

Building Liberated Futures Through the EFOD Fund

Empowering Communities Through Non-Extractive
Funding for Shared Power and Resilient Food Systems



EFOD
EQUITABLE FOOD
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



Table of Contents

00 Preface & Foundations

Preface: Liberation in the Current Moment	i
The Roots of the EFOD Fund	1
Values of the EFOD Fund	2

01 The EFOD Fund: Who We Are, Who We Represent

Actively Shifting Power & Capital	3
The EFOD Fund Is For Us, By Us	4
The EFOD Criteria	5

02 Economic Injustice in Action; Our Solution

We're Filling a Gap	6
Spotlight on CDFIs: Aren't They Supposed to be the Solution?	7
The EFOD Fund Provides Long-Term Support	8
A Tool For Sustainability	9

03 Growing Community

We're a Growing Community of Practice	10
Our Work Is Part of An Ecosystem of Community Controlled Funds	11
Mapping EFOD: Transforming Communities Across America	12
Building Towards a Liberated Future	13

05 Notes & Resources

Acknowledgments	14
Designer's Note	15
The EFOD Directory	16-17



Preface: Liberation in the Current Moment

We find ourselves once again within another chapter in the long history of systemic inequities within the U.S., during which capitalist incentives create profit for the few via the marginalization and exploitation of the many. Nowhere is this more evident than in our food system, interacting along all nodes with humans sidelined and corporations at the center.

However, we also find that in times of national uncertainty, local organizing becomes even more vital. Local action matters because it is where systemic change takes root, but it doesn't happen in isolation. When communities come together to pool resources, share knowledge, and organize collectively, our coalitions can drive transformative change. While federal and state policies may set the stage, it is these movements—grounded in cultural knowledge, community power, and deep accountability—that make transformation tangible.

Practitioners aligned with the principles of Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD), working collectively to support and resource each other, are living proof of what's possible. They are reclaiming land, rebuilding food systems, and creating ecosystems of care that prioritize people over profit. From farmers and food hubs to cultural spaces and cooperative businesses, EFOD network organizations are redefining what it means to hold power and create wealth rooted in the values and aspirations of the people they serve. This collective effort strengthens not only local communities but also the broader movement, ensuring that solutions are adaptable and shared across regions.

In moments like these, it's natural to feel the pull to move quickly, to act immediately in the face of so much change. But the urgency of this moment reminds us of something critical: **transformation isn't dictated solely by election cycles. It's rooted in the enduring power of communities to lead, adapt, and thrive.**



**Change grows
from the seeds we
plant and nurture
over time.**



“For us,
it's not just the building,
it's the corridor, it's also the
blocks where people live. It's a
holistic plan to preserve what my
grandfather had—an entrepreneur,
who migrated here. We have and will
continue to do everything in our
in our power to create the
circumstances to get people to
stay and preserve
what we know.”

-Asiaha Butler,
Residents Association of Greater Englewood,
EFOD Grantee

The EFOD Fund invests in and supports the growth and **long-term** prosperity of organizations, social enterprises, and businesses that build wealth and assets in disinvested Black, Brown, Indigenous and AAPI communities. The wealth created by these organizations and entrepreneurial leaders has too often been extracted from their communities. Because of this, we believe **profits should be held locally**, and our communities benefit more when they're in control of their own sources of wealth.

The Roots of the EFOD Fund

In 2017, respected leaders of community-based food and social justice organizations around the country came together to create the Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) Collaborative. The Collaborative was created to support organizations working in alignment with EFOD principles - centering Black, Brown, Indigenous, and AAPI-led food and agriculture projects and enterprises as vehicles for shared power, cultural expression, and community asset-building.

These leaders recognized that our communities are often intentionally branded as asset-poor, yet have found ways to thrive and build power in spite of historic wealth inequities. EFOD initiatives are a response to the systematic disenfranchisement, exclusion, and disinvestment of our communities - and a desire to create new systems of social, environmental, and economic interaction.

A central tool for the Collaborative's work has been the EFOD Fund, created to dismantle centuries of wealth extraction and financial exploitation—built on stolen land, enslaved labor, and the ongoing theft of our communities' human, cultural, and entrepreneurial capital. The Fund shifts power by prioritizing community-led financing models over conventional credit and asset-based requirements.

