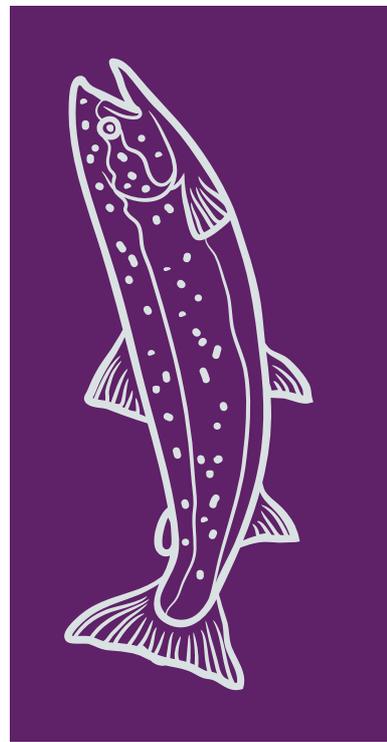
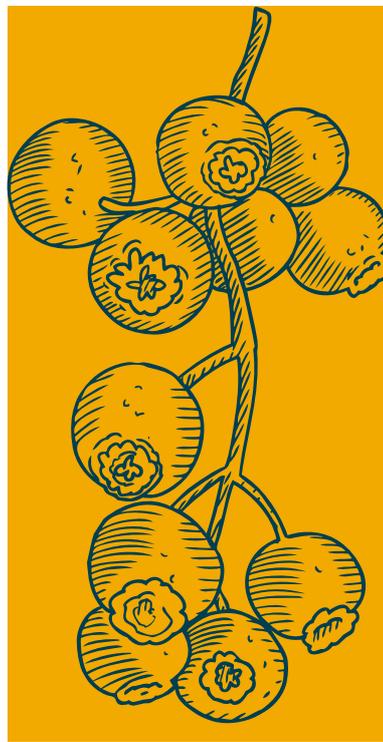




LEAP

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL
AGRICULTURE PROJECT



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Over the past decade, LEAP has had long, slow conversations about community, food, farming, equitable access, and resilient food systems. The pandemic crystallized our shared need for healthy land, people, and food. Over the past two years, these conversations have come to bear fruit.

As you will see in the following pages, we have expanded the number of community food access points and we redeemed more than doubled the healthy food incentives from shoppers participating in SNAP, Medicaid, and WIC. In late 2021, Roanoke City accepted proposals for American Rescue Plan Act funds, and LEAP applied for and received \$2.5M to enhance and expand the local food systems. With some of that funding, LEAP purchased a building in the West End neighborhood (currently under construction!) that will house an expanded food hub and Mobile Market, in-season food processing to reduce food waste and diversify product offerings, a small-format food retail shop, and an expanded West End Farmers Market. This investment in food and community is a new chapter for Roanoke's food systems.

I am honored to lead, support, cultivate, and learn from LEAP staff, Board, volunteers, and supporters. I am humbled by the LEAP team members' continued willingness and openness to grow, change, ask hard questions, and listen. Thank you for another great, messy, amazing year.

And y'all- farmers, food businesses, customers, community members, and multi-sector partners- we are nothing without you. Thank you for the ongoing grace, support, and partnership.

We are committed to growing more abundant and healthy food systems. In the day to day, it can feel like this vision is lightyears away. When I step back and take a 30,000 foot view, I see we are making real strides. We still have a long way to go, and I feel hopeful that we can continue to work together to nurture our food community.



Maureen McNamara Best
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LEAP 2021 SNAPSHOT

160

Farms & Food
businesses



13,000

Roanoke Valley
residents



\$856,000

in regionally
grown food
sold



The evolution of local food systems during a global crisis

2021 cemented for LEAP the changes brought on by COVID-19. It was a year of challenge, growth, and success.

- Healthy food incentive redemptions increased by 70%. People who participate in SNAP and Medicaid purchased over \$70,000 worth of regional food from LEAP markets.
- Interest in & support for local food expanded. We worked with over 50 regional partners to build a better food system and received support from 135+ donors wanting to invest in local food.
- Our program revenue increased by 40% and fed \$1.5M back into the community.
- LEAP started the process of making a new home. With funding from Roanoke City, we purchased a building in the West End neighborhood that will house LEAP's food hub, light food processing, a retail space, LEAP Mobile Market, the West End Farmers Market, and community and office space. We are so excited have our programs share one roof and ready to buy more food from farmers to distribute to more people.



From our Market Manager, Connie Kenny...

"We brought our Mobile Market to Eagle Rock for the first time this year—it's a good way to a convenience store or a grocery store. It's mostly older folks and they kept thanking me for bringing fresh food, asking me to bring more. I thought this one older customer was upset because she kept picking stuff up and putting it down. I asked is everything ok, she started tearing up and said she can't tell me how long it had been since she was able to pick out my own veggies."



LEAP @ THE LOCAL LEVEL

32

Community Food Access points across Roanoke City

45

Roanoke City-based food businesses who participated in our programs

70%

Of surveyed residents felt that LEAP helped stretch their food budgets

\$1.5M

Reinvested in our local economy using the 1.8X multiplier effect



LEAP supports community initiatives, markets, farms, and farmers. We believe in the transformative power of food as a force of good. LEAP is rooted in Roanoke and here to build a more resilient and equitable community for all. Our programs support urban farms and small businesses, many of which are small and BIPOC and/or Women-owned. We build community spaces where people come together and share food. We give people the opportunity to choose their own food no matter their budget. Our work helps put fresh, healthy food in public school cafeterias and on tables across the city. Success for LEAP means a Roanoke food system that equitably produces health and abundance.

