

HEAL Food Alliance
RAPID RESPONSE FUND

IMPACT REPORT

2023





ABOUT HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE

The HEAL (Health, Environment, Agriculture, Labor) Food Alliance is a multi-sector, multi-racial coalition building collective power to transform our food and farm systems. We are led by our member organizations, who represent over 2 million rural and urban farmers, fishers, farm and food chain workers, Indigenous groups, scientists, public health advocates, policy experts, community organizers, and activists.

Together we are growing our collective power to create food and farm systems that are nourishing for our families, accessible and affordable for all communities, and fair to the people who grow, distribute, prepare, and serve our food — while protecting the air, water, and land we all depend on.





ABOUT THE RAPID RESPONSE FUND

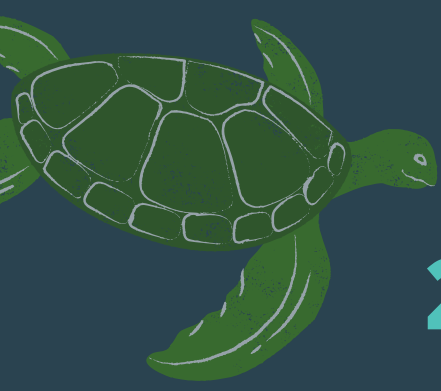
Amidst the chaos of 2020, HEAL Food Alliance piloted a Rapid Response Fund, to support members addressing urgent needs in their communities. Since we established the fund three years ago, we've seen a huge impact: to date, HEAL has distributed \$122,000 to 15 of our member organizations through the fund.

HEAL's Rapid Response Fund aligns with our commitment to organizing resources for a BIPOC-led movement for change. In 2020 HEAL co-wrote an [Open Letter to Philanthropy](#) addressing the patronizing and problematic practice of funding white-led organizations while under-compensating BIPOC-led nonprofits. The letter's authors began to organize as LIFE (Liberating Investment for the Food and Farm Ecosystem) to move more funding to values-aligned BIPOC-led organizations.

Meanwhile, our Rapid Response Fund is entirely dependent on individuals who donate during our End of Year giving campaign. At the end of 2022, we raised \$30,000 from individual donors. In early 2023, we invited all [HEAL member organizations](#) – and their members – to apply to the Rapid Response Fund. We encouraged organizations focused on base-building and/or from less resourced regions to apply, with priority given to organizations with a budget under \$1 million. Recipients could use the funding for any urgent need related to civil response to COVID-19, climate chaos, and/or political conditions.

Five member organizations applied for the fund in 2023, all of which were awarded grants ranging from \$3,000-\$8,050. Representatives from HEAL's Steering Council reviewed the applications and determined funding amounts based on the priority criteria above.





RAPID RESPONSE FUND
2023 GRANTEES

- ★ CoFED | National
- ★ HOPE Collaborative | Oakland, CA
- ★ Operation Spring Plant | Oxford, NC
- ★ Restaurant Opportunities Center United | Chicago, IL
- ★ Rural Community Workers Alliance | MO



GRANTEE STORIES



CoFED (NATIONAL)

Cooperative Food Empowerment Directive (CoFED) is building a cooperative food economy, powered by the visionary leadership of young people of color. They partner with food and land co-ops across the U.S. and Canada to embody cooperative values and economics.

CoFED used funding from HEAL's Rapid Response Fund to coordinate a myriad of workshops and offerings for their MyceliYUM Community of Just Leaders Fellows.

In one multi-day workshop series, CoFED unpacked the influences of intergenerational trauma by understanding the history of money, how individual trauma and experiences re-enforce colonial practices, and how we can heal and decolonize our relationship with money to create a world where we can all thrive.

In another workshop, CoFED explored ideas of ancestral/indigenous market structures and how they have been transformed over time to shape our current global economy. One of the participants in the workshop said that the training felt essential to the revolution, and for the first time in a long time, they felt a part of the revolution, rather than witnessing it. Looking ahead, CoFED is excited to return to their in-person Build, Unlearn, Decolonize (BUD) program in the Fall in Durham, NC.

“We are doing this immense and humbling task collectively and with the understanding that we are continually dismantling systems of oppression that want to keep our communities in the same place, while also co-building our communities’ wings and prowess to build the liberated tomorrows we want to live in and leave behind.” - Suparna Kure





GRANTEE STORIES

HOPE COLLABORATIVE (OAKLAND, CA)

Health For Oakland's People & Environment (HOPE) Collaborative's mission is to advance racial, economic, and health equity in Oakland's food system and built environment. HOPE Collaborative envisions a vibrant Oakland where historically marginalized communities shape their neighborhoods' future, have equitable opportunities for healthy food and safe community spaces, and build community wealth.

