



2020 Annual Report



A Message From Our Executive Director

Dear Friend,

Duke Ellington, the jazz legend is attributed in saying “A problem is a chance for you to do your best.” It is through this lens that I find so much gratitude in the efforts FoodChain put forth during this challenging year- both in the worthy programs and plans, but especially of our labors under the shadows of the pandemic.

I hope you'll take a moment to look through the details of our annual report, and I hope too that it brings you as much optimism and encouragement as it has me. For all the metrics and impact recorded in these pages, there are countless other stories of untold impacts and bellies filled. Those undocumented anecdotes are one of the biggest sources of fuel for me, also providing the drive to do more and think more imaginatively as to what might be possible.

And finally, I owe an exceeding depth of gratitude to the committed and dedicated FoodChain team. Our staff more than doubled in 2020, and their energy, creativity and passion is no doubt to credit for FoodChain's swift action during the coronavirus. Because of them, and you, I'm so proud of how we were able to truly lean into the need. There's a chinese proverb that says from the hottest fires comes the strongest steel. Rest assured, we've never been stronger.

In Gratitude,

Becca Self

Becca Self
Executive Director



From The Words Of Others

"FoodChain's Nourish Lexington kept us from hunger many nights. They are truly a blessing."

-Meal recipient & mother



"Making meals for FoodChain has kept my catering business afloat and has provided jobs for my staff. We love making healthy meals for anyone in need."

-Angelia
From the Heart Catering

"I'm happy FoodChain is able to use our produce to make nourishing meals for anyone in need while helping us out financially"

-Maggie
Owner, Salad Days Farm

2020: A Year Like No Other



Our Mission:

Forging links between community and fresh food through education and demonstration of sustainable food systems.

At the beginning of 2020, Kentucky's families already experienced limited access to fresh, locally-sourced food...

1 in 5
Children
are food insecure

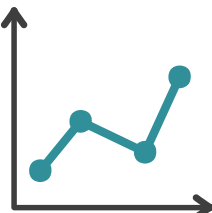


1 in 7 people struggles with hunger

19,600
Seniors
qualify for SNAP

Since COVID- 19 struck in March the need has only grown...

110,000
U.S Restaurants
have closed



food insecurity rates are on the rise

20.6
Million
jobs lost since mid-March

The pandemic has caused a public health and economic crisis like never before in our time. The effects have been felt far and wide, but most severely by historically marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Our goal for the past nine years has been to connect this community to fresh food through education and outreach while modeling and investing in a sustainable food system. With the onset of the pandemic, food insecurity became the most pressing need. In March, FoodChain went into swift action to alleviate hunger by preparing and getting over 200,000 fresh meals to children, families and elderly, no questions asked.

Nourish Lexington Powered By FoodChain



In mid-March, when cases of Covid-19 first began appearing in Kentucky, it sent a seismic shift through our way of life. Schools were immediately closed, many businesses had to shut their doors, thousands suddenly lost their jobs, and the social safety nets that existed through congregate interactions suddenly ceased. This meant that the need for basic support, such as access to quality food, rose dramatically at the same time that many traditional emergency support efforts stopped.

To address this need for quality food immediately and to provide economic support to our local food service industry, a creative approach was required. Thus, Nourish Lexington - powered by FoodChain, was formed. This innovative collaboration was forged between Keeneland, VisitLEX, and FoodChain to help provide nutritious meals to all while also supporting the economic backbone of our region's food industry.

This effort linked the skills and bounty of our local food system professionals, including farmers, cooks, distributors, and servers to provide well over 200,000 meals for free to those struggling through this pandemic.

This orchestrated effort recognizes the dignity and inherent worth of all individuals in these troubled times, allowing each person to contribute where their skills are needed in order to invest in our community and to take care of our neighbors.



FOOD PROFESSIONALS PAID



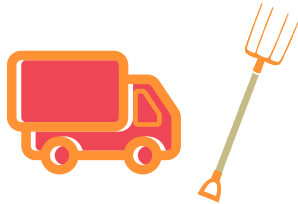
43

We've hired 16 displaced food service workers and provided supplemental income to 27 other food professionals throughout the pandemic in our Kitchen

18

This year farmers faced a sharp decrease in demand for produce due to closed markets. We prioritized sourcing from these farmers in order to make nourishing meals

LOCAL FARMS SUPPORTED



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



62 SITES

It truly takes a village! These sites help with the distribution of meals, ingredients, and educational content around Lexington

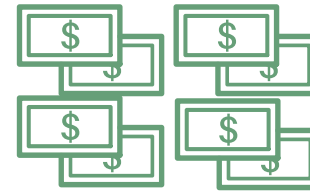
210,000

Thousands of kids, adults, seniors and families have received scratch-made meals for free with no paperwork needed or questions asked

