

# California Foodshed Funders

## Final Report to Nell Newman Foundation

### Grant Period: June 1, 2016 - June 1, 2017

#### BACKGROUND

California Foodshed Funders (CFF) is a fellowship of funders dedicated to accelerating the shift toward regenerative organic farming practices, and sustainably-minded and just food systems. Through shared learning and information exchange, the organization seeks ways to increase members' collaborative impact while engaging other grantmakers in learning about why this work is so essential.

#### OVERVIEW

During the grant period of June 1, 2016 to June 1, 2017, collaboration facilitator Sarah Cabell worked to advance the group's goals and objectives in collaboration with the organization's two co-chairs, Michael Roberts of 11th Hour Project, and Esther Park of Globetrotter Foundation, and active steering committee members.

During the grant period, CFF accomplished the goals set forth in our proposal to Nell Newman Foundation that included:

#### Peer Learning

- Grant Mapping: In 2016, we updated our internal grants spreadsheet that includes grantmaking information from each of our members. This document presents and analyses our members' impact in order to identify new opportunities, and the barriers, to effecting greater change. Members found this data and reporting extremely useful. We have continued to update this document with members' grantmaking information on an annual basis.
- Grant Docket Reviews: Members started convening to review each others grant dockets and to share insights. This has been voiced as one of our most valuable peer-learning activities as it brings to light how our members fund and why. Members' still convene approximately four times per year to review each others grant dockets.

#### Conferences & Events

CFF helped plan and co-host a pre-conference on research, agriculture and climate policy as part of Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders' (SAFSF) annual policy summit that occurred in Sacramento in December of 2016. After the pre-conference, many CFF members attended and participated in the policy conference. The program for this conference is included at the end of this report and demonstrates CFF's role in planning as well as content of the event.

CFF facilitator and members also attended SAFSF and EcoFarm conferences. These conferences provided important opportunities to maintain and to build relationships. and learn about some of the latest innovations in sustainable and regenerative food and agriculture systems, both locally and nationwide.

Additional meetings and events included:

- Monthly calls and check-ins on two tracks of information sharing and policy
- Member networking meeting at EcoFarm
- Member happy hour in Palo Alto on emerging opportunities in California food and agriculture systems
- Open discussion lunch meetings where members discussed various issues, concerns, and opportunities related to food systems funding in California

### First Steering Committee Retreat

In November, CFF successfully convened its first steering committee retreat at Paicines Ranch to assess our progress and membership, and to set goals for the coming year. This meeting created a new direction for the organization and a simplification of its purpose and activities.

During this 1 ½ day retreat, members worked with Joseph McIntyre to reflect on our activities and membership, to clarify core organizational questions, and to create a shared plan of action. During the retreat we addressed the following:

- Why is our group needed?
- What is the change we want to see in California food systems?
- What are our shared values, principles, and framework for moving forward?
- What are the leverage points we want to address through our work?
- How will we address the connection between racial equity and sustainability?
- Who do we want to be working with as members and collaborators?

During the retreat we discovered that while CFF had successfully grown its membership, we were doing so without sufficient focus and clarity of purpose. This made it difficult for members to know how to engage or where they fit in. Our conclusion was that we needed to better define who we are and our focus. The group developed the following framework to describe our purpose and activities going forward:

*The California Foodshed Funders is a fellowship of funders committed to equitable systems change focused on deepening our understanding of critical system failures and leverage points in California food systems, who take on a single topic a year to deepen our capacity to support systemic change towards just and sustainable food systems. The output of our work is emergent, and we may work on projects collaboratively.*

With clearer shared values and purpose, CFF created a strong blueprint for participation and activities.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Organizations that joined CFF in 2016 included the following seven organizations: Panta Rhea Foundation, The Health Trust, Emerson Collective, CCOF Foundation, Leslie Foundation, UNFI Foundation, and the Sustainable Futures Fund. These organizations were joined by long-lasting partner organizations 11th Hour Project, Gaia Fund, TomKat Foundation, Clarence E. Heller Foundation, Nell Newman Foundation, New Priorities Foundation, and Globetrotter Foundation.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Since completing the 2016 - 2017 grant cycle with Nell Newman Foundation, CFF co-chairs Susan Clark of Gaia Fund, and Esther Park of Globetrotter Foundation, have brought Temra Costa on as the organization's manager. Starting in June of 2017, Temra has worked with co-chairs to create a new mission and articulated purpose. With these northstars developed and a new logo and website, CFF is better positioned to educate and inspire both our membership and additional grantmakers in supporting regenerative and organic agriculture and food systems in California. Please visit [www.cafoodshedfunders.org](http://www.cafoodshedfunders.org) for additional information.

In looking ahead, we hope to continue to collaborate with the Nell Newman Foundation in our efforts. After all, the science is in. We have a limited amount of time to stabilize our climate and regenerate our soils to sequester carbon. If CFF is successful, we will continue engaging our members in meaningful programming while bringing more grantmakers to the table to realize a faster transition to regenerative agriculture and food systems for California. We believe that our future depends on it.

