

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding several fresh vegetables, including carrots and onions, with their green tops and roots. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal white overlay.

# FEED PHOENIX INITIATIVE

AUGUST 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021



City of Phoenix



## CITY OF PHOENIX

# FEED PHOENIX INITIATIVE

### FEED PHOENIX INITIATIVE SYNOPSIS:

The Feed Phoenix Initiative was a collaborative project between Local First Arizona and City of Phoenix utilizing CARES Act Dollars to bring high-quality meals to COVID-impacted families across the City of Phoenix. Local restaurants, caterers, and farms were utilized to help prepare meals from Phoenix-grown produce in order to sustain local jobs and supply chains, strengthen the local food economy and, most importantly, help keep all Phoenicians healthy during the ongoing COVID-19 economic, health and social crises.

### AUGUST 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021 FEED PHOENIX IMPACT:

- A total of 80,760 meals were served
- 6,405 Thanksgiving meals served
- 5,491 fresh produce bags were distributed

### AUGUST 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2021 FEED PHOENIX SMALL BUSINESSES SUPPORTED:

- 12 participating farms
- 45 participating restaurants
- 29 distribution centers

Due to the pandemic, most of Phoenix's small urban farms had all but completely lost their wholesale customer base and were resorting to dumping produce in compost or the trash. This initiative ensured that these small farms could sell their produce, thereby making up some loss of income, maintain as many jobs as possible for farm operations, and prevent valuable and nutritious food from rotting in their fields or being burned. Through Feed Phoenix, farms supplied restaurants with fresh produce to include in the meals and created fresh produce bags that were delivered directly to distribution centers for families being impacted by COVID.

Participating local businesses like restaurants, catering companies, event venues, and mobile markets took the fresh produce they received and prepared and delivered individually boxed meals to distribution centers. These Phoenix-based businesses lost primary revenue streams like full-scale dine-in options, event-based revenue, catering contracts, and any other residual income. As a result of the program, many of the restaurants and caterers were able to then keep their lights on, pay rent, and pay their employees while feeding their communities. These local businesses have forged new relationships with local farms that will last beyond the crisis, resulting in a more resilient and sustainable food system.

Distribution centers and the people they served were also in crisis prior to this program. They lost their volunteer teams, closed their shelters and communal gathering areas, lost funding, and were unable to direct people (especially seniors) toward other assistance because everything was stretched so thin. Senior centers that supplied meals to seniors closed completely. Through all of this, the number of people who needed assistance was continuously rising as people lost employment or shelter, and their support structure was reduced or eliminated.

The Feed Phoenix Initiative supplied healthy, nutrient-dense meals to people who were at a higher risk of catching COVID or other illnesses. Oftentimes, the one meal received because of this program became that person's only full meal of the week. Participating organizations understood the beauty of supporting these distribution centers and communities and, as a result, have created wonderful relationships as they continue to overcome the struggles associated with COVID-19.

## THE APPLICATION/RFP PROCESS

Restaurants and farms each had their own RFP application that they could use to apply either online or via hard copy. The RFP was open for 7 days (from July 10-17, 2020) and the applications were evaluated over the following 7-day period.

Restaurants, caterers, and food producers had to meet the following criteria:

- located within the Phoenix city boundaries
- able to supply 50-500 meals depending on distribution point
- adapt meals to meet the needs of the demographics or distribution centers
- stay within the specified budget
- confirm all required licenses
- commit to utilizing environmentally friendly containers
- give references of prior experiences
- describe two menu options that included at least three produce items
- deliver meals or arrange for delivery of meals to distribution centers
- adhere to CDC guidelines and wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE)
- provide photos of meals and their team for reporting purposes

Farms, growers, and produce amalgamators had to meet the following criteria:

- located within the Phoenix city boundaries
  - confirm all required licenses
  - adhere to CDC guidelines and wear the recommended PPE
  - provide photos of location where produce is grown and deliveries for reporting purposes
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- supply produce throughout the time of the program even during a brutal summer
- give examples of produce that would be available
- describe their organization's food safety practices

Please review the [Feed Phoenix Businesses](#) document to learn more about participating restaurants and farms.