Rather than upholding the same financial barriers that have excluded our communities, we co-design funding terms with practitioners, ensuring resources flow directly to those building solutions from within. By investing in economic models rooted in self-determination, we support projects that create long-term community wealth and ownership.

To date, the EFOD Fund has deployed over **\$8.3 million to 39 organizations**. And we are proud of this work!

While we continue to get money out the door to frontline community organizations^[1] doing this powerful work on the ground, we saw the need to share the collective story of the values behind the fund and the intentionality behind its creation.

This is the story of the EFOD Fund and its impact thus far. It highlights the resilience, adaptability, and brilliance of EFOD practitioners who refuse to wait for permission to build liberated futures. Together, we are proving what's possible when communities collectively build our own systems.

Through this story, we aim to demonstrate the potential of community-controlled finance and inspire a broader shift toward equitable investment in diverse communities. **We hope you'll join us.**

[1]

The term "frontline communities" grew out of climate and environmental justice movement spaces and refers to populations that experience the most immediate and severe impacts of environmental hazards and climate change. These communities often include Black, Brown, Indigenous AAPI populations, and other marginalized individuals who are disproportionately exposed to pollution and environmental degradation. They frequently reside near industrial facilities, waste sites, or in areas highly susceptible to climate-related events, leading to increased health risks and economic challenges. See the following resources [here](#) and [here](#).

Values of the EFOD Fund

The EFOD Fund is guided by values that center our relationships, our pace, and our purpose. We believe in **reparative wealth building**, moving resources into communities most harmed by extraction to support land return, food sovereignty, and collective ownership that rebuilds generational wealth. We uplift **interdependence and solidarity**, showing up in reciprocal relationship—not to fix, but to follow the leadership of those already doing the work. Our capital is rooted in **non-extractive practices**—patient, flexible, and regenerative, aligned with community timelines. We are committed to **community sovereignty**, trusting Black, Brown, Indigenous, and AAPI land stewards, growers, and organizers to determine their own futures with autonomy and care. And we honor **cultural resilience** by resourcing foodways, land-based traditions, and healing practices as essential forms of resistance, identity, and organizing.



Reparative Wealth Building

For practitioners, this is a reflection of the work many of you have already been leading—centering self-determination, leveraging collective resources, and creating lasting economic transformation. We hope this document serves as a tool to affirm, inspire, and deepen your practice.



For funders and investors, this is an invitation to rethink how capital moves. True investment in community-led economies means resourcing projects on their terms, breaking from extractive funding models, and aligning with practitioners as co-creators. The EFOD Fund is proof that this is not only possible—it's already happening.



Interdependence and Solidarity



Non Extractive Practices



Community Sovereignty



Cultural Resilience

Actively Shifting Power & Capital

3

Too often, conventional funding models place decision-making power in the hands of people far removed from the communities they aim to support. The EFOD Fund challenges this by **centering power with practitioners, leaders, and organizations embedded in their communities**. At the heart of this work is the Community Investment Committee (CIC), made up of national leaders in equitable food systems and community-rooted^[2] organizations committed to advancing just funding practices.

The CIC governs the EFOD Fund through a consensus-driven approach that reflects EFOD's principles of equity, accountability, and collaboration. Despite having our financial acumen and expertise repeatedly questioned by conventional financiers, we know the leaders who make up the CIC are the real experts in organizational funding and sustainability. Using tools like the "fist of five," decision-making is democratic and ensures resources align with the visions of the communities they serve.

Beyond resource allocation, the CIC fosters a collaborative funding process. Applicants receive detailed feedback and support to strengthen their proposals, creating opportunities for growth and learning. With mentorship and tools from EFOD's practitioner-led network of technical assistance providers, organizations are equipped not only to secure funding but to build long-term stability.

The EFOD Fund is more than a financial mechanism—it's a vehicle to shift power, challenge extractive practices, and invest in the capacity of communities to lead their own solutions.

The EFOD Fund isn't just about moving money—it's about redistributing power. EFOD organizations are transforming local food systems while preserving culture, creating economic opportunities, and building resilience.



Photo: Malik Yakini and EFOD National Director Trisha Chakrabarti

We're not just addressing access to food—we're really addressing the question of how we shift power in communities so people have the capacity to exercise their agency and determine what happens in their own communities, including what happens with the economy in their community.

