



FOOD AND FARM

COMMUNICATIONS FUND

collaborative grantmaking to
advance grassroots communications



“*Our communications need to draw from positive values in our communities that are often discounted in the dominant narrative. Advancing a new public narrative—about farming, about the land, about community, about racial equity, about food—is a tall task, but one we believe is essential to changing the tide.*”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE



Our Mission and Vision

We are a multi-funder collaborative and pooled grant program organized around a shared belief in the role of strategic communications and narrative to build power and embolden transformative change.

We provide targeted communications funding and resources to community-based organizations working at the forefront of food and farm systems change, and support communications initiatives and media projects that help shift narrative and further the goals of the grassroots and their allies.

We have a vision of a future in which food and farm systems enrich and nourish the people, places, and ecological systems on which they depend, and where those working to uphold these values have the capacity and resources they need to effectively communicate their work, shape the public narrative about food and farming, and promote equity, wellbeing, and resilience in our food and farm systems.

“The food industry spends billions to influence the public’s understanding of food and farming and, by extension, control policies and markets. We can’t match them dollar for dollar, but we can **help communities get their voices out there**—and we can and should recognize the critical role of communications in achieving real change.”

—LESLIE HATFIELD, GRACE COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATION



Photo Credits: Kati Greaney Photography of Pie Ranch (Cover); Team by Food Chain Workers Alliance (left); Food Justice Dialogue by Leah Cohen (right)

\$2.5+ million

in communications grantmaking since 2012.

50+ grantees

from 20 states and 5 countries.

8%

of groups that have submitted a Letter of Interest have received a grant to date.

There is a huge need for communications funding.

Our History

In 2010, The 11th Hour Project conducted a national survey of 200 leaders working to create resilient and robust food and farm systems. Leaders expressed an **urgent need for expanding the communications capacity** of food and farm movement organizations. The Food and Farm Communications Fund was launched to respond to that need and since 2012 has invested more than \$2.5 million in the field.

Our Five Key Areas of Funding

- Investing in Communications Strategy
- Building Communications Capacity
- Supporting Storytelling and Narrative Change
- Fostering Collaboration and Connection
- Funding Media that Makes a Difference

“The Food and Farm Communications Fund **took us up two or three levels in our communications work.** The videos we were able to produce were high quality, professional. Two years later, we still use them. This grant not only raised our profile, but the quality of the videos also raised our internal sense of the importance of our work.”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE



Photo Credits: Homeplace Under Fire by Farm Aid (left); Food Sovereignty Breakout by David Crump (right)



“*Food and Farm Communications Fund support allowed us to produce podcasts that **uplift seldom-heard voices and spark dialogue about strategies for change.***”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE

We believe in...

- 📶 the power of story and media to change hearts, minds, and our very perceptions of what is possible;
- 📶 the potential for communications to bridge divides—both real and imagined;
- 📶 the wisdom of the grassroots and those most marginalized by the food system to identify root causes and provide solutions to our most pressing problems;
- 📶 the strength of collaboration and community, and that together we are more effective and powerful in our work;
- 📶 the need to take risks and explore the edges where innovation takes root;
- 📶 the value in keeping our eyes on the long view and the systemic and cultural transformation required to truly achieve equitable, just, and resilient food and farm systems.

50%

of surveyed organizations with budgets less than \$500,000 had no dedicated communications staff.

Volatile landscapes

Most of those surveyed identified the volatile media, political, and technology environments as further constraints on their communication efforts.

53%

of those surveyed said their communications capacity was either “not adequate at all” or “inadequate.”

Based on a survey conducted of 65 organizations in the field about their communications and media needs. (Food and Farm Communications Fund, 2018)

Stories of Impact

Investing in Strategy

Food Chain Workers Alliance, National (2016, 2017)

Funded a communications strategy to help communities discover the potential of the Good Food Purchasing Program, which aims to fundamentally transform the way public institutions purchase food and grow the market for a values-based supply chain. To date, the campaign has reached dozens of public institutions and now influences nearly \$1 billion in food purchases annually.

Building Communications Capacity

Sagal Radio Services, Stone Mountain, GA (2016)

Funded the creation of targeted media in Somali, Amharic, Swahili, Karen, and Bhutanese/Nepalese—the languages of 70% of recently arrived refugees in Georgia—to expand refugees' knowledge of and access to good food locally grown. This project illustrated how the refugee community can strengthen health outcomes by working together.

Storytelling and Narrative Change

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action, Kapaa, HI (2018)

Funded strategic narrative development to counter the chemical industry's spin against progressive pesticide policy in Hawai'i and amplify calls to action for pesticide regulation at the State Legislature. In 2018, the Governor signed into law the first pesticide regulations in Hawai'i and the nation's first ban on the brain-damaging insecticide chlorpyrifos.

