

FARMS TO FAMILY FUND

FINAL REPORT



2020/2021



ROOTS4CHANGE
Raíces para el Cambio **CO-OP**



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FARMS TO FAMILIES/ DE GRANJAS A FAMILIAS RESILIENCE BOXES

A Community Based Collaborative

Brief Description

The Farms to Families/De Granjas a Familias Fund is a food security initiative launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a response to the wide financial & health disparities affecting the Latino/Indigenous families in Dane County, WI.

Funder: Wisconsin Partnership Program

Dollar Amount: \$57, 194

Start and end dates: 5/1/20 - 4/30/21





PROJECT SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the often overlooked health inequities within all marginalized communities, and the Dane County Latino community was no stranger to this reality.

Roots4Change Cooperative and REAP Food Group have been collaborating on projects that advocate for food equity within the community and developed the idea to be able to provide a service to Latino families during a time where community engagement and support seemed to be hard to attain for every community across the country. Farms to Family Fund (FFF) was born not only out of a forecasted emergency food insecurity, but of the necessity to maintain connection through a time where isolation was becoming a norm in society.

Succinctly stated, the main purpose of the initiative was both to support the Latino community, and do it in a way that also supported the many sustainable family farms and food businesses hit hard by the pandemic.



IMPETUS FOR THIS WORK

Roots4Change and REAP have created a significant relationship with the Madison community. The drive to deliver equitable access to health, and resources transcends our respective fields of expertise when it comes to servicing our communities.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, our organizations realized we needed to take action in being there for the communities who needed our support the most. Our individual commitments to build stronger communities and our collective agenda to exemplify just and equitable relationships among white-led and organizations of color, ignited us to work together to support families, farmers, and food businesses from experiencing further barriers as a result of COVID-19.



MAIN ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OVER THE DURATION OF THE GRANT

Project Capacity

Key people, partners, and logistics made this project a possible community-driven model to build/mobilize capacity and serve families. This grant allowed us to continue to contract with 10 community members who assisted us in implementing and evaluating this operation.

a. Seven drivers were community members that had experienced job loss due to the pandemic. FFF allowed us to provide \$30,708 of total income to them for this work. Over the course of the program our drivers ended up driving a total of 14,966 miles throughout Dane County delivering 7,221 total food boxes throughout 55 weeks. Close to 90% of families (88%) lived in the following zip codes: 40% were located at 53713, 23% at 53711, 13% at 53719, and 12% 53704. The remaining 12% of families were located at the following zip codes: 53527, 53705, 53718, 53562, 53589, 53528, 53717, 53559, and 53593.

b. Three interns: mainly young Latino/professionals assisted us in the development of educational materials, evaluation, and logistics. They created 25 biweekly newsletters (boletines) that were included in all the bags. They were used as an entry way to further connect with families and provide community resources (e.g. housing), and engage in conversations. See boletín #22.

c. The Resilient Boxes were planned using family input specially to gauge on needed quantities. They required the careful coordination of deliveries and pickups from farmers, food businesses, as well as their storage at **Badger Rock Community Center**, where they were aggregated each week.

REAP's staff, volunteers, and drivers used food handling and food delivery protocols developed using guidance from the CDC and Public Health Madison Dane County (PHMDC). Families were required to use a mask when picking up their boxes at delivery.



MAIN ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OVER THE DURATION OF THE GRANT...CONTINUED

The logistics behind the Resilient Boxes

R4C created a screening process in order to assess and build a priority list to identify families at greater risk. Families were divided in GROUP A or 100 households (deliveries were made the first and third Tuesday/month) and GROUP B, or the other 100 households (deliveries were made the second and forth Tuesday/month).

Each week a survey was sent to families to gauge emergent needs and changes in their employment, housing, and/or health status. Access to the surveys was done using a QR code or through a link sent via WhatsApp. R4C members reviewed the responses and followed-up with individual families when they expressed particular needs (e.g., housing, perinatal services, health care information, needs with their children, etc.).

An average of 4 surveys were sent each month, two for each group, for a total of 48 surveys, with an average 42 responses for 200 families. The surveys often asked people to send their recipes and pictures of the dishes they made at home. In page 16 you can see some of the variety of dishes, snacks and desserts created and enjoyed by our households from the items in the resilience boxes.

In addition, the survey data allowed REAP to be aware of the ways the contents of the resilience food boxes were being used, and made sure that the food that was being distributed was able to easily be incorporated in the families' daily eating habits and/or expose them to new ingredients and flavors.



The first “resilience box” delivery occurred on April 6, 2020 to 80 families, a number that became 200 families/by-weekly within two weeks from the beginning of the deliveries.



FARMERS AND FOOD BUSSINESS

From REAP to Farmers

FFF allowed REAP to continue their work in supporting local farmers (49% non-White or women owned/co-owned) and small scale food businesses.

