

September 20, 2023

Participatory Grantmaking 101: Funder Peer Learning

Hosted by SAFSF and HEFN

Collaboration | Equity | Respect | Stewardship | Integrity



**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
and FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS**



Co-Facilitators



ERIN OLSCHESKI

SAFSF

Program Director



KALILA BOOKER-CASSANO

HEFN

Director of Programs



Land Acknowledgement

As funders and advocates working to create a more equitable U.S. agriculture and food system, SAFSF believes it is imperative for us to acknowledge that the roots of today's inequities lie deep in the history of land theft and dispossession from Native peoples.

As we convene virtually, we name that our staff is on the unceded land of the Arapahoe, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Coastal Chumash, Kickapoo, Manahoac, Monacan, Munsee Lenape, Nacotchtank, Omaha, Osage, Piscataway, Pomo, Shawnee, Ute, and Yucki peoples. Join us in acknowledging the traditional Native inhabitants of the land you are on via chat introductions.

Who We Are

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) is the leading national PSO for funders seeking to drive change in support of just and sustainable food and agriculture systems.

Learn more about membership:
www.agandfoodfunders.org/join-safsf

What is HEFN?

The **Health & Environmental Funders Network** (HEFN) is a funder affinity network that works to mobilize philanthropy around solutions for environmental health and justice. To do this, HEFN supports and grows a community of grantmakers to build knowledge, leadership, and power for environmental health and justice.

Learn more about HEFN membership here:

<https://www.hefn.org/membership>



What is Participatory Grantmaking?

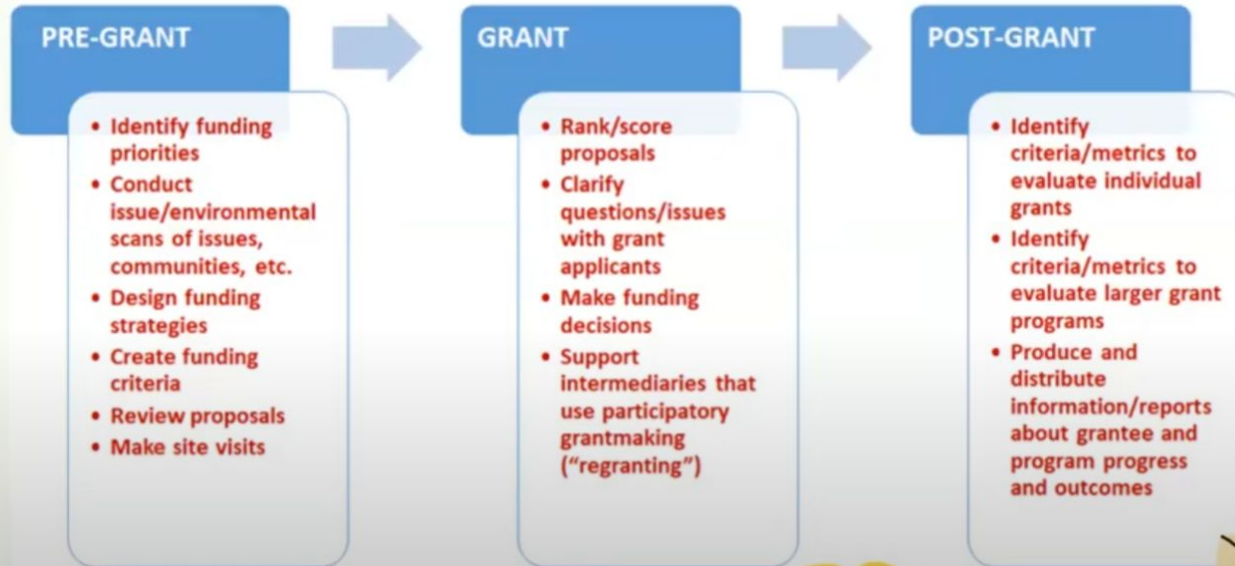
Participatory grantmaking is grantmaking that cedes decision making power about funding – including the strategy and criteria behind those decisions – to the very communities that funders aim to serve.

How is traditional philanthropy extractive?

