Boulder Food Rescue aims to create a more just and less wasteful food system

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When I think of the work we are doing and the direction we are heading, I feel a sinking feeling, but not one of despair. I feel a rootedness, a grounding, a depth that I’ve never felt before. Where I see others getting wider, I see us getting deeper. The heart of this work is in the depth of what we do, in the relationships we build, in the way in which we show up in our community.

Don’t get me wrong - I love seeing the broad impact we have. Our 150 active courier volunteers are showing up every day to move over 1,200 pounds of food to over 40 sites across Boulder. That is absolutely integral to the work we do. We are reducing food waste, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing awareness and possibility for using alternative modes of transportation like bikes, getting hundreds of thousands of pounds of healthy food into the hands of thousands of people who wouldn't otherwise have access to it. I love that we are thrifty, creative, and nimble. I truly believe that all of this is connected, that food touches everything - people, climate, animals, justice, community, relationships, language. This work is about health, equity, impact and power.

It’s just that sometimes I also wonder how much is happening that we cannot even see. No Cost Grocery Programs are run by Grocery Program Coordinators, people living and working in the community who run the food distribution on the ground. This work builds upon the inherent leadership and power within communities and also reduces barriers around shame and stigma, language and culture, and policies and practices that aren’t affirming for people. The Grocery Program Coordinator volunteers who are distributing food in their community are making the programs run and facilitating food distribution and community connection.

NCGPs are not only a space to access healthy food but they bring people together to design and manage programs, often creating community in spaces where people were previously isolated. Loneliness and social isolation are factors that significantly impact people's health. Individuals within the communities hosting NCGPs have told us they have met new people within their neighborhoods, take food to people who are physically isolated, and have used the food drops as a way to build community in other ways such as sharing clothing, meals, childcare, emotional support, and community building. This is what I mean when I talk about depth. I see us using food as a tool to build relationships. From here, we can organize to keep going deeper. To use our work to grab food insecurity at the root and work towards a more just food system for everyone.

I believe that we all have a stake in making change and that together, we can do this. No matter who you are, if you are connected in with the BFR community, you are essential to this work happening. From the bicycle couriers moving food, to the grocery program coordinators organizing its distribution, to the financial donors who give in order for this work to function, to the food donors who give the produce instead of wasting it, to the staff whose labor organizes the whole system - you are essential in changing lives, redistributing produce and power, here in Boulder.

Thank you for creating a more just food system here in our community.

[Signature]
HAYDEN DANSKY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Program Impact

481,095 POUNDS OF FOOD RESCUED

*That’s the size of 2 blue whales!

17,035 miles traveled

17,164 Hours of Service

165 VOLUNTEERS

12 shifts/day

385,262 Kg of CO2 reduction

169 million gallons of water saved

387,962 Kg of CO2 reduction

$1,669,070 Worth of Groceries

20,194 PEOPLE RECEIVED FOOD

21 FOOD DONORS

28 NO-COST GROCERY PROGRAMS

11 RECIPIENT AGENCIES

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

2700 Kg of CO2 reduction
Partners

RECIPIENT AGENCIES

- Attention Recovery Center (ARC)
- Attention Homes
- The Bridge House / Community Table
- Chinook Clubhouse
- Emergency Family Assistance Association (EFAA)
- Harvest of Hope
- Lamb’s Lunch
- Meals on Wheels
- Mother House
- Sunday Soup Program: First Congregational
- Mental Health Partners: Warner House

NO-COST GROCERY PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

- Boulder Housing Partners (15 sites)
- Thistle Affordable Housing (3 sites)
- Boulder Day Nursery
- Boulder Valley School District – Uni Hill Elementary
- Children’s Alley
- Community Montessori
- The Family Learning Center
- CU Children’s Center
- New Horizons Cooperative Preschool
- Friends Encouraging Eating Daily (FEED)
- Mountain Community Resource Center
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

FOOD DONORS

Grocery:
- Alfalfa’s
- Lucky’s
- Natural Grocers/Vitamin Cottage
- Sprouts
- Whole Foods

Restaurants:
- Breadworks
- Cured
- Great Harvest
- Hotel Boulderado
- Lolita’s
- Lucky’s Bakehouse
- Nick n Willy’s
- Spruce Confections
- Trident

Community Organizations, Farms, and Gardens:
- Boulder County Farmers’ Market
- Frasier Meadows
- Growing Gardens
- Milk & Honey Farm
- Fresh Food Connect home garden donors
Boulder Food Rescue’s mission is to create a more just and less wasteful food system by increasing access to healthy fruits and vegetables and removing barriers to accessing food. The unique model of BFR simultaneously addresses food waste and insecurity by redistributing healthy surplus produce from grocery stores and restaurants directly to low-income communities. Resident leaders in these communities then distribute the food amongst their neighbors.

