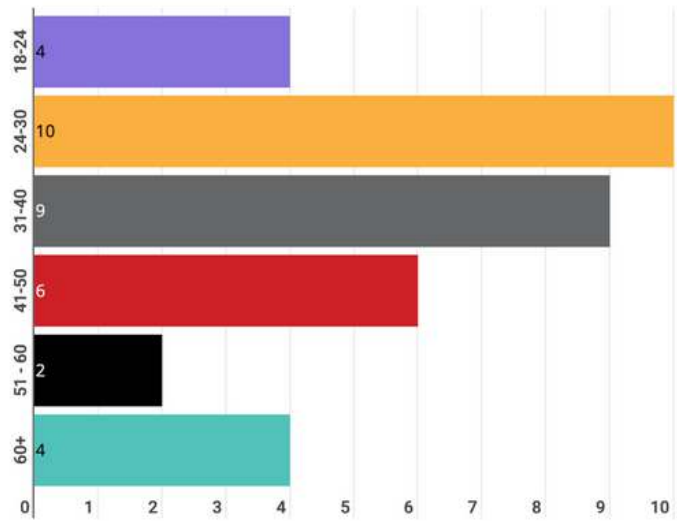


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## Age of Participants

- 18-24 (4)
- 24-30 (10)
- 31-40 (9)
- 41-50 (6)
- 51 - 60 (2)
- 60+ (4)



## Landscapes Represented

- Urban (23)
- Suburban (1)
- Rural (8)
- Small Town (2)
- Coastal (1)

## Demographics

- Black/African-American (12)
- Indigenous/Native American (7)
- Latine/Hispanic (6)
- Multiracial (5)
  - Black/African-American and Asian/Asian-American (2)
  - Indigenous/Native American and Black/African-American (1)
  - Asian/Asian-American and White (1)
  - Latine/Hispanic and Asian/Asian-American (1)
- White (3)
- Middle Eastern/Northern African (1)
- Prefer not to say (1)

Asian-American  
 Latine or Hispanic  
**Black or African American**  
 Indigenous or Native American  
 Multiracial  
 White  
 Middle Eastern or Northern African

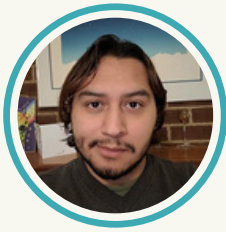


# FEATURED CAMPAIGNS

## Cultivate Charlottesville, VA 2021 Cohort



JEANETTE ABI-NADER



LEON NUÑEZ



RICHARD MORRIS



TAMARA WRIGHT

### ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Our campaign was aimed at acquiring city land in a public park for setting up a new urban farm. The goals for the first phase of the campaign were to generate awareness about the idea and get residents' feedback on how they would use and support the space, and to use this feedback as part of our appeal to city council and the parks department.

The campaign is part of a broader policy agenda. For over two years, we'd been working with the community to explore what was needed to move Charlottesville to being a food equity city rather than just a foodie city and pulled together a policy platform that included six planks. One of those planks — "Power to grow" — is connected to urban agriculture.

At our core we believe food is a human right and urban agriculture is critical to a healthy, urban community. The Urban Agriculture Collective, which has been a program of Cultivate Charlottesville since 2018, has been growing and sharing food with the community since its founding in 2007. Residents see value in having an urban garden in their neighborhoods.

### CHALLENGES

Unfortunately, we are still operating in a pandemic and that has impacted how we engage with residents. The most efficient way to reach some of the folks we want to talk to is to knock on their doors, but that's no longer an easy option. Even outside of COVID19, it's

## CHALLENGES (CONTINUED)

always challenging to get access to people who might be outside the normal communication channels. As a multicultural organization, we're also grappling with how to share the difficult history of some of our neighborhoods in a way that honors multiple different experiences. We have to continuously update our strategies to reflect these changes that are happening within our communities.

