

STRATEGY BRIEF

North Carolina Food System Resilience Strategy



North Carolina Food Resilience Advisory Board
Duke World Food Policy Center
Center for Environmental Farming Systems

Introduction

This brief presents a philanthropic food system investment strategy for North Carolina. The strategy presents many footholds for philanthropy to partner with North Carolina communities, nonprofits, and government to create more equity and resiliency in the North Carolina food system.

Changing the food system is difficult to imagine. Power often resides in the hands of actors who operate on a global scale. The report begins by defining food systems and providing historical context for how the food system came to be. Yet there are pathways forward. We believe community-rooted organizations already have ideas that can help chart a new course.

The **Critical Actions** named in this report are the result of a year-long process, led by Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) food justice leaders from rural, urban, and peri-urban communities across North Carolina. While we envision a just, resilient, and equitable network of locally controlled community food systems in North Carolina, we wish to emphasize that no individual funder nor organization will be able to achieve that vision by themselves. The effort must be collective.

This strategy also presents six interdependent conditions that allow social or environmental problems to fester. Shifting any of the six can create space for change to occur. The Critical Actions described in this report are designed to work across different levels and conditions. The actions will require time, capacity building, relationship building, and capital. They will take trust and relationships, and change will be slow—we envision 5-10 years at a minimum.

Many recommendations are building new systems across philanthropy, academia, government, and community. All of the recommendations address the shifts in decision making, leadership, and funding that have been, for the most part, historically left out of the community food system in North Carolina.

Systems change can happen through relationships with BIPOC-led and BIPOC-accountable food justice organizations. Systems change can happen when the narrative changes from “target populations” to “community-led and community-accountable.” Systems change can happen when institutions and community stay hopeful during the inevitable struggles that will occur during the transformation. Systems change can happen when institutions embrace the discomfort of NOT leading the discussions—of hearing challenging truths and turning the lens inward to identify the internal and organizational changes that must happen to build equity.

“Foundations involved in systems change can increase their odds for success by focusing on less explicit but more powerful conditions for change, while also turning the lens on themselves.”

—The Water of Systems Change, June 2018

Critical Actions Investment Scaffold



150.55M Total

Systems Change

Creating Conditions for

North Carolina needs a **multipronged approach to systems change to achieve better outcomes for communities and a food system that supports and replicates equity.**

The FSG consulting firm published a conceptual model in 2018 titled *The Water of Systems Change*.¹ The model can be applied to any intractable social or environmental problem. We present this model here as a way to conceptualize strategies for creating a more sustainable North Carolina food system.

The Water of Systems Change model identifies six interdependent conditions that “hold social or environmental problems in place.”

The model identifies three levels of change as well: explicit, semi-explicit and implicit. The Critical Actions in this report are designed to impact multiple conditions of change, and to work across explicit, semi-explicit, and implicit levels of change.

Shifting any of the six conditions can create space for change to occur, but the FSG notes that:

“...real shifts in system conditions are more likely to be sustained when working at all three levels of change.”

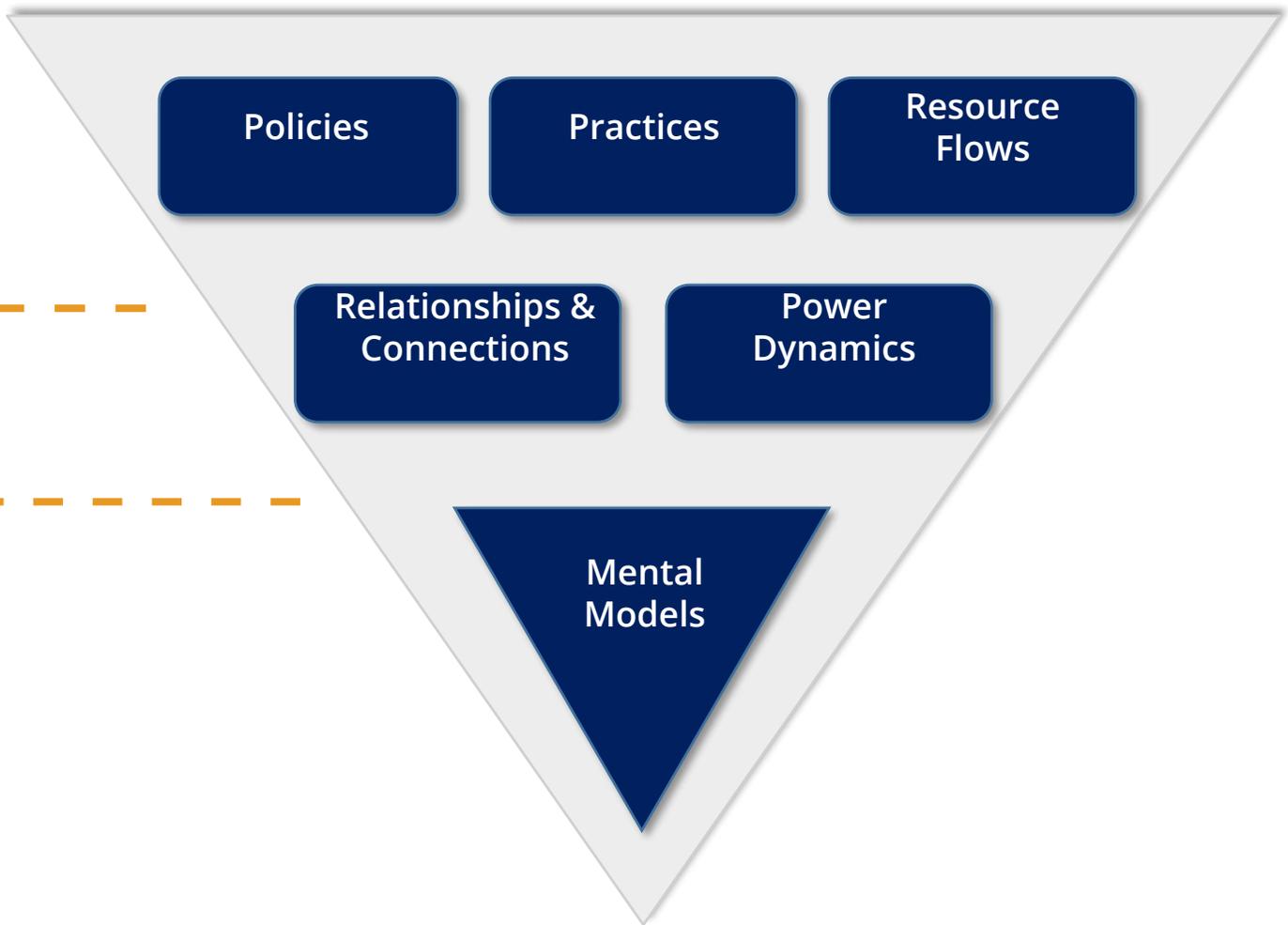
Six Conditions of Systems Change

Structural Change
(explicit)

Relational Change
(semi-explicit)

Transformational Change
(implicit)

¹ The report can be found on the following link: https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change.



Definitions

Policies: Government, institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity’s own and others’ actions.

Practices: Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise their work.

Resource Flows: How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

Relationships & Connections: Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.