MEALS SERVED



DOLLARS INVESTED



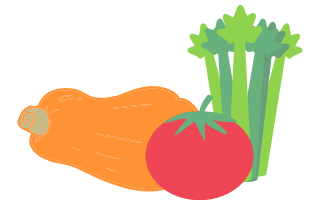
\$700K+

That's money spent on local restaurants, caterers, farmers, food professionals, and businesses to help make meals and sustain the local food economy

24

We've been able to invest in local restaurants, caterers, and other local food distributors - helping to sustain their work and pay their employees

LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES



Teaching & Processing Kitchen





SERVING UP A SIDE OF EDUCATION

FoodChain is committed not only to supporting and feeding our community but to education as well. Those core principals are embodied throughout our work and that is what we believe has the greatest impact on our community. While our kitchen hasn't been able to host in-person tours, cooking classes, or our workforce development program since the spring, we have found other ways to weave education into our work.

One of our favorite examples of this was hosting a Facebook live butchering class with Chef Greg Spalding. We taught some basics on how families can save money when purchasing ethically sourced, locally raised meat in bulk, and then walked them through step-by-step to demonstrate how to break down a hog! You can check it out here if you missed it before:
<https://bit.ly/3cKLGZa>

PROCESSING GOODS

Since we first opened our kitchen, FoodChain has been modeling innovative ways to reduce food surplus that would likely end up in landfills. In practice, that means we're processing a lot of produce - washing, peeling, dicing, freezing/freeze drying, packaging and then redistributing. This important step increases shelf life and access to local fruits and veggies outside of the seasons they grow. Examples of some of our processed goods includes apple and pear chips, frozen green beans, smoothie kits (with kale, apples, bananas, blueberries), butternut squash, and more! All KY grown and/or rescued and all SNAP eligible!

You can now find these processed, nutrient dense goodies on a variety of shelves around the Lexington area, including Good Foods Co-op, Wilson's Grocery, Wine + Market, and Truly Local.



RESCUED FOOD



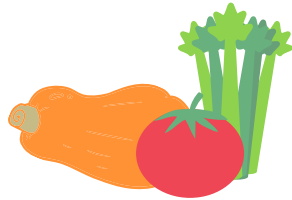
112,300 LBS

That's right! All rescued from local farms, grocery stores, and God's Pantry/Farms to Food Banks and then used in the kitchen for meals and processing

35,000 lbs

We prioritize local fruits and vegetables, either purchased or gleaned, for the meals we serve to food insecure families, youth, and the elderly

KY PRODUCE



MONEY TO LOCAL FARMS



\$20,900

We have always been driven to support our local farmers, but in 2020 it was more important to source locally and provide as much economic relief as possible for our local growers

MAKING MEALS

On the fly we quickly began preparing hundreds of meals each day, which required an enormous amount of logistical coordination -- creating processes as we went. And while that learning curve was steep, we were lucky to find skills and in-kind support from so many players in our existing local food system. Through it all, we were able to be mindful about the seemingly mundane things too, to ensure that our meals both reflected the values of a just, sustainable food system and also preserved the inherent worth and dignity of the meal recipient. Investing in reheatable metal pans, like restaurants use, to plate our meals is one small example of this. These tiny details all accumulate to show our respect to everyone who receives these meals.

Together, we triumphed over more obstacles than ever before, all while remaining steadfast in our focus to provide wholesome food to neighbors.



Education & Outreach





SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

Summer Food Service Program, a program of the USDA, typically takes place only throughout the summer months to help feed students who need access to food. However, due to the pandemic, this program opened up back in March with the unforeseen closure of schools.

As the pandemic continued to keep schools closed, the need for access to food for youth has continued. Fortunately, with the program being extended for the 2020-2021 school year, all kids 1-18 yrs old can get free meals from designated meal pick-up sites and we get to continue feeding, and as always, serving up fresh food education as a side! Thanks to the partners who have helped extend our reach to feed students in need (via 34 different distribution sites!) like the good folks of Pilgrim Baptist Church pictured above.

FARM TO SCHOOL

Since 2017 FoodChain has taken a major role in helping to coordinate the efforts of the Fayette County Farm to School Program. Our Education Director, Kristin, has served as the Farm to School Chair for the past two years. Despite the unprecedented year that our schools and this program have faced, Kristin continues to work on connecting students to fresh food through access and education through the Farm to School program.