## CHOOSING THE DISTRIBUTION CENTERS:

Each distribution center was screened and chosen based on the following criteria:

- Located within low-to-moderate income areas in the City of Phoenix
- Their ability to collect or share data on the people they serve
- The demographics of the people they serve, including:
  - zero to low-income individuals
  - those living in areas that have a higher concentration of COVID positive results
  - seniors or disabled individuals
  - people or families who are financially struggling because of COVID-related issues such as loss of work, income, or an increase in medical bills
  - families having difficulty accessing fresh produce or well-balanced meals

## OUTCOMES:

- While there was a wide age range served, from children to seniors, 65 to 70% of the meals delivered each week were to people 55 and older
- All recipients of the meals were in the lowest income bracket earning zero or very little income
- All recipients were affected by COVID-19 in some way
- Distribution centers were located in and distributed meals to people living in areas where access to fresh food was limited

Please review the [Feed Phoenix Businesses](#) document for more information about the distribution centers.

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## FEED PHOENIX MEALS:

All meals produced by the program incorporated Phoenix-grown produce, were packaged in environmentally friendly containers, and were healthy, nutrient-dense meals. The most popular meals included:

- Lovecraft's smoked pork street tacos topped with cabbage slaw with rice and beans
- Citron Catering's box lunches that included gourmet sandwiches with bowtie caprese pasta salad
- Witnessing Nature In Food made BBQ chicken sandwiches for one meal and a roasted seasonal vegetable salad with cilantro lime vinaigrette and grilled chicken for another meal
- Chino Mex whipped up Orange Chicken "ChimiChinas" with a side of Lo Mein
- Sana Sana Foods featured their HRC Wraps: ancient grains (wild rice, quinoa and beans), sunflower shoots, cucumbers, bell peppers, and tomatoes wrapped in a flour tortilla, chips, and fresh fruit
- Amici Catering provided pasta with meat sauce, roasted broccoli with seared lemons, and garlic bread, as well as penne pasta with tomato cream sauce, chicken, mozzarella, and roasted veggies
- Chef Beckett created BBQ roasted pork and smoked ham wraps with lime cilantro cream cheese, apple, and cabbage slaw
- All About Food made Swedish meatballs served with vegetables and egg noodles
- Fresh From the Kitchen's Chicken Caesar Pasta Salad included broccoli, red onion, zucchini, yellow squash, and fresh herbs.
- Moira Sushi featured wok seared locally grown bok choy, basil, bell peppers over rice with Vietnamese garlic shitake sauce



## PARTICIPATING FARMS:

Participating farms providing produce to the program were small to medium-sized farms that were based in Phoenix. Green on Purpose was a collaborative partner and served as an amalgamator and distributor of produce from Phoenix farms to participating restaurants. Paris Masek, owner of Green on Purpose, collected orders from restaurants, placed the produce orders with the farms, and then distributed produce directly to the restaurants.

Utilizing Green on Purpose streamlined the process between farm and restaurant and allowed restaurants to have a wider variety of produce options for their meals and has made it easy for restaurants to continue to order locally grown produce beyond the completion of the Feed Phoenix Initiative.

The program also provided bags of fresh, seasonal produce for individuals to enjoy and included enough produce for approximately five meals. Some of the bags included descriptions of produce, recipes, and directions for cooking or eating. Some farmers delivered and passed out the bags themselves and offered insight to the produce included.