—Malik Yakini,
Detroit Black Food Community Sovereignty Network,
EFOD co-founder & Grantee

[2]

Community-rooted reflects a commitment to center the experience and expertise of those most affected by negative neighborhood conditions, and is an alternative to the "community-based" stance of many conventional community development organizations. We use this term as defined by Communities in Partnership (Durham, NC) and referenced in the [July 2020 issue of Metropolitica](#).

The EFOD Fund is For Us, By Us.

The EFOD CIC is made up of practitioner-leaders from across the country who have developed innovative models of land, property stewardship, farmer and food business support, food retail, and collective asset building. We gather annually for a retreat to step back from the day-to-day, strengthen our relationships, and shape the vision and priorities for the year ahead—through deep discussions, shared meals, and plenty of laughter. These gatherings remind us that building community isn't just about strategy; it's about connection, joy, and collective care.



Photo: EFOD CIC members visiting La Semilla Food Center during our annual retreat.

Organizations Include: **Communities in Partnership**, Durham, NC; **Inclusive Action for the City**, Los Angeles, CA; **Mandela Partners**, Oakland, CA; **La Mujer Obera**, El Paso, TX; **La Semilla Food Center**, Anthony, NM; **Loiter**, East Cleveland, OH; **Sankofa CDC**, New Orleans, LA; **Planting Justice**, Oakland, CA; **Detroit Black Community Food Sovereignty Network**, Detroit, MI; plus ally representatives from **Manzanita Capital Collective**, Bay Area, CA; **Conscious Capital Investments**, Los Angeles, CA; **EcoTrust**, Portland, OR; and **First Nations Development Institute**, Longmont, CO.

These organizations collectively make up the CIC, ensuring EFOD investments remain rooted in community priorities. As Rudy Espinoza shares, this work is about more than just funding—it's about direct accountability to our own neighborhoods.



Each of us on the CIC represents community-rooted EFOD organizations, **and we're accountable to our communities every day.** While the EFOD Fund operates as a lender and grantmaker, we also serve as advocates. The most effective advocates are those who possess firsthand experience and knowledge of the communities they represent. They understand how their neighborhoods function and can identify the potential benefits or harms associated with investments. We're here together because we share similar values and a desire to address the problems we've faced ourselves in getting access to capital for our own organizations and communities.

— Rudy Espinoza, CIC Member & Executive Director of Inclusive Action for the City

The EFOD Criteria

The EFOD Steering Committee defined key criteria to identify projects and organizations that embody “food oriented equitable development.” These criteria provide useful definitions to those beginning to explore this work and are a tool for learning and reflection. To learn out more about EFOD criteria, visit www.efod.org.

1

Equity & Justice First

We evaluate projects based on their capacity to dismantle historical inequities and their connection to local organizing. We assess whether organizations collaborate with systemic actors to transform the economic and social landscape.

2

Rooted in a Specific Community or Place

EFOD projects support organizations that are deeply rooted in their communities. We assess how well an organization understands, represents, and engages with local needs and strengths. We consider the organization’s longevity, respect for local culture, and efforts to amplify community voices—ensuring initiatives are driven by the community, not just for it.

3

Building Community Wealth

We prioritize projects that use market strategies to economically empower communities, addressing the unique challenges faced by community businesses and disrupting systemic inequities rooted in capitalism. EFOD-aligned projects focus on strategic economic development, not only supporting but elevating the communities they serve.

4

Community Leadership Development

We prioritize projects where community members are not just participants but leaders, ensuring decisions reflect the genuine needs and aspirations of those they impact, authentically embodying the community’s ambitions and values.

5

Community Ownership

We advocate for initiatives that secure real ownership of physical spaces and economic resources within communities, contributing to long-term wealth and resilience. We prioritize projects that effectively distribute capital, develop sustainable business models, and cultivate a liberatory consciousness among community members.

We're Filling a Gap

For many Black, Brown, Indigenous, and AAPI-led enterprises, **accessing capital often feels like navigating a labyrinth designed to keep them out.** Despite their stated missions to alleviate poverty and promote equity, traditional community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and credit unions often perpetuate the very inequities they aim to solve. Instead of shifting resources toward those most impacted by systemic disinvestment, these systems frequently direct those resources to projects they perceive as less “risky”—leaving EFOD organizations to face entrenched, structural barriers.



