BOULDER FOOD RESCUE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
REDISTRIBUTING PRODUCE AND POWER
"We see this program as a way to build community, starting with the kindness of the people that deliver the food, the volunteers at Community Montessori, the person that donates her time to pack the food, the drivers that put the food on the buses, and our enthusiastic students happy to take food home."

- Patricia Forero
Grocery Program Coordinator
Boulder Food Rescue aims to create a more just and less wasteful food system.

Our work envisions a world in which everyone has equitable access to healthy food and the resources they need to thrive.

Boulder Food Rescue facilitates the sustainable redistribution of healthy food that would otherwise be wasted to low-income communities and to those experiencing food insecurity, mostly by bicycle.

We work with communities to facilitate their own food redistribution and create decentralized systems that bypass barriers to food access.

Our goals are to:

- Increase food access by reducing food access barriers
- Decrease food waste by redistributing surplus food
- Increase participant involvement and representation
- Create collaborative relationships with participants and the community at large

We have redistributed significant amounts of food and have had a major impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the impact of our efforts extends beyond these figures. We are able to cooperatively strive towards a more just and less wasteful food system because of our ties with community members, food donors, partner groups, volunteers, and financial donors.

We have created relationships based on reciprocity and mutual exchange. Food is donated and community members give back by volunteering or contributing time and ideas. This reciprocal support and care have far-reaching impacts on increasing community well-being.
Despite a number of industry supply chain concerns in 2021, it had a smaller impact on BFR donations than we had anticipated.

Fresh produce is regularly donated from grocery stores, restaurants, small farmers, and farmer’s markets an average of 12 times per day. With frequent check-ins with food donors and the formation of new ties with community partners, we were able to maximize donations.

We expanded the number of distribution sites after the onset of the pandemic. In 2021, food distribution sites in the mountains increased from one to five sites and distribution sites in Boulder mobile home communities expanded from three to five.
"The special thing is the way we distribute the food strategically and that we can receive it close to our homes, almost to the door.

The Madison community has received food from BFR for more than three years. In addition, the people who distribute it are volunteers who do not expect anything in return for doing these tasks, which speaks very well of the people who make up this program. I can only thank the BFR program and all the staff who make it possible."

- Diana Rocha
Grocery Program Coordinator
Sunny is the Grocery Program Coordinator at Thistle Mapleton and she is looked up to by all of her neighbors because she goes out of her way to help others. Before the pandemic the residents would gather in the community center to mingle and pick up food. Now this has moved to Sunny’s backyard. She does her own food pickups and distributes the food to the 80 participants with the help of two other residential volunteers.

BFR builds trust and relationships by supporting this independent community to build a program that best suits their needs.
No Cost Grocery Programs are community-led distribution points that engage the voices, experiences, and leadership of program participants. Community leaders run their own unique programs and determine when, where, and how the food is redistributed.

Communities with limited access to wealth and resources have developed strong innovative traditions for maintaining their own health and well-being that have endured over time and even through the pandemic.

No Cost Grocery Programs and the decentralized food rescue model recognize, honor, and leverage the ingenuity of partner communities. We create systems of resilience through these collaborations, share and distribute resources, and strengthen community ties. These programs are intended to create a space for community members to have more opportunities to connect and support one another.
Grocery Program Coordinators are encouraged to operate their program according to what works best for them and we support them as requested in that process. These resident-leaders assist with receiving and displaying food, informing neighbors about the program, and maintaining the community area where food is provided. They devise food redistribution strategies and methods that are tailored to the needs of their particular community.

No Cost Grocery Programs mitigate food access barriers by:

- Not requiring paperwork, documentation, or enrollment
- Operating in settings where people are already present, such as residential spaces, community centers, schools, and daycares
- Reducing shame and stigma by resident leaders of the community distributing the food
- Creating connections so neighbors can support one another more broadly like sharing other resources such as clothing or childcare

BFR staff members on the Programs Team coordinate food deliveries in quantities, qualities, and types that are desirable for individual communities at times and locations that are most convenient for the communities. We also devote time and resources to deep relationship building, quality assurance, and thoughtfully responding to participants' needs and desires.
"The neighbors said to me, “Oh! you can be the one to get the delivery!” I like doing this because I help myself and I help everyone.

