2022 Annual Report
Vision Statement

Every community is part of and well-provided for by a food system that is healthy for all beings and the earth.

This looks like:

• All people have the resources they need to thrive beyond day-to-day survival.
• All people have the time, energy, information, and economic capacity to make desired food choices.
• Food and resources in the food system are cultivated without exploitation of communities and the earth. Instead, food is produced in a way that creates mutual and reciprocal relationships with people and the land.
• All people easily access foods which are nourishing and hold connection to their communities and culture.
Priorities

Support & grow community participation in Food Systems change & access to food.

Increased community conversations on food systems & climate change bringing a more holistic, root-cause, & people oriented approach.

Communities have regular access to foods which nourish their health & cultural identities.

We value people & the planet, & oppose the exploitation of either.

Grounding

Through community-based participatory research we center community voice, needs, & power.

All people have the time, energy, information, & economic capacity to make healthy choices.

We work in partnership & coalition with other values-aligned groups.

All people have what they need to thrive beyond day-to-day survival.

We work to build a culture of care within & between communities.

Systems of support exist & are built & led by communities themselves.

We form and maintain strong relationships with community leaders & work to support them as best we can.

All people easily access foods which are nourishing to their health & hold connection to their communities & culture.

We strive to live our values in our day-to-day work, operations, & relationships with each other.

Support local food systems infrastructure.

Partners in our local food system create more participatory frameworks for our shared communities.

Model the systems change we want to see within BFR.

Distributed leadership & shared decision-making between BFR & program participants.

Significant community involvement in BFR with spaces for sincere input.

We inhabit a culture of care, trust, and respect.

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We inhabit a culture of care, trust, and respect.
We look for opportunities to build connections in communities beyond distributing food. When Cultural Caravan came along, we were delighted to help host these free concerts at six of our No Cost Grocery Program sites. Twelve BFR grocery program coordinators participated as hosts, and 100 people attended. Additionally, these shows provided an opportunity to gather feedback about our strategic plan from the broader participant community.

Quotes from community on the concerts:
• “The concert was a complete success. The band was very good. The members were very informative. Great shout out to Venezuela.”
• “The Concert came off well. It was great and souls to connect through music”
• “That was so nice - the music gathering with you all and the Mapleton folks - everyone really loved it - I’ve had many say to me to give thanks to you and how nice it was. The classical music - under the tree - in beautiful weather - with good people and good food ---- what more could a person ask for”

According to the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger, 1 in 5 people in Colorado lack reliable access to nutritious food, affecting their long-term health and wellbeing. Meanwhile, 40% of food in this country is wasted.

However, individuals experiencing food insecurity face barriers accessing traditional food access agencies. Barriers include: transportation to distribution sites, limited hours of operation, paperwork that gatekeeps access to resources, lack of culturally relevant and healthy food, and social stigma associated with using these programs.

Our food distribution program, specifically our No Cost Grocery Programs, is designed to address these barriers by taking food directly to people, and creating community-led and owned food access programs in their communities.

Food redistribution sites allow participants to access food easily and with dignity, while also building relationships and community resilience.

Program Spotlight: Cultural Caravan

Food Redistribution

No Cost Grocery Program
noun
Redistribution sites housed out of people’s own communities. BFR delivers the food and leaders and other volunteers from the community coordinate their own food redistribution programs.

boulderfoodrescue.org
We redistribute food that would otherwise be wasted, often by bike.

- Staff coordinate with grocery & donor employees to set aside food for donation.
- Volunteers sign up in our software. At the designated time, they head to the food donor where bikes & trailers are locked up.
- After sorting through produce to ensure quality, they transport healthy, quality food directly to the designated recipient site.
- Community leaders receive the food and distribute it according to their own systems and community needs.
- Example systems:
  - Residents set up food in community rooms for others to come through.
  - Text ordering where desired foods are bagged up & delivered.

**Participant**

People who use the food BFR delivers.
A few years ago, we recognized that the open-source logistics software BFR created, the Robot, needed to retire. Conventional wisdom told us we shouldn’t maintain our own software. We partnered with a graduate student studying food systems and software to find another platform.

However, existing products didn’t align with our values or needs. Additionally, the researcher saw creating software as an opportunity for FRA to build governance and deepen relationships for collective action - ‘software as movement building.’

FRA organizations focus on the day-to-day logistics of food rescue, and it’s never-ending. It leaves little time for other efforts to reduce hunger, like building community wealth or collective power.