- Project Roots is a non-profit farm located at Agave Farms in Central Phoenix and Spaces of Opportunity in South Phoenix that specializes in greens, onions, tomatoes and peppers.
- Maya's Farm in South Phoenix experienced their first financial hit when closed restaurants cancelled all of their produce orders. Her second hit came from the summer heat, no summer monsoon rains, and a mini tornado that ravaged her farm. Through Feed Phoenix, Maya was able to move produce that normally would have had to go into her compost bins. For her CSA bags, she created "meals in a bag" with potatoes, onions, garlic, herbs, greens - everything needed to make sauteed veggies or soup.
- Diana Gregory grows fresh produce and delivers to low-income senior housing units. Because of her connections at senior housing units, Diana Gregory was able to deliver to locations that were on strict lockdown procedures or were closed due to COVID-19. Each week, she harvested and delivered vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, sweet potatoes, garlic, kale, peppers, and much more.
- TigerMountain Foundation is a non-profit farm located at Spaces of Opportunity in South Phoenix that is managed by Darren Chapman. TigerMountain farms supplied 1,000s of pounds of produce to community centers, food pantries, and senior centers. The Foundation supplied okra, onions, peppers, herbs, squash, collard greens, oranges, and more.
- AREA Farms is owned and managed by Anita Reale. By pulling together produce from Phoenix Farms, she created beautiful CSA produce bags. Each bag included a flier with fresh produce, descriptions of the produce, and ideas for enjoying.
- Al-Hamka Farm is a small family farm cultivated by Husein Al-Hamka and his wife. They grow loads of produce at Spaces of Opportunity and a large greenhouse in South Phoenix. They grow their own varietal of Nafur Basil that smells incredibly fresh and herbaceous. At their grow spaces, they excel at growing basil, cucumbers, radishes, onions, garlic, watermelon, okra, peppers, and pumpkins.
- Rodney Machokoto is a community activist and grower of fine produce. Together with his wife and children, he grows collard greens, kale, tomatoes, peas, green onions, eggplant, and watermelon.
- Abby Lee Farm located at 15th Ave and Broadway grows heirloom tomato and cucumber, as well as a variety of other vegetables. For the program, Neal Brooks supplied an abundance of cucumbers, potatoes, onions, squash, tomatoes, green chilies, basil, and mint.
- Arizona Microgreens experienced a tumultuous summer. Even though Joseph Martinez grows his microgreens in a controlled greenhouse environment, a mini-tornado at the end of August 2020 ripped the roof off his facility and destroyed everything. Because of the Feed Phoenix program, he was able to bounce back and provide mixed greens, super greens, cilantro, basil, and green onions.
- YoBro owned by Adam Dombrowski participated for several weeks with the Feed Phoenix program, supplying nutrient-dense sunflower shoots.

Examples of other produce in the bags were lettuce mix, citrus, tatsoi, carrots, radishes, bok choy, peppers, arugula, cucumbers, herbs, tomatoes, squash, cabbage, cauliflower, pomegranate, chinese long beans, sweet peas, spinach, turnip, swiss chard, and kohlrabi.

## THANKSGIVING MEALS:

For Thanksgiving week, 6,405 meals were distributed throughout Phoenix. For that week especially, Local First Arizona, participating restaurants, farmers, and distribution centers were adamant that everyone should receive a delicious, complete Thanksgiving meal.

The meals included turkey, potatoes, gravy, and a vegetable. Some meals included more options. Chefs went above and beyond to make sure that everyone in Phoenix received the best Thanksgiving meal.

For the holiday, participating farms supplied amazing produce including over 1,100 pounds of potatoes, almost 700 pounds of green beans, and loads of fresh herbs from Phoenix farms through Green on Purpose.

Distribution centers rallied volunteers to make sure they could increase the number of people receiving the meals and opened more centers that had been closed during COVID just for the Thanksgiving meals distribution. Some community centers pulled together teams of volunteers to deliver meals to homebound seniors and those who are disabled.



