



Farm Alliance of Baltimore

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# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We persevered through a dramatic year, and I thank you. Our work remained steady as we continued to support urban and regional agriculture, advance food equity, and rebuild the future of urban farming in Baltimore. It was a challenging season, yet through it all we made new friends and strengthened our community.

Our network showcases the incredible productivity and dedication of Baltimore's urban growers. Together, we steward more than 25 acres of land. Our collective market stand saw sales rise by 20 percent, and we responded to the needs of our neighbors during a food assistance crisis. I delighted in beautiful bouquets grown and foraged right here in the city, and beekeepers are thriving across Baltimore, with each hive producing honey that tastes subtly different from the last.

In 2025, our events and workshops expanded, attracting record numbers of attendees eager to deepen their knowledge of urban farming and build practical skills. At the heart of this growing movement is the Black Butterfly Teaching Farm, where hands-on learning meets real production. This year we cultivated another successful crop of dent corn, demonstrating that city farms can produce grain and reinforcing the farm's role as a living classroom for innovation in urban agriculture.

The Black Butterfly Teaching Farm is the cornerstone of our long-term vision to revitalize Baltimore's food system. Once completed in late 2026, it will serve as a central hub for training new and beginning growers while providing critical shared infrastructure for our members and aspiring farmers. The farm is designed to demonstrate what is possible in urban agriculture—showing how to feed and care for neighbors while thriving as a site for research, education, and experimentation.

We made significant progress on site development this year, though important work remains. Planned features include an education pavilion, community orchard, farm stand, and shared infrastructure for multiple farmers, establishing a fully operational, best-practices hub for local growers and transforming the site into a powerful engine for change.



Looking ahead, we are excited to announce the relaunch of the Black Butterfly Urban Farmer Academy (BBUFA). After a brief pause to redesign the program and complete construction on the farm, we will host a series of workshops and field days through the BBUFA Field School. This series will be open to the public throughout the year. We look forward to sharing more details soon.

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for what we have accomplished. Blessed be the staff of this organization: a small, smart, creative, and deeply dedicated team that exemplifies collaboration. I am profoundly grateful for each of them. To our members, partners, and friends, your continued support is vital to our work of teaching, producing, and empowering growers across the city. Together, we are greening our communities, feeding our neighbors, and demonstrating food sovereignty for all of Baltimore.

In peace and radical Black imagination,

Denzel Mitchell Jr.

**“Together, we are greening our communities, feeding our neighbors, and demonstrating food sovereignty for all of Baltimore.”**

Denzel Mitchell Jr.



# OUR MISSION

The Farm Alliance of Baltimore is a membership organization of urban farms, neighborhood growers, and friends. We use connection, resource sharing, and collective advocacy with respect to food, land and water to expand communities' self-determination and power.

# OUR HISTORY

While Baltimore City faces significant vacant land issues and limited access to fresh food, it is also home to strong neighborhoods and a growing, vibrant food movement. **Nearly 15 years ago**, a group of local farmers recognized the potential to strengthen this emerging network. They were already collaborating by sharing seeds, lending tools, and exchanging knowledge, but they saw that by working together more intentionally, they could increase their impact, save resources, and create new opportunities for growth.

**A series of potlucks, an online Baltimore farming group, and a survey to assess shared values helped guide the formation** of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore (FAB). With support from an Open Society Institute fellowship and a USDA grant, **the network launched in fall 2011** with a full-time coordinator and seed funding. Early research included visits and interviews with urban farm networks across the country, providing both big-picture inspiration and practical guidance. By winter 2011, FAB had a name, logo, website, and clear priorities for the growing season ahead.

Today, FAB is a thriving network of urban farmers, educators, and community partners. We support **more than 40 city-wide farms and gardens**, employ six full-time staff along with part-time and seasonal team members, and lead programs such as the Black Butterfly Urban Farmer Academy. Together, we continue to **grow food, build skills, and strengthen community** connections throughout Baltimore.