To build new worlds, we need to look beyond conventional wisdom, like who owns software, what a business looks like, how we fund our work, and how we collect data. Rootable is our experiment. Building Rootable together meets organizations where they are. We get to know one another, learn to make decisions collaboratively, and practice governance.

Denver’s Center for Community Wealth Building now convenes 6 Colorado organizations to develop our cooperative business: BFR, Denver Food Rescue, Food to Power (Colorado Springs), Vindeket Foods (Fort Collins), CAFE Food Rescue (Summit County), and Longmont Food Rescue.

Rootable is software as movement-building: a mechanism to practice open, flexible, cooperatively-owned, relationship-based projects to build collective power.

**Organizing is the work of dreaming new worlds into being - Kelly Hayes**

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**Food Rescue Alliance**

BFR runs a network of food rescue initiatives across North America. As a generative social impact network, we aim to amplify individual members’ on-the-ground efforts and our collective work through sharing knowledge, resources, and coming together to learn and advance shared goals.

FRA spent the last year strengthening member connections and aligning on our direction and intention as a network. We collected feedback on resources and projects that help food rescues grow and support their day-to-day operations; and utilized this feedback to strengthen existing resources and create additional opportunities for members to collaborate.

**Generative Social Impact Network**

*noun*

A set of relationships that are maintained over time to activate as needed. Members are deliberate about building, strengthening, and maintaining ties so that they can be activated again and again. Key characteristics: member driven, voluntary, relationship focused, flexible, and decentralized.

[networkimpact.org](http://networkimpact.org)
In 2022, FRA grew our nationwide movement to 31 organizations.

Collectively, FRA members:
- served 250,000 people
- distributed over 4 million lbs of food
- saved an average of ~5 weeks of labor through resource sharing and collective learning

A sampling of workshops:
- From Rescue to Solidarity
- Introduction to Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- Circular Economy & Food Rescue
- Generative Social Impact Networks & Collective Action
A sampling of organizations we’re partnering with and/or who celebrate our work.

**Colorado Health Foundation**

*Nonprofit Sabbatical Program* - This award allows an executive to take time off to “reflect, rest, and rejuvenate.” It was also an opportunity for the remaining staff to take more responsibility and ownership of the organization. Hayden Dansky, our Co-Director, spent 4 months last summer away from the organization, getting much-needed rest.

*Leadership Cohort* - “Food systems leaders in organizations across Colorado build skills and partnerships to increase food access and food sovereignty in rural and urban communities.” Emily Cho, our Logistics Manager, participated in the 2022 program, and Mireille Bakhos, our new Food Recovery Program Manager, was selected for 2023.

**Bertha Foundation**

*Challenge Fellows* - “An opportunity for activists and investigative journalists to spend a year focusing on one pressing social justice issue.” Lindsey Loberg, our Co-Director is a 2023 Fellow. They will create a curriculum for grassroots food distributors to explore the root causes of hunger and challenge the alliance between charitable food, corporations, and politics. This work advances our goals to address root causes of hunger and engage in movement building.

**Hunger Free Colorado**

*Kathy Underhill Scholarship* - The $1000 award “recognizes an individual leading change in advocacy or health equity as it relates to hunger and healthy food access.” Lindsey Loberg, our Co-Director, received the scholarship to advance their work and professional development.

Know an organization or program that might be a good fit for BFR? Let us know info@boulderfoodrescue.org
Democratizing Leadership

We’ve been on a journey of democratizing leadership within BFR.

We work on the structures of how people participate in the broader direction-setting and decision-making of the organization. In our programs, we call this “participation.” Within our staff, we call it “democratizing leadership.” Although we operate within a hierarchy, we work to create structures where staff have agency and opportunity to participate in the broader goals and decision-making of the organization.

We did this by switching to a Co-Director model, enabling more shared decision-making in the broader vision and more shared support, so one person isn’t responsible for ensuring the organization’s success.

We also created an equitable and transparent salary structure for all our staff. Even in nonprofits, we see significant pay disparities between the highest and lowest-paid staff.

At BFR, we have never had those pay disparities. Still, we finalized an equitable salary structure that ensures consistently equitable salaries in the future. The staff collectively created the system, which considers the responsibilities and skills we prioritize. We highly value care work and bilingualism, which aren’t always recognized in a traditional market-rate salary structure.

1. Involving program participants in every step of strategic planning, including three who were on our strategic planning committee.

