

FOOD FORWARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020



MEETING THE MOMENT

OUR MISSION

Dear Food Forward Friends,

As we start a new year tinged with optimism, the tradition of summing up Food Forward's last twelve months stares me down as a surreal and challenging task.

The year that this annual report ties up was – and hopefully will remain – like no other. We were knocked about in 2020, not just as a country but as an *entire civilization*. A sudden pandemic begot an international economic crash. The re-ignition of a global movement for racial justice was followed by unprecedented fires raging across our state, capped off by a pivotal national election.

For Food Forward, it created the groundwork for what has undoubtedly been the hardest year we have faced as an organization. In retrospect, it made our first decade feel very much like a dress rehearsal.

In mid-March 2020, when we began this long, strange trip through the looking glass with our first lockdown, our crew took a deeeeep breath and made sure everyone was safe. As soon as we were deemed an “essential business,” we collectively **jumped back into our work with a vengeance**—work that was now more critical than it had ever been.



Like many of you, last spring we were beyond distraught seeing footage of millions of Americans, some newly food insecure and others who were already struggling to feed their families, **snaked for miles outside food banks**. At the same time, farmers without markets for their produce plowed entire fields under.

But, out of the shock, a moral imperative grew—not unlike the one I felt before founding Food Forward twelve years ago—only much more intense. Just weeks into the pandemic, in early May, we collectively committed to take our efficient, impactful produce recovery machine and scale it to meet the tsunami of need as best we could.

As such, **this became the year of The Sprout (El Brote)** an extension of Food Forward's Produce Pit Stop, which grew quickly to sprout hope, resilience, and most importantly, results. It sprung from the fertile surplus produce of a nation's broken food chain and the sweat and commitment of Food Forward's intrepid staff. These qualities aligned with our incredibly

responsive funding community who enabled us, sight unseen, to take on an unproven triage solution.

We added an 8,000 square foot extension to our 10,000 square foot warehouse to provide more produce to dozens of small and medium-sized agencies now on the front lines of a once-in-a-generation national hunger crisis. **We also quickly launched new distribution sites, responsive and flexible to the needs of our partners.** These funders – *the majority of whom didn't even know our name a year ago* – hitched themselves to our vision and, in less than ten days, collectively supplied the resources to help The Sprout germinate.

On every front, it was all-hands-on-deck, with staff ready to learn new skills and be redeployed as needed. We knew we had to grow to meet the moment. Still, little did we know that by year's end, we'd be responsible for the distribution of over 62 million pounds of fresh produce. That is almost 2.5 times what we delivered to hundreds of food insecure communities in all of 2019.

While our passionate staff of fruit masters, outrageously dedicated Board, extremely giving advisors, and steadfast volunteers pulled together to reach another milestone – OUR 100 MILLIONTH POUND DISTRIBUTED – we did it mostly while being apart in a way we'd have never thought possible just a year ago.

We see hope on the horizon and buds on the trees. New vaccines are taming the pandemic, and a new administration is prioritizing food security and the underlying issues of inequity that propel it. While this all takes shape, Food Forward still has its work cut out. We thank you for being there with us during a historic year that tested us all. Here's to that and a much quieter 2021.



Rick Nahmias, Founder/CEO

OUR 2020 IMPACT



62.5 MILLION
POUNDS

FRUITS & VEGETABLES
RECOVERED & DISTRIBUTED



160
NEW AGENCIES
WERE ONBOARDED



7¢
ORGANIZATIONAL
COST TO RECOVER
AND DONATE ONE
POUND OF PRODUCE

17,556
METRIC TONS OF
CO2 EQUIVALENT
PREVENTED



THE FARMERS MARKET
RECOVERY PROGRAM
HAD ITS LARGEST
SINGLE GLEAN EVER:

3,883
POUNDS RECOVERED ON
OCTOBER 25 AT THE
HOLLYWOOD FARMERS
MARKET

1,200
PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED IN
THE FIRST
LA FRUIT SHARE



901,472
BOXES DISTRIBUTED
THROUGH USDA'S FARMERS
TO FAMILIES BOX PROGRAM

2020 STORIES



Making a difference

Since Food Forward began, we have relied on volunteers' passion and dedication. Despite putting community volunteer events on hold, our Event Leaders didn't slow down.