This food is most desired by the communities we serve. In fact, 89% of our participants say they prefer to receive either “fruits,” “vegetables,” or “fruits and vegetables.” 1 in 3 participants report receiving most of their household consumed produce from the grocery program.
Most volunteers train to become bike couriers and sign up to distribute food from the same donor to the same recipient weekly. Some volunteers support BFR in other capacities, which include: writing our newsletter, contributing to the blog, fundraising, joining the board, volunteering at an event, and other skills and interests that provide support to our programs. Grocery Program Coordinators volunteer at each No-Cost Grocery Program site by receiving and distributing food directly to their communities.

Our 21 food donors provide recipient organizations with healthy, fresh food that is soon-to-expire or overstocked, directly impacting those experiencing food insecurity within the Boulder community. We partner with 39 different recipient sites across town, including 28 No-Cost Grocery Programs. The remaining 11 sites include food pantries and meal programs in which the produce is incorporated into their current food distribution programs. This enables us to expand our reach by supporting an increase of healthy food options and building collaborative partnerships that address equitable food access in Boulder.
In order to reduce barriers to food access, BFR works with communities to host No Cost Grocery Programs, where food is redistributed in easy-to-access places, such as affordable housing sites, schools and daycares. This enables us to bring food directly to people in places they are already going to be, thus reducing mobility and transportation barriers in accessing food, especially produce.

No-Cost Grocery Programs necessitate participation by people utilizing the program. Grocery Program Coordinators are responsible for receiving, organizing, distributing and cleaning the food that couriers deliver. They are active organizers in their communities, connecting their neighbors to the food source, notifying them of changes, and distributing surveys for feedback. Each grocery program is unique because it is run by the resident-leaders that organize to meet the needs of their particular community.
This participatory and community-based approach creates inclusive leadership, which means that people receiving food are leaders in the distribution processes, have power and autonomy over how the programs are run and are able to create and maintain programs that work for them, which is key to distribution in this time.

Participants exercise power and influence as volunteers, feedback givers, organizers, decision makers, and as voices in their own food access. By allowing individuals who experience food insecurity to actively participate in their own systems of food redistribution, we are building trust in our relationships with these communities. This trust-building process and participatory model is the first step to addressing the larger root causes of food insecurity. It gives people a place to give back to their communities, which decreases barriers to accessing food. However, we have a lot of growth ahead to enact systems change. Given more resources, we would like to expand our advocacy efforts to include more organizing amongst these communities and advocating for the needs addressed by these communities to be met at the roots and drive system-level change.
Fresh Food Connect utilizes technology to solve two problems — excess garden produce and food insecurity. This was our second successful year redistributing surplus produce from home gardeners to senior centers, affordable housing sites and childcare centers.

Our No Cost Grocery Programs received 3,268 pounds of home-grown fresh vegetables, herbs, and eggs from 18 gardeners and 2 farms: Growing Gardens & Milk and Honey Farms

If you have extra bounty from your garden, consider donating to community in 2020, as we will continue this program with coolers at drop-points throughout the city.

Download the Fresh Food Connect app and start donating: [https://freshfoodconnect.org/](https://freshfoodconnect.org/)
Beyond the city limits, we have continued expanding our Food Rescue Alliance program, a peer-learning network that aims to develop best practices for community-based food rescue programs and make an impact nationally.

We now have **27 cities** connected to FRA and hope to grow more with our new software that supports these food rescues with their daily food distribution work. Our current member organizations are located in Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Wyoming, Minnesota, Iowa, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, California, Canada, and Nigeria (some states have multiple locations).

FRA supports food rescue organizations through peer-to-peer learning, trainings, consulting, resource sharing and workshops. FRA members encompass values such as: health equity, community-driven work, participation, volunteerism, and committing to working on systems-level change.

To learn more about the Alliance, how to become a member and advice on starting your own food rescue, visit: https://foodrescuealliance.org/
Research and Education

Publications

A HAND AND A VOICE: PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

This guide is the first external-facing outcome of our Community-Based Participatory Design Research on food access in Boulder. It was written to support all nonprofits and other human service organizations to analyze their own systems and to better understand how they can become more participatory.

THE PACKAGE DEAL: HOW TO CREATE A COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD RESCUE IN YOUR CITY

The first iteration of this guidebook was created in 2012 after our first year as an organization. The goal was to capture everything we had learned along the way so we could share this with other interested individuals, for free. Version 2 contains additional information that we have learned during the past 8 years, including information about our own programs, the nonprofit (and hunger) industrial complex, and effective mechanisms of decentralizing food access.

Research and Presentations

Boulder Food Rescue is committed to evidence-based practices and continuing to conduct research that informs our programs and work in the community.