Power Dynamics: The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations.

Mental Models: Habits of thought—deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

Source: The Water of Systems Change, FSG, 2018 https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change

Innovative Framework

Benefits of an

The Water of Systems Change concept can be applied to the food system through an Innovative Framework oriented toward justice and equity. Systematic strategies tie programming together with solutions that address the causes of the unequal distribution of harms and benefits in the food system. Innovative strategies shift power to BIPOC communities based on sustainable, long-term relationship development.

The innovative framework emphasizes the root causes of inequality. Food insecurity is viewed as structural injustice as opposed to a consequence of individual decisions or a lack of initiative on the part of BIPOC communities. In other words, it is understood that *the whole system* privileges certain groups and produces the problems that philanthropy intervenes to address. Solving those problems requires addressing the systems themselves, not the individuals within the systems.

Key Features

Relational, place-based approaches are solutions that build capacity by developing programming across all aspects of the food system (Ventura & Bailkey, 2017). Rather than focusing narrowly on discrete components of a system—the processing segment of the food production value chains, for instance—each part is considered in relation to others, with an understanding that interventions must be comprehensive. A relational approach recognizes that a community's place-based attributes give it an identity that influences its relationship with all other parts. That, in turn, can shape questions and concerns about equitable development—how can projects ensure positive outcomes for all, reducing some of the negative consequences (land loss, gentrification,

loss of community identity and cohesion) that are often felt by BIPOC communities in specific locations (Chakrabarti et al., 2019).

Intersectionality is a concept first developed to describe how different social constructs might overlap and intersect (Crenshaw, 1991), intersectionality in the food system explores how inequality and injustice are tied together across race, class, and gender categories (Collins, 2015; Horst & Marion, 2019; Smith, 2019). To transition to a more just and equal system that works for all individuals, the intersections of race, class, and gender necessitate innovative solutions be built by those who are most adversely affected by inequities in the current food system (Collins, 2015). In other words: who and what *caused* the problem should not necessarily design the solution.

Resiliency is the capacity to persist, adapt, and transform relative to a changing food system landscape (Sinclair et al., 2014). In an inequitable food system, resilience is more challenging for those confronting deprivation. An important clarification is that resilience does not mean that oppressed peoples are the ones who should adapt to survive; instead, the system should adapt (and persist and transform), not the individuals within that system (Ammons, 2020). System-level resilience reduces the burden on organizations by providing stability.

Sustainability captures the idea that a resilient system must also be capable of reproducing itself into the future (Caron et al., 2018). Communities deprived of resources are more likely to face business closures, land dispossession, and other events that threaten their longevity. Programming must consider long-term elements such as the role of building inter-generational wealth and infusing the food production value chain within a more balanced conception of social, political, economic, and environmental elements.

Community Food Systems

Creating Change Through

A Community food System integrates food production, processing, distribution, and consumption to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a particular place.

Philanthropy Can Impact Locally Responsive Systems

Food systems exist at different scales and orientations. As philanthropy considers the food system landscape, it is important to identify leverage points. The governance system of food and agricultural global value chains is controlled by multinational corporations and multilateral institutions that are beyond the reach of local actors.

Community food systems exist on a different scale and geographic orientation. In many respects, philanthropy is already working with individuals and actors who are seeking to build systems rooted in the community. These organizations embrace many aspects of the Innovative Framework highlighted above and are centered on simple ideas: communities can nourish themselves physically, economically and environmentally; and they know what they need and have the power, capacity, and influence to transform lives.

Elements of an Equitable & Resilient Community Food System

Community food systems are distinguished by four factors related to food security, location, self-reliance, and sustainability:

1. The focus of food security revolves around the whole community.

Community food system framing is relational and prioritizes food security of the collective. Lower-income households are a key consideration.

2. Proximity is important. Shorter geographical distances between stages of the food production value chain encourage deeper and more meaningful relationships between food system actors.

3. Self-determination is emphasized.

Related to some of the food justice movements described above, the community food system framing encourages local businesses and stakeholders to own the decision-making process to the highest degree possible, and to provide maximum benefit for all.

4. Sustainability is prioritized. Food and agriculture practices do not jeopardize the ability of future generations to use the same natural resources while meeting their food needs. Sustainability concerns include fair working conditions and compensation for workers, ethical treatment of animals, active environmental protections, less reliance on synthetic fertilizers or chemical pesticides, and other factors.²

² It should be stressed that these four factors are not necessarily “missing” from the globalized food systems. They are, however, accentuated in community food systems to a more significant degree.

Critical Action Recommendations

Intentional Design of

We envision a just, resilient, and equitable network of locally controlled community food systems in North Carolina. Systemic change in community food systems will happen through racial reconciliation and reparative funding structures for BIPOC communities. We highlight the importance of racial reconciliation and reparative funding structures as drivers for the Critical Actions to follow.

How Critical Actions Were Developed

These Critical Action recommendations were developed in partnership with advisors whose work is directly aligned with each topic/focused action.

All recommendations build on existing work that has been taking place at either the local or national levels (often both) but has been historically disinvested and under-resourced.

As funders invest, they will build relationships with the respective leaders (organizations and individuals) and articulate the necessary details with those respective voices.

To this end, when applicable, specific organizations have been named in the recommendations. The naming of specific organizations is intentional—those groups have the existing relationships, expertise, and vision to lead the work for which they have been specifically named. Where organizations have not been named it is also intentional, as recommendations and decisions around leadership cannot be prescriptive from predominantly white research institutions, such as the Duke World Food Policy Center or the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, nor from philanthropy.

Focus on Innovative Framework and Community Food Systems

Critical Action recommendations begin with the outcomes in mind, and scaffold the action needed to achieve those outcomes. We focus specifically on community food systems because this is the scale at which philanthropy nonprofits, and state organizations can create sustainable change. Locally responsive systems lead to sustainable solutions.

Focus on Reparative Impact

Reparative funding structures focus on the root of “repairing”³. The Critical Actions recommend direct investment in and creation of BIPOC organizations and networks to lead, decide, implement, and recommend efforts that affect the respective communities.

Focus on Existing Needs in NC

Each Critical Action is rooted in existing efforts either at the local, state, or national level. However, all of these efforts need intentional investment to build capacity which will produce sustainable health, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Focus on Community Accountability Mechanism

Each Critical Action also articulates an accountability structure centered with the communities most aligned with the specific work the Action addresses. This attention to accountability comes from the perspective of advisors’ experiences. Their vision for building a structure of accountability is mutual across grassroots organizations and funders and is values-based rather than transactional.