The Parks and Recreation advisory board responded positively to our initial presentation, but it is often the case that when new people come onto a board, you sometimes have to start the conversation all over again. New people bring different levels of energy for different projects, so we have to update our power maps to reflect the natural shifts that personnel changes bring.

## VICTORIES

That this project is still rolling is a win in itself — we have retained focus on this project in the current climate, through personnel changes and varying levels of interest and support.

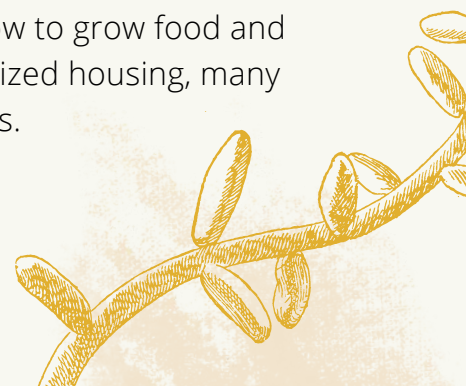
We had a great turnout for the launch of our policy platform. Hearing from community members who were positively engaging with our platform was a great boost in morale.

Though COVID19 delayed our timeline, that gave us an opportunity to strategize better. We worked with a local consultant to help us build on the tools and strategies we developed at SoPL and shape the campaign to suit our local context. This will be a great proof of concept for how to do future campaigns.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We're currently ramping up to launch the campaign. We took some time to drill down and strategize deeply about how we get to our goals. We have put together brochures and surveys and are speaking with an outside consultant about how to launch the campaign and conduct outreach for the survey, how to leverage community events to engage with residents and how we can speak with public officials about all of this. We're thinking a lot about the 'power map' tool for this last piece.

One of our gardens is also starting a pilot program that teaches folks how to grow food and start a garden, and it's targeted specifically for folks in public and subsidized housing, many of whom have limited access to fresh and nutritious food on a daily basis.





## FEATURED CAMPAIGNS

# Diné Food Sovereignty, AZ/NM

## 2020 Cohort



DANA ELDRIGE



GLORIA ANN BEGAY



ROBERTO NUTLOUIS



STEPHANIE HALL

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Our campaign was the result of several different threads of work coming together — policy advocacy, community organizing for food and water sovereignty, participatory research and more. Our overarching goal was to engage Diné farmers and community members to develop and enact a policy of Diné Food Sovereignty grounded in community control and ownership of our food systems and revitalization of a Diné food economy. We wanted to set the groundwork for this to happen, and we wanted to bring networks of farmers and community members into the fold of the work being done by the Diné Food Sovereignty Policy Coalition. This work started long before SoPL but the program gave us a chance to regroup and think about how we could move forward together.

The pandemic definitely forced us to shift our work. In the initial phase, we were actively responding to crises in our community. COVID19 really exposed the underlying issues that lead to poverty, inequality and food insecurity — it really showed how the colonial project has devastated our people. We were all involved in various efforts personally and through our organizations. The reservation shut down during this time and it was the nonprofits and community members that showed up. Tolani Lake Enterprises (TLE) where Stephanie was serving as Executive Director was actively involved in mutual aid efforts across the region. Roberto was working on restoring traditional architecture and hogans with young community members and also began to work with schools in the area on bringing Diné curriculum to their lessons, while dana, was engaged in efforts to ensure access to water, housing, supplies and other basic necessities for folks. During this time, Gloria continued to build on the policy platform and engage decision makers to deal with our new reality.

## CHALLENGES

Much of what happened in 2020 was reactionary, but by mid-2021, things had settled a bit so we got to slow down and work on long term solutions and infrastructure in a way that feels regenerative. It was time for big transitions and reprioritization of work that was meaningful to us. This included getting infrastructure such as a cell phone antenna and a small solar system for electricity, for some of us to be able to work from home, and setting up new initiatives and efforts. TLE received CARES Act funding which enabled us to work on infrastructure projects. For instance, TLE was able to contract Roberto and his team to set up traditional water catchment systems for over 50 families that previously had to travel over 50 miles to get water for livestock and personal use.