- Most of the wealth distributed via philanthropy was/is accumulated from extractive practices
- Tool for the wealthy to stay wealthy
- Exploitative system in which funders have power over grantees, and grantees have very little say in how grant decisions are made.
- ***These power dynamics are not the fault of individuals or foundations - they are structural.***

Expanded Definition

Some see participatory grantmaking as a process that offers many opportunities for peers to participate (which is sometimes called participatory philanthropy):





Participatory Grantmaking 101: Funder Speakers



SHAVAUN EVANS

*Food and Farm Communications Fund
Director of Programs & Management*



AMANDA TELLO

*Franciscan Sisters of Mary
Senior Program Manager*



MARK MULLER

*Regenerative Agriculture Foundation
Executive Director*



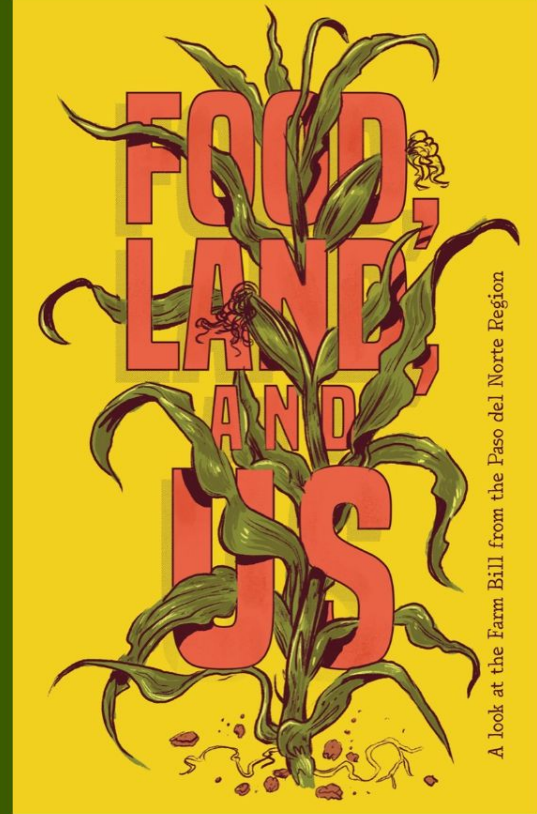
FOOD & FARM COMMUNICATIONS FUND

Participatory Grantmaking 101

Shavaun Evans,
Director of Programs
& Movement Support

MISSION

We provide communications funding and resources for grassroots organizations and networks working to uplift frontline narratives, build power, and embolden transformative food and farm systems change.



OUR VALUES

Collective Decision-Making

We embrace and encourage participatory decision-making in both our grant-making process and strategic direction.

Justice In All Its Forms

Racial justice is our guide and informs how we understand and interact with other forms of oppression, including sexuality, gender, and economic class.

Cultural Organizing

We strive to lift up a counter narrative rooted in community cultural wealth and capacity.

People Power

The core of our work is continually forging strategic connections so that food systems are shaped and determined by the people who comprise them, not corporate interests.

Reclaiming Ancestral Traditions

Rather than claiming that we are creating a new model for food and land sovereignty, we recognize that centuries-long practices are the way forward.





CO-GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP

In 2019, we made a **radical stride in philanthropy by embracing a participatory grantmaking model**. The fund now uses a co-governance leadership model made up of a Grants Advisory and Steering Committee, and two full time staff members who **collaboratively make decisions** about our strategic direction, core values, and grantmaking.

A person is shown from the waist down, using a machete to cut a coconut. The person's legs and hands are visible. The coconut is held in one hand while the machete is used to cut it. The background is a field of green grass and plants. The entire image has a green tint.

OUR JOURNEY

OUR JOURNEY

Formation

2010 – 11th Hour landscape assessment of needs in the field

2012 – Fund begins, spearheaded by one funder and in collaboration with five funders; housed at Greater Kansas City Community Foundation as Donor Advised Fund

2013 – first round of funding – \$300,000; one funder played coordinator – funders met as needed

Evaluation & Re-organization

2016 – recognition of capacity constraints; no opportunity for strategy development or growth; lengthy process for grant applications and review

2017 – 1 Part-time staff hired

2018 – Program evaluation: comms capacity, professional development, narrative development

Ceding Grantmaking Power

2019 – Grants Advisory Committee created to lead grant program development and decision-making; 2 FFCF funders on committee

2020 – 1 Full-time staff (organizer w/ community relationships) hired; TA & comms coaching offered to grantees

2022/23 – Co-governance model implemented to facilitate more intentional collaboration b/w Steering Committee and Grants Advisory; transition GA to full movement leadership – no FFCF funders; Full-time ED (organizer w/ community relationships) hired

GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Adam Hymans
Managing Director of
Resource Media
(former grantee partner)