I think oftentimes people that work in these institutions, because they themselves haven't been directly impacted or they themselves aren't currently being directly impacted, there's this disconnect. EFOD is different because the investment centers community sustainability over capital gains.

—Camryn Smith,
Communities In Partnership, EFOD Executive Committee & CIC Member



From the start of their funding journey with traditional funding options, EFOD orgs face daunting pre-development hurdles: navigating cumbersome zoning and permitting processes, managing reporting requirements, and securing long-term site control.

Even when these obstacles are overcome, the loan process itself can present additional challenges as shown right.

Traditional funding models prioritize short-term returns over long-term impact, putting critical community infrastructure at risk. These barriers illustrate the urgent need for a different approach—one that centers equity, cultural relevance, and community power.



Predatory Lending Practices

Many EFOD practitioners are forced to accept higher-than-market interest rates and restrictive terms. In some cases, predatory practices strip equity from the very assets communities have fought to secure. Properties and land are often at risk of foreclosure due to balloon payments or unrealistic repayment schedules—creating a cycle where hard-earned progress is undone.



Bias in Risk Assessment

Loan applications are evaluated using frameworks that disadvantage Black, Indigenous, and AAPI-led organizations. These assessments penalize sweat equity, undervalue community accountability, and ignore systemic disinvestment that has stunted wealth accumulation for generations.



Accessibility Challenges

Financial jargon and dense requirements make traditional financing inaccessible to many EFOD organizations. Worse, these models fail to account for the historical extraction and exploitation of wealth from BIPOC communities, perpetuating barriers rather than breaking them down.

Spotlight on CDFIs: Aren't They supposed to be the Solution?

While CDFIs are often positioned as a solution to systemic disinvestment, many organizations rooted in historically underserved communities question whether they're truly delivering on that mission—citing repeated denials, high-interest rates, and equity-stripping terms that put critical community assets at risk.

CDFIs are still very much shaped by a view of capitalism and don't consider community ownership as important.

—Anthony Chang,
Manzanita Capital, EFOD CIC Ally Member



Why the Disconnect?

Under federal regulations, commercial banks can satisfy their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) obligations by partnering with CDFIs, often by providing below-market capital or donations. While this may sound beneficial, the strong presence of banks in the CDFI ecosystem—sometimes even on loan committees—has shifted the culture of these institutions. The result is a system that mirrors traditional banking models—prioritizing institutional control over community ownership.

Here's What EFOD Organizations are Saying:

Despite their mission, many CDFIs fail to meet the needs of EFOD practitioners. In our research, EFOD organizations reported significant frustrations:

76%

of respondents expressed disappointment or lack of access to the CDFIs serving their communities.

52%

described direct negative experiences, including being denied loans or receiving offers with unsustainable terms.

24%

wanted to work with CDFIs but felt unsupported or distrusted their processes



Our goal isn't just to create an alternative—it's to build a system where power resides in the communities themselves. Every step of our process centers applicants, actively dismantles bias, and ensures we're not replicating the extractive systems that have historically harmed us."

—Rudy Espinoza, Inclusive Action for the City, EFOD CIC Member

The EFOD Fund Provides Long-Term Support

For EFOD practitioners, capital is only one part of what's needed. The EFOD Fund offers integrated support that meets projects where they are and adapts to what they truly need to thrive:

- **Grants** for early-stage development.
- **Loans** of up to \$250,000 – 0% interest, no fees.
- **Technical Assistance**, led by practitioners—not outside consultants.

In the corporate world, there's a lot of patient capital to develop a project—being able to work, failing at it, and being able to recreate something from lessons learned...We don't have that timespan to develop those best practices to learn along the way before funding runs out.

– Nezaa Bandele,
Paradise Natural Foods, EFOD Grantee

This intentional structure acknowledges the unique timelines and challenges faced by our communities. Every grant, loan, or technical assistance dollar contributes to building systems that sustain communities over time, anchoring them against displacement, disinvestment, and loss of equity.

For many disinvested communities, loans are seen as dangerous and ripe for exploitation. However, we also understand that large-scale EFOD projects often require a level of capital only available as debt. That's why we're reimagining loans—so that when structured to be non-extractive, they become tools for empowerment, not burden.