## THANKSGIVING MEAL EXAMPLES:

- Conceptually Social Catering made Roasted Turkey, mashed potatoes, homemade stuffing, gravy, green bean casserole, hawaiian roll & butter, and mini pumpkin pies.
- Frasher's Smokehouse made smoked turkey breast, smokehouse corn, garlic mashed potatoes, traditional cornbread, homemade gravy, & pumpkin pie with whipped cream.
- Salvadoreno Restaurant made turkey, ground beef picadillo dressing, escabeche veggies, mashed potatoes and gravy, pumpkin pie and dinner rolls.
- PHX Eats Cafe made roasted turkey, glazed ham, mashed potatoes, turkey gravy, candied yams, green bean casserole, herbed stuffing, cranberry sauce, cornbread, multi-grain and french dinner rolls, & pumpkin pie with whipped cream.
- Autumn Court Chinese Restaurant made halal Thanksgiving meals for refugees living in low income housing in Maryvale.
- On Thanksgiving Day, Dilla Libre brought their entire crew and their food truck to downtown Phoenix to serve individuals who live in the designated COVID homeless areas. They served turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, green bean casserole, dinner rolls with butter, and pumpkin pie.

## SUMMARY OF THE 2020-2021 FEED PHOENIX INITIATIVE:

The Feed Phoenix Initiative is a great example of a working study that evaluates the functional and dysfunctional aspects of the Phoenix Food System. The program has created strong bonds between the people who are growing produce, cooking or preparing locally-grown produce, organizations serving the meals, and the people who are hungry and have no access to healthy food. Those participating learned how the local food system operates and how much they need each other to survive and thrive.

“We would not be open if it were not for our community and local business support,” said Lori Harlig, owner of Amici Catering. “Every purchase we make now is viewed from the lens of supporting local - first. We have a desire to give back to businesses because of the generosity shown to us.”

When restaurants applied for the program in the very beginning, they reported employing an estimated total of 360 employees. Farms estimated employing a total of 70 employees. When restaurants were surveyed about how the Feed Phoenix Initiative impacted their business, nearly 50% of the restaurants reported that they had to close their business at some point due to COVID. All restaurants answered that they had experienced a loss in revenue but were able to retain employees and stay in business because of Feed Phoenix funding. Because of this program, 90% of the restaurants noted that they have shifted their purchasing to include more locally-grown produce from nearby farms, and additionally, they report purchasing biodegradable supplies from Captains, a local container supply company.



Phoenix-based Project Roots reported that they were able to purchase a truck and other farm equipment to help them harvest their produce and deliver to restaurants and markets as a result of the consistent revenue they received for their produce. Additionally, Project Roots was able to employ their first full-time staff members. They have also partnered with Local First Arizona to improve the community gardens at a low-income housing development in Mesa and are connecting with Arizona Housing Inc. (AHI) to build community gardens to feed their residents.

“The Feed Phoenix Program replicates what Green on Purpose provides to the local farms and the community—putting food to work in the best way possible for the betterment of everyone,” said Paris Masek from Green on Purpose. “Our business was built almost entirely on wholesaling local produce to restaurants, which fell apart when the pandemic struck. I’m excited to put my skills and business model to work to help Feed Phoenix.”

“This was one of the most complex yet gratifying projects that I’ve had the opportunity to work on,” said Melissa Wright, Special Programs Manager at Local First Arizona. “From feeding people who hadn’t had a full meal in days to knowing the funding was saving local businesses to ensuring that food waste was being diverted. This funding made a huge, lasting impact on so many people at so many levels. I feel lucky to have been a part of it.”

Kimber Lanning, CEO of Local First Arizona added: “We are proud to be partnering on such a thoughtful and innovative approach to feeding Phoenix families. This initiative will touch all layers of our local food system and make the greatest impact possible for small businesses across various industries. From local chefs featuring three locally-sourced fruits or vegetables in every meal to opting for sustainable to-go packaging for delivery, community-driven solutions to complex problems are how we build a stronger local food system.”