Juan Santiago
Farmworker Organizer
in Central Valley &
Loan Officer at Feed
the Hunger Fund



**Rubi Orozco
Santos**
Director of Storytelling
and Development at
La Semilla Food Center
(former grantee partner)

GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Onyx Ramirez

Senior Communications
Manager at
Black Farmer Fund

(former grantee partner)



Masika Henson

Documentary Host,
Narrator and Co-
Producer



Mark Shultz

Organizer & Retired Executive
Director of Land Stewardship
Project

(former grantee partner)



GRANTS ADVISORY: THE DETAILS

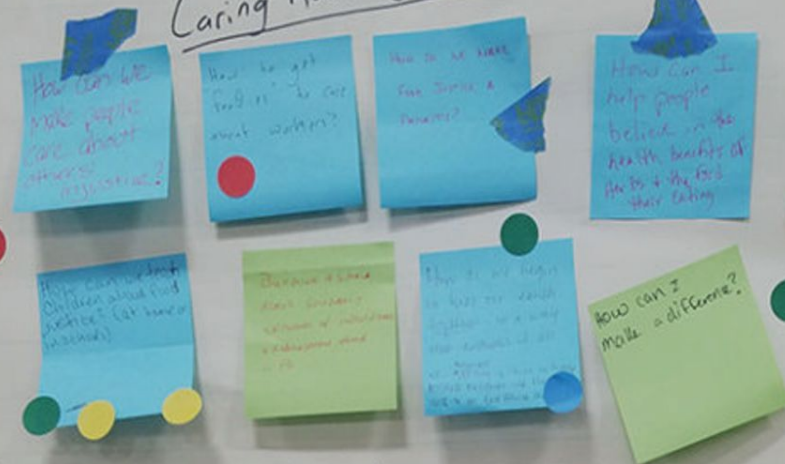
- 1-year term; 5-year term limit
- \$4,000 stipend - estimated 40 hours of work each term
- 4-6 members
- Signed Conflict of Interest
- Typically \$1 million or less to distribute
- 1 or 2 year grants, up to \$50K over 1-year or up to \$75K over 2-years
- Control of 90% of grantmaking budget; 10% for staff-led funding for emergent and higher-touch projects

GRANTS ADVISORY: THE PROCESS

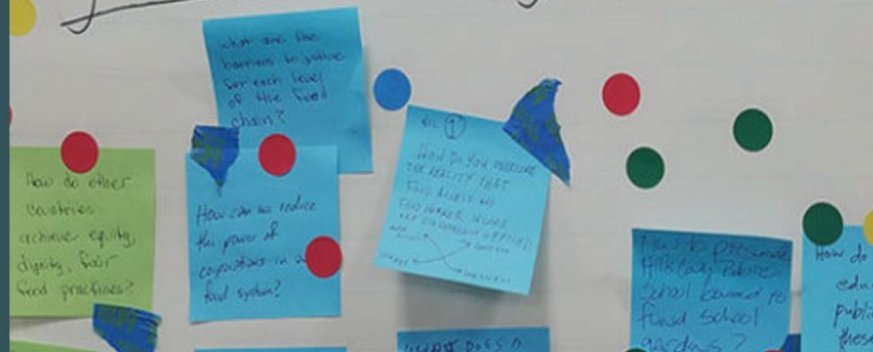
- **Early Fall:** 1-2 trainings focused on implicit bias, transformational funding, just transition principles, etc
- **Late Fall/ Early Winter:** 2-3 grant planning calls: develop grant criteria, focus, application questions, scoring, etc
- **Start of Year:** Outreach to spread the word about grant launch
- **After Application Period Closes:** Initial staff review; opportunity for members to add applications back in for review
- **After Staff Review:** 3-4 weeks review of 40~ applications per member – half as primary reviewer, half as secondary reviewer
- **After Individual Review:** 3 days of 3-hour calls each day to collectively determine final grantees
- **After Grant Announcements:** Debrief of Process

Justice in the food system

Caring About Justice:



Systems Thinking:



THE RESULTS:



Los Angeles, CA

Across Our Kitchen Tables

Food Worker Entrepreneur Field Guide to support the goal of centering BIPOC working in food and building a more inclusive food economy through the production of a print and video field guide for food worker entrepreneurs in the Los Angeles region.



St. Louis, MO

A.C.R.E.S.

Voices of North St. Louis - to support a project that amplifies the voices of north St. Louis community members, and a Black farmer zine that helps community members connect with and support local Black farmers.