Media that Makes a Difference

Farm Aid, National (2017)

Funded *Homeplace Under Fire: The Farm Advocate Story*, a short documentary capturing the unseen, grassroots work of farm advocates and their fight to keep family farmers on their land. Sharing these stories has been key to inspiring the next generation of farm advocates to support America's farmers during the current farm crisis.

Fostering Collaboration and Connection

Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis, MN (2016, 2017)

Funded multimedia strategy to enhance communications between farmers and policymakers at the intersection of agriculture, soil health, and climate change. This work was key to the sponsorship of a "Soil Health Title" in the 2018 Farm Bill and a soil health briefing for congressional staff in Washington D.C.

“Our Food and Farm Communications Fund grant provided the opportunity to **tell the story of our work**. We are very good at ‘doing’ the work, but not as good at sharing it with our audiences.”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE



Photo Credit: Whose Voice is Missing Project by Frank Kelly



Our Offerings

Core Grants Program — Targeted communications support for community-based organizations and grassroots networks at the forefront of food systems change. Each year, Core Grantees are determined with the synergies of the group in mind, setting up the possibilities for additional group capacity-building, peer-learning, and networking to enrich the grant experience and deepen its impact.

Capacity Mini-Grants — Small boosts to communications can go a long way for organizations with limited resources. These Capacity Mini-Grants support investments in discrete communications capacity-building and professional development opportunities.

Impact Media Awards — Recognizing the invaluable contributions of filmmakers, writers, and investigative reporters in shifting narrative and driving change, the Fund presents annual Impact Media Awards to honor communicators who captivate audiences through insightful and illuminating media projects.

Strategic Grants — This program is designed to support timely, responsive, targeted grants that advance the Fund’s mission yet fall outside of our other grant offering’s criteria and timelines.

“Our grant enabled us to hire a communications person to help us craft a new narrative that has had a **tremendous impact on the consistency and effectiveness** of our message and how we communicate to the outside world as well as our internal networks.”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE



Photo Credits: Apples courtesy of the Oneida Nation Tourism Department (top); Voices of the Food Chain by Real Food Media (right)

Selected Grantees (2013-2019)

Agricultural Justice Project

Alliance for Fair Food

Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities

American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association

California Institute for Rural Studies

Center for Rural Affairs

The Center for Rural Strategies

Center of Southwest Culture

Civil Eats

Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas

Common Market

Community Farm Alliance

Dakota Resource Council

Dakota Rural Action

Farm Aid

The Farmworker Association of Florida

Food & Environment Reporting Network

Food Chain Workers Alliance

From the Heart Productions

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action

HEAL Food Alliance

Institute For Agriculture and Trade Policy

Institute for Journalism & Natural Resources

Land Stewardship Project

La Semilla Food Center

La Via Campesina-South Asia

The Lexicon of Sustainability

Main Street Project

Mesa Media

Mighty Earth

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance

Nollie Jenkins Family Center

Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance

Pesticide Action Network North America

Practical Farmers of Iowa

Real Food Media

Resource Media

Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA

Sagal Radio Services

Savé PNG

Soil Generation

Tohono O'odham Community Action

Union of Concerned Scientists

Western Organization of Resource Councils

White Earth Land Recovery Project

“The Fund is supporting leading-edge efforts for low-capacity groups. This work is **experimental in nature**. It is great to see funders support innovation, even if it carries some risk.”

—FOOD AND FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND GRANTEE







Photo Credits: Film Crew by Agricultural Justice Project (left); Capitol by RAFI-USA (right)

Join Us

The Food and Farm Communications Fund is an open funder collaborative with many pathways to contribute and get involved.

Collaboration benefits include:

-  **Deepened understanding of the field and the role of strategic communications;**
-  **Improved due diligence and a broadened network;**
-  **Opportunities to support worthwhile projects and a cohort outside your typical grantmaking;**
-  **Connections in advocacy, thought leadership, and funding expertise;**
-  **Collective impact with aligned funders working on transformative change.**

“*The Food and Farm Communications Fund has allowed me to find out about and support some of the most **cutting edge, urgent, and creative media initiatives** out there—something that would have been impossible for me to do on my own with the limited staffing and closed grantmaking process of our Foundation.*”

—ANNA LAPPÉ
PANTA RHEA FOUNDATION

Food and Farm Communications Fund Steering Committee

Sarah Bell, The 11th Hour Project

Kyra Busch, The Christensen Fund

Chris Griffiths and Leslie Hatfield, GRACE Communications Foundation

Anna Lappé, Panta Rhea Foundation

Denise St. Omer, Greater Kansas City Community Foundation

Hilde Steffey, Food and Farm Communications Fund

To inquire about joining as a funder partner, or to discuss ways to advance grassroots communications via your own grantmaking, contact **Hilde Steffey, Director**
hilde@foodandfarmcommunications.org

Current Participating Foundations



foodandfarmcommunications.org

The Food and Farm Communications Fund is administered by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation
We are immensely grateful for their capable and steady support. info@foodandfarmcommunications.org