This model supports not only project implementation but also long-term growth and community-owned outcomes.

ANATOMY OF NON-EXTRACTIVE FINANCE



Fig. No. 5 illustrates how the EFOD Fund grows like a blossoming plant—rooted in lived experience, nurtured through care, and cultivated to nourish collective power. Here, capital grows alongside community, not away from it.



Photo Courtesy of Kheprw Institute

A Tool For Sustainability

At EFOD, we believe that space is more than just a physical location—it's a foundation for long-term community autonomy. For too long, systemic disinvestment and gentrification have displaced people from the places that hold their histories, relationships, and dreams. Ownership of land and property is a critical tool in reversing this trend, providing stability for communities to grow, organize, and stay rooted.

Whether it's a farm, a community kitchen, or a food hub, EFOD organizations are creating spaces that do more than house programs—they serve as hubs for innovation, cultural preservation,

cultural preservation, and collective well-being. When communities control their own spaces, they can lead work on their own terms, without fear of being priced out or pushed aside.

The Stakes: Ownership in the Face of Displacement

The forces of gentrification and land speculation continue to disrupt communities across the country, particularly in urban and rural areas where land and property values have soared. For Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities, the stakes are even higher—losing access to space often means losing the cultural, social, and economic lifelines that sustain them.

Community ownership counters this. It anchors organizations, strengthens economic self-determination, and protects the continuity of culture and connection. That's why the EFOD Fund invests in projects that secure and develop community-owned spaces—from acquisitions and infrastructure to preserving cultural hubs that reflect the strength and creativity of the people they serve.

The zero percent interest loan we received through EFOD was transformative. It supported our cooperative housing project that provides radical housing, as well as a community space. The flexibility gave us enough time to generate sustaining resources.

**-Alvin Sangsuwangul,
Kheprw Institute, EFOD Grantee and borrower**



We're a Growing Community of Practice

EFOD is more than a funding model or theory—it's a community of practice, a network of aligned practitioners working together to shape a future rooted in justice, equity, and collective power.

This network is built on the shared understanding that no single organization or project can tackle systemic inequities alone. Instead, transformation emerges when communities share knowledge, resources, and strategies, creating ripple effects of impact across regions.

EFOD organizations are transforming local food systems while preserving culture, creating economic opportunities, and building resilience.

The stories behind the funding show what this work truly means. It's a cooperative farm and eco-campus in the Midwest reclaiming land for Black farmers. It's a food hub in California revitalizing local economies and creating jobs. It's the preservation of Indigenous foodways in Alaska, empowering communities to steward their futures. From securing property to launching community kitchens, EFOD grantees reflect the incredible diversity and ingenuity of this network.

This growing community isn't just about scaling projects, it's about scaling solidarity, ensuring that the lessons learned in one place can inspire solutions elsewhere.