We got a lot of attention from the Navajo Nation government because of all the resources that were coming in to support food sovereignty and security work. The collaborations and building that took place during this time brought forth a network of organizations, farms and community gardens into the fold. It demonstrated that people had their own ability to grow their own food and take control of their own destinies. The work done by all these organizations proved that these skills and knowledge exist within the reservation, and that we should be working with each other to solve these problems.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Although we have not been in direct collaboration with each other, we are always at the periphery of each other's work, but now things are building up to a point where we see the team coming together again soon.

Gloria, along with her team at Diné Food Sovereignty Alliance (DFSA) has been moving forward with several policy efforts, and community engagement work based on research and methodologies put together by Roberto and dana. This summer, DFSA will have the first of many sessions where they introduce community recommendations with council delegates.

We are in an election year at Navajo Nation and for the first time we are hearing candidates talking about sovereignty, breaking out of the colonial mindset and what long term solutions are for our people. We have always known that a colonial governance structure is never going to work for us but now feels like a time to engage strategically to move that vision forward.

Since the closure of Black Mesa Water Coalition, Roberto has been working towards setting up a separate entity — Nihikeya — which focuses on how we can restore traditional systems around food, water and other critical things. The Navajo Tribe is also part of a global research project that explores the intersections between food and water security, climate change and agroecological food systems which once again gives us an opportunity to move our vision for a resilient food system that's in harmony with our ecology.



## FEATURED CAMPAIGNS

# Urban Agriculture & Equity, NY

## 2020 Cohort



QIANA MICKIE



RENEE KEITT



SHERYLL DURRANT



## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Our platform upon entering SoPL was Urban Agriculture and Equity. We wanted our collective work within SoPL to help us envision and build a grassroots policy and advocacy – rooted in equity and food sovereignty – towards ending food apartheid and fostering resiliency in New York City. Our campaign focused on policy and advocacy around the city's urban agriculture landscape and policies. At the time, there was no dedicated office or framework for what constituted urban agriculture in the city.

Since our time in SoPL, New York City established the office of Urban Agriculture. This is an exciting development after years of community advocacy. We are looking forward to the office evolving and will likely pivot some of our advocacy efforts to upcoming urban agriculture policy. The NYC urban agriculture landscape includes rooftop gardens, community gardens, urban farms, and greenspaces for food production and community resiliency and respite. We believe equitable policy in the city would support the breadth of our diverse urban agriculture landscape and its stewards.