For example, when the potatoes arrive, I decide that today I'm going to make potato taquitos, and the lettuce arrives and sometimes the chili comes, so today I'm going to cook potato taquitos with lettuce and avocado, ...When it's a lot, I put a little of everything in the bag."

- Claudia Aguilar
Grocery Program Coordinator
Our research shows that people facing food insecurity have intersecting barriers. One of those barriers is the stigma and shame around using the charitable food system. By listening to participants’ feedback, the residents at High Mar have built a No Cost Grocery Program that works to erase the stigma of sharing food.

They use a team of volunteers to reach the 35 participants at this senior living Boulder Housing Partners location. By setting up tables so the community members can shop like it’s a grocery store, they build stronger relationships and can begin to reduce the barriers.
In the charitable food system, the majority of those utilizing programs are not included in programmatic decisions or broader direction-setting for the organizations. BFR prioritizes participation in our programs because we have discovered through our community based research that it is not only sustainable and effective, it is integral to equitable change.

Our research team has published these findings in *Food Access in Boulder report* as an external-facing outcome of our 5+ year Community-Based Participatory Design Research project. We also published a Participation Framework and Participatory Toolkit for other nonprofit organizations to utilize. These guides are written to support nonprofits and other human service organizations to analyze their own systems and become more participatory.

We believe that as participant voices are more prioritized and included, access to services will increase, and ultimately, people will feel more affirmed, respected, and resourced towards enacting community change (These publications can be found on our website: Participation Framework, Food Access in Boulder report, and Participatory Toolkit).
We began a strategic planning process this year to understand and specify the direction that we will be heading in the next five years. Participants have been involved in every step of the process.

Participants have been invited to join our board of directors and staff. Currently, 25% of our board members are active participants in No Cost Grocery Programs and 55% of our staff are current or former participants.

We collect participant feedback through focus groups, interviews, and surveys to measure the success of the program. We then utilize participant feedback to measure success, make programming adjustments, and define our long-term strategy.

We formed representative bodies of Grocery Program Coordinators to provide direction, leadership, and to enhance the distribution systems in local communities.

We held a series of participant-centered and participant-facilitated workshops called Mesas de Trabajo. These workshops helped us better understand how the program functions in individual communities and to explore what improvements and modifications might benefit program users and coordinators. They also had the opportunity to hear how the program works in other communities and make connections with fellow GPCs.

We piloted a participant internship program in which a Grocery Program Coordinator joined our development team for a year and completed two communications based projects: 1) contributed a photo gallery to an exhibit about the research project at The Museum of Boulder, and 2) designed a NCGP guidebook for other coordinators.

Our programs are built from participant feedback. In 2021, we set out to also invite participants to have more involvement throughout the entire organization. Here are some ways we have done this:

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"I have had many people in our community share how the grocery program has impacted them. One child cried until his mother took home fresh vegetables from the donations, she later told me she doesn’t normally cook vegetables, so it was a healthier treat for their whole family. One BDN teacher has said that she would not be able to afford as many fresh fruits and veggies, and would not learn how to cook them on her own, but that participating in the program has helped her learn more about healthy eating in addition to the accessibility piece. Another family has repeatedly thanked me for being a part of the program, she is so grateful for the food donations."

-Mary Newell
Boulder Day Nursery
The barriers that participants face vary from person to person and we work with communities to find the best solutions that will bring them culturally relevant food.

Red Oak Park is a Boulder Housing Partners location and has 60 residents participating in the program. The two regular Grocery Program Coordinators, Claudia and Brianda, have been volunteering for 6 years. Their donations come from Sprouts Arapahoe and Great Harvest on Wednesdays and Fridays.
Collaboration is essential to our decentralized food rescue model.

We coordinate directly with food donors and engage 125 active courier volunteers that transport produce an average of 12 shifts per day to No Cost Grocery Programs and additional recipient agencies.