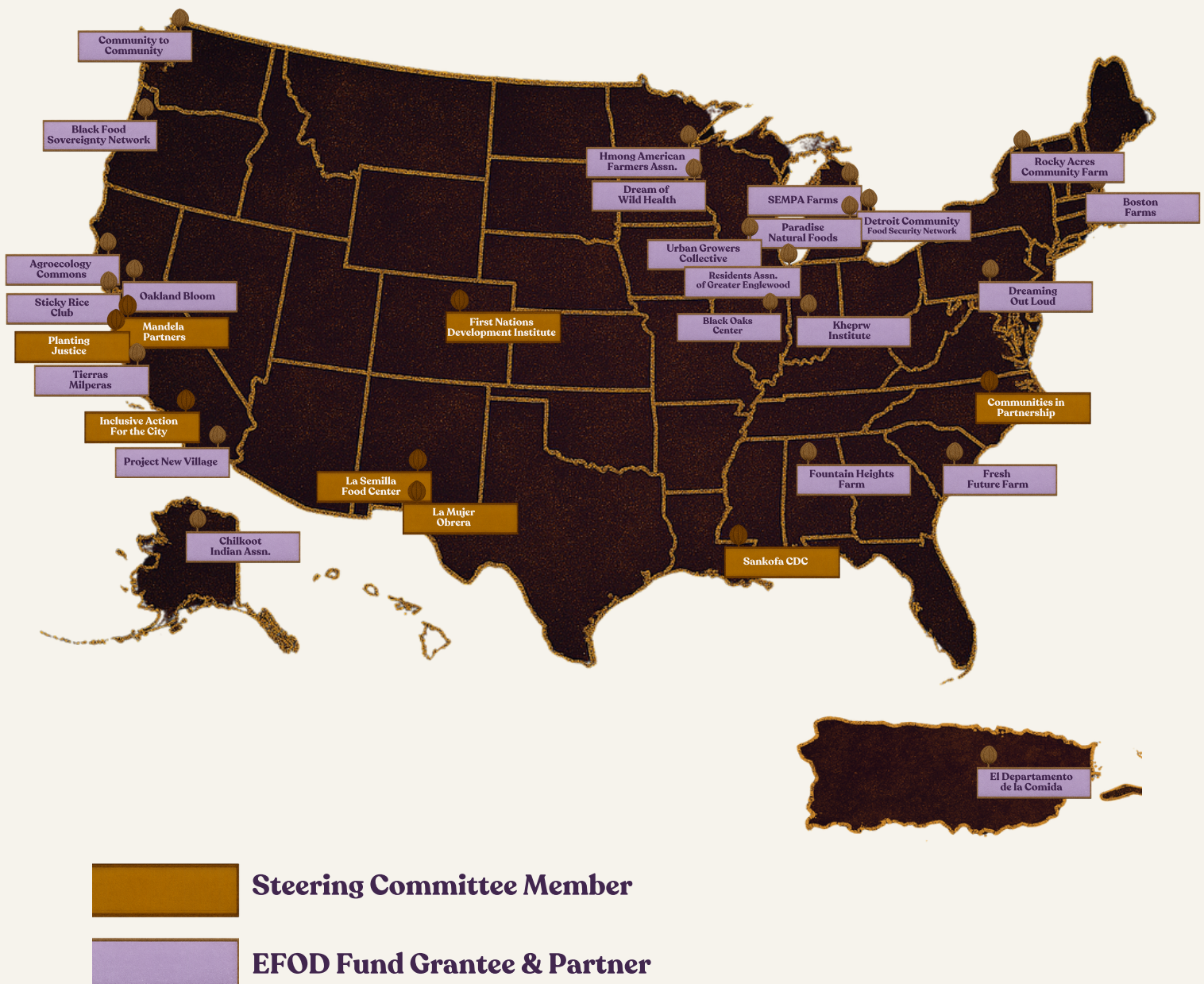
With grantees spanning urban centers, rural towns, and tribal lands, the EFOD Fund meets communities where they are. We don't prescribe solutions—we support locally driven initiatives that respond to the realities on the ground.

By funding projects across regions and connecting local brilliance to a field of national practitioners, the EFOD Fund deepens collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and collective impact.



Mapping EFOD: Transforming Communities Across America

This map showcases the powerful network of EFOD practitioners across the nation, each driving impactful change within their communities!



Our Work Is Part of an Ecosystem of Community-Controlled Funds

EFOD is proud to be part of a growing movement of community-controlled funds that are redefining how capital flows into our communities. We stand alongside incredible networks and initiatives that center equity, local leadership, and cultural resilience in their funding practices. From the National Black Food and Justice Alliance the LIFE group, the Climate Justice Alliance, and countless others, these organizations are building transformative models for how funding can truly serve the people.

At our recent Unconference, we were honored to collaborate with stewards in this work who inspire and inform this movement, such as **Dara Cooper and Shantell Bingham** of the LIFE group, **Cicely Garrett** of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance. Their participation reminded us that no single fund or model exists in isolation; we're all part of a larger, interconnected effort to build liberated futures together.

What unites these funds is a shared commitment to community control, where decision-making is placed directly in the hands of those most impacted. These efforts emphasize long-term investment in community wealth, cultural preservation, and systemic transformation—shifting away from extractive practices and sustaining the infrastructure urgently needed in these crucial times.

We don't see ourselves as the leaders of this movement but as a part of its fabric. Together with our peers, we are creating ecosystems where community brilliance can thrive. It's this collective energy that moves us forward, and we're deeply honored to be in community alongside organizations building these transformative systems of care, trust, and liberation.