"It feels so good that not only am I getting great food and not only am I directly supporting the farmers who worked so hard to raise this food and raise it in such ethical, thoughtful ways, but that my money is also expanding out and helping to support people who live in food deserts in Roanoke."

— Farm Share member and Grandin Village Farmers Market shopper

OUR LOCAL PROGRAMS

Grandin Village Farmers Market

West End Farmers Market

LEAP Online Marketplace

LEAP Farm Share

LEAP Mobile Market

LEAP Kitchen

Community Produce Packs

LEAP Community Gardens

LEAP Food Hub



LEAP @ THE REGIONAL LEVEL

50

Organizations joined the Roanoke Regional Food System Partnership

\$96K

In funding distributed to 15 regional farmers markets, farms, and grocery stores for their SNAP Match programs

46,000

Harvest of the Month meals served by Roanoke City Public Schools

HALF A MILLION

Virginians who stand to benefit from a more equitable and abundant regional food system



We did a lot in 2021 to advance our regional food systems. We worked in Farm to School and Roanoke Region Food System Partnership projects. We joined a larger chain of regional food hubs to expand the number of farms we can support and people we can serve. We collaborated with community members, nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses across 9 counties to develop a shared vision and goals for our food systems. We are, more than ever, a small part of a bigger movement that impacts every aspect of life in our region.

GUIDING STAR
An equitable & resilient food & farm system

NEAR STAR
Mobilize a network to collaborate & take action



LEAP @ THE STATE LEVEL

50,000

SNAP participants stretched their food budgets to buy more fruits and vegetables

\$778K

Provided to organizations and community food outlets across the state

85%

of VFM Shoppers said VFM incentives helped their food to last when they did not have money to buy more

90

Virginia Fresh Match farmers markets, grocery stores, mobile markets, & farm stands

LEAP serves as the network coordinator for Virginia Fresh Match, a statewide network that funds SNAP incentive programs at community outlets.

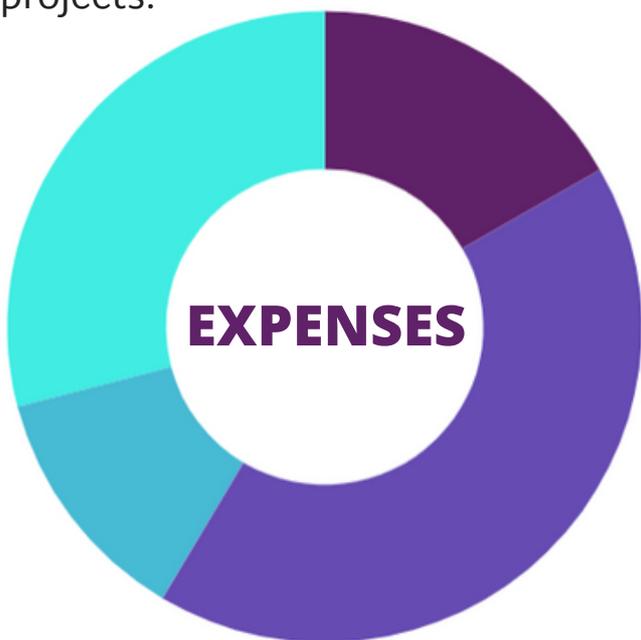




ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

LEAP has thrived during the pandemic in part because we have a diverse funding model. We are not overly dependent on any single source of funding. This provides us with flexibility to respond and adapt to the ever-changing community and organizational needs. LEAP also continues to grow our network facilitation work which includes serving as a fiscal agent for funds to support community-based food projects.

- 6% Other
- 10% Government Grants
- 11% Private Grants
- 44% Earned income
- 29% Donations



People Power 42%

In our team of dedicated local food experts

Food Power 29%

In local food, at fair prices for local farmers

Purchasing Power 12%

In extra dollars for Roanoke Valley residents to spend on fresh, local food

Program Power 17%

In community spaces, business support, moving food, and programs

Funding is a barrier for most small businesses and community projects. LEAP secures funds to disseminate to partners across Roanoke, the region and the state.

\$10K

In mini-grants to farmers markets for supplies, materials, and staffing

\$73K

Awarded to food systems organizations advancing food security

\$22K

In fresh, local food distributed free to people living with food insecurity

\$647K

Awarded to outlets operating SNAP incentive programs



BOARD & STAFF

2021 LEAP Board of Directors

Susan Clark, President
 Brent Cochran, Vice President
 Christy Pugh, Treasurer
 Pat Young, Secretary
 Mike Burton
 Jeremy Butterfield
 Sam Cannon
 Laura Reilly
 Cameron Terry
 Linda Thornton
 Rebecca Wright

LEAP Staff in 2021

Maureen McNamara Best
 Jeff Bland
 Kyra Crawford
 Sam Hedges
 Connie Kenny
 Kelly Key
 Sam Lev
 Maureen McGonagle
 Yohan McNamara
 Christina Nifong
 Aaron Terry
 Ned Savage
 Davey Stewards
 Frances West

LEAP Volunteers & Interns

Traci Bitrick	Sophie Bartholomaus (intern)	Hannah Chambers (intern)
Will Childers	Walker Peterson (Eagle Scout project)	Kierra Scott (intern)
Kevin Swanson	Junior League of Roanoke Valley	Blue Ridge Literacy