Silver Spring, MD

Afrithrive Inc

Reviving our Community Voices through Digital Storytelling - to support a digital storytelling project that aims to amplify the stories and lived experiences of marginalized and underserved Black immigrant gardeners and community members in Baltimore County.



El Sobrante, CA

Agroecology Commons

Evolution of a Farmer Film - to support the creation of a short documentary film called Evolution of a Farmer that will follow real life people along the humbling journey of becoming a farmer.



New York, NY

Black Farmer Fund

Black Farmers Thriving - to support a strategic, cross-platform, and multi-stakeholder communications strategy that increases the Fund's visibility and shifts narratives about Black farmers towards abundance and thriving on land.



Jackson, MS

Center for Mississippi Food Systems

MS Food Futures: BIPOC led, BIPOC determined - to support the development and implementation of a culturally appropriate communications strategy that supports BIPOC led food systems transformation in the Delta, Coastal, Central & Choctaw regions of Mississippi.



Ventura, CA

Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

Farmerworker Living Wage and Climate Resiliency Campaign - to support communication strategies that support organizing farmworkers to win livable wages in the agricultural sector, strengthens safety nets, particularly for immigrant workers, and to draw investment from state and local government agencies to support farmworkers in exercising their rights and reporting labor violations.



Brookings, SD

Dakota Rural Action

Sicangu Chapter of Dakota Rural Action - to support organizing a new geographic chapter in Mission, SD on the Rosebud Reservation utilizing sophisticated communication and data tools database and GIS mapping.



Los Angeles, CA

Food Chain Workers Alliance



Germanatown NY

Freedom Food Alliance

Grow Food, Not Prisons! Cultivating



Kapaa, HI

Hui Kaloko-Honokohau

Voices of the Land, Mo'olelo o



Boise, ID

Idaho Organization of Resource Councils

'23 GRANTEE PARTNERS




THE RESULTS:

ESSENCE

NEWS: FOOD & LIFESTYLE

These Women Launched A Fund For Black Farmers Who Were Overlooked By The USDA

ACTIVISTS KAREN WASHINGTON AND OLIVIA WATKINS WERE FED-UP WITH THE LACK OF GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT FOR BLACK FARMERS FOLLOWING THE PANDEMIC.



BY JOURNALS REVIEWS | UPDATED SEPTEMBER 20, 2022

The Biden administration's efforts to right years of wrong done to Black farmers were severely curtailed by a array of measures that response.

healthline Health Conditions Discover Plan Connect

HEALTHY EATING ACROSS AMERICA

NUTRITION Evidence Based

What is Food Justice? These Leaders Explain How They Expand Food Access in Marginalized Communities

"It's time to fix our broken food systems. If community-based, urban agricultural initiatives worked back in the day, then surely they can work again now."

There are varying interpretations and definitions of the term "food justice."

They range from supporting communities in exercising their right to grow and sell their own food, to promoting systemic structures that collectively support access to healthy food, to simply understanding food as a basic human right.

Shan Rose, the New York-based City Parks Foundation's associate director of environmental education, leads an initiative called Learning Gardens. To her, food justice means creating a world where everyone has access to healthy and culturally relevant food.

It would be "a world full of equitable nourishment and connection," she told Healthline. "Food insecurity would no longer exist."

The bottom line is this: in order to achieve food justice, everyone must have adequate access to nourishment without barriers.

But presently, this is far from true.



The New York Times

A New Cookbook by Indigenous People, for Indigenous People

A group of Indigenous chefs is releasing a virtual cookbook featuring digital issues, webinars and videos to reclaim narratives about Native foods.



BY PENNELLY DROZ 10 MIN READ NOV 22, 2022

M. Karlos Baca is the lead writer for "A Gathering Basket," a new cookbook project by a group of Indigenous chefs. The first issue includes a discussion of three leaf sumac, which Mx. Baca holds here. Shana Chachity for The New York Times

By **Eliza Kribben**

9th 11, 2022

Cooking: Feast on recipes, food writing and culinary inspiration from San Simeon and NYT Cooking. [Get it sent to your inbox.](#)

The chiltepin is a tiny, powerfully spicy chile that's the genetic grandparent of nearly every chile varietal cultivated in the United States. It's a living emblem of how [Indigenous ingredients](#) formed the bedrock of American foodways.

