

New Fund Aims to Raise \$50 Million to Transform Food Procurement Practices for Farmers and Communities of Color

Growing Justice fund empowers communities to direct resources where they see the greatest opportunity to strengthen the local food systems.

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, UNITED STATES, October 3, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A team of Black, Indigenous, other People of Color, and allied leaders have announced Growing Justice, a new initiative that aims to raise \$50 million in order to transform food systems in the United States. The fund is the first of its kind focused on equitable 'good food' procurement and prioritizing the leadership and collaboration of people of color in the food value chain, from funders to farmers to distributors and food workers. Founding Funders include: The Rockefeller Foundation, Native American Agriculture Fund, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Panta Rhea Foundation, and Clif Family Foundation.



Growing Justice

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*Toni Stanger MacLachlan, CEO
of the Native American
Agriculture Fund*

The goal of the fund is to transform food systems through procurement practices that increase opportunities for farmers, food producers, organizations, and social enterprises led by people of color in innovative, locally-led ways. It will seek to improve access to good food, particularly for marginalized communities, by supporting partnerships and new approaches that will change how community institutions buy their food.

In the United States, institutions spend approximately \$120 billion on food annually, but the benefits often do not reach the farmers, fishers, food producers and distributors, and other food

workers of color from the communities themselves. The fund aims to distribute \$50 million over the next 10 years to community leaders committed to transforming these systems to be more just; \$11 million has been pledged to date.

“With this joint effort, we hope to expand the purchasing power of key institutions, including grocers, schools, and community food procurers, such as The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). Nutritious foods cultivated in the Southwest are different from the foods that have sustained the tribes in the Pacific Northwest for generations. No one knows the needs of a community more than those that live within those communities,” said Toni Stanger McLachlan, CEO of the Native American Agriculture Fund. “Therefore, The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF), in conjunction with other founding funders, hopes these grants will increase local Tribal vendors and improve engagement of Tribal producers in the food procurement system”

Uniting under the belief that it is past time for greater focus on equitable good food procurement, the Fund will promote health equity, racial equity, food justice, good food and economic justice, environmental sustainability, and participatory grantmaking. “Good food” is defined within these shared values as being affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate. It supports physical, economic, and community health; regenerates, protects, and respects natural resources and animals; and ensures that all people involved in the value chain live with dignity and freedom from oppression and exploitation.

“In terms of changing the food system and making it available to all – not just from the consumption standpoint but also from the enterprise standpoint – the system has to be more



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inclusive of BIPOC farmers and women, including in logistics, processing, or anything that takes it from farm to table,” said fund advisor Betti Wiggins, officer for the Office of School Nutrition, Houston Independent School District, who helped to contribute to the design of the fund. “Growing Justice will provide that opportunity with the training and support these individuals may need.”

“Procurement is a powerful tool that can transform our food and farming systems,” said Carla Thompson Payton, vice president for program strategy for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. “We are proud to collaborate with diverse funders and community partners to operationalize what good food can be for children, families, and communities – while grounding our work in racial equity, community engagement, and leadership development.”

Growing Justice’s work is driven by the wisdom and experience of food workers, farmers, and other producers and distributors across the food value chain. The fund was designed by field leaders from different demographic populations and geographies across the United States. The fund is guided by the collaboration of field leaders and funders working together in an Advisory Committee to determine grantmaking strategy and decisions. This collaborative endeavor provides a unique opportunity for funders to work alongside and learn from stakeholders in the field who have dedicated their lives to providing good food and creating opportunities for economic prosperity. The full list of community leaders and funders collaborating on this effort is listed [here](#).

“The Fund is a major sea change in the way that philanthropy is shifting to include those most impacted by historic inequity in the development of flexible and wholistic funding opportunities,” said Erika Allen of the Urban Growers Collective, Green ERA Educational NFP, and Green Era Sustainability Partners, who participated in the design of the fund. “We are also building mutual understanding through the process of co-developing this national fund that has the flexibility and intelligence to be responsive to the needs of our communities.

Growing Justice is working with its founding funders and other partners to identify and secure new funding to reach its \$50 million goal, and to explore ways to expand opportunities for farmers, food producers, and other BIPOC leaders in the food value chain to access federal, state, and philanthropic funds.

"Today's hunger crisis is another reminder we must transform our food systems," said Dr. Rajiv J. Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation. "By centering people of color's interests across the food value chain, Growing Justice will increase access to good food while stimulating the kind of equitable economic growth that can make opportunity universal and sustainable."

Growing Justice aims to release its first Funding Opportunity Announcement this fall.

Growing Justice: The Fund for Equitable Good Food Procurement is administered by the Amalgamated Foundation, an independent nonprofit public charity. In addition to

administering Combined Impact Funds like Growing Justice, the Foundation also offers Advance Change Funds, donor-advised funds uniquely committed to social change. Reflecting their shared commitment to positive social change, Amalgamated Foundation receives charitable contributions from and maintains service agreements with Amalgamated Bank but is not a program or activity of Amalgamated Bank. For more information, visit online: [Amalgamated Foundation](#) and [Growing Justice](#).

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