**Today we are  
44 members  
strong and  
growing!**

# 2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

## LAND & GROWING POWER

**25 acres**  
of urban  
green space  
stewarded  
by members

**16,000+  
seedlings**  
distributed to  
grow more  
food citywide

**↑ 59% increase**  
in cover crop seed  
applied by members

## MARKETS & ECONOMIC IMPACT

**16 distribution  
partners**  
including food banks,  
restaurants, and market stands

**\$52,000  
in sales**  
from the Black  
Butterfly  
Teaching Farm

**↑ 21%  
growth**  
in collective  
market stand  
sales

## EDUCATION & COMMUNITY

**60 educational events**  
including hands-on workshops  
and cooking demonstrations

**1,090  
attendees**     ↑ 22% increase  
in participation

**\$4,530  
awarded**     in professional  
development  
scholarships  
to members

## FOOD GROWN & SHARED

**21,000+ pounds**  
of produce grown at the Black  
Butterfly Teaching Farm

**200+  
neighbors**  
at Black  
Butterfly  
Farm  
community  
days

**1,500+  
pounds**  
of free  
produce  
shared  
with  
neighbors

# OUR MEMBERS

Our network of urban farms is **vibrant and diverse**, with each farm operating autonomously according to its own mission, vision, and goals. Across the network, sites differ widely in infrastructure, operations, management structures, and the types of food and products they produce. Some are tucked-away treasures in alleyways, overflowing with produce, while others engage the community boldly with bright murals and welcoming signage, making each farm a **distinctive presence in its neighborhood**.

FAB unites these growers, **amplifying their collective impact**. Together, we steward shared green spaces that provide environmental benefits, promote community health and wellness, increase equitable access to fresh food, strengthen local economic vitality, and help build a **more resilient, climate-ready food system**.

**“FAB makes it possible for small farms like ours to thrive and have a greater collective impact.”**

The 6th Branch,  
member since 2015

**What started as a network of 6  
has grown to 44 members:**

**21**

**farms**

**15**

**gardens**

**8**

**individuals**

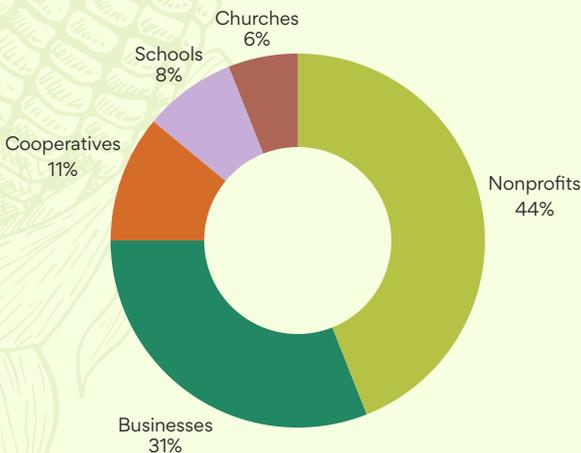
**We welcomed 5 new members to  
our network this year!**

## LAND

Our members steward growing spaces that range from backyards and small vacant lots to expansive sites up to 8.5 acres. Most farms operate on quarter- to half-acre plots.

**Together, our members steward approximately 25 acres of green space across Baltimore City.**

## LEGAL STRUCTURE OF MEMBERS



**Half of our members have been part of FAB's network for 5 years or more!**

## GROWERS

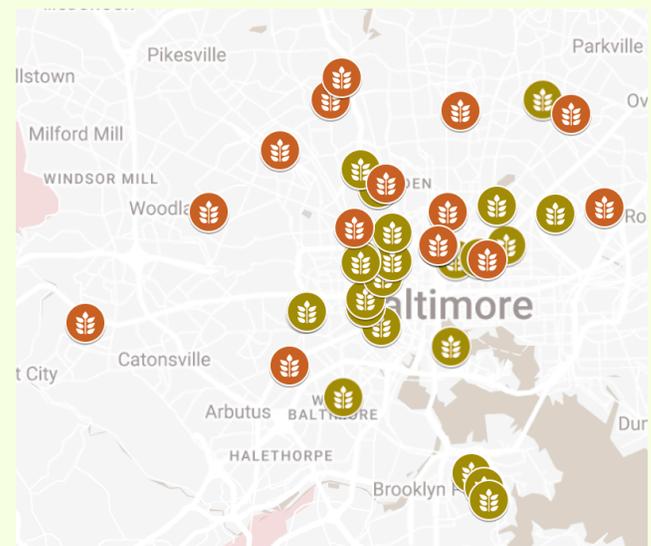
Most sites are led by a single primary grower, while others operate collaboratively with support from interns, youth apprentices, and neighborhood volunteers.

