



September 2020

CO4F METRICS

As of June 2020

\$8,500,000
Total Capitalization

\$1,841,307
Funds Available

\$6,658,693
Total Funded and Committed

Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F) improves access to healthy food in underserved Colorado communities by financing grocery stores and other forms of healthy food retail.

PARTNERS



High Plains Food Cooperative Expands with CO4F Support to Launch Home Delivery Program

CO4F was proud to provide a \$50,000 grant to support the Colorado-based [High Plains Food Cooperative](#) (HPFC). The grant helped the co-op purchase equipment to launch its new Build a Farm Box home delivery program and serve more clients. This has become critical to communities during the COVID-19 pandemic as the need for fresh food and delivery service has spiked significantly.



“Most of the co-op function up until March 2020 was through pick-up sites, where once a month, we’d bring product from all our different farms for direct distribution to consumers. Once COVID hit, that became unfeasible because we were reliant on a lot of volunteers being close together. For a few months prior, we had been piloting home deliveries with Bondadosa of our farm boxes. So, we were just about ready to start that program slowly over the summer and scale it up but by the last half of March, we were already doing a large volume of weekly home deliveries,” said Neal Zelarney, HPFC Board President.

Essentially an online farmer’s market, HPFC serves both rural and urban areas of Colorado within a 25-mile radius of downtown Denver. Its food supply comes from more than 50 family farmers located along the plains of Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska, which is then aggregated at Emerald Gardens in Bennett and East Denver Food Hub. Bondadosa, which has also received past support from CO4F, serves as HPFC’s distributor.

“As we started to see the fallout from the pandemic, we realized that we had a very strong value proposition and responsibility through the network and the partnerships that we built to get food to people,” said Roberto Meza, HPFC Board Member, Co-founder of Emerald Gardens, Director of Operations at East Denver Food Hub.

What led HPFC to seek CO4F funding included logistical challenges that prevented HPFC to scale up and meet demand. The \$50,000 CO4F grant allowed HPFC to purchase a new



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delivery vehicle, walk-in cooler, and an egg-washer. These improvements have made operations significantly more efficient and enabled HPFC to meet demand.

“The bottleneck with scaling anything is processing,” explained Chris Sramek, HPFC Vice President of Customer Development and Board Member. “The egg-washer allows us to package and process eggs—a weekly staple item—in much less time. The new truck has a customized shelving system that allows us to separate orders and stack vertically to use the whole truck. And the walk-in cooler is critical now because we’re going from one farm to another.”

With HPFC in position to meet the growing needs of its customers and communities, it hopes to further expand in the future and serve as a pioneer in sustainable, equitable food access thereby strengthening communities overall.

“What really motivates us as a partner being involved with the local food system is not only how funding can help us develop more sound business practices but how can we create lasting change for our communities. We see it as not an investment in us, but actually an investment in our communities because we’re able to radically change the way food is produced, aggregated, and distributed by shortening the supply chain, pivoting during the pandemic, and now serving other communities that have been struggling to access fresh, local food.”

Meza added that HPFC provides opportunities for food producers of color who have historically been marginalized in accessing markets to remain viable.

“For me, this project has become a mission to break down barriers and adapt to challenges we’re facing with social justice and poverty in both rural and urban areas,” said Sramek.

To learn more, please visit highplainsfood.org.

Photo courtesy of High Plains Food Co-op

Andrea Buglione, P.U.M.A.
720.510.8567
CO4F@pumaworldhq.com

Tim Dolan, CHFA
303.297.7318
tdolan@chfainfo.com



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