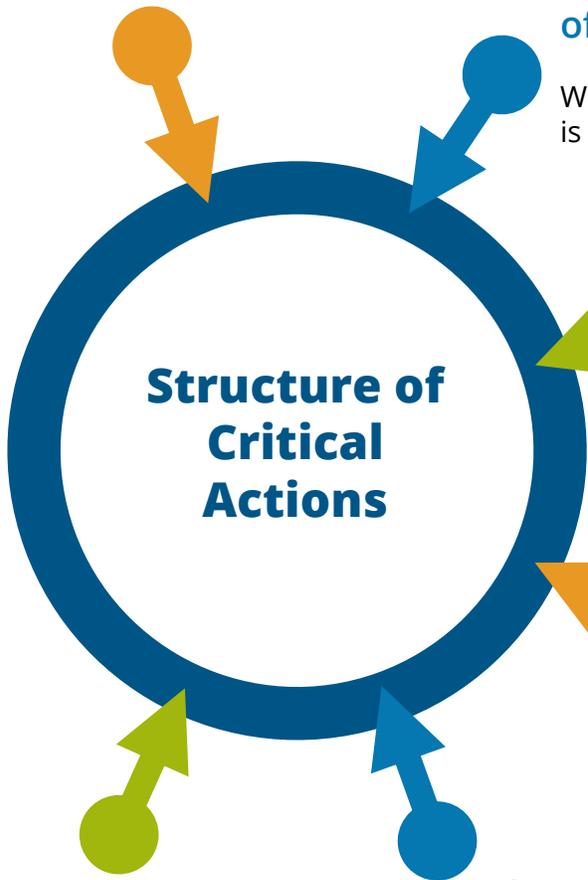
3 A glossary of Racial Equity tools, including the definition for restorative justice, can be found here: https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary#comp-ki145ql8_e39a8e2b-1a19-45d8-b923-0d5edad47df7

KEY POINT

No individual funder nor individual organization will be able to achieve the goal of a more just, resilient, and equitable food system. This effort must be collective.

Concept

What is being asked and who can affect the change? The naming or not naming of organizations in Critical Actions is intentional, based on who is already positioned to do the work, not led by outside organizations.



Existing Models/Evidence of this Work in Action

Where is this happening and what is the resulting impact?

Immediate Steps to Success

How does North Carolina advance this work in the short-term?

Key Resource Needs

How much will this cost? Where will those dollars go? How much time is needed for this to happen?

What Will Be Different

The impact of the Critical Action on community food systems in North Carolina.

Community Accountability Mechanism

How can we build structures to achieve relationships necessary for transformational health, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Recommendations

Critical Action

The Critical Actions named in this report are the result of a year-long process, led by food justice leaders from rural, urban, and peri-urban communities across North Carolina. Each Critical Action is the start of the scaffolding for long-term systems change and systems building, rooted in community decision making and power shifts to achieve the outcomes of improved health and well-being for all North Carolinians.

Scope of Need and Timeline

The Critical Actions will require time, capacity building, relationship building, and capital. It will take trust and relationship to live into this vision. **The change will be slow and we envision at least a 5 to 10-year period of time.** Many recommendations are building new systems across philanthropy, academia, government, and community. All of the recommendations address the shifts in decision making, leadership, and funding that have been, for the most part, historically left out of the community food system in North Carolina. Intentional investment in the following Critical Actions can lead to the transformation in our food system that we seek, not only towards food security, but also towards food justice and community health and wealth.

An estimated total investment of \$150.55M is needed to achieve the outcomes and the future state of each Critical Action.

Call for Collaboration Across Philanthropy, Academia, Government, and Non-profits

Critical Actions are the shifts that must occur within and across BIPOC-led community-accountable organizations, predominantly white institutions (academia, government, nonprofits), and philanthropy in order to build justice and resiliency into community food systems in North Carolina. No individual funder nor individual organization will be able to achieve the goal of a more just, resilient, and equitable food system. This effort must be collective. All of the Critical Actions require collective actors—no one organization could implement any of the Actions and no one funder can affect all of the Actions.

Numerous Starting Points for Organizations to Engage

While the report has a specific focus on the North Carolina philanthropic community, the Critical Actions are designed for investments at any level and from any funding entity—philanthropic, corporate, or local/state/or federal government. Organizations can leverage Critical Action recommendations as a place to lean into and implement racial equity strategies.

Prioritization

The Critical Actions are designed with specific and purposeful framing. Each action is a necessary component of a more just, resilient, and equitable food system. There is no wrong place to start. Therefore, we do not present any prioritization of the actions. We do note one funding dependency, connecting the need for the BIPOC Food Justice Network to support the Food Justice Learning Network for North Carolina Funders.

Summary of Critical Actions & Outcomes

Critical Actions	Current State	Future State
<p>Formalize and invest in a statewide BIPOC-led, community-accountable Food Justice Network \$26.75M</p>	<p>The Food Resilience Advisory Board is currently working as an intentional network to bring the long-time work of BIPOC community organizations to the forefront of food systems change. There is currently no financial investment or structural capacity for this group to continue beyond the scope of the completion of this Resiliency Report.</p>	<p>Power shifts to a collaborative network of leaders accountable to communities most impacted by systemic inequities in the food system. This network will be a collective convener for BIPOC-led food justice organizations in the state. The network will collectively design strategies for justice, resiliency, food security, and community ownership of food system solutions.</p>
<p>Establish a statewide Equitable Food Oriented Development Fund (EFOD) and a statewide Equitable Food Oriented Development Network \$17.5M</p>	<p>No collective fund exists to drive equitable food systems change in North Carolina. The Fair Food Fund has supported the development of the Michigan Good Food Fund, and is currently creating equitable funds in Camden, New Jersey and New York state.</p>	<p>An EFOD fund will leverage state, federal, and private dollars to provide grants and loans to grow equitable food organizations and businesses across North Carolina. The fund is accountable to the Equitable Food Oriented Development Network.</p>
<p>Create/Expand Community Participatory Grant Funding for Grassroots Food Systems Work \$12</p>	<p>Developing strategies exist for community participatory grant funding (RSF Social Finance Shared Gifting Circles) and could be expanded through existing models in NC such as Community Food Strategies Participatory Grant making process, the Cypress Fund, and/or other infrastructure.</p>	<p>Power shifts to local community leadership for collaborative dissemination of dollars, and values-based grantmaking processes that intentionally invest in both social and financial capital, acknowledging the critical value of both in equitable food systems development.</p>
<p>Create a Statewide Tribal Food Sovereignty Fund \$30.5M</p>	<p>No statewide fund currently exists explicitly for Tribal Nations. The UNC American Indian Center currently reinvests the limited regrating dollars they receive for food system efforts and has the capacity and relationships to serve as a fiscal and administrative home for the fund.</p>	<p>Intentional investment in Tribal food sovereignty shifts power to Tribal leadership resulting in increased food security and improved health and well-being across Tribal Nations.</p>