## CROP TYPES

While some growers specialize in products such as honey, mushrooms, cut flowers, or dye plants, many grow a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

## DISTRIBUTION & SALES OUTLETS

Members sell and distribute their produce through farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, restaurants, and pop-up markets.



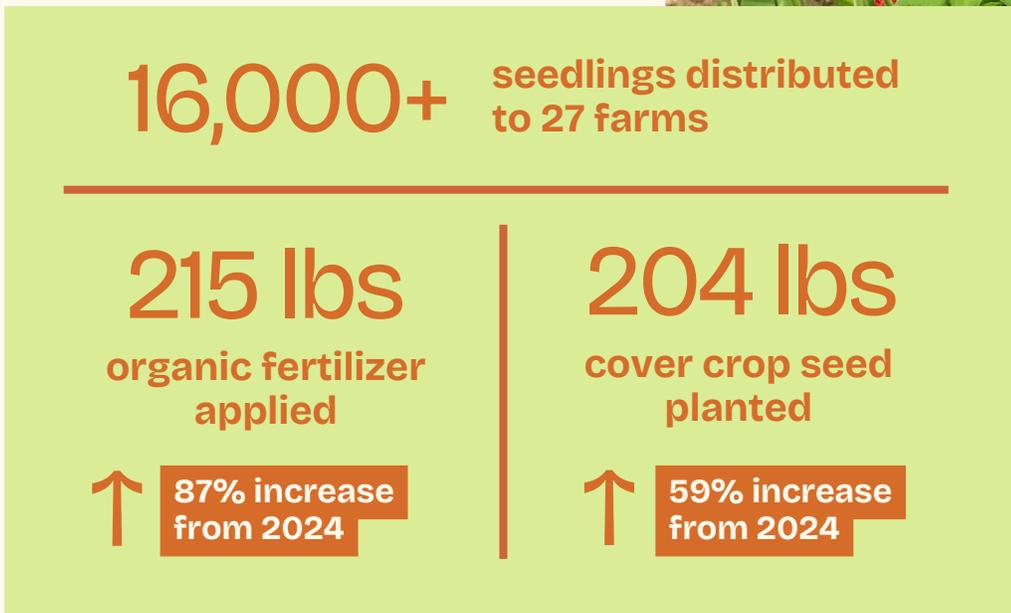
[Check out our interactive member map at: farmalliancebaltimore.org/members](http://farmalliancebaltimore.org/members)

# SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION PROGRAM

To support members' production goals and their efforts to feed their neighbors, FAB **bulk-purchases seedlings, cover crop seeds, and organic fertilizers** and distributes them to members at no cost at seasonally appropriate times. We also provide **soil testing and consulting** services, helping members monitor and improve soil health year after year.

**"FAB ensures we can grow as much food as possible for the communities we serve."**

The 6th Branch, member since 2015



## \* Building Better Soils

Thanks to support from the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Healthy Soils Competitive Fund, we continued to strengthen our soil health initiatives. This year, **we collected 84 soil samples across 22 farms** to build an enhanced database that tracks soil improvements at member sites over more than five years.

**New hands-on workshops** equipped member farmers with practical strategies for nutrient management and erosion prevention, helping farms become more resilient, productive, and sustainable.

As a result, cover crops are spreading across Baltimore City. **Members applied 59% more seed** than in 2024, reflecting a growing culture of regenerative urban farming that supports neighbors, protects land and water, and nurtures diverse urban ecosystems.



# COLLECTIVE SALES PROGRAM

Our collective farm stand at the **32nd Street Farmers Market** in Waverly is FAB's first and longest-running program. This shared model **economically empowers members** by selling their products at a joint stand, while promoting individual farm brands, advertising their own neighborhood markets, and providing support with pricing, merchandising, and sales logistics.



“Joining the market was the best part of being a member for me in 2025.”