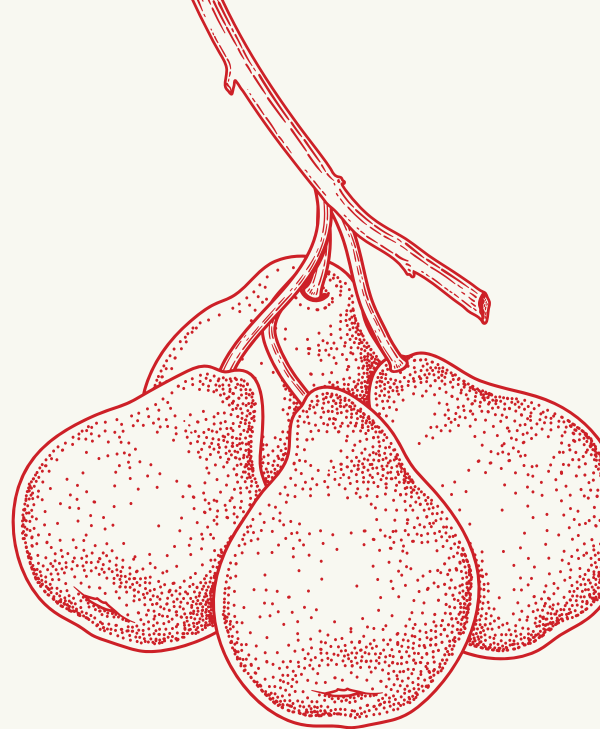
## CHALLENGES & VICTORIES

Our work has always been working towards food sovereignty and nurturing community resilience. Community self-determined work can be a challenge to fund and with the rise of COVID, we experienced the vast majority of the COVID related funding in New York diverted to emergency food services and short term mutual aid efforts. Urban farms and community gardens around the city like New Roots Community Farm and Kelly Street Garden were mainly utilized to distribute emergency food and were not supported to ramp up their existing food production to serve their communities. For example, New Roots Bronx and Kelly Street Garden each distribute 200 shares a week since COVID. The majority of food is brought



## CHALLENGES & VICTORIES (CONTINUED)

in from rural farms supported by this emergency funding. In 2020, we distributed approximately 55,000 lbs of food from rural farmers. That figure increased to approximately 80,000 lbs in 2021. By contrast, we saw a decline in harvest from both New Roots and Kelly Street. For Kelly Street our average annual harvest was consistently over 2,000 lbs. During COVID our harvest was approximately 1,400 lbs in 2020 and 1,500 lbs in 2021. Similarly at New Roots our average annual harvest has been over 6,000 lbs. We haven't hit that mark since COVID with an average annual harvest of 4,500 lbs.



In shifting our focus to deal with the immediate needs of our community, our food sovereignty work was less focused on our own food production and programming. The narrative during COVID was too dominated by “feel-good” stories about mutual aid and community fridges rather than on community solidarity models that already existed, nor the justice and equity work that folks have been doing for years. The funds shifted from food sovereignty work to emergency services and that’s a step backward. And this has had a lasting impact on the landscape; and we feel that hunger and lack of resources have been normalized.

Another example of the funding shift towards emergency food vs food sovereignty is the Nourish New York program. It initially was created in the midst of the COVID crisis to provide funds to large scale farmers/producers; not to small to mid scale farmers and farmers of color, in order to get their food to needy New Yorkers. Just Food was able to implement our services and get a mid-sized farm successfully into the Nourish NY program to supply food pantries in the Bronx and primed more farmers to get onboard. However, our efforts to ramp up the program were compromised due to lack of government and private funding for this critical connective work. While meeting an urgent need, Nourish NY was designed solely on a food security model rather than food sovereignty. Food security efforts are not designed to end persistent hunger and marginalize small scale farmers and farmers of color. There’s just an acceptance that much of the population will be food insecure forever. We are concerned that the lack of food can be considered normal. This program has now been funded in perpetuity in our state with little to no representation of diversified farmers.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

COVID-19 illustrated that much of the population was food insecure and exposed the holes in the system— illustrating what decades of disinvestment did to communities and neighborhoods. We see this as an opportunity to push for policies and programs that truly support equity and food sovereignty. And we will continue to use urban agriculture as a tool for education and empowerment — to nurture a resilient food system, to inform and educate the community on how to access resources, and build micro-enterprises. We do this work at the grassroots as well as the policy level. That's the work we want to continue doing.

Sheryll and Renee are continuing to work with a network of urban farmers/gardeners at community growing spaces across the five boroughs, including New Roots Community Farm in the Bronx where they work primarily with folks from refugee communities, as well as Kelly Street Garden which serves the Hunts Point/Longwood community. Sheryll has also become the Board Chair of Just Food while Renee is developing urban agriculture curriculum and trainings. Qiana has since transitioned out of the Executive Director role at Just Food and launched a food systems and equity consultancy, QJM Multiprise. She works on various NYC based and national food and policy projects, such as the Cultivating Collaborations Series to improve connections to farm to school contracts for small-scale and BIPOC farmers in NYS.

In addition, we are collaborating with the HBCUs University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) and Florida A&M University (FAMU) on a national project to support equitable access to federal funding among Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and Hawaiian Pacific Islander (HP) farmers. It's an opportunity to use our voices to recommend how more farmers of color can access funding to build enterprises, access land, and remain viable. The project is a step toward increasing BIPOC representation in strategy and decision-making around agriculture policy.