## MEDIA COVERAGE & AWARDS:

FEED PHOENIX was the proud recipient of the 2020 Arizona Recycling Coalition Award

### 24th Annual DATOS: The State of Arizona's Hispanic Market

7/10/2020, Phoenix Business Journal: Phoenix, Local First Arizona announce initiative to deliver food to families in need

7/10/2020, InBusiness PHX: Feed Phoenix Initiative to Feed Underserved Families Launched

7/10/2020, ABC 15 (PBJ Pickup): Phoenix, Local First Arizona announce initiative to deliver food to families in need

7/30/2020, Next City: Phoenix Weaving Together New Local Food System Amid a Pandemic

8/20/2020, Fox 10 Phoenix: Feed Phoenix Initiative helps Valley families, seniors in need

9/1/2020, Green Living Magazine: Feed Phoenix: Witnessing Nature in Food

9/9/2020, Your Valley: American Legion Post 65 wins contract to help feed those in need in Arizona

9/10/2020, Front Doors Magazine: Native Health Receives Support from 'Feed Phoenix' Initiative

9/11/2020, Phoenix Magazine: Feed Phoenix Partners with Local Farmers and Restaurants to Provide Meals to Those in Need

11/24/2020, Cronkite News: Food banks receive government help to fill bellies during holidays

11/27/2020, Phoenix New Times: Here's Your Feel-Good Friday Phoenix Food News Recap

12/17/2020, Bloomberg CityLab: Phoenix Didn't Just Feed the Hungry. It Saved Farms and Restaurants.

1/9/2021, Good News Network: How Phoenix Feeds The Hungry With Fresh Food While Saving Local Businesses and Farms

2/1/2021, Downtown Devil: Local First Arizona hosts live stream highlighting business relief efforts

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# FEED PHOENIX PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS

## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT 1

Farm - Abby Lee Farm & Al-Hamka Farm  
Produce Distributor - Green on Purpose  
Restaurant - Der Wurst Hot Dogs  
Meal Delivery - Local First Arizona

Distribution Organization - Feed Phoenix Project, 9th Avenue and Washington

Situated on Broadway and 14th Avenue, Neal Brooks, owner of Abby Lee Farm has created rows of greenhouses and perfected the art of growing heirloom tomatoes and cucumbers yearound. In early 2020, he was looking forward to having a record season from his tomatoes when all of a sudden his orders stopped and the fruit started rotting on the vines. He had to continue to plant and grow tomatoes so that he could be ready as soon as restaurants were opened again. With tomatoes taking 40-60 days to ripen, he couldn't stop growing and wait; he had to be ready. The Feed Phoenix program completely saved thousands of pounds of tomatoes from going to waste and instead, got them into the bellies of hungry people.

Abby Lee grew and harvested heirloom tomatoes, and Al-Hamka Farm grew peppers and onions. Green on Purpose delivered tomatoes and peppers to Der Wurst Hot Dogs operating out of Linger Longer Lounge. Chef Nicholas Hyche created vegetarian wraps that included black beans, quinoa, tomatoes, peppers, onions, and other veggies. All were wrapped in paper and packed in paper bags with a napkin. Local First Arizona picked up the wraps and delivered them to the FeedPhoenix Project (same name; different project) on 9th Avenue and Washington. The wraps were served to homeless individuals living in designated COVID-19 encampments.

Uncle Mickey received a wrap and halfway through eating did a little dance. When asked about his dance, Mickey said, "These are so good, they just make me want to dance...I was expecting carne, but this is way better, and I just feel so good eating it that I just gotta dance!"



## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT 2

Farm - Al-Hamka & TigerMountain Foundation

Produce Distributor - Green on Purpose

Restaurant & Meal Delivery - Lovecraft

Distribution Center - Harvest Compassion Center



TigerMountain grew an abundance of peppers and, after Saturday Farmers Markets, often found themselves in the dilemma of either throwing those peppers in their compost or trying to find a new home for them. Rebecca Golden and Lovecraft were happy to take them to make incredibly delicious food. She incorporated the peppers into her vegan beans and topped smoked pork tacos with a salsa she made with the onions and herbs grown by Al-Hamka farms. Through the course of the program, she often delivered to the Harvest Compassion Centers.