A total of \$151,285 was invested into our local farming economy and new relationships were forged among people that otherwise would not cross paths.

Many of these growers and food businesses were themselves heavily impacted by COVID-19 and the loss of their contracts and farmers markets customers. This project gave them some needed support and consistency to stay viable during the pandemic. For example our honeybee farmer lost all her hives during the winter and her sales of honey to the project allowed her to replace them in time for the upcoming season.

One of our food businesses took the opportunity of working with FFF to invest in equipment to diversify her tortilla products to continue meeting a desire of the Latino community - something she was not sure she would have done without knowing she had a consistent customer. Over 40% of the growers and food businesses we engaged in the project were owned by women and POC. As we wind down the FFF initiative, we continue to engage these growers to support them in rebuilding markets and in training and networking with buyers. Several of the growers will be providing vegetables for Madison Metropolitan School District in the next school year through our snack program.





OUTCOMES

The urgent outcomes we had previously forecasted in our initial grant application included:

- Deliver food boxes to families in need twice a week for 16 weeks.

Actual: *Program was active for one year.*

- Procure and purchase at a fair price food from farmers and food entrepreneurs in Wisconsin, focusing on young, female and minority producers who serve Dane County.

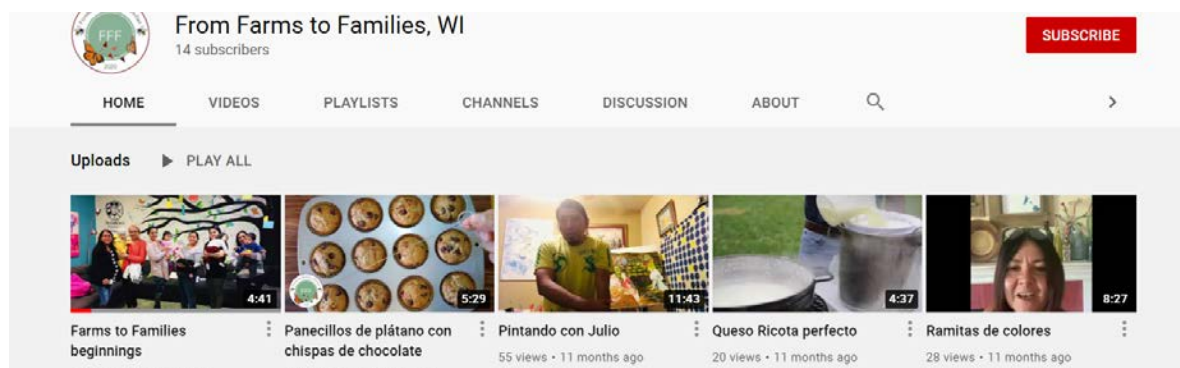
Actual: *Done with exceeding expectations, since we were able to partner with a large percentage of minority and women-owned local farmers and food business owners.*

- Provide temporary employment to at least 5 community members who have lost their jobs to assist with delivery of the food.

Actual: *10 people were contracted to provide logistical, educational, and on-the-ground support.*

- Create educational and interactive materials in Spanish with information about COVID-19, self-care, maternal and child well-being, children's learning activities that could be accessed via social media, short videos, and reading materials sent inside the boxes each week.

Actual: *Done! Newsletters were a great way to engage with families.*



EMERGENT OUTCOMES

Nested communications allowed us to have a constant pathway to connect with families, and fostering a sense of companionship throughout the duration of the program. The food resilience boxes gave us the opportunity to "knock on people's doors" to build a deeper connection and sense of trust which enabled us to identify additional needs, opportunities, and community assets.

Specific outcomes:

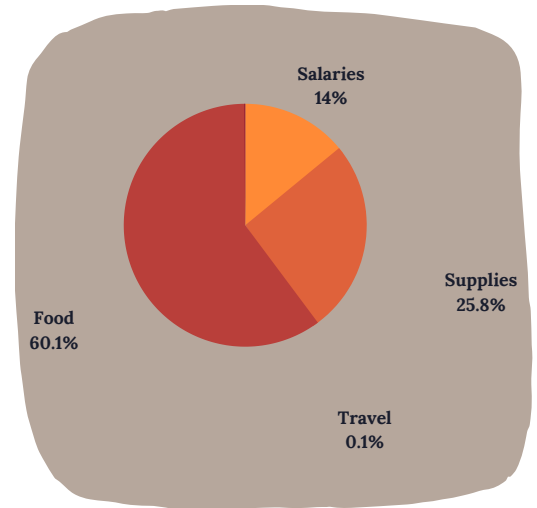
- To enact a collaboration moving beyond the lenses of racial and social equity, to one focusing on racial justice, advocacy, and community mobilization: *As part of our weekly communications with families, R4C was able to organize a meeting with Governor Evers to talk about the biannual state budget. FFF community team participated in this call.*
- Create an integrative program merging maternal and child health and food systems using the One Health Approach, based on the contextual realities of immigrant communities in the county/State, particularly in areas of mental health and leadership development: *R4C was able to build and facilitate family therapy sessions with Latin American psychologists, and the resilience box newsletters were a gateway to further connect our families to needed resources.*
- Increase Latino/Indigenous participation on local and state activities related with food justice and action: *REAP is working in creating a community engagement strategy using a equity and anti-racist approach with the goal to engage in active conversations about food advocacy and policy.*
- Communities of color leading their own agenda and White-lead organizations acting as engaged allies: *FFF served as a template in how R4C and REAP can operationalize their partnership, while centering the work of community leaders and women of color.*