A second round of funding from HEAL's Rapid Response Fund sustained HOPE Collaborative's mutual aid program to nourish its communities. This program pays a local BIPOC catering business to prepare meals, and in partnership with a local organization, to distribute these meals weekly to community members via community fridges and home delivery. In total, HOPE Collaborative has been able to provide 800 meals and has cultivated deeper relationships with their distribution partners. This includes Hella Positive, a local business that has offered more systems of care by asking the community to donate clothes, hygiene kits, and other materials for well being. As a result, the owner of Hella Positive has noted that the amount of theft has decreased when people have what they need.

GRANTEE STORIES

OPERATION SPRING PLANT (OXFORD, NC)

Operation Spring Plant is dedicated to helping Black and other small family farmers to continue farming, preserve the land, stay informed and secure markets for continued growth. They accomplish these goals through educational programs, and technical and marketing assistance with hands-on projects and workshops which help Black and other small farmers to maintain their farm operation.

Funding from HEAL's Rapid Response Fund allowed Operation Spring Plant (OSP) to support its network of farmers in maintaining production in the Spring, and to help fund its Youth in Today's Agriculture program. The Youth in Today's Agriculture program is growing a new generation of farmers through educational programming, and OSP is hoping to increase the reach of the program by solidifying a partnership with a local school. OSP provided five workshops to BIPOC producers, landowners, and ranchers, giving them resources to sustain their farming operations, share pathways for market access, and bolster tools for climate resiliency.

"We will continue to do what it takes to better the lives of those around us and the lives of everyone that is somehow connected to us... To have a world where everyone has access to fresh, healthy, locally grown food is possible, but we all must work together."



GRANTEE STORIES

RESTAURANT OPPORTUNITIES CENTER UNITED (CHICAGO, IL)

Restaurant Opportunities Center United's (ROC-United's) mission is to improve restaurant workers' lives by building worker power and uniting workers of various backgrounds around shared goals and values. ROC United envisions a society that treats restaurant workers with dignity and respect and an industry that prioritizes racial and gender equity and strives to increase the standard of living for all working-class people.

HEAL's Rapid Response Fund supported ROC United's workforce development cohort for their Chicago chapter. The chapter graduated a multigenerational class of 11 individuals in partnership with a local college. In the class, participants went through a rigorous culinary essential skills training.

With the funding support, ROC United also introduced a labor rights advocacy series in partnership with legal experts and labor activists. Workers gained a better understanding of their rights in the workplace, tools for conflict resolution, and more.

“The ripple effects of your support will resonate beyond the individuals themselves. By uplifting those who form the backbone of our industry, we are catalyzing positive change throughout communities. We are giving a voice to the marginalized, building a more inclusive society, and advocating for much-needed reform in labor standards. Your investment is an investment in a brighter, more equitable future for the entire restaurant ecosystem and the communities it serves”

GRANTEE STORIES

RURAL COMMUNITY WORKERS ALLIANCE (MISSOURI)

Rural Community Workers Alliance (RCWA) builds and strengthens the engagement of low-wage immigrant and refugee workers in their local communities. RCWA seeks to address the root causes of the problems faced by its members, secure improved community health systems and services, and ensure workplace safety for food industry workers.

Funding from HEAL's Rapid Response Fund for RWCA supported the addition of a new part-time field organizer – RCWA's second staff member – to organize workers and conduct worker's rights trainings. More than 300 people participated in these trainings, which ranged from leadership skills development to business ownership for new women entrepreneurs, and to labor rights. RCWA implemented a new training format in which organizers offered trainings to households, expanding the reach to workers who would have otherwise not attended a public workshop for fear of risking their job security.

As a result of the training sessions and guidance from RCWA through the process, a group of women successfully stood up to harassment from a superintendent. Also impactful, RCWA guided workers on how to successfully file workers comp complaints, including working with a lawyer to support the process.

“We work directly with people being impacted and that are vulnerable to food system injustices. Listen to them and support them with whatever ideas they're bringing to the table. The workers decide where the organization gets engaged.”



**THE HEAL FOOD ALLIANCE
RAPID RESPONSE FUND IS
DRIVEN BY INDIVIDUAL
DONORS LIKE YOU.**

**TO SUPPORT THE NEXT
ROUND OF OUR
RAPID RESPONSE FUND,
VISIT
HEALFOODALLIANCE.ORG**