



Slow Food USA®

Slow Food National Resilience Fund

Proposal

The current Covid-19 outbreak is presenting our food system with unprecedented challenges. Small-scale food producers are struggling to pivot to new distribution methods while big agricultural food systems have ample resources and flexibility. At the same time, food security is a growing concern as more than 10 million people claim unemployment. **Immediate action is needed to ensure that diverse small-scale producers – farmers, ranchers, fish-harvesters and other food producers – continue to sustain the local economy, provide fresh and nutritious food to vulnerable communities and build resilience for future disasters.**

Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, with initiatives that protect and promote economic, social and environmental sustainability. In the USA, over 100 volunteer-run local chapters are integrated into the local food economy, and groups like Slow Fish and Slow Food Turtle Island Association (Indigenous communities) have deep relationships nationwide. This diffused and rooted network of farmers, producers, processors, chefs and educators are committed to taking care of our planet and keeping traditional techniques alive. They understand the unique needs of their communities during this pandemic.

We are creating the National Resilience Fund to give direct financial support to community-based producers through local Slow Food chapters and groups. The fund is an investment in long-term biocultural diversity of our food chain. We know that COVID-19 is not the last crisis we will face; climate change is putting pressure on all links of the food chain. **By injecting extra funds to local communities and the producers who most need support now, we will help them survive the current crisis and build resilient economies and communities for the future, with good, clean and fair food front and center.**

Example

Slow Food East Bay (CA) is working to establish a direct farm-to-consumer pipeline through a central hub point. Farmers, especially small-scale BIPOC (black, Indigenous, people of color) farmers, need markets to replace closed restaurant, school or company cafeteria accounts. There is abundant food that needs harvesting and more coming. Most of these farmers don't have the infrastructure and funds to pivot to a CSA-style model. People in the East Bay need fresh food, especially lesser-served communities where fresh food has always been scarce. Slow Food East Bay, in partnership with local farms and organizations, is focusing on creating and distributing boxes of produce at one farm that has plenty of space, then creating an order-ahead system for pick-up with a sliding scale, and delivering boxes to less-served communities. They need funding now to make this project a reality.



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Detailed Strategy

Slow Food USA, in collaboration with our local chapters and national groups, is setting up a **National Resilience Fund** to directly support community-based producers so they can continue to provide rural and urban consumers with good, healthy food on a daily basis.

How It Works

Slow Food USA will aggregate funds from national and regional funders, and direct money through Slow Food chapters and key on-the-ground partners. Partners include the Slow Food Turtle Island Association (Indigenous communities), black and Latinx farmer networks, and the Slow Fish network.

Who It Benefits and How We Prioritize

Participation will be available to farmers, ranchers, fish-harvesters, and other small-scale producers who 1) prioritize food access to vulnerable communities, 2) play a pivotal role in the local community, 3) respect the Slow Food philosophy of good, clean and fair food, 4) are not able to get enough support from state or federal funds. We will prioritize chapter and partner efforts that support black, Indigenous, people of color and women. Decisions will be made by SFUSA staff in collaboration with regional coordinators and partners. The funds will be distributed directly from Slow Food USA to the chapters and key partners, to then distribute to the producers.

Outcomes

As we listen to the network, it is clear that each region, each state and each community has vastly different needs. We cannot dictate a one-size-fits-all approach at the national level. Instead, we will rely on the producers, partners and Slow Food leaders to tell us what their community needs to build resilience. But the outcomes of this fund do share commonalities:

- A shortened supply chain between producers and consumers, creating diversified markets for long-term resilience, enabling direct sales to consumers, and improving livelihoods of producers.
- Improved nutrition and food security for households in vulnerable communities, with healthy and fresh food available instead of only shelf-stable foods from corporate chains.
- Retention of employees, creating stability for families in vulnerable sectors.
- Increased synergies between diverse stakeholders in the food chain, connecting tools and channels for direct selling, building partnerships between producers and local partners, and creating long-term robust local food economies.

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