Unconventional Farm, member since 2024

13 members generated \$32,000 of revenue across 36 market days

21% ↑

increase in sales compared to last year

## \* Community Response During Food Benefits Disruption

In 2025, statewide shutdowns temporarily halted food assistance programs just as we were on track to meet projected food benefits sales. In response, and **in solidarity with our Baltimore community, we launched a special pricing initiative** at our market stand. Customers could choose **50% off their produce**, or pay full price and “pay it forward” by donating to help cover costs for neighbors in need. Farm Alliance farmers were **fully compensated in every case**.

During the month of November:

24 customers paid it forward

18% of sales offered at a discount

95 households received support

These collective actions demonstrate the power of **mutual aid and strong local food systems** to ensure access to fresh, local food while supporting urban growers.



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

We offer **experiential learning** for members, beginner farmers, and the public through **more than 20 annual field trips, workshops, and classes**, covering topics from seed saving and cover cropping to farmer first aid. Members also receive on-site technical assistance and benefit from FAB's connections to farm support agencies. In 2025, **hands-on events nearly doubled** in number, with more than **twice as many participants**, reflecting growing community interest.

Through our long-standing partnership with **Holistic Wellness and Health**, we also provide **cooking demonstrations** at member sites that highlight seasonal produce, teach healthy meal preparation, and strengthen connections between growers and the communities they serve.



FAB hosted **20 workshops** and members hosted **40 cooking demonstrations** reaching a total of **1,090 people in Baltimore and beyond!**

## FARMER-TO-FARMER LEARNING

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**Members led 14 of our 20 workshops, sharing skills with peers and the public**

## \* Pollinators and Produce

*Healthy green spaces with rich ecological diversity support vibrant urban farms and neighborhoods. In partnership with the **National Wildlife Federation**, Farm Alliance member **Sajeeda Urban Farm**, and eight network experts, we hosted a workshop series focusing on native pollinators, habitat design, and urban beekeeping. These programs helped participants **boost biodiversity, expand pollinator habitat, increase crop productivity, and produce honey** as a value-added crop.*

## BUZZING WITH PARTICIPATION

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**240 eager learners joined our 11-part pollinator workshop series**



# MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

We cultivate a strong farmer-to-farmer network through **monthly in-person member meetings** and an active online forum, where members exchange information on **funding, career growth, and advocacy opportunities**. We also support members by promoting their events and volunteer days, and by connecting them with **technical resources** to strengthen their operations and professional development.

"The network has often met needs I didn't even know I had."

The 6th Branch, member since 2015

12 member-exclusive events

9 guest speakers

24 hours in fellowship together

\$4,530

awarded in professional development scholarships to 15 members



FAB's diverse engagement opportunities help members **build skills, expand their networks, and access resources** that strengthen both their farms and the broader urban agriculture community.

"Breaking bread with other members created a space for us to be enthusiastic about our harvests and the work we do to bring joy and nourishment to our communities."

Blue Light Junction, member since 2021

**"Farming is hard, but farming  
alone is harder."**

Strength to Love II,  
member since 2016



# THE BLACK BUTTERFLY URBAN FARMER ACADEMY

The **Black Butterfly Urban Farmer Academy (BBUFA)** was launched in 2021 with funding from the **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)** program. The program's name comes from the term "Black Butterfly," coined by Dr. Lawrence Brown to describe Baltimore's predominantly Black neighborhoods, which appear like butterfly wings on city maps due to the lasting effects of redlining and segregation.

BBUFA began as a two-year pilot, operating as an intensive nine-month training program in 2021 and 2022. **Participants gained hands-on experience in sustainable agriculture** and farm business planning through classroom instruction, field days, and on-farm practice. The academy focused on training socially disadvantaged individuals, as defined by the USDA 2501 program, who lived or worked in Baltimore's butterfly wings.

**50% of graduates** remain active FAB members

## BBUFA FIELD SCHOOL

In **2026**, we're thrilled to bring back a version of BBUFA through the **BBUFA Field School**, a pipeline program designed to provide foundational, hands-on experience that prepares participants for a more intensive training program launching in 2027. **Keep an eye out for opportunities** to get your hands in the soil at our Black Butterfly Teaching Farm in South Baltimore!