This year, a group of high school students, led by our Farm to School intern Lindsey, developed videos for the Farm to School Youtube channel as a way for students to engage with our content virtually and safely. Videos include short cooking demos, tours of home gardens, tips for gardening, and more! Visit "Fayette County Farm 2 School" on Youtube: <http://bit.ly/3jR534k>



KIDS ENGAGED IN VIRTUAL COOKING



75

Not being able to cook in person did not stop us from providing education around cooking with fresh food! Like many, we adapted and started to lead classes via Zoom in partnership with local schools

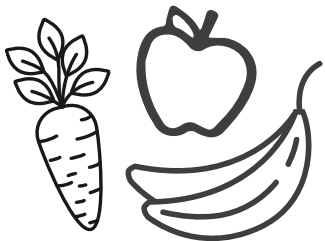
52,627

MEALS FOR STUDENTS

We worked with school Family Resource Coordinators to feed area students who, while learning at home, couldn't access the meals provided by the public school system



**SNACKS
DISTRIBUTED**



620

During 2020 we distributed healthy snacks to students from our kitchen, with our van, and at resource fairs. Snacks we handed out ranged from sweet potato chips and popcorn balls to butternut muffins

COOK. EAT. GROW. GOES VIRTUAL

Despite not being able to meet in person, FoodChain was still able to engage virtually with students for C.E.G. - providing ingredient kits and recipes for students to follow along on Zoom to prepare several healthy snacks. It started with a 2-week summer camp at LTMS - creating videos for knife skills, math in the kitchen, and talking about substitutions of fats for healthier options in cooking. By fall, we were able to provide live cooking classes, led by our Education Director, Kristin, along with ingredient kits so that all the students had what they needed to cook.

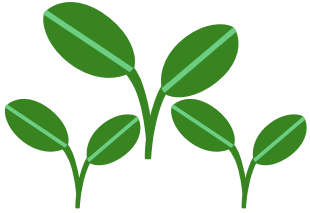
Some of our favorite snack lessons included green bean udon wraps, mushroom and greens on ricotta toast (make your own ricotta!), and sweet potato noodles in a peanut sesame sauce!



Indoor Aquaponics Farm



GREENS HARVESTED



3,011 LBS

We more than doubled the amount of micros, herbs, and other greens that we grew in our indoor aquaponic farm this year despite major technical difficulties

970 LBS

The majority of the free meals that we give out include hearty and healthy salads and most of the greens used in them were harvested here on our farm

PRODUCE USED IN MEALS



PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH THE FARM



548

272 of the of the people who toured our farm were able to do so in person before the pandemic. Since then, 276 students have gone on virtual tours

AQUAPONICS FARM IN THE PANDEMIC

In the past, most of our lettuce has been sold to local restaurants. With restaurants and other markets minimizing their operations, we had a greens surplus - but not to worry! We have been using those greens to give out thousands of free, nourishing salads to accompany our meals and many families have reported a huge uptick in their consumption of veggies as a result!

VIRTUAL EDUCATION ON THE FARM

Due social distancing, not being able to open our doors to the public for farm tours was a hard loss. But it forced us to think outside the actual box to better connect and engage others with our agricultural operations. From interactive videos shared with schools, to virtual field trips and how-to's, we've been rolling out a variety of ways for folks to learn about our farm. You too can check them out by visiting our website at <https://bit.ly/3k9CyPL>



FoodChain FEAST



FEAST 2020 Chefs



FEAST 2020

In 2016, Chef Ouita Michel came back from the James Beard Foundation Boot Camp fired up about the four female chefs she met, with hopes of bringing them to Kentucky for an event to create amazing food with local products while raising awareness about FoodChain. Ouita's idea became a reality, known as FEAST - Food Equity & Access Sustains Tomorrow.

We celebrated the 4th annual FEAST 2020 with those same 4 original chefs, plus 13 talented women chefs from across the region and each created a fabulous dish from locally sourced ingredients. Thanks to all the chefs, sponsors, auction donors, bidders and all of YOU that attend, FEAST has become a major foodie event and fund/awareness raiser for FoodChain. We hope to welcome you to the 5th annual FEAST in March 2022 when we can all be together again. It will be one heck of a celebration you won't want to miss!

FEAST FUNDS FOODCHAIN VAN

In 2018, we began dreaming about the many ways a van would help us increase access to food, transport kids to farmers markets and FoodChain cooking classes, and deliver our aquaponic farmed products to local restaurants. But we never dreamed it would become such a critical link for delivering thousands of meals during a pandemic.

Thanks to grants from the Kentucky Colonels and Traditional Bank, we purchased the van in 2020 and with funds raised at FEAST, we can continue to operate and utilize the FoodChain van daily. The van enables us to pick up produce from local farmers to prepare fresh nutritious meals and deliver them in order to minimize transportation inequities. One meal recipient reported that kids stay on the look out and squeal with excitement when they see the FoodChain food chariot roll up!