Critical Actions	Current State	Future State
<p>Create a Black Food and Farm Advocacy Network and Fund \$9.25M</p>	<p>There are several organizations working independently on Black food and farm efforts but there is no dedicated network or fund to support collaborative efforts across Black food and farm organizations. Also, recent legislation, such as the Justice for Black Farmers Act, has increased the need for legal support to navigate federal and state resources for Black farmers.</p>	<p>Because the BIPOC community is not monolithic, this network will speak to and meet the particular needs of North Carolina’s Black farmers and growers from fisheries to producers of multiple scales; Black food systems advocates, entrepreneurs and those in agri-business; and Black policy makers. This network and fund will support opportunities and address barriers specific to Black food and farm organizations.</p>
<p>Create an Agricultural Worker Equity, Access, and Advocacy Fund and Network Development \$9.5M</p>	<p>Many organizations focusing on agricultural worker equity convene through The Farmworker Advocacy Network. The network is significantly underfunded for capacity and operations and does not have a full-time coordinator.</p>	<p>Intentional investment in agricultural worker aligned organizations through network building, with attention to both urgent technical assistance needs as well as advocacy efforts, shifts power to the groups with the most direct influence on farmworker rights and wellbeing resulting in increased food security and improved health and well-being across farm and agricultural worker communities.</p>
<p>Create a food justice learning network for North Carolina funders working across the food system \$800K</p>	<p>The North Carolina Network of Grantmakers convenes and supports funders and offers racial equity training for its members. The Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders Network offers support for regional food system networks. Cypress Fund and MDC are convening funders to support more investments in BIPOC-led organizations. No networks currently exist in partnership with BIPOC community leadership and across private philanthropy and government funders.*</p> <p><i>* = This Critical Action relies on the funding of the formalized BIPOC-led, community accountable food justice network (Critical Action 1) as an accountability structure.</i></p>	<p>Intentional and restorative relationships built across funders (public and private) and BIPOC-led community organizations, resulting in more impactful health, educational, economic, and environmental outcomes in BIPOC communities. This learning network will support the trust, relationships, and investments of all Critical Actions.</p>

Formalize and invest in a statewide BIPOC-led, community-accountable Food Justice Network

CONCEPT

The current members of the Food Resilience Advisory Board were intentionally selected because of their connection to their communities, their long-term (generational) work across community food systems, and their commitment to equity and justice. While this network does not represent all communities or all organizations across the state at this time, it does represent existing relationships and committed leaders with which a statewide network can begin to form. The intent is for this network to expand, building relationships to include additional BIPOC food system leaders, including youth leaders. This Statewide Food Justice Network will establish its own framework, strategy, agenda, and policy platform and will lead connections with and recommendations for ongoing and future philanthropic and state investments for justice and resiliency in the North Carolina food system. It will also serve as a connecting organization for other focused networks named in these Critical Actions (Equitable Food Oriented Development Network, Black Food and Farm Advocacy Network, Agricultural Worker Equity, Access, and Advocacy Network, and Tribal Food Sovereignty Network).

Total Cost

\$26.75 million over five years

Immediate Steps To Success

- Immediate investment of \$100,000 for each of the fifteen organizations currently participating on the Advisory Board that intend to continue to engage for at least one additional year (through June 2022).
- Invest \$1 million (\$100,000 for each organization up to ten additional organizations), to expand the leadership of the Food Justice Network over the course of the first year (through June 2022).
- Four-year scaling investment in each organization: July 2022-\$125,000; July 2023-\$150,000; July 2024-\$175,000, July 2025-\$200,000 per year to ensure consistent leadership and representation as the Network and responsibilities grow.
- Invest \$1.5 million over five years to support youth networks and youth-focused organizations (such as but not limited to: NC Native American Youth, Food Youth Initiative, Juntos, Men and Women United for Youth and Families' Youth Ambassadors, SEEDS, A Better Chance a Better Community, Transplanting Traditions, Growing Change, and NC FIELD) to ensure capacity for inter-generational leadership structure for the Food Justice Network. This investment includes \$100,000 each year for five years to support youth coordinator(s)/coordination within the Food Justice Network.
- Invest \$5M to establish an endowment dedicated to supporting intergenerational BIPOC leadership to organize and run this Network for a minimum of ten years.
- Investment of \$1.5 million over five years to a fiscal agent, determined by the network, to support the hiring of a full-time coordinator, network capacity building, strategic development, communications, programming, travel, and convenings.

What Will Be Different As A Result Of This Network

- Decisions about funding to BIPOC communities are made by BIPOC community organizations, eliminating the need to “mine” communities repeatedly for information.
- “Best practice” is redefined as practice that is based in relationship, accountability to community, and sustainable, substantive change for the most impacted communities.
- Convener for developing networks
- Creation of an intergenerational, BIPOC-led food system policy platform.
- Power shift to BIPOC-led, community-accountable organizations to bring in support from government, academia, and predominantly white nonprofit partners.
- Trust built across BIPOC-led, community-accountable organizations and philanthropy to establish reparative funding models.
- Intergenerational leadership, offering a pipeline to continue multigenerational BIPOC leaders.

Key Resource Needs (Time, Dollars, Staffing, Capacity, Etc.)

- Full-time network coordinator
- Fiscal sponsoring organization
- A minimum of two years for the network to deepen relationships, establish shared values and key strategies, and build collective recommendations for action.
- A minimum of five years of ongoing support to solidify the network as a cohesive organization.
- Financial investment in all participating organizations to support time dedicated to building the network while also supporting day-to-day community programming for which these organizations are continually operating.
- Establishing a fund that provides ongoing support to this network to maintain momentum and ensure sustainability.

Community Accountability Mechanism

- All members represent community-accountable organizations as defined by the Network

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

The Food Resilience Advisory Board has been working over the course of the last year to bring this Resiliency Report to fruition. This group represents evidence of this work in action. The leaders who have come together to form this Board represent organizations across the state and across the value chain. They represent organizations that have been doing this work, often out of their own pockets, for years. They also represent networks that have connected outside of this project for decades, but have never had investment to support collective strategy, advocacy, capacity building, policy, or action. The leaders on this Board recognize that the current participants do not represent every community across North Carolina and will grow this network over time.

A national example of a collective BIPOC-led, community accountable Food Justice Network is the HEAL Food Alliance.⁴ The HEAL Food Alliance launched in 2017. The Alliance is a multi-sector, multi-racial coalition of 55 organizations. They have developed a platform that serves as an action and advocacy roadmap addressing health, the economy, and the environment to achieve the vision that “all people and all communities should 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.” The Alliance works through five core methods of: Connecting and Uniting Groups; Political Education and Analysis; Advancing a Shared Narrative; Connecting and Nurturing Existing and Emerging Campaigns; and Organizing Resources for a BIPOC-led Grassroots Movement For Change (HEAL Food Alliance, 2020).

⁴ The HEAL Food Alliance web site can be found here: <https://healfoodalliance.org/who-is-heal/>.

Establish a Statewide Equitable Food Oriented Development Fund and Equitable Food Oriented Development Network

CONCEPT

Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD), as defined by the Equitable Food Oriented Development National Steering Committee, is “a development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy communities, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically-marginalized communities” (Chakrabarti et al., 2019). EFOD efforts must align with the practitioner-created criteria of: Equity and Justice First; Place-Based; Uses Market-Based/Business Strategies; Community Leadership Development/Community Organizing; and Community Ownership. Traditional grantmaking and financing instruments do not sufficiently meet the needs of EFOD-aligned projects.

A statewide EFOD fund will establish strong connections across state and federal dollars, private equity, philanthropy, and community development finance to provide innovative relationship-based financing (ex: grants, character-based loan-making, program related investments, patient capital) that EFOD organizations need to build healthier, more resilient community food systems.

The statewide EFOD Network will consist of organizations (nonprofit and for-profit) that meet the criteria listed above. This Network will support the capacity building of EFOD organizations across North Carolina, creating connections across rural and urban

communities. The Network will also serve as a community accountability mechanism for the EFOD fund and as a connector to the EFOD National Steering Committee.