Our primary areas of focus are:
- Food Access
- Food Waste
- Participation and Inclusion in nonprofits

If you would like to receive consulting services or book us for a presentation, please contact us at: info@boulderfoodrescue.org
7th Annual Food Rescue Feast

EVENT AT A GLANCE

Community Meal

Recipes inspired by rescued food

Appetizers by local chefs:
- Boulder Kitchen Collective
- Pastifico
- Three Leaf Catering

Indian Food buffet:
- Meena’s Restaurant

Local brews and spirits

Twisted Pine Brewing Company
Avery Brewing Company
West Flanders Brewing Company
Montucky Cold Snacks
Hazel’s Beverage World
Vapor Distillery
Doctor D’s Sparkling Probiotics
Mortal Kombucha
Pete’s Coffee

Raised $12,640

150 Attendees
40 Volunteers
130 Silent Auction Items

Live Music:
- MonoVerde Collective
- Milk and Honey
- Farm Tour
We partnered with the Museum of Boulder to celebrate the launch of a Participatory Recipe Book created by Boulder Food Rescue’s No-Cost Grocery Program Coordinators and Participants.

The recipes in this book were submitted by people who participate in No-Cost Grocery Programs. This book highlights that people know their own communities best, possess the knowledge and skills to most effectively distribute food, and know the foods that make them happy and healthy.

The contributors captured on paper what was already happening at No-Cost Grocery Programs - people sharing information with one another about many ways to prepare foods that often arrive in deliveries.

BFR is grateful to Boulder Housing Partners for their partnership, to the contributors who shared their delicious recipes, to Diana M. Alvarado for collecting the recipes and to Elizabeth Gibb for testing and preparing them for print.

To get your own copy of the Participatory Recipe Book (in English and Spanish) visit: https://www.boulderfoodrescue.org/recipebook/
Financials

**Revenue**
- Grants: 55.4%
- Individual Donors: 25.7%
- Business Donations: 9.9%
- Events: 6.9%

**Expenses**
- Programming: 64%
- Fundraising: 28%
- Administration: 8%

**Major Contributors**
- City of Boulder Healthy Equity Grant: $90,000
- Scaled Agile, Inc.: $10,000
- Kettering Family Philanthropies: $10,000
- Wells Fargo Foundation: $10,000
- Boulder County Commissioners: $10,000
- Redman Foundation: $7,000
- The Caleb Fund, Minneapolis Foundation: $5,000
- Anschutz Family Foundation: $5,000
- Collins Foundation: $5,000
- Community Foundation of Boulder: $4,000
OUR TEAM

2019 STAFF

Diana M. Alvarado - Participant Coordinator
Becks Boone - Tech Lead
Lou Creech - Communications and Development Coordinator
Hayden Dansky - Executive Director
Luke Galloway - Courier Coordinator
Elizabeth Gibb - Grants Manager
Janeè Harris - Donor Coordinator
Lindsey Loberg - Program Director
Ricchi Machado - Courier Coordinator
Elizabeth Suttle - Logistics Director

2019 BOARD

(Matriculated in alphabetical order)

Matthew Clifford - Treasurer
Marina Fleming - Board Member
Abby Knowles - Board Member
Danny Kramer - Board Member
Wendy Peters Moschetti - Board Member
Angela Maria Ortiz Roa - Board Member
Ina Sajovich - Board Chair
Jessica Shah - Board Member
Ellen Teig - Board Member
Blair Young - Board Member
WHAT'S NEXT IN 2020
SUPPORTING COMMUNITY LEADERS

We will support community leaders by equipping them with more tools and resources they need to thrive. These include gaining important leadership skills, conducting outreach, volunteer-engagement, and working within their neighborhoods to understand needs and respond effectively. Participants exercise power and influence as organizers, feedback givers, decision makers, and as voices in their own food access.

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We will continue to haul thousands of pounds of food across Boulder. Over 40% of the food produced in this country is wasted (52 million tons) while 1 in 7 people experiences food insecurity. Producing and disposing this food costs $218 billion per year. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact by rescuing nutritious food that would otherwise be wasted, mostly by bicycle. Any produce that isn’t edible will be sorted and composted.

PUBLISHING FOOD ACCESS RESEARCH

We will publish a report about food access that is five years in the making. The report will detail people’s experiences accessing food, describe the work and ingenuity people employ to get food, and explain how these experiences impact physical health and emotional wellbeing. Also included is a series of recommendations for the general public, policy makers and influencers, human service providers, and funders.

EXPANDING FOOD RESCUE ALLIANCE

Beyond the city limits, we will continue expanding our Food Rescue Alliance program by conducting outreach to new organizations and redeveloping the cooperative software that serves as a critical logistics coordination tool for the members of the network. The software will be redesigned and owned cooperatively by the FRA members which will be another avenue of sharing power and decisions with people who have a stake in them.
GET INVOLVED

DONATE
100% of contributions support our mission - creating a more just and less wasteful food system. For every $1, we are able to redistribute $8 worth of fresh produce.

VOLUNTEER
Train to become a food courier or Grocery Program Coordinator, contribute your skills to our outreach team, complete an internship, or donate home-grown produce from your garden.

LEARN
Discover more about food justice, participatory structures, and food systems by reading our Participation Framework, Package Deal, Qualitative Food Access Research Report and more.

SHARE
Follow us online and spread the word about our local food justice efforts to your friends, family, and networks. Meet your neighbors and engage with local mutual aid efforts.