This growing community of practice demonstrates that by working together, sharing tools, and learning from one another, we're creating a powerful and sustainable shift—one that uplifts all of our communities and reimagines what's possible. **This is the future of funding: rooted in us, led by us, and for us.**



Building Towards A Liberated Future

JOIN US!

The EFOD Fund Is... Part of a Growing Movement of Community-Controlled Funds

EFOD-Aligned and Community-Rooted Organizations

Use this playbook as a tool to inspire and develop your own strategies for equitable financing. Whether you're building your own fund or strengthening your community-focused initiatives, tailor these practices to your local context. Lean into EFOD's framework to guide your work toward justice and resilience.

Aligned Funders, Investors, and Funder Coalitions

Reflect on the insights shared in this playbook and recognize the power of funding that trusts community expertise.

- **Fund Boldly:** Resource these initiatives with the robust and flexible support they need, giving community-driven projects the freedom to lead and innovate.
- **Share Power:** Shift decision-making authority to those most connected to the work—ensuring investments are not just impactful but equitable.

Social Justice Allies and Supporters

- **Amplify:** Share this playbook with your networks, colleagues, and allies who share our commitment to justice-based solutions.
- **Engage:** Support EFOD organizations by donating, advocating, and collaborating. Explore the network list in the appendix to connect with practitioners in your area or field of interest.
- **Build Bridges:** Bring these ideas into your work, and let's collectively grow a movement that prioritizes justice, cultural preservation, and community wealth.

LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER.

This isn't just about shifting capital—it's about shifting mindsets, power, and ecosystems. Join us in building liberated futures where communities are not only surviving but thriving, on their own terms.

Explore. Engage. Act. The future is ours to shape.



Acknowledgements

This playbook is for our network, our partners, and our supporters—for everyone who believes in the power of community-led solutions. It is a way to remind the world that EFOD is more than just a theory; it is a living, breathing community of practitioners doing extraordinary work across the country. It is a document of celebration and reflection, a way to acknowledge the progress we've made while holding space for the dreams we continue to build. It is also a tool to share the EFOD Fund's story from our perspective, ensuring our voices and values remain at the center of this work.

This document is a team effort. It reflects the wisdom, labor, and vision of so many who have poured themselves into this work. It is a collective story, written through the lens of our communities, our values, and our commitment to creating liberated futures.

Thank you to the EFOD staff: **Trisha Chakrabarti, EFOD National Director; Germaine Jenkins, EFOD Community Network Manager; Ciara Segura, EFOD Research and Strategy Manager, and Ashley Brailsford, EFOD Grants Fellow.**

We would like to extend special thanks to EFOD's **Steering Committee Members**, who steward this movement with care, intention, and vision. As the decision-makers of EFOD, your leadership ensures that this work remains deeply rooted in the needs of our communities while charting pathways toward systemic change. Your dual commitment—to investing in communities nationally while sustaining your own local projects—embodies the very heart of EFOD's mission. Thank you for holding this movement with integrity and for creating space for transformative possibilities.

To our grantee member organizations: your work on the ground is the heartbeat of EFOD, and your brilliance continues to inspire and guide us all. And to the partner organizations that have helped expand EFOD's fund and reach—thank you for believing in the power of community-led solutions and for walking alongside us in this journey.

This playbook is not just a record of where we've been; it is a testament to what we are building. Rooted in the communities that inspire and guide us, it holds space for the possibilities we dare to dream—possibilities that extend beyond what we can see now. It is a love letter to the EFOD network and a reminder that the transformative work we do today is for generations to come.

Together, we are building a world that honors the past, transforms the present, and paves the way for a liberated future.

With love, gratitude, and sacred solidarity,
Monica Cadena
Storytelling Manager, EFOD

Designer's Note

The visual representation of Building Liberated Futures carries the sacred stories of those who have shaped and sustained this land. At the heart are the **Tres Hermanas—corn, beans, and squash**, deeply rooted in the agricultural traditions of Indigenous peoples. These crops are more than food; they are teachers of care, reciprocity, and balance. The squash blossoms, shown blooming, symbolize a moment of emergence and renewal—a reminder that even under uncertain times, life continues to find its way.