Total Cost

\$17.5 million over five years, plus contracts with DAISA Enterprises and Fair Food Fund (amount TBD)

Immediate Steps to Success

- Establish a two-year contract with DAISA Enterprises (amount dependent on the scope of work), the technical support consultant for the national EFOD collaborative, to develop the structure of the EFOD Network and framing of the EFOD fund.
- Establish a two-year contract (amount dependent on the scope of work) with the Fair Food Fund, or similar organization, to create an infrastructure, bring in investors (to include state and federal dollars, philanthropic dollars, and private equity), and establish a fund that will be transferred, once operational and active, to the NC Equitable Food Oriented Development Network.
- Invest \$10 million to establish the Equitable Food Oriented Development Fund.
- Invest \$1.5 million each year for five years to Communities in Partnership (CIP) to develop an EFOD Network, hire an EFOD Director, EFOD Fund Liaison, and administrative support. CIP will also administer EFOD programming, capacity building, and communications for the fund and the Network. \$500,000 of the \$1.5 million will be invested directly in technical assistance for organizations in the EFOD

Network. Communities in Partnership is currently the only North Carolina organization that is a member of the national EFOD Executive Steering Committee, and would bring those national relationships and expertise to development in North Carolina.

What will be different as a result of this fund?

- Addressing food insecurity in rural and urban areas with community-led solutions, leading to increased food security and collective community wealth.
- Increase in culturally-appropriate foods in communities across North Carolina.
- Deep organizational, relational, and community-driven market connections across rural and urban communities.
- Adoption of community-designed health and nutrition priorities.
- New/expanded BIPOC business ownership with capital that circulates locally, supporting collective community wealth.
- Community members involved in leadership roles and decision-making
- Community-ownership of data collection and data communication demonstrating the impact of EFOD projects.

Key resource needs (time, dollars, staffing, capacity, etc.)

- Creation of a viable fund requires approximately two years.
- The development and capacity building of the EFOD Network will be done in coordination with the development of the fund over those two years, with the leadership of the fund transferring to the Network once the fund and the Network are established.
- Fund developer (such as the Fair Food Fund)
- Technical support to the EFOD Network (DAISA Enterprises)
- EFOD Network Director, Fund Liaison, administrative support
- EFOD organization capacity building
- Communications support
- Education/communications to potential investors about EFOD
- \$10 million from anchor investors from Department of Health and Human Services

and private philanthropy

Community Accountability Mechanism

- NC Equitable Food Oriented Development Network, as defined by the National Equitable Food Oriented Development Steering Committee

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

The National Equitable Food Oriented Development movement began to formalize in 2015 when initial founding members and leaders in the field of community development, the late Dana Harvey of Mandela Partners in Oakland, CA, and Neelam Sharma of Community Services Unlimited in Los Angeles, CA, came together to discuss a shared frustration “that funders and investors bypassed investment in their organizations in order to fund largely outsider-led and -serving enterprises, failing to recognize or measure the deep social, health, and economic impacts possible when investments are made in the expertise of on-the-ground leadership” (Chakrabarti et al., 2019). As a result of that initial conversation, a national network, supported by the Kresge and W.K. Kellogg Foundations, has formed, codifying a framework, identifying funding and investment needs, building a technical assistance infrastructure, and leading a network-building EFOD grants program.

An example of the results produced by EFOD is the impact of Mandela Partners in Oakland. “Since 2004, Mandela Partners has made significant economic, health, food system, and social impacts, including: increased revenue for businesses and farmers, new jobs and expanded employment opportunities, and improved access to healthy food for hundreds of neighborhood residents and local customers. Among its network of Mandela Partners-incubated social enterprises is Mandela Foods Cooperative, a 2,200-square-foot cooperative grocery store in West Oakland that alone has generated more than \$4 million in new revenue for its worker-owners and network of farmers and local food entrepreneurs—with \$1 million in sales recorded for 2014, and growing.”

Create/Expand Community Participatory Grant Funding for Grassroots Food Systems Work

CONCEPT

Participatory grantmaking strategies are an established mechanism for shifting power, fostering innovation, and increasing connection across grassroots organizations (Buhles, 2017). These models shift power of decision-making to community organizations in terms of who distributes the dollars and who is funded, lessen restrictions as to how the funds are used, and usually come with flexible and collaborative reporting. This funding structure inherently values and invites relationship development as an intended outcome, in addition to financial investment. This type of funding allows organizations that normally do not receive funding from private philanthropy at a substantive level to build capacity and leadership and reduces the competitive nature of traditional grantmaking strategies, while offering opportunities for partnerships to deepen or develop among community-based organizations. The work of transformative food systems change is necessarily tied to relational trust and will take collaboration across organizations. This funding structure offers a mechanism to prioritize those closest to the work while centering relationship and collaboration as key needs in addition to financial resources.

Total Cost

\$12 million over five years

Immediate steps to success

- Allocate an initial \$10.5 million scaling investment over five years (\$1 million year one; \$1.5 million year two; \$2 million year three; and \$3 million years four and five) for participatory grantmaking among food systems organizations to a fiscal agent designated by the recommended Statewide Food Justice Network.
- Create/expand this framework for local decision-making of community grants. This might include a combination of strategies, which could include expanding the capacity of Community Food Strategies community participatory 'Shared Gifting', establishing a food system grassroots fund with Cypress Fund, and/or other mechanisms recommended by the Statewide Food Justice Network.
- Allocate \$200,000 each year for five years to fund the coordination/support of this framework development. This position(s) will be housed at an organization(s) recommended by the Statewide Food Justice Network.
- Allocate \$100,000 a year for five years to build the practice of participatory grantmaking. Funds will support training community leaders to be Shared Gifting facilitators, allowing the process to be implemented in their local communities; and will support a learning group with Shared Gifting facilitators, including an annual convening for learning and development and sharing resources.
- Commit to developing a long-term (minimum of ten years) investment allocation for community-controlled local grant funds with mechanisms to scale the participatory grantmaking funds over time in alignment with the growth and resonance of the process in the initial three years, and with direction from the network of Shared Gifting facilitators, and the Food Justice Network.

What will be different as a result of these/this fund(s)

- Increase in BIPOC-led, grassroots organizations receiving funding, which improves the resiliency of community food security systems
- Shift power to and build leadership within grassroots organizations
- Funding distributed based on the values and priorities defined and led by the communities with the most relevant lived experience
- Increased capacity of grassroots organizations
- The practice of social capital development as central to grassroots food systems funding in NC
- A network of BIPOC practitioners leading the continued development and implementation of ongoing participatory funding opportunities
- Opportunity to engage local and regional funders to support BIPOC and grassroots food systems leaders
- Deepened collaboration and connection, building trust, across grassroots organizations and funders
- Growth of network of BIPOC-led organizations across North Carolina, especially among small and scaling projects

Key resource needs

- Fiscal agent
- Fund development coordinator/administrator(s)
- Capacity building and strategic planning for the administering organizations
- Communications infrastructure for the network; support for posting and disseminating funding opportunities, sharing the work of the network to build and deepen community
- Creation of a sustainable fund and process will require a minimum of five years of investment, both in pooled dollars for the fund as well as support for fund coordination and administration.