TOTAL OUTCOMES BY THE NUMBERS

WPP funding distribution

Total funds awarded: \$57,194



PROJECT INDICATORS INCLUDING SUPPORT FROM FUNDING SOURCES

Total people hired	10	Total boxes delivered	7,221
Average of delivery hours per quarter	306	Total Miles traveled	14,966
Total amount paid to people	\$101,856	Total Mileage cost	\$8,473
Total families participated (byweekly deliveries per family)	200	Total hours spent delivering	1,482
# farms / businesses that provided food donations	16	Total of Delivery weeks	55
Total sells from farmers	\$151,285	Total amount of newsletters created	25
Total local food business partnerships	18	Total Local Farmers	35

PARTNERS (SPECIAL SHOUT OUT TO BADGER ROCK!) & FUNDERS



TOTAL FOOD PURCHASING IN NUMBERS

Food Distributed from local farms to families

Vegetables

Fresh vegetables: 29,673 lbs

Staples

flour/cornmeal: 3,200 lbs

Bread: 5,060 lbs

Tortillas: 6,040 pks

Protein

Beef: 2,610 lbs

Fish: 800 lbs

Pork/Sausage: 1,711 lbs

Eggs: (dozen): 1,780

Non-perishables

Beans: 4,260 lbs

Rice: 3,650 lbs

salsa/canned prod: 2,720 lbs

coffee: 150 lbs

Honey: 500 lbs

Dairy

Butter: 216 lbs

Cheese: 3,860 lbs

Yogurt: 35 lbs

Milk: 200 gallons

Other Leveraged Funds

Total Grants & Foundations

\$166,572

Private Donations

\$ 62,303

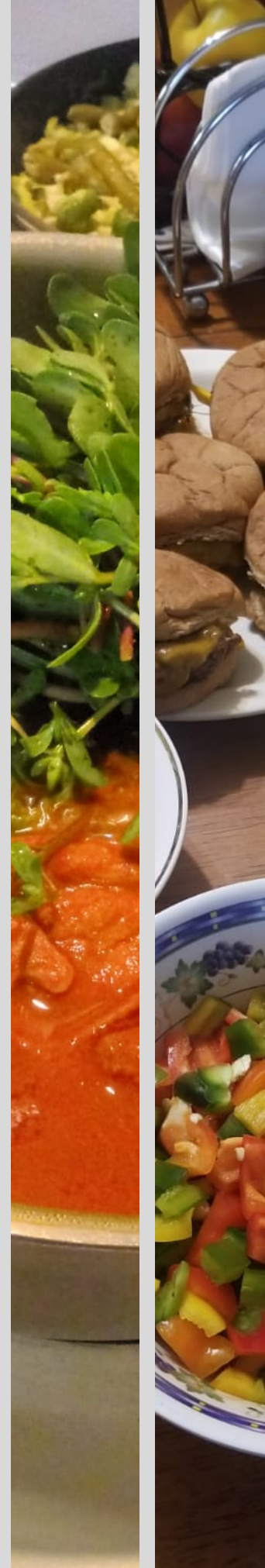
*see financial progress report for full details

CONCLUSIONS

This project was filled with love and care. Its strategic innovation and intentionality to embody an emergency initiative that responded to the actual needs of families and farmers, while providing a sense of collective pride and support and not of charity.

a. Lessons learned or reinforced:

1. People receiving support need to be central in the development of an idea or program. They are partners more than recipients.
2. Multiple systems can be impacted at once, and the collection of internal data, summative, and longitudinal data is key for program development and communication strategies.
3. Business and non-profits can work in alignment to support local economies, while creating alternative economies.
4. Food, and health status in communities are interdependent systems and cannot be seemed as two separate entities.
5. Good and clean food is a human right, and it needs to become an important component of equity and public health efforts.
6. Multicultural and multilingual partnerships need to be fostered with care, as they a worthy and needed investment.
7. Equity is more than a concept, as it needs to be embodied and practiced in a regular basis, in order to operationalize its meaning in a pragmatic way.
8. Power dynamics are not as static nor always explicit, they tend to sneak through the cracks of "business (or funding) as usual," making them elusive and salient.
9. Sustainable farming and local farmer and food businesses require more system support to weather out economic turbulence. When COVID hit, and direct-to-consumer avenues dispersed for food producers, there was little infrastructure and support in place for growers to contribute to aggregation efforts, or to be able to process their surplus to sell at a later date. For many, rural broadband and technology limitations restricted their ability to market digitally. As we recover from this pandemic, we must continue to rebuild infrastructure to support family farms and local food systems to build the resilience of our food system against the next crisis.



CONCLUSIONS CONTINUED...

b. Future Plans

REAP and R4C relationship continues strong. We are currently "cashing out" from our intensive engagement efforts and organizing summer activities for families: park events, farm visits, and community trainings in areas of food advocacy and policy.

In addition, we are hoping to write a peer-reviewed journal paper on this program in the near future.

c. Articles and other media exposure

FFF allowed both organizations to gain local and national attention via new partnerships and funding opportunities.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5-GyodXWfg>



QUOTES FROM OUR FAMILIES

Hello, thank you very much for all the time that you bring my bag of food, it was a great help, blessings for all the people who collaborated and thank you very much.

-M.V 6/7/21

Il want to thank you from the bottom of your heart for your help, & support. I wish you a better year, full of blessings to each member of those who send our pantry, thank you so much to all of you! -M.T

Thank you very much a thousand thanks to all the team and the farmers who helped with all their delicious products. -Anon

Just thank God first because you were a channel of blessing for many families, especially I say it for myself, thank you very much that God greatly bless you and each of the people who put a grain of sand, thank you very much!

-Anon

Thanks a lot!!! to each and every one of you who did everything possible so that the pantry reached our homes in the most difficult moments. I thank you very much I hope not to lose contact with you for the programs !! Thanks!!!

-Anon

Thanks with all my heart. May God multiply your crops and bless your families. Thank you, the whole year the food was never missing on the table. Glory to God.

-Anon

QUOTES FROM OUR FAMILIES CONTINUED...

Thank you for your support,
always very attentive to our
needs, blessings and once
again thank you.

-M.T.M 6/7/21

Thank you for bringing me
my food blessings for all the
people who collaborated
thank you☺☺

-A.C 6/7/21

Thank you so much for the
effort you have created to
be able to provide us with a
pantry of fresh products and
especially to bring them to
our home. Thank you very
much because you have
been a great support to my
family. -S.M

I just wanted to thank you
for the pantry, everything is
very healthy and thanks to
all the people who make
this possible, and much
more in these times! -L.F

My family has been helped so
much, since the children are at
home and we have to eat while
they are studying. Everything
they send us is super! Like the
flour tortillas!

Everything is very tasty and to
all the people who make it
possible, thank you very much!!!

-A.M.S

Thank you very much for
supporting my family and
me, very grateful to God and
you for all the help provided
by Raices. God bless
everyone who made this
possible.

-C.G

QUOTES FROM OUR FARMERS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

The Farms to Families program has supported our business tremendously. We've been able to test out new products (corn tortillas and more sizes of flour tortillas), source other goods as a distributor for the families, and be supportive of our Latino community. Thank you!" - *Lupita Montoto, Co-owner La Capital Products LLC.*

Thank you for all of the great orders this year that have gone towards this initiative! It has been very positive for our business, and for the small farm and food communities to be a part of it. - *Robert Schulz, Co-owner New Traditions Homestead Farm.*

ALL Wisconsin residents deserve high quality food!" - *Kingsley Gobourne, Owner of Artemis Provisions & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Manager for UnityPoint Health Meriter. (Kingsley supplies us with high quality cheese and farm fresh eggs.)*

We are so thankful to have this market option. Things are so uncertain right now, there's a lot of worry. Our eggs going directly to families also facing challenges of uncertainty provides comfort and builds a sense of community" Dan later donated 30 cuts of beef roasts and expressed interest to donate more should their business remain stable. - *Dan (Beef n Beaks)*

PHOTOS



SMILE



BOXES READY



HERE COME THE DRIVERS TO PICK UP THE BOXES.
SITE: BADGER ROCK MIDDLE SCHOOL



HERE IS THE LINE UP



LOCAL, LOCAL, LOCAL!!



BOX CONTENT ON YOUR TABLE

PHOTOS CONTINUED...



TEEN BAKING GOODIES



SO MUCH RICHNESS



TRADITIONAL MEXICAN RECIPE

BLUEBERRIES FROM MIGHIGAN



MASK ON: YOUR BOX IS HERE!