But the history of the chiltepin — and that of the Indigenous people in the Southwest who grow it — isn't well documented in

Indigenous and Black Communities Find Common Cause for Land Justice

BY PENNELLY DROZ

10 MIN READ

NOV 22, 2022



Historically, Indigenous and Black folks have been turned against each other by colonizers and enslavers. Now,

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Race Economy & Workers' Rights Gender & LGBTQIA+ Immigration Crime, Reform & Abolition Public & Democracy Climate & Environment Education Health

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

Restoring Hawaiian fishponds revitalizes food systems and cultures

Loke Ia, or fishponds, in Hawaii are a chance to wrest food security and culture back from American colonization

By **Ray Vasquez** October 24, 2022



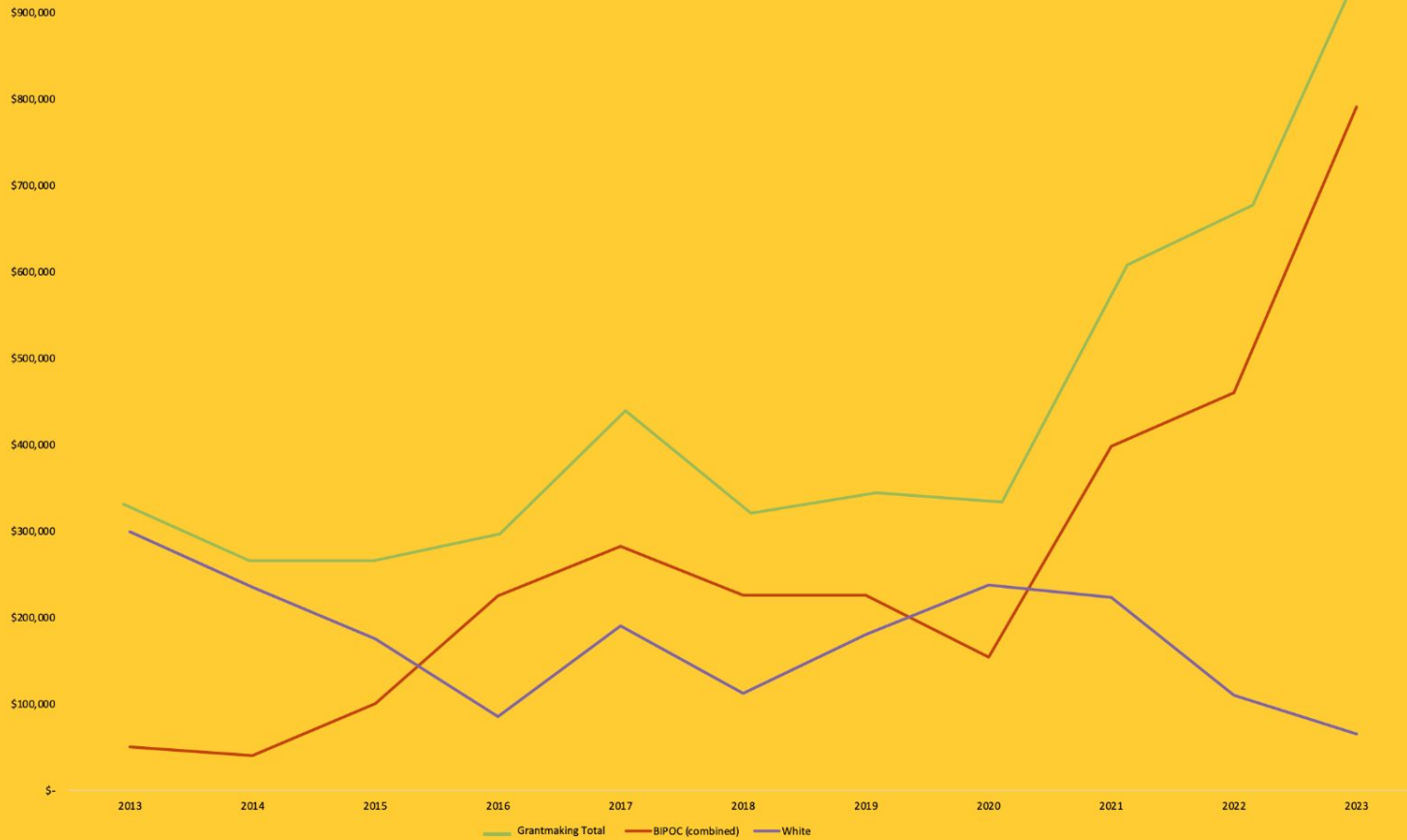
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Year

THE RESULTS:



THE RESULTS:



A photograph of a young Black woman with long braids, wearing glasses and a dark top, smiling warmly. She is holding a large, light-colored leaf. The background is a lush green field of plants, possibly a farm or garden. The image has a warm, reddish-orange tint.