# ALUMNI SURVEY RESPONSES

**Where are they now?** In December 2021, we surveyed all 35 SoPL graduates and collected a total of 24 responses. In this section we share the anonymous responses from our alumni.

- **Are you working on the campaign idea you came into SoPL with?**
  - 18 YES / 6 NO
- **How did your campaign idea change through SoPL?**
  - "SoPL taught me about similar values-aligned work happening across country, and helped to solidify what an anti-racist framework could look like."
  - "I was able to enhance several critical skills such as narrative building, power mapping, and systems analysis. Our campaign work 100% improved."
  - "Our idea was too broad, so we narrowed it way down."
  - "Became much more specific and rigorous."
- **Did your SoPL experience impact your work?**
  - YES: 24/24
- **How has your SoPL experience impacted your work?**
  - "SoPL was SO life changing for me! It gave me a national network of support, and helped give me a safe space."
  - "Having the experience gave me a taste of what it's like to be a participant of a political leadership program, which was really helpful in getting my current job."
  - "The SoPL experience made me realize I already knew a lot while providing me with structure and useful tools to support and strengthen my work."
  - "I have a more sophisticated understanding of food systems and the intersections that exist between policy change and social political systems."
- **Did SoPL meet your expectations?**
  - "SoPL exceeded my expectations. In addition to campaign organizing skills and perspective, I also gained awareness about the importance of somatics and self-reflection to be an effective leader."
  - "I really appreciated how SoPL designed each session to blend both focused training with informal relationship building. I recall playing music, dancing, walking, listening, and more which made me feel a level of trust and connection to my fellow cohort members."
  - "It was way more than what I would have thought or come up with. It was interactive without the physical aspect of it. I was engaging even though it was strictly on a digital platform. It was easy to navigate and it brought a sense of community with it. Also it was way more "hands on" than I expected."





## **SURVEY RESPONSES (CONTINUED)**

### **• How did your leadership skills grow through SoPL?**

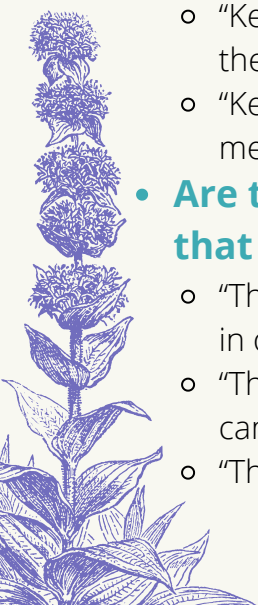
- "My confidence as a leader grew tremendously!"
- "The frameworks and structure help me to organize my thoughts and also bring people along on a more organized journey."
- "This experience helped me find my voice, truly."
- "Just about every session I felt like I learned a lot and felt like I had a new lesson and tool under my belt."

### **• What recommendations or suggestions do you have for future SoPL programming?**

- "It would be awesome to have opportunities and ways to continue connecting or pouring into future cohorts!"
- "I felt some supplemental materials would help folks who are new to political work in the food system. Materials could include readings or videos."
- "To continue the program, expand the audience, and reach more people."
- "More time! An extra day (or half day) for each month without adding additional content. More time to sit with the concepts and frameworks, to practice them, to let them absorb."
- "Keep the travel. I had never been on a large farm. Keep the experiences such as the trip to the plantation museums, etc."
- "Keep using the examples and stories provided because they're strong and are quite memorable."

### **• Are there any specific tools, resources, or lessons you learned at SoPL that have benefited you the most in your work?**

- "The communication session helped us clarify our messages and opportunities for coalition in our network."
- "The campaign power mapping and the presentation on pitches and presenting your campaign in the media stuck with me the most."
- "The understanding of historic touch points illustrated by the timeline."