Harvest Compassion Centers are situated in areas that are in densely populated low-income housing. Each center has a food pantry, clean clothes, job postings, support and more. They were supplied fresh produce from TigerMountain Foundation and healthy meals from participating Phoenix

restaurants. Lovecraft would often deliver smoked pork tacos with rice and vegan beans.

“The handmade meals were amazing, each meal was truly welcomed by our clients. One family said it was one of the best wraps they have ever had and they weren’t sure what they put in their pasta salad, but it was on point!” said Paul Thompson, Director of Harvest Compassion Center. “We love to connect with local partners, and we’ve been able to promote each restaurant partner to our volunteers; many who now have visited and eaten at their locations. A true win-win for our community!”



## PROGRAM SNAPSHOT 3

Farm - Abby Lee & Arizona Microgreens  
Produce Distributor - Green On Purpose  
Restaurant & Meal Delivery - Switch Restaurant  
Distribution Center - MOMs Pantry

Joseph Martinez, owner of Arizona Microgreens thought his business was completely kaput when a mini tornado ripped the roof off his South Phoenix growhouse in August, and the winds destroyed his crops. The Feed Phoenix Initiative gave him the hope that he could fix his farm and get through this hardship. He realized that he needed to pivot from fancy micro herbs and started growing more nutrient dense power greens that would help feed his fellow Phoenixians.

“Local farms have been hit hard by the pandemic,” Martinez said. “Our production capacity is still there but demand and distribution networks have been destroyed. The Feed Phoenix program connects the latent capacities in our local food system and enables farmers and foodservice professionals to get back to work and provide meaningful support for families impacted by COVID-19. We are grateful to be included in this innovative program and optimistic that it will forge relationships that survive the pandemic and make our food system strong.”

In late October, 100 pounds of tomatoes, 40 pounds of cucumbers from Abby Lee Farm, and 100 bags of micro salad greens were delivered to Switch Restaurant on Central Ave. Chef Jason Petersen made 400 Greek orzo pasta salads with grilled chicken, lemon cucumbers, heirloom tomatoes, and a pita for a Friday delivery to MOM’s Pantry in north Phoenix.

Chef Jason also delivered 400 meals of Sonoran Ranchero roasted chicken, potatoes, peppers, onions, cucumbers, heirloom tomatoes, green salad, homemade ranch dressing, and a Hawaiian roll with a Halloween treat to MOM’s Pantry.



“MOM’s Pantry is amazing,” said Chef Jason. Pam Trudeau, director of MOM’s Pantry, and her slim cadre of volunteers support almost 2,000 clients every weekend with food, fresh produce, and staples. (This number is an increase from January 2020 when they saw about 1,000 clients every weekend.)

“Thank you to you and your team for all you did to make this happen!” said Pam. “Our guests have been so thankful for this food! We appreciate all the hard work you guys put in to connect us with all the catering companies and restaurants!”

Because of the Feed Phoenix Initiative, Chef Jason was able to keep all 20 employees through the pandemic even though he was closed to the public until very recently. “Thank you all so much. I honestly believe we would have closed for good if not for this program,” Chef Jason said.

## OTHER QUOTES FROM FEED PHOENIX PARTICIPANTS:

“Thanks to this program our restaurant could stay open because the sale of those meals helped pay our utilities and other expenses,” said Carlos Castillo of Chino Mex. “The City of Phoenix should consider the continuation of this program as the pandemic is not over yet and the restaurant industry is still suffering financially.”



“We are very grateful to have participated, it literally saved our business,” shared Monica Merenda of Los Compadres.

“We appreciate you guys a lot for helping us stay open and giving our restaurant and employees an opportunity to be a part of this experience,” said Georgia Martinez of La Olmeca.