2. Switching to a Co-Director model, enabling more shared decision making at the top.

3. Supporting our staff to take ownership over BFR while a Co-Director took a 4-month sabbatical.

4. Creating an equitable and transparent salary structure for all our staff.
BFR has always been a leader in fighting injustice and inequity in our community. As they have grown, I have watched them turn this internally, examining how we all interact in it and with each other. They have created a community that can support you no matter where you are at, how you identify, or your background. I feel truly accepted here.

Liz Gibb, she/her
Grant Manager

BFR has been a great organization for myself, my family and community. It’s been super helpful in getting groceries and saving money in my household as well as seeing others in my community strive with the similar circumstances I have. It’s great being part of a team that cares about all the people that make its wheels turn from the Staff, to the recipients and especially our Volunteers. Very grateful to be part of something this big and important to our town!

Johnny Espina, he/él
Distribution Coordinator

BFR is unparalleled in its care for its staff and the community. I am so fortunate to work for an organization that supports my growth as an individual as much as a professional. The work and care everyone involved puts into the cause is a source of constant inspiration. I am immensely grateful.

Emily Cho, she/her
Logistics Coordinator

Some of the challenges I have faced as an immigrant Latinx woman who speaks primarily Spanish, is my level of fluency in English. BFR has always made me feel welcome and has helped me overcome the language barrier among other cultural differences.

Diana M. Alvarado, she/ella
Community Outreach Manager

Staff Shareout
Finances

**Revenue** $798,541

- FRA Membership Dues 1%
- Business 4%
- Fundraising 14%
- Programs 78%

**Expenses** $691,781

- Administrative 8%
- Fundraising 14%
- Programs 78%

**In-kind Food Donations (not included above):** $2,504,615
Letter from a Co-Director

Hayden Dansky, they/them

BFR switched to a co-director model in 2022. It continues our path towards more shared decision-making in the broader vision and more shared support, so one person isn’t responsible for ensuring the organization’s success.

Mycelium
noun
Root-like structure of a fungus, consisting of a mass of branching, thread-like filaments.

BFR has always been known as a grassroots organization, meaning, we grow from the ground up slowly and with our roots in the soil. However, as we have grown, it feels less like grass and more like we are growing as mycelium, interconnected webs of fungi that grow underground and horizontally, creating a symbiotic environment and healthy soil. BFR’s network is immense, and beyond what we even see as Co-Directors. We hear stories of the intricate webs of people who all make BFR thrive and shape it into the living organism that it is. We work to create the conditions in which those people (FRA members, the participants of the programs, the Grocery Program Coordinators, the courier volunteers, the staff, the board, the food donors, the financial donors, the fans) can participate in shaping BFR into the beautiful thriving organization that it is today.

BFR’s work happens in the margins of our community by design. Food is delivered

We grow from the ground up slowly and with our roots in the soil.
to No Cost Grocery Programs that exist in the backyards and community rooms of program users. We do this to minimize barriers to food access: bringing food directly to people in the places they are already going to be reduces mobility and transportation barriers. Bringing fresh short shelf life produce directly to communities enables people to use that produce before it expires, supplementing the limited fresh produce available in food banks and food pantries. Having residents distribute the food reduces barriers around shame and stigma, language and culture, and policies and practices that aren't affirming for people. Not requiring “poverty-proving” paperwork reduces barriers around red tape to access necessary food.

But much more happens in the communities. Community members can provide one another with material (food, small amounts of money, care for elders or children), informational (“Here’s how I got my medical debt reduced.”), or emotional (“You’re not alone and that’s not your fault.”) support. Distributing food in places where people already feel like they belong enables not just physical health via food access, but an emotional healing around community. How we do our work is at least as important as the work we do.

After receiving an immense amount of feedback from participants about BFR during our strategic planning process, much of which was affirming, we have narrowed in on a desire to increase food access, food choice, and autonomy. We have established many relationships built on mutual trust and reciprocity with our community. It is our charge now to utilize that trust and community power to change the conditions for why people are food insecure in the first place. This may look like collaborative partnerships with local farmers for growing food for communities, community-owned food preservation programs, or a number of other programmatic opportunities to explore community-wealth building.

Our mycelial networks are also expanding via our Food Rescue Alliance program. In the coming year, we will further establish cooperative ownership of Rootable, our food rescue logistics software, grow our national network of members, and better support other grassroots food rescue organizations to get established and thrive.

We are excited to lead this organization into its unknown future. We will continue to carry the principles of mutual aid, respect, participation, and community ownership with us as we carve out space for more and more people to shape BFR into what it needs to be.
Special Thanks

All the people that make BFR happen: recipients, grocery program coordinators, participants, volunteers, Food Rescue Alliance members, donors, funders, staff, and our board.