



The Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund, LEAFF, began in 2020 as a multi-organizational collaboration to help small-scale emerging farmers survive the loss of their typical markets due to the pandemic. LEAFF partner organizations include: The Good Acre, Lakewinds Food Co-op, Latino Economic Development Center, Hmong American Partnership, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Mill City Farmers Market, and The Food Group.

Emerging farmers face many barriers that make finding alternative routes to sell their produce unattainable, this is where LEAFF comes in. LEAFF trains underserved farmers in new market channels by providing a wholesale outlet with minimal barriers. If you are a farmer with more produce than you can sell at a market, funds are used to pay farmers' market-rate prices for over 30 different produce items. The produce is then donated to hunger relief organizations that serve both the Twin Cities Metro Area and Greater Minnesota.

Below are highlights of LEAFF's impact in its first two years as well as testimonials from program partners and participating farmers:

- Worked with 62 emerging farmers to train them in wholesale marketing and provide production and business technical assistance.
- Purchased over \$480,000 in produce from participating farms.
- Provided over 250,000 pounds of produce from local farmers for distribution to hunger-relief partners
- Participants who joined LEAFF in 2020 sold over \$350,000 in produce into The Good Acre's other wholesale channels in 2021 because of skills learned from their participation in the LEAFF program.
- 94% of participating farmers reported that LEAFF contributed to their farm business "to a moderate or significant degree".
- 100% of participating farmers reported learning new skills from LEAFF, including how to communicate with wholesale buyers, packaging requirements and food safety.
- The vast majority of participants commented that LEAFF allowed them to reduce or even eliminate the amount of wasted produce on their farms.
- Applications to the LEAFF program are open to all emerging farmers, selections are made by the Farmer Evaluation subcommittee based on farmer need and funding availability.



“I am thankful to the Governor for allocating funding to support local farmers and to fight the hunger in Minnesota. I am happy that I was participating in the LEAFF program, and that my organic vegetable was delivered to Minnesotans who faced challenges during COVID-19.”

-Wa Kou Hang, Twin Cities Green Farm

Culturally connected foods have the ability to make people feel seen, welcome and known. The fresh, local, culturally connected foods we’ve received from LEAFF have made such a positive difference to food shelf participants throughout the Twin Cities. The quality and variety has been instrumental in meeting community needs in these challenging times.”

-Sophia Lenarz-Coy, Executive Director, The Food Group

“I’m vegetarian so it’s harder to find affordable foods that meet my nutritional needs. I can eat poorly on a limited budget; just surviving is tough. The produce I get here is life changing.”

-Bonnie, food shelf participant at a LEAFF distribution site

I am an Asian American farmer name Yee Moua. I have farmed for the last 10 plus years. I enjoy farming and providing fresh healthy produce to my community. My main source of income came from selling my fresh produce at local farmers market. During the pandemic, it hit us farmers hard with the lock down and people scared to coming out to support their local farmers at the farmer’s market. When I heard about the LEAFF program The Good Acre and other local non-profits put together to help the local farmers buy and provide their goods to the community, I signed up. I am very thankful for these non-profits for coming together to create this program to help buy from local farmers so that their produce at the garden will not go to waste during this time of hardship and give back by providing fresh produce to the community. This program has helped me tremendously to be able to stay in business as a local farmer to provide fresh healthy produce to the community and I hope this program continues.

-Yee Moua, Heathy Greens Farm

“LEAFF has been instrumental in providing support for farmers who lost wholesale sales due to restaurants closures and retail sales when customer traffic dropped off dramatically at farmers markets. It created an essential new sales channel for their produce and has continued to help sustain our local farmers by supplementing their sales. It’s a win-win when the produce supports food access in our communities.”

- Martha Archer, Executive Director, Mill City Farmers Market