BBUFA graduated two inspiring cohorts of farmers who are now making their mark on Baltimore's food system. Since 2023, the training program has been on pause to refine the curriculum, secure additional funding, and build key infrastructure at the **Black Butterfly Teaching Farm**. In 2025, public workshops continued, engaging members and the public while laying the groundwork for the next chapter of BBUFA.

**4 graduates** currently operate their own farm businesses



# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR BBUFA GRADUATES



## SHANICE DANIELS

**2022 GRADUATE**  
**FOUNDED FEEL GOOD FLORALS IN 2023**

"Participating in the Black Butterfly Urban Farm Academy was exactly what I needed to transition from a home gardener who enjoyed growing flowers to a farmer who learned the craft of growing and selling the same flowers that I enjoyed. As a BBUFA graduate, I became a Farm Alliance member, was connected to a sales outlet, and have learned so much from observing other growers. My experience with BBUFA and the Farm Alliance of Baltimore has created more opportunities for my passion to flourish into a business that continues to grow."



## LESLIE EVANS

**2022 GRADUATE**  
**FOUNDED UNCONVENTIONAL FARM IN 2024**

"BBUFA has helped me bring my farm fantasy into the world of farm reality...With the BBUFA foundation, and my Farm Alliance of Baltimore network (family really), I believe that my aspirations will lead to success."



## ARIA EGHBAL

**2021 GRADUATE**  
**FAB FARMERS MARKET COORDINATOR**

"The Black Butterfly program helped shape my understanding of what it means to grow food in Baltimore city, allowed me to build connections with others who understand the importance of food sovereignty, and gave me tools to move forward within this beloved urban farming community in Baltimore. As someone who maintained membership after the Black Butterfly program ended, I've been able to connect with this loving community in many ways since I graduated, and I'm deeply grateful for the mycelial network of farmers, growers, gardeners, cooks, community organizers, builders, and beyond who make up the fabric of this organization."

# THE BLACK BUTTERFLY TEACHING FARM

The Black Butterfly Teaching Farm, located in Farring-Baybrook Park in South Baltimore's Curtis Bay neighborhood, was **established in 2021 through a 15-year lease** with Baltimore City's Department of Recreation and Parks, with support from the Department of Planning's Office of Sustainability. That fall, we planted the farm's first crop, garlic, marking the start of a space dedicated to **sustainable urban agriculture**.

Today, the farm is a hub for hands-on learning, sustainable food production, and community engagement. It serves as the **demonstration and education backbone** for our public workshops and farmer training programs, including BBUFA and the upcoming BBUFA Field School, providing practical, hands-on experience for emerging urban farmers.

Over the past few years, FAB has focused on developing a **master design plan** and building the farm's **core infrastructure**. Key milestones include perimeter fencing, a water connection, a greenhouse, a high tunnel, and an apiary. Construction is expected to be completed by mid-2026, with planned additions such as an **education pavilion, community orchard, and pay-what-you-can farm stand**.

These enhancements will strengthen our ability to **teach, grow, and gather**. They reflect our commitment to regenerative practices, equitable access, and hands-on learning, helping **build a lasting resource for Baltimore's food system**.

**21,000+ pounds**

of fresh food grown

**200+ neighbors**

engaged at two community days

**1,500+ pounds**

produce donated to our community

**16 distribution partners**

including food banks, health systems, community organizations, churches, and restaurants

**\$52,000**

in total produce sales





# DIGGING IN

## Growing Food, Farmers, and Community

In a year of shifting funding and urgent needs, we turned to our most steadfast supporters and launched our first major individual giving campaign, *Digging In*. Our goal was simple: **raise flexible, unrestricted funding** to support community-powered farming, food justice, and education across Baltimore.

The campaign quickly grew from a **\$10,000 grassroots goal to \$20,000 and continued building**. With support from **130+ individual donors**, several major gifts, and a matching challenge, we far exceeded our goal. Grassroots contributions energized the movement, inspired major donor support, and **amplified impact through the match**.