The **beans** include **Black-eyed peas**, tied to the knowledge carried by ancestors of the African diaspora, who were forcibly brought to these lands. Black-eyed peas are both a legacy of survival and a sacred offering, feeding not only bodies but also the spirit of resistance and renewal. Alongside them are **Pinto beans**, reflecting the stories of Native people of the Americas, who have long cultivated these seeds in harmony with the earth. These beans carry the weight of displacement and land theft faced by Native peoples and the hurdles of Mexican immigrant and other displaced migrant communities face—barriers to staying rooted in lands many have called home for decades, now exacerbated by shifting administrations that threaten sanctuary and call for mass deportations. They reflect how Black and Brown communities, despite different struggles, are bound together in a web of care and mutual strength.

The **sunflower**, sacred in Native traditions, stands as a symbol of orientation and grounding. Its roots hold steady in the soil while its face turns toward the sun, embodying a sacred relationship between the earth and the heavens. It represents guidance, nourishment, and the stories that connect us to the lands we stand upon and the ancestors who came before.

At the heart of this visual story is a **child**, a reminder of why we do this work. She represents the generations to come, the future for whom we plant and build today. Long-term investment is not just about immediate change; it is about creating the conditions for children and their communities to thrive—not just tomorrow but for generations yet to come.

Above, **the city grid becomes the sky**, dissolving the boundaries between what is grounded and what is infinite. Even as we dream into the cosmos of liberated futures—expanding our work to national, global, and limitless horizons—we remain deeply rooted in the communities that guide and ground us. The city grid reflects the everyday realities of the neighborhoods we serve, holding us accountable to the people and places at the heart of this work, even as we imagine what lies beyond.

At the lower center of the cover, the EFOD symbol rests within a heart of coffee beans, a reminder that, just as coffee fuels our bodies, our love for one another and our communities fuels our work. It is through this love—rooted in care and solidarity—that we continue to grow ecosystems that honor and sustain the people at the heart of our shared futures.

Monica Cadena



EFOD Network Directory

16

The EFOD Network is a collective of member organizations working across various sectors of the food system, including farming, restaurants, community markets, and more. Each member is committed to building equitable food systems that uplift and empower our communities. This directory connects you with these organizations, offering insight into their work and the many ways they contribute to creating lasting change.

This directory is a resource to help you connect with fellow EFOD members, explore collaboration opportunities, and learn more about the innovative work being done across our network.

Agroecology Commons | El Sobrante, CA

Black Food Sovereignty Coalition | Portland, OR

Black Oaks Center | Pembroke, IL

Boston Farms Community Land Trust | Boston, MA

Chilkoot Indian Association | Haines, AK

Communities in Partnership (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Durham, NC

Community Services Unlimited | Los Angeles, CA

Community to Community | Bellingham, WA

Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Detroit, MI

Dream of Wild Health | Minneapolis, MN

Dreaming Out Loud | Washington DC

El Departamento de la Comida | Caguas, Puerto Rico

Fountain Heights Farm | Birmingham, AL

Fresh Future Farms | North Charleston, SC

Hmong American Farmers Association | Minneapolis, MN

Inclusive Action for the City (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Los Angeles, CA

Kheprw Institute | Indianapolis, IN

La Mujer Obrera (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | El Paso, TX

La Semilla Food Center (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Anthony, NM

Loiter (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | East Cleveland, OH

Mandela Partners (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Oakland, CA

EFOD Network Directory

17

Oakland Bloom | Oakland, CA

Paradise Natural Foods | Detroit, MI

Planting Justice (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization) | Oakland, CA

Project New Village | San Diego, CA

Residents Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.) | Chicago, IL

Rocky Acres Community Farm | Freeville, NY

Sankofa Community Development Corporation (EFOD Steering Committee Member Organization)
New Orleans, LA

Southeast MI Producers Association | Royal Oak, MI

Sticky Rice Club | Oakland, CA

Tierras Milperas | Watsonville, CA

Urban Growers Collective | Chicago, IL

Allied Non-Voting Members of the EFOD Collaborative Steering Committee

We want to acknowledge our allied non-voting member organizations who offer unique insights and expertise to support the work of the EFOD Collaborative. Their contributions help strengthen our shared commitment to building equitable food systems.

Manzanita Capital Collective, Bay Area, CA; Conscious Capital Investments, Los Angeles, CA; Ecotrust, Portland, OR and First Nations Development Institute, Denver, CO.

EFOD
EQUITABLE FOOD
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