Community Accountability Mechanism

- Determined by the Statewide Food Justice Network
- Opportunity for participating grantees to be accountable to one another (relational/circular accountability, rather than hierarchical)

Existing Models/Evidence Of The Work In Action

At least two groups in North Carolina have experience developing these participatory funding mechanisms with grassroots groups—Cypress Fund and Community Food Strategies. Additionally, a strong history and growing relevance of participatory grantmaking exists nationally. RSF Social Finance's support of Shared Gifting has fueled this collaborative model across several food networks nationally including ongoing work in Minnesota, Maine, Michigan, and the Chesapeake Bay in addition to North Carolina.

As an example of this work, RSF hosted the first gathering of the Food & Agriculture Shared Gifting Program in February 2011. "The model created a sense of abundance, community, and mutual trust among a group of grantees that had previously never worked together. One reason for this is that the initial gift from RSF to the group came from a gesture of trust. RSF had no intended outcomes or objectives for how the grantees would use the money, other than transforming the practice of grantmaking. Rather, RSF asked the group to use its collaborative wisdom to determine the best use of the funds. That gesture of trust created reciprocal trust, both among the participants and between the participants and RSF as the initiator. It also freed the grantees to create mutually beneficial collaborations and outcomes (Buhles, 2012, p. 6)."

This model can be developed with guidance from state and national voices who have experienced the creation and application of a participatory grantmaking process, and in collaboration with BIPOC and community-rooted leadership from groups that have participated in these methods. Developing a standing fund that supports building social *and* financial capital across grassroots food-justice work builds a foundation for growth grounded in connectivity and collaboration among food-related organizations.

Create a Statewide Tribal Food Sovereignty Fund

CONCEPT

Tribal Nations steward and govern resources for their communities, and have the best understanding of their communities' strengths, strategies, and traditions supporting wellness through strong local food systems. Supporting Native American food sovereignty means supporting self-determined food efforts led by Tribal Governments and Native-led community organizations. There are already strong local food systems and powerful models of food sovereignty work happening on the ground in every Tribal Nation and Native American community across the state, operating on countless centuries of strong local agricultural and land stewardship traditions. However, there has been no dedicated outside funding specific to supporting, expanding, and uplifting this powerful traditions-based work already happening in Tribal communities. We know that the most powerful reach and impact comes from sustainable projects rooted in local community leadership (Tribal Governments, Urban Indian Organizations, and Native-led/serving organizations) and attuned to the unique and specific culture and dynamic within each community. In the case of Native American communities, this means recognizing and supporting the original and continuous stewards of Native land and foodways. Establishing explicit direction of funds to Tribal Leadership mediates invisibility of Indigenous populations from funding priorities and strengthens direct relationships among funders and Tribal Leaders. Funding in a trust-based model of investment follows

Tribal self-determination of spending priorities to honor and reaffirm Tribal Sovereignty.

Total Cost

\$30.5 million over five years

Immediate Steps to Success

- Invest \$250,000 a year for a minimum of five years to each of the eight recognized Tribal Governments (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Coharie Indian Tribe, Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Meherrin Indian Nation, Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, Sappony, and Waccamaw-Siouan Tribe) and each of the four Urban Indian Organizations (Cumberland County Association for Indian People, Guilford Native American Association, Metrolina Native American Association, and Triangle Native American Society) to support their own self-determined food sovereignty efforts in their local communities/service areas.
- Invest \$350,000 a year for a minimum of five years to the UNC American Indian Center as a uniting meeting ground to expand technical assistance, capacity building, and inter-tribal workshops and gatherings for resource sharing, mutual learning, and exchange among all Tribal Nations and Urban Indian Organizations' work.
- Invest \$150,000 a year for a minimum of five years to Native-led nonprofits and institutions that are operating in inter-tribal service (for example, United Tribes of North Carolina, NC Native American Youth Organization (NCNAYO), American Indian Women of Proud Nations, the American Indian Health Board, and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke).

- Invest an initial \$5 million in an entity determined by Tribal Leadership to create a Tribal Food Sovereignty Fund that can be drawn from to support future grantmaking and invest in longer-term sustainable efforts.

What will be different as a result of this fund

- Increased security and capacity of each Tribal Nation and Urban Indian Organization to expand and strengthen their current local food systems and food sovereignty work.
- Groundbreaking funding opportunity for North Carolina funders to emerge as leaders in supporting Tribal food sovereignty.
- Flexible funding and capacity building allows for sustainable efforts.
- Trust-based model, recognizing that Tribal Leadership and Government are already the trusted sources doing the work of food sovereignty in their communities.

Key resource needs

- Direct investment for Tribally self-determined food sovereignty priorities. These specific areas of prioritized need are often restricted from many grant funds, hence the need for unrestricted funding open to priorities of communities. Frequently listed priorities of need include reliable money to:
 - hire staff/coordinators and increase internal capacity
 - land acquisition for the purchase of permanent Tribally-owned land re-establishing ongoing stewardship and permanent community access to traditional activities and sacred spaces
 - invest in infrastructure (building/repair, refrigeration, large scale commercial equipment for food processing, storage, distribution, agricultural use)
- Convening, communications, and technical assistance through the UNC American Indian Center
- Capacity building for Native nonprofits working in Inter-Tribal service
- Establishment of a dedicated Tribal Food Sovereignty Fund

Community Accountability Mechanism

- Create an advisory board of Tribal Leaders and Native delegates to help funders determine the fund structure and process for grantmaking and priorities. Funders benefit from this learning space.
- The UNC American Indian Center currently serves as an intermediary to disburse funds to Tribal Nations and Urban Indian Organizations. AIC convenes Inter-Tribal gatherings, capacity building, and resource sharing opportunities among all of North Carolina's Tribal Communities, and has coordinated the statewide Healthy Native North Carolinians Network for years around issues of foodways, food access, and food sovereignty.

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

The Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA) is a nonprofit organization that supports Native communities nationwide through advocacy and education programs. NAFSA evolved out of a nearly ten-year process of grassroots Native food activists working together to have a greater impact on Native food systems. NAFSA works across communities, generations, and the food system, centering “farmers, wild-crafters, fishers, hunters, ranchers, and eaters at the center of decision-making on policies, strategies, and natural resource management.” NAFSA programs include an Indigenous Seedkeepers Network, a Native Food and Culinary Mentorship Program, and Food Sovereignty events. The organization is led by Native food activists at the staff, Board, and Leadership Council levels.

Create a North Carolina Black Food and Farm Advocacy Network and Statewide Fund for Black Food and Agriculture

CONCEPT

Incubate a multi-layered network of Black farmers and food leaders in North Carolina within an existing Black-led organization, such as the National Institute for Economic Development (The Institute), with the intent to form an independent network. Because the BIPOC community is not monolithic, this network will speak to and meet the needs of North Carolina's Black farmers and growers from fishers to producers of multiple scales: Black food systems advocates, entrepreneurs and those in agri-business; and Black policy makers. This equitable framing will seek to address, alleviate, and rectify past discriminatory practices that have directly and disproportionately impacted Black communities in North Carolina with emphasis on issues of discriminatory lending, inequitable access to resources and social capital, as well as significant land loss. This work will include but will not be limited to: creating multi-generational, urban-rural mentorship opportunities for Black growers and producers; providing technical assistance and support to Black growers and entrepreneurs to adequately and equitably access resources as well as be informed of and advocate for relevant policy issues; create and/or support an annual convening space for Black communities in food and agriculture; and establish a fund for Black community support in the areas of food, land, and agriculture. This caucused group will have direct input, relationship to, and representation on the Statewide Food Justice Network.