MOVING FORWARD

Increased \$\$ to distribute

*

Training & Skill-sharing

*

Documenting the Process

Organizational Leadership

*

New Processes for Increased Apps & Funding

~ THANK YOU ~

Shavaun Evans

Director of Programs and Movement Support
shavaun@foodandfarmcommunications.org



FOOD & FARM
COMMUNICATIONS FUND

Participatory Grantmaking 101

Starting with this Photo...



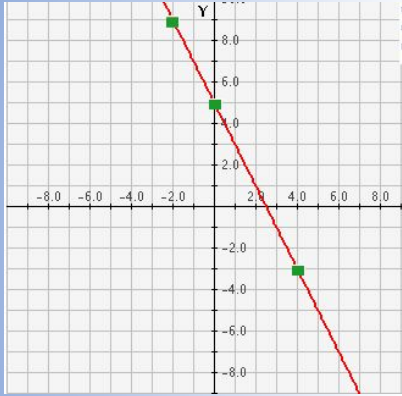
Mark Muller



Regenerative
Agriculture
Foundation

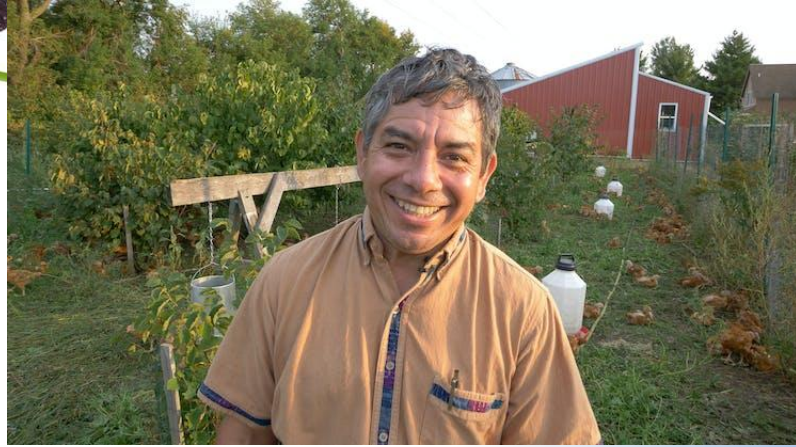
Seeding the Evolution of Agriculture

If your grantmaking objectives are
concrete and achievable...



Then perhaps traditional
decisionmaking works best

If you see the need for emergent thinking and transformational change...



Consider inviting other perspectives and ways of knowing

Unleash Brilliant Uncolonized Thinking



"When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure"

Charles Goodhart, 1975



“Restorying” Regenerative Agriculture



Participatory Grantmaking That Broadens Definitions

- Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network/ La Cosecha
- Black Dirt Farm Collective
- Gangstas to Growers
- Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
- American Indian Mothers Incorporated
- Red Willow Center/ Taos Pueblo
- Black Farmer Fund
- Sistas in the Village
- Catatumbo Cooperative Farm
- Black Oregon Land Trust
- ShipRock Traditional Farmers
- Los Jardines Institute
- Kokua Kalihi Valley
- Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO)
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Grassroots Farm Bill Campaign

Rapid Response Fund

- Open to members of Rural Coalition, NSAC, Native Farm Bill Coalition, National Family Farm Coalition, HEAL Food Alliance, and Good Food for All.
- Selection committee of staff members of those coalitions
- Over \$1 million distributed in grants less than \$10k.
- One more round this winter!

Thank You NSAC & RAFI-USA!!





Regenerative
Agriculture
Foundation

Seeding the Evolution of Agriculture

Watch this Space!
More Participatory Grantmaking
Distribution Coming Soon!

Mark Muller

Mark@regenerativeagriculturefoundation.org

Thank You!

**Register for future SAFSF and HEFN events:
www.agandfoodfunders.org/events/
www.hefn.org/connect/events**

Questions?



erin@safsf.org

kbooker-cassano@hefn.org

PG Learning Community

- A space for both emerging and emergent PG Practitioners to connect and collaborate around their grantmaking practices
- Centers values of **trust, confidentiality, and showing up as your whole self**
- Monthly calls (4th Tuesday of every month, at 2pm Eastern) that include deep dives on funds, discussion of key PG themes and tensions, and targeted support for community members
- Listserv
- Slack space