“This opportunity gave us the revenue and emotional support at just the right time! Yay, and thank you!” noted Dawn Kensington-Bejar of Benedict’s Catering.

“When the program first started, we had a business model that was focused on our food truck and some catering,” said Krystal Harris of Trash Panda Vegan. “Fast forward into the program, we now have a brick and mortar, three employees in

addition to myself being on the payroll and now making a wage. It has been a year and a half since we opened Trash Panda Vegan and now we have a brick and mortar establishment that serves healthy options to the community, is a resource, and a place where people can come in and feel loved through our food. We have this building and employees not because we have done amazing numbers but because of hard work, determination, sweat equity, people believing in us and supporting us, and for Local First Arizona stepping up and putting together a program that gave us enough to get through really tough times and provided us with connections for the future. We will always be eternally grateful for the impact made on these restaurants, farms, and small business communities in Arizona.”

“The Feed Phoenix Program has been instrumental in keeping our business afloat the past seven to eight months,” said Kent Fear of Citron Catering. “We employ 15 people currently (35 at our peak pre-COVID) and are confident that we can get back to our pre-COVID numbers within a year. We would very much love it if the program would continue through the summer as we predict most businesses won’t start calling their employees back until late in the third quarter or beginning of the fourth quarter. Thank you for all you have done to help us and our team members and their families during these challenging times!!”

“I just wanted to let you know that we have been participating in the Feed Phoenix Program organized by Local First AZ, and it has really helped our restaurant so much,” shared Rebecca Golden of Lovecraft. “We were able to offer more hours to our employees who really needed some extra cash, and there was just an awesome feeling knowing we were helping feed so many in need with good nutritional meals from Lovecraft.”



“The Feed Phoenix Initiative has been providing hundreds of pre-made meals as well as produce bags each week to NATIVE HEALTH Central,” noted Susan Smith of NATIVE HEALTH. “ We hear from many hungry individuals that this is their only meal of the day. The Feed Phoenix Initiative is greatly needed and appreciated.”



“Local farms have been hit hard by the pandemic. Our production capacity is still there but demand and distribution networks have been destroyed, said Joseph Martinez of Arizona Microgreens. “The Feed Phoenix program connects the latent capacities in our local food system and enables farmers and food service professionals to get back to work and provide meaningful support for families impacted by COVID-19. We are grateful to be included in this innovative program and optimistic that it will forge relationships that survive the pandemic and make our food system strong.”

“On behalf of Justa Center, thank you for lining up not just meals, but great meals from a variety of restaurants that helped our seniors maintain health, reduce hunger, and restore hope during this challenging time in our history, said Wendy Johnson from Justa Center. “We are grateful for the partnership and the care. We look forward to opportunities like this in the future.”

“Several resources and entities that the Homeless Community would normally use had guidelines that drastically changed or ended up closing,” said Arthur Le of Living Streams Church. “The meal program provided tremendous relief with sustenance in conjunction with the heat relief we were providing to the Phoenix/Sunnyslope areas from June to present day.”

“We’ve been coming to Harvest Compassion Center for about a year now to get help with groceries and some clothes for the kids, but almost the entire last year they also had fresh lunches for us each time we visited! My kids all got their own to-go box and it was some good-tasting food! We thank the people who made and provided this food for us.” shared Maria, a Harvest Compassion Center client.

“I operate a small food hub that works with local farms to help sell their products directly to local restaurants, caterers, school systems, and private chefs,” wrote Paris Masek, owner of Green on Purpose. “By the end of March 2020 my business dropped about 90% due to the pandemic. I became involved in the Feed Phoenix Initiative providing logistical support to transport food items from the growers to entities providing meal preparation and delivery. The influx of local food products and the subsequent meal preparation/delivery provided quality, fresh, nutritionally dense food to those who could benefit the most from eating those meals at no cost to those in need who received the meals. Reduced costs of raw food products for chefs, and additional income to small farms helped keep some of those businesses from closing their doors temporarily, and in some cases permanently. The Initiative was uniquely dynamic in how Local First Arizona put the



program together and then operated the program. The timing of the Initiative was spot on to meet the needs of many. The program was warmly received by all that participated and greatly appreciated by workers and those getting the meals. The organizational and operational model created for the Feed Phoenix program by the City of Phoenix and Local First Arizona demonstrates and promotes the value of small local businesses while working cohesively to solve life-altering events.”