Total Cost

\$9.25 million over five years plus contract with Fair Food Fund (or other similar organization)

Immediate Steps to Success

- Invest \$500,000 a year for five years to The Institute to incubate the Network and to support the hiring of a full-time coordinator, network capacity building, governance, strategic development, communications, programming, travel, and convenings.
- Invest \$350,000 a year for five years in the Land Loss Prevention Project to serve as the agricultural law resource for the Black Food and Farm Advocacy Network. This investment will support staff and capacity for advocacy, structural services, infrastructure development, business law services, training, and outreach to farmers about programs and services.
- Contract with the Fair Food Fund, or a similar organization, to establish a statewide Black Food and Farm Fund, similar to the Black Farmers Fund in New York, a mix of regrantsing dollars and debt capital, accountable to the Black Food and Farm Advocacy Network.
- Invest \$5 million to establish the Black Food and Farm Fund.

What will be different as a result

- Establishment of a Black, all-encompassing, food and farm systems network
- Development of a Black-determined, collective, abundance-focused action plan
- Power shift for decisions about Black food and farming policy, programs, and investments made by Black farmers and food systems leaders
- Development of a Black farmer mentor

program, bringing intergenerational learning and knowledge sharing across Black farmers and new/young Black farmers

- Increased access for Black farmers in North Carolina to federal and state resources

Key resource needs

- Full-time network coordinator
- Fiscal sponsoring organization
- A minimum of two years for the Network to deepen relationships, establish shared values and key strategies, and build collective values, advocacy, and action plans. A minimum of five years of ongoing support to solidify the Network as a cohesive organization.
- Communications, capacity building, and convening support
- Infrastructure to navigate federal and state legislation around Black farmer support and Black land loss
- Technical service support to navigate Farm Services, Farm Credit, and conservation programs
- Expertise and support from N.C. Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Technical support to establish the fund

Community Accountability Mechanism

- Black-led food and farming organizations around the state including, but not limited to: Minority Land Ownership Conference conveners, Bailey Conference conveners, Land Loss Prevention Project, Black Communities Conference conveners, and Island CulturZ.

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

The New York State Black Farmer Fund began developing in 2017 as a “direct request from communities of Black food system entrepreneurs to create an instrument that uses capital as a catalyst for social change” acknowledging “there needed to be a means for community members to access capital that recognized the historical discrimination of lending and banking that informs the present reality of Black communities (BFF, 2020).” The Fund became operational in 2019, with the hiring of staff, launching a pilot fund, and developing a community governance model. The organization is currently raising re-granting and debt capital dollars to expand the Fund, growing a network of community stakeholders, and expanding financial educational curriculum. This existing structure provides a framework on which the North Carolina Network and fund may be built.

Additionally, the Justice For Black Farmers Act, part of the Biden Administration’s American Rescue Plan, will provide \$5 billion to farmers of color. This landmark legislation has created significant opportunity, but for Black farmers in North Carolina to be able to navigate this system and access those dollars, legal guidance and technical assistance are needed to leverage these federal and supporting state resources (such as the North Carolina Heirs Property Act) to advance Black farm ownership and land access.

Agricultural Worker Equity, Access, and Advocacy Fund and Agricultural Workforce Network Development

CONCEPT

Invest in infrastructure, including capacity building and sustainability, of informal and formal rural collaborators who seek equitable access to resources for agricultural workers, by leveraging larger statewide networks, like the Farmworker Advocacy Network (FAN) and AMEXCAN, to elevate the voices of farm and agricultural workers through rural community organizations across North Carolina.

Barriers are currently overwhelming for thousands of essential agricultural laborers and their families, and include lack of trust, language barriers, cultural concerns, transportation, and persistent, extreme poverty. The current lack of basic resources is dangerous to the health and safety of the agricultural workforce. And COVID-19 further illuminated glaring disparities. There is a need to alleviate chronic food insecurity, address transportation barriers, and provide equitable access to health care for agricultural workers both in the immediate term, and also through systemic efforts that center their voices and lived experiences.

The power to create the most significant change lies in fully resourcing local, dedicated activism within communities meeting urgent needs, and creating opportunities for agricultural workers to have the capacity and skills to participate alongside allies in crafting and implementing systemic advocacy efforts. This Critical Action will build the capacity of existing networks, formal and/or informal, like FAN and its member organizations, to improve

health, food security, and labor conditions for food and farmworkers and their families and will create a fund available to support the ongoing and critical needs of the agricultural workforce.

The Fund for Equity, Access and Advocacy will fulfill the vision set forth by the agricultural workforce communities by developing infrastructure that promotes continued capacity building. The Fund will facilitate a range of supports, some of which include the following: reimbursement for time lost from work, transportation, language accessibility, popular education/training, related expenses, facilitating opportunities for entrepreneurship; and financial and cultural opportunities for upward mobility without leaving the region.

Total Cost

\$9.5 million over five years

Immediate Steps to Success

- Allocate an immediate \$800,000 a year for five years to FAN and aligned networks
- \$250,000 a year for FAN's sustainable operating dollars; and
- \$550,000 a year in partnership with rural nonprofits and community groups to build sustainable infrastructure in partnership with the agricultural workforce. [The \$550,000 can run through FAN or can offer support for an aligned network specific to technical assistance, with an intention to work alongside FAN for advocacy purposes.]
- Invest \$100,000 a year, during the first two years of these Critical Action investments, in facilitation, identified by FAN membership and its affiliates, to support network growth and

development including clarifying fiscal agents and roles across aligned networks.

- Allocate an initial \$5 million investment over five years to create an ongoing Agricultural Workforce Equity, Access, and Advocacy Fund that can be drawn from by community-based partners to support the critical needs of the agricultural workforce. Resources will provide infrastructure necessary to facilitate access and equity for farmworkers to be key players and leaders in identifying and directing funding of and advocacy for agricultural workers' health and wellbeing.
- Invest \$150,000 a year for two years to support development/clarification of the Agricultural Workforce Equity, Access, and Advocacy Fund mechanism and management for a simple, equitable process with an emphasis on rural capacity building and infrastructure that is data-driven by the population in Areas of Concern.

What will be different as a result

- Sustainable funding to support rural areas of concern and the technical assistance they need to build, facilitate, and seek long term solutions based upon the unique barriers and deficits of the area
- Significant and relevant technical assistance resources within FAN and clear outcomes from existing partnerships will deepen trust across the Network and allow for increased collaborative allocation of time and resources to the agricultural workforce.
- Resources will provide infrastructure necessary to facilitate access and equity for farmworkers to be key players and leaders in identifying and directing funding of and advocacy for agricultural workers' health and wellbeing.
- Systemic food systems change will reflect the needs and voices of the agricultural workforce
- Local community organizing will be promoted, then elevated to statewide advocacy, policy, and systems change to address the barriers. Diversity, equity, and inclusion will be a focus in rural communities that suffer high incidences of environmental injustice.