**This support went straight to action:** building infrastructure at our teaching farm, sustaining programming for 40+ city-wide farms and gardens, laying the groundwork for the return of the Black Butterfly Urban Farmer Academy in 2026, and helping us harvest and distribute thousands of pounds of fresh produce to neighbors across Baltimore.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who gave, shared, and cheered us on. **Together, we continue to grow food, farmers, and community power in Baltimore.**

**\$21,518**

raised from grassroots donations

**136**

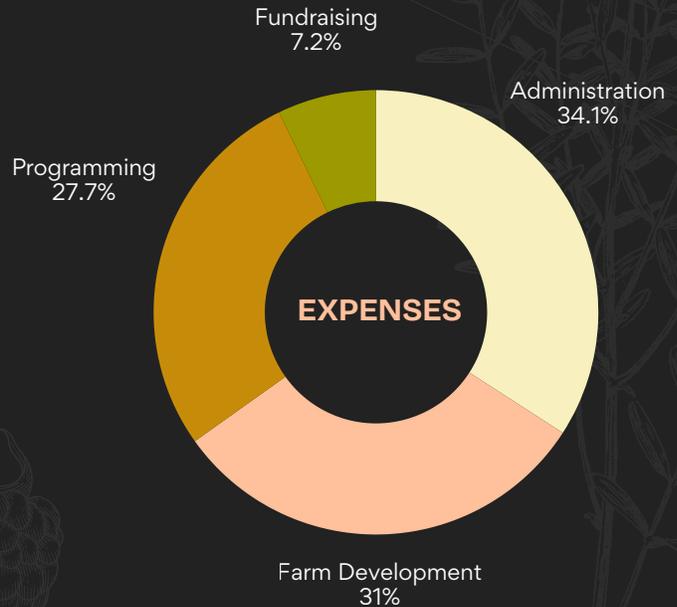
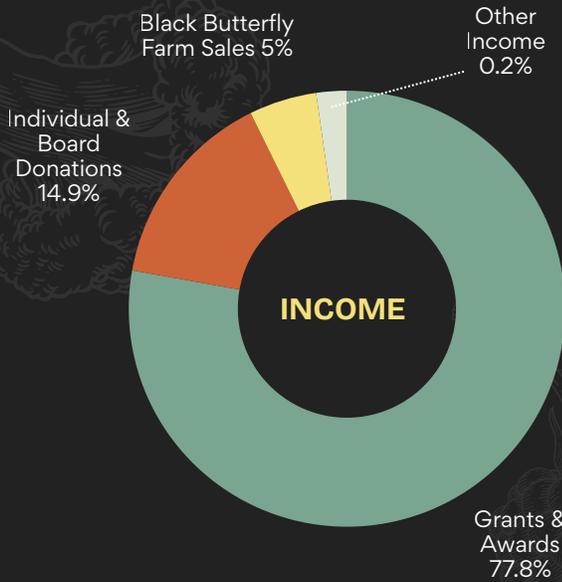
individual donors

**\$1,011,118**

grand total with major gifts and matching funds



# FINANCES



*Please note: These numbers are drawn from unaudited financial statements and are for illustrative purposes only.*

# SUPPORTERS

- Abell Foundation
- American Rescue Plan Act Funding via Baltimore City Department of Planning
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Baltimore Gas and Electric Green Grant
- Big Green DOA
- The Campbell Foundation
- The Chesapeake Bay Trust via National Wildlife Federation
- Clayton Baker Trust
- Clif Family Foundation
- The Goldseker Foundation
- Kentfields Foundation
- Maryland Department of Agriculture Healthy Soils Competitive Fund
- Michele’s Granola Give One for Good Food Fund
- Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program via University of Maryland Extension
- Patagonia
- The Henry and Ruth Blaustein Rosenberg Foundation
- T. Rowe Price Foundation
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service via Maryland Department of Agriculture Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant
- USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture via University of Maryland Extension
- USDA NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the 250+ individual donors who contributed to our work in 2025. Thank you!

# STAFF

Denzel Mitchell, Jr.  
**Executive Director**

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Skher Brown  
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Gabriela Amaya-Williams  
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**Production & Maintenance  
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Claudia Torrieri  
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Aria Eghbal  
**Farmers Market Coordinator**

Saj Dillard  
**Farmers Market Coordinator**

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# DONATE





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