“The Feed Phoenix Initiative was an opportunity to dive deeper into the assistance of Phoenicians who had a tremendous need (nutritious sustenance) during this pandemic,” said Darren Chapman from Tiger Mountain Foundation. “We were so proud to work with the City of Phoenix and Local First to benefit the communities we serve.”

Additional quotes shared by those from the Affordable Housing Initiative:

“Thank you so much for these weekly meals, they are delicious!”

“I get excited to see what restaurant we will have this week; they are all so good, it’s the highlight of my week”

“Thank you so much for these ongoing meals. I look forward to this meal every week.”

“These meals have been so helpful for my family and I. Thank you!”

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# PROJECT COSTS & MILESTONES

## TOTAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES

45 restaurants and 12 farms were able to continue operations through the COVID Pandemic because of funding through the Feed Phoenix Initiative. All outlined work was completed between August 2020 - February 2021.

## TOTAL REVENUE TO MEAL PRODUCERS:

\$860,546.25

## TOTAL REVENUE TO FARMS:

\$237,453.75

## TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS:

\$203,000.00

## TOTAL FEED PHOENIX INITIATIVE: \$1,301,000.00

- 80,760 meals served
  - 5,491 fresh produce bags distributed
  - 12 participating farms
  - 45 participating restaurants
  - 29 distribution centers
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# LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA

## ABOUT LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA:

Local First Arizona works to build a more diverse and inclusive Arizona economy. Because of Local First's commitment to Phoenix's small businesses, farms and community, LFA was uniquely positioned to manage the Feed Phoenix Initiative with the City of Phoenix.

Local First Arizona brings to its contract work a wealth of experience that includes first-hand knowledge of business ownership and engagement, as well as food systems and marketing for local food producers. Our team includes experts with a deep understanding of small business challenges that bring entrepreneurial thinking to solve problems creatively, effectively and affordably.

The Local First team committed to managing the Feed Phoenix Initiative included:



**Kimber Lanning** Herself a business owner for over 30 years, Lanning founded Local First with a belief that local businesses can compete with national corporations, especially if they have a level playing field. Lanning has 17 years of experience coaching small businesses across Arizona and has won dozens of awards of recognition for her strategic approaches to leveraging entrepreneurship to build generational wealth.



**Melissa Wright** Melissa is the Special Programs Manager for Local First Arizona and loves the organized chaos that is events and project management. Every day is entirely different and ranges from executing minute logistical details to creative brainstorming on possible themes and how to best represent the community.



**Gabe Gardner:** The 25 year's experience he has in the hospitality industry, teaching at culinary schools, running restaurants, and working in hotels is what he marshals to help entrepreneurs establish their business and succeed.



**Maria Lopez:** Maria manages Local First Arizona's story, whether it be on TV, or through a blog or digital campaign. She's passionate about building a better state by engaging everyday people in local issues and by highlighting the small businesses and community leaders who love their home and want to take it to new heights.



**Tanya Chakravarty:** As Local First Arizona's Good Food Program Coordinator, Tanya puts her uncompromising work ethic to use -- supporting local food producers and distributors across Arizona and raising awareness of the local food economy to build a resilient food system that ultimately increases the strength of Arizona's economy.

Additional staffing included bookkeepers, administrative support, and marketing professionals.

## Appendix - Additional documents and reports

[Feed Phoenix Businesses, Farms, and Distribution Centers](#)

[Monthly Schedule of Distributions](#)

[Additional photos](#)

[Total delivery numbers](#)