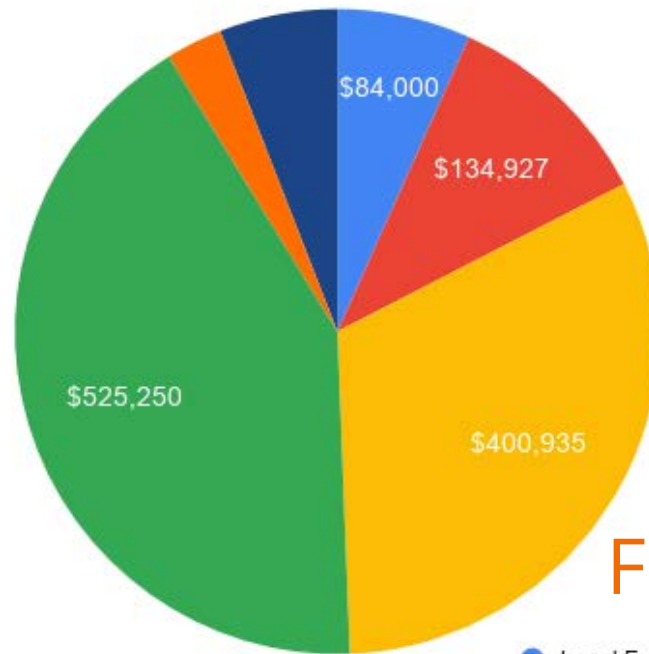


Funding of FoodChain

A wooden crate filled with fresh produce and packaged items. It includes a large bag of green leafy lettuce, three large red tomatoes, two cucumbers, a clear plastic container of salad mix, and a small jar of dressing. The salad container label lists ingredients like corn meal, garlic, and chili powder, and includes the date 10/29/2020.

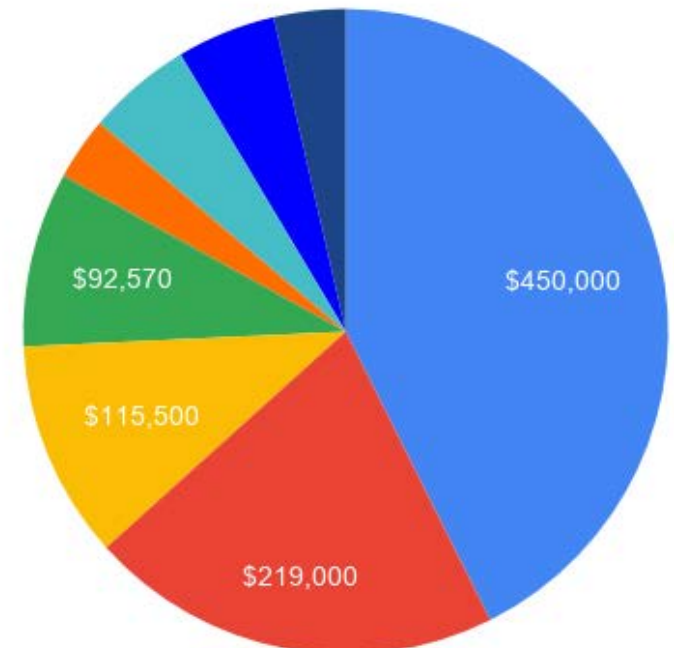
FoodChain's 2020 Income

- Corporate Support
- Individual Donations
- Grants
- Foundations
- Revenue
- Events



FoodChain's 2020 Expenses

- Local Food Businesses
- Kitchen Operations & Supplies
- New Hires for Nourish
- Administrative
- Fundraising
- Educational Programming
- Farm Operations
- Van



Thanks For Fueling Our Work!

The work mentioned throughout these pages would not be possible without the myriad of ways this community showed their support. We have truly been in awe at the number of people who showed up and helped out in a time of such need. To every single person who donated money, masks, time, produce from gardens, resources, and beyond... thank you. We are so grateful to serve such a stellar community!

REVENUE

Farm sales, processed goods sales, holiday item sales, catering sales, tours, tshirt sales

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Over 440 individual donors have offered charitable support to FoodChain throughout 2020!

CORPORATE SUPPORT

Kroger, Traditional Bank, Whole Foods, Tate Hill Jacobs Architects, Crank & Boom, Cup of Common Wealth, Circeo Fannin, BB&T, Anthem, Fifth Generation, Marsh & McLennan Companies, Fayette County Farm Bureau, Cotton Patch of KY

GRANTS

Lexington Fayette Urban County Government's ESR, United States Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Feeding Kentucky, Lexington Fayette Urban County Government - Community Development Block Grant, EFSP - CARES funding, Kentucky Colonels