**Food Donors:**
- Natural Grocers
- Sprouts (2 locations)
- Whole Foods (3 locations)
- Lucky’s Market
- Lucky’s Bakehouse
- Great Harvest
- Moxie Bread Co.
- Nick-N-Willy’s Pizza
- Spruce Confections
- Trident
- Bona Coffee Roasters
- Boulder County Farmers Market
- Colorado Pet Pantry
- Conscious Coffees
- Garden to Table
- Google
- Growing Gardens
- Milk & Honey Farm
- Uproot Colorado

**No Cost Grocery Programs:**
- Boulder Housing Partners (17 sites)
- Thistle Affordable Housing (3 sites)
- 9 to 5 (3 sites)
- Jamestown Area Community Foundation (3 sites)
- Boulder Day Nursery
- Persimmon Early Learning @ YWCA
- Community Montessori
- The Family Learning Center
- CU Children’s Center

**Recipient Agencies:**
- Addiction Recovery Center (ARC)
- Boulder SAFE
- Boulder Bridge House – Community Table Kitchen
- Golden West
- Mother House
- Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence
- TGTHR
- Mental Health Partners: Warner House
In order to enhance food access in our community, we also collaborate with other food access organizations. Here are a few of our collaborations throughout Boulder in 2021:

- **Food Security Network:** We participate in a coalition of food access organizations throughout Boulder and Broomfield County that works to organize and streamline food access services.

- **Community Food Share:** We each recover food that our model excels at distributing. Notably we redistribute perishable fruits and vegetables directly to communities, while Community Food Share distributes other food types through a food banking strategy.

- **Boulder County Public Health:** We help enroll people in Fruit & Veg, a county-wide "SNAP gap" program that offers fruit and vegetable vouchers to persons who do not qualify for SNAP benefits or only qualify for a minimal amount.

- **Bridge to Justice:** We connect participants to legal assistance that increases access to SNAP and other benefits, such as caregiver allowances.

- **Community Resource Center and Colorado Center for Law and Policy:** We increased civic involvement among participants through a collaborative voter registration outreach campaign.
"BFR is doing amazing work in the community, not only delivering food but engaging participants in meaningful ways that promote community building and leadership opportunities".

-Karin Stayton
Director of Resident Services
Boulder Housing Partners
**FINANCIALS**

**In Kind Food Donations** $1,714,807

**Grants** $593,620

**Individual Donors** $233,247

**Businesses** $48,801

**Earned Service Revenue** $11,089

**Total Revenue** $2,601,564

**Programming** $2,279,238

**Development** $134,562

**Administration** $42,095

**Total Expenses** $2,455,895

**Major Contributors**
- Foundation Beyond Belief $150,000
- City of Boulder, Health Equity Fund $90,000
- Colorado Health Foundation $72,464
- Albertsons Foundation $50,000
- Kettering Family Foundation $15,000
CONTINUE DEVELOPING FOOD RESCUE PROTOCOLS WITH GROCERY STORES AND LOCAL FARMERS

ENHANCE OUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITH PARTICIPANTS

FUEL THE NATIONAL FOOD RECOVERY MOVEMENT THROUGH FOOD RESCUE ALLIANCE PROGRAMMING

FINALIZE STRATEGIC PLANNING, INVOLVING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AT EVERY STEP

FACILITATE WORKSHOPS ON BUILDING PARTICIPATORY STRUCTURES FOR OTHER ORGS
GET INVOLVED

DONATE

100% of contributions support our mission - to create a more just and less wasteful food system.

Contributing to BFR fuels the ingenuity of our team and programs. Your support makes it all possible.

VOLUNTEER

- Join a New Volunteer Orientation to become a food rescue courier.

- Join our outreach team.

- If you have skills, ideas, or knowledge, you’d like to contribute, we’d love to chat.

LEARN

If you’d like to learn more about the food system and our approaches to local food justice, check out our publications:

- Food Access Report
- Participation Framework
- The Package Deal: How to Start your own Food Rescue

SHARE

- Sign up for our monthly newsletter to stay up to date with all things BFR.

- Follow us on social media and share with your friends.

- Engage with local mutual aid efforts.