## SURVEY RESPONSES (CONTINUED)

- **Is there anything that surprised you about what you learned in SoPL?**

- "I was surprised by how detailed and strategic the program was. It was rich and thorough!"
- "It helped me connect the dots as far as the interconnectivity of the intentional pattern of degradation that white supremacy has had on people, land, water, and the environment especially in the U.S."
- "That it is possible to create a campaign through digital organizing since we have restrictions with meeting folks. And that it can be interactive and fun."



- **Are there relationships you made at SoPL that you continue to find valuable for your work and organizing?**

- 21 YES / 3 NO
- "I am still very connected to my cohort members and have made lifelong friends."
- "So many others have become regular parts of my work life to this day."
- "I know I can reach out to anyone in my SoPL class if I need help, guidance, or just want to network or have a question."





# LESSONS LEARNED & RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviewing alumni feedback affirms the importance of HEAL's School of Political Leadership. SoPL is making a change in communities and developing food and farming leaders across the country.

We have found that participants appreciated SoPL curriculum's grounding in storytelling, shared values, and somatic practices, which allow for deeper connection.



In the future, we hope to reinstate the travel component of SoPL, including site visits to farms and to HEAL member organizations, which were eliminated during the COVID-19 pandemic. These experiences allow participants to connect with other people, organizations, and communities working to transform food and agricultural systems. It's something that the COVID-19 pandemic derailed, but hopefully we can continue.

We learned that each SoPL cohort enjoyed opportunities to make connections with alumni, both virtually and through site visits. These moments helped participants learn how to implement their own campaign ideas in creative ways. We will continue integrating SoPL alumni into the curriculum, so that participants can continue to build relationships and learn from each other's work. We also hope to hold in-person alumni reunions.







# VISION FOR THE FUTURE



HEAL prioritizes meeting diverse language needs in order to build power across various communities. We are currently working to build capacity within our team to create a Spanish language curriculum, in response to members' suggestions. We envision bringing in Spanish-speaking trainers and facilitators, and offering Spanish language translation and interpretation. In addition to piloting a Spanish language SoPL in the next two years, we will also explore other language adaptations as needed.

Our vision for the future is to see SoPL alumni in positions of leadership in their communities and in key decision-making roles. We hope to see even more SoPL alumni involved in municipal, tribal, state, and/or federal positions of government facilitating the transformation of our food and farming systems.

# THANK YOU

A special thank you to everyone who has helped make SoPL happen to this day:

- **HEAL staff** past & present: Candace Clark, Celize Christy, Eloni Porcher, En Strader, Jay Conui, Jose Oliva, Kidan Araya, Laurence Jones, Maleeka Manurasada, Marla Karina Larrave, Marlene Manzo, Navina Khanna, Neshani Jani, Nikki Lewis Cole, Onyi Chukwuanu, Rosie Fitz, Sara Leon Guerrero, and Zeenab Aneez
- **Our community hosts** during the SoPL in-person gatherings:
  - 40 Acres, Appetite for Change, Californians for Pesticide Reform, Coalition Advocating for Pesticide Safety, La Semilla, New Communities Inc./Resora, Rowe Organic Farms, Southwest Georgia Project, Tierra Negra Farms; as well as the residents, families and agricultural workers of Lindsay, East Porterville and Tulare County, CA that welcomed us into their communities
- **Our donors & funders**
- **Anna Lappé** for her guidance on this report
- **HEAL Members & the HEAL Steering Council**
- **SoPL Alumni Advisory Committee** - Angel Garcia, Miah Ulysse, Qiana Mickie, V Quevedo, Stephanie Hall, Jeanette Abi-Nader, Asia Hampton, Richard Morris, and Marielena Vega
- Last, but not least, all of the amazing **SoPL alumni**

Without all of these people, SoPL wouldn't have been possible. We are so fortunate to have their guidance, support, and leadership in this work.

Thank you a million,

**Marlene Manzo**, *Political Leadership Coordinator*  
& **Marla Karina Larrave**, *Political Education Director*