Key resource needs

- Full time Coordinator for FAN
- Full time Resource Coordinator (to support technical assistance network building) at FAN or aligned TA-focused network

- Hire a consultant to support effective Network growth that builds capacity within and between TA and advocacy organizations in FAN and aligned networks
- Programming funds to support bilingual communications, and support meetings and calls in areas of concern
- Investments to FAN agencies and nonprofits and community groups in areas of concern in order to build relevant, sustainable, and strong rural communities through a combination of human capital, access to state and federal resources, internal capacity building, etc.
- Establishing an Equity, Access, and Advocacy Fund that ensures the agricultural workforce steers policy and systemic change work.

Community Accountability Mechanism

- Preparation, training, and support for the agricultural workforce to participate in the Statewide Food Justice Network
- Farmworker voices

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

The Farmworker Advocacy Network is an existing entity of collaborators whose membership includes both organizations that are focused on-the-ground with capacity building to meet urgent needs in areas of concern and those focused on advocacy and systemic, policy-related solutions. FAN is an existing mechanism that can be funded to address systemic advocacy, and has the potential to serve as an initial convener/fiscal agent for the numerous agricultural worker-focused organizations in the state. With multiple organizations offering localized support to agricultural workers (including but not limited to FAN member organizations), funding an existing entity of collaborators can provide a landing place for the incubation of network agreements to support funding across organizations and communities most directly aligned with agricultural workers' visions for a healthy future.

Create a Food Justice Learning Network for North Carolina Funders Working Across the Food System

CONCEPT

Engage North Carolina funders (public and private) in an 18-month to two-year process to deepen relationships across funders and with BIPOC food justice organizations for collaborative learning, intentional relationship building, and investment. This collective work will support the racial reconciliation and reparative funding frameworks outlined in the previous Critical Actions. Examples of the collaborative learning includes but will not be limited to: the history of philanthropy; the history of inequity that built our current food system; principles of trust-based philanthropy; strategies for equity-centered and justice-centered philanthropy; strategies for shifting power; and frameworks for building reparative funding models. Learning and intentional relationship development also includes coordinated conversations led by the Statewide Food Justice Network⁵ and other developing networks supported through the Critical Actions, as well as other food justice and racial equity leaders who will be engaged as needed.

Total Cost

\$800,000 over two years

⁵ Note that the funding of the Statewide Food Justice Network is critical to the success of the Food Justice Learning Network for Funders in order to build the necessary accountability for longer term relationship building and change.

Immediate Steps to Success

- Invest \$800,000 over two years in one or more convening organizations to work with the Statewide Food Justice Network to develop the curriculum, coordinate learning opportunities, convene critical conversations, provide training and resources, and conduct ongoing research that leads to deeper understanding of inequities in the food system and strategies to shift and share power in funding.

What will be different as a result of this Network

- Deeper understanding within philanthropy of power shifting strategies that will build resilience, equity, and justice into community food systems across North Carolina
- Mechanisms for pooled grantmaking and strategic alignment of investments across funding organizations
- Develop/apply mechanisms for accountability within philanthropic and public institutions that align with power shifting strategies
- Establishment of the first statewide reparative funding network

Key resource needs

- Curriculum/learning framework: 3-6 months for development/framing; the initial learning network will go through a 12-18 month learning/unlearning process
- Aligned, community-centered, values-based accountability mechanism development, over 12-18 months
- Network convener
- Research support
- Communications support

Community Accountability Mechanism

- The Statewide Food Justice Network will serve as the Community Accountability Mechanism for this learning network.

Existing Models/Evidence Of This Work In Action

There are multiple philanthropy-serving organizations and affinity groups across the state and nation including the North Carolina Network of Grantmakers, Grantmakers in Health, Council on Foundations, and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders. Many of the private philanthropic organizations in North Carolina are members of one or more of these organizations. These organizations provide critical support to learn from other organizations, build partnerships, and create new learnings. Based on the surveys and interviews conducted for this report, there was the desire from private philanthropy to build on the strong communication and collaboration within philanthropy in the state and to expand collaboration with state and local government funders. No organizations interviewed reported participating in a food justice-specific or equity-specific learning network at this time. This Network will focus across community, public, and private funders with a specific lens of racial equity and justice in the food system to help support the Critical Actions in this report.

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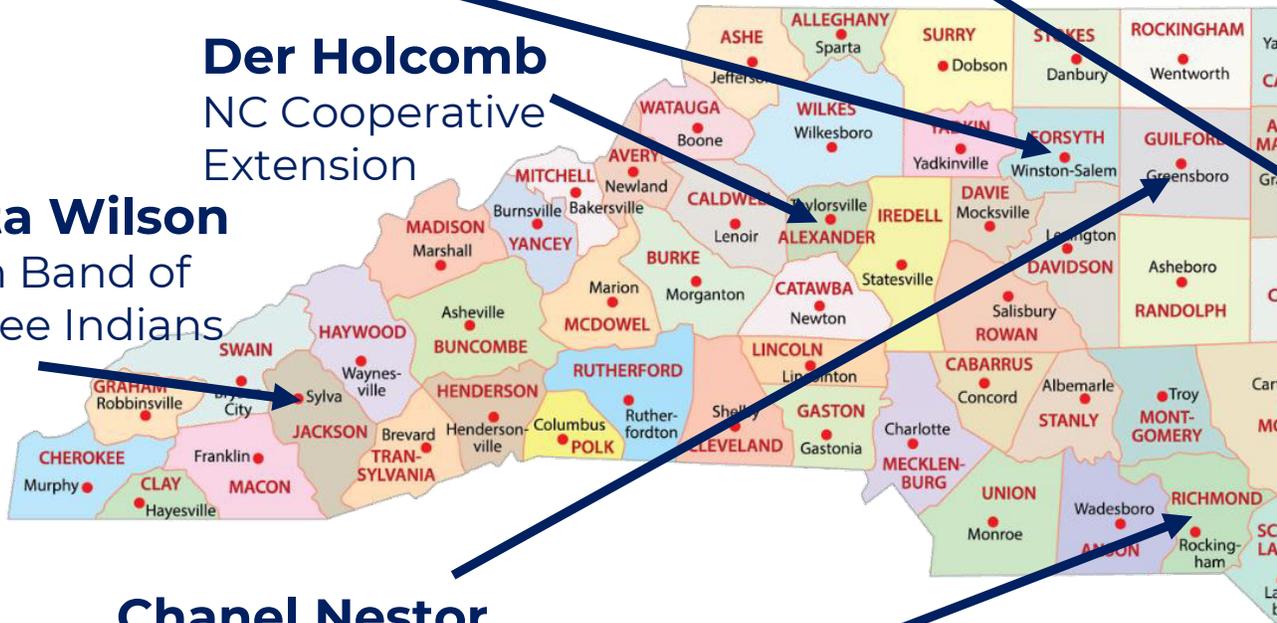
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