

REIMAGINING FOOD SYSTEMS:

Feed'em Freedom Foundation

In 2020, Oregon Food Bank launched Rooted + Rising – an \$80M campaign to channel public and private investments toward innovations that will transform our region: to strengthen the systems that prevent hunger, unravel the systems that propagate hunger, and realize resilient communities that never go hungry.

As a Rooted + Rising project, Feed'em Freedom Foundation's Black Community Food Center and Agricultural Hub is reimagining food systems to be more just. Honoring fair labor and the environment, our communities will grow, harvest and access foods that meet diverse cultural and health needs.

The State of Food Systems Today

Our community deserves economically, environmentally and racially just food systems. Culturally-specific, fresh, nutritious food that is sustainably grown, produced and distributed locally will become our standard, not an exception. Equitably-accessible small agriculture will lead to economic opportunity and vitality throughout our region through community food centers, land access, support for growers and food justice.

We understand and acknowledge that the celebrated Oregon food system, while looked to as a national leader in organic and local food production, is built upon stolen land and the exploitation of Black and Brown workers.

Over the last century, much of the land owned by Black farmers across the country was taken away by white people and institutions through legal, coercive and sometimes violent ways. In 1920 there were an estimated 1 million Black farmers representing 14% of all farmers nationwide, but today there are less than 50,000. According to the Oregon Census of Agriculture 2017, there are only 64 Black farmers/producers in Oregon, or the equivalent of .1% of all Oregon farmers.

What is Feed'em Freedom Foundation?

Feed'em Freedom Foundation (FFF) ignites and centers Black agriculturists as the owners and movement leaders of land stewardship, regional food security, and economic prosperity systems.

FFF is a Black-led small farm incubator that supports emerging Black farmers to grow and celebrate culturally-specific ancestral foods. Black families have faced unprecedented food insecurity due to the pandemic. Currently, 1 in 5 Black families in Oregon experience hunger, with 18% of Black families experiencing high food insecurity – a statistic that is three times higher than white, non-hispanic families. FFF programs build economic strength that flows from the community of food producers directly into the homes of families most in need.

FFF was born from the work of Mudbone Grown, a Black-owned small farm enterprise that grows and celebrates Black food sovereignty. Mudbone Grown became an Oregon Food Bank partner in June 2017, residing on the Unity Farm at OFB NE 33rd Headquarters. From there, OFB has nurtured and supported Mudbone Grown's efforts including being a fiscal sponsor while they developed FFF, the 501(c)3 entity of Mudbone Grown. Mudbone Grown has deep connections with Black, Indigenous and all People of Color (BIPOC) producers, and sees the Black Community Food Center as the space to aggregate small producers' crops and form growing contracts in collaboration with BIPOC processors to build sustainable community wealth.

The Black Community Food Center

Food security and food sovereignty are at the foundation of Feed'em Freedom Foundation's work. That is why the FFF Black Community Food Center will be critical infrastructure in the BIPOC food economy, activating solutions and connections that will lead to the growth of BIPOC-led farms and businesses.



The Center will provide community access to a food pantry, commercial kitchen space, and greenhouse. This will be a place where community-based organizations can host breastfeeding groups, garden education classes and cooking classes. The campus also includes a central gathering hub, cold and dry food storage areas, a hydroponic freight farm and an anaerobic digester.

The Center is a place of innovation, where FFF will cultivate community wealth by connecting small producers to institutional markets, building cooperative growing efforts, and creating agricultural pipelines for youth to grow greater food sovereignty for our community. It will be a full loop system driver for agriculture, incubating the next generation of food system leaders.

The Black Community Food Center Programs

Propagating Produce for the People (PPP):

A culturally-specific agricultural training program that provides comprehensive hands-on instruction, mentorship and technical assistance establishing and growing small business endeavors.

Greenhouse Management: PPP participants to get low-cost vegetable starts into the land of small producers and other BIPOC farms. The revenue from these plant starts will support a sustainable funding model for this program over the long-term.

Hydroponics and Anaerobic Digesting:

Supports climate-resilient vegetable production for small-scale urban farmers. The Center will teach system design, plants and pests management, and water quality testing and analysis. Waste from the site will be processed in an anaerobic digester to generate energy and reinvigorate soils.

Refrigerated and Frozen Storage: Farmers with different microclimates, soil types and infrastructure can only supply produce seasonally. This program aims to bridge this gap with coordination, light processing (chopping, washing, etc.) and cold storage capabilities.

Food Pantry and CSA Distribution: Provides space and opportunities for small producers to connect and distribute their produce and resources with the broader community.

Arts and Activism: The Center's role in the community is about more than job creation. This is where our community will use agriculture as a tool for reconnecting to culture, healing, family and food justice.

Produce Processing and Commercial

Kitchen: Hosts equipment that will benefit CSA members, food makers and food service managers. Named after FFF's grandmothers, the kitchen is a classroom where we build intergenerational connection.

Peer-To-Peer Learning Space: Our community will convene to strengthen our collective by sharing knowledge with one another on topics ranging from aquaponics and sustainable farming practices, to key produce preservation techniques and more.

\$5M

Black Community
Food Center capital
project target

\$500,000

annual anticipated
ongoing operating
expenses

How You Can Help

The FFF Black Community Food Center will bring vital investments to a community that has experienced historic injustices and systemically racist barriers to building generational wealth. Oregon Food Bank believes supporting Black farmers is critical to address and solve food insecurity across our region – and that’s why we’re asking for your investment in FFF’s Black Community Food Center through Rooted + Rising. The Black Community Food Center capital project aims to raise \$5 million with an anticipated, ongoing \$500,000 in annual operating expenses.

We urge your support for this project, allowing Feed'em Freedom Foundation to strengthen regional food economies, foster job creation, bolster community-led support services and increase Black participation in the green economy. To discuss your support of the Black Community Food Center, you can reach Shantae Johnson, Feed'em Freedom Foundation Executive Director and other FFF staff at FeedemFreedomFoundation@gmail.com. To make an online donation today, visit feedemfreedom.org

 @feedemfreedomfoundation



“Creating prosperity and bridging the wealth gap can’t happen without land access. If you can get on that land and work the soil, grow food and create jobs, you can create a path toward community sovereignty.”

— SHANTAE JOHNSON

Executive Director, Feed'em Freedom Foundation
Co-Founder, Mudbone Grown; OFB Board of Directors

Learn More at OregonFoodBank.org/Mudbone-FFF



**ROOTED
+ RISING**