Sprouting hope

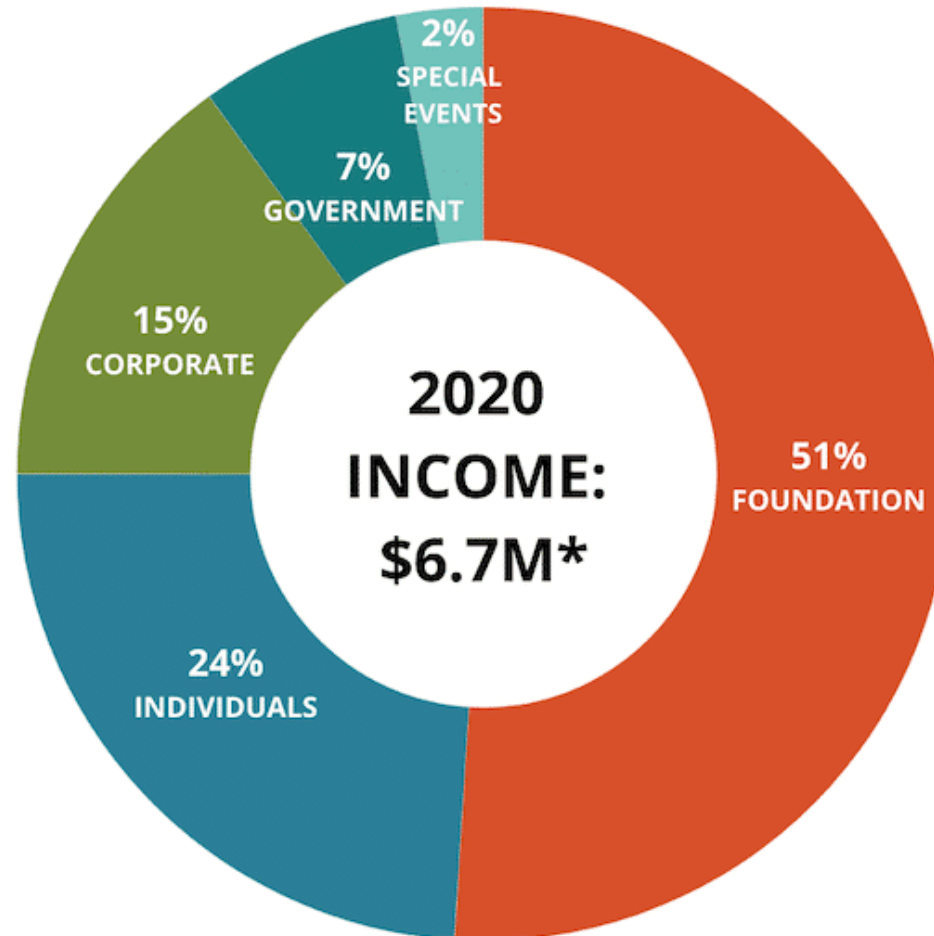
In 2020, thanks to our funding community's generous support, we greatly expanded the Produce Pit Stop to meet the growing demand for food.



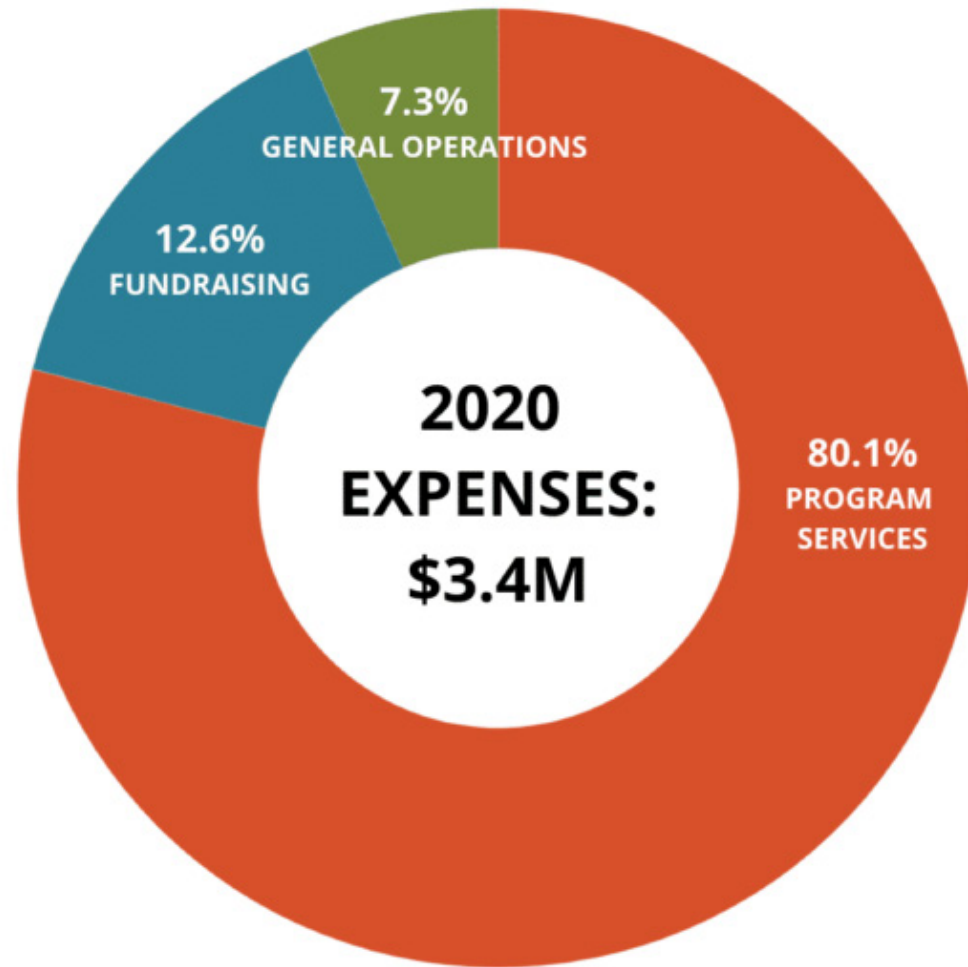
Increasing food access

A key component of Food Forward's emergency expansion in April included rapidly increasing Food Forward's "Produce Hub" distributions across Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

FINANCIALS



* We are grateful for the extraordinary support during the unprecedented emergencies of 2020. The total above includes funding received for programs and operations starting in 2020. (Food Forward received additional funding in 2020 that is restricted for program support in 2021-2023, which will help us continue our work through the recovery and beyond.)



Food Forward operates with efficiency. With our budget of \$3.4 million in 2020, we distributed produce valued at \$108,815,424 — an astounding 32 times return on social investment!

To make a financial contribution, please visit foodforward.org/give

For a copy of Food Forward's 990 tax form, please email development@foodforward.org.

OUR TEAM



Our Staff



Our Board



For every dollar you give, we provide 14 pounds of free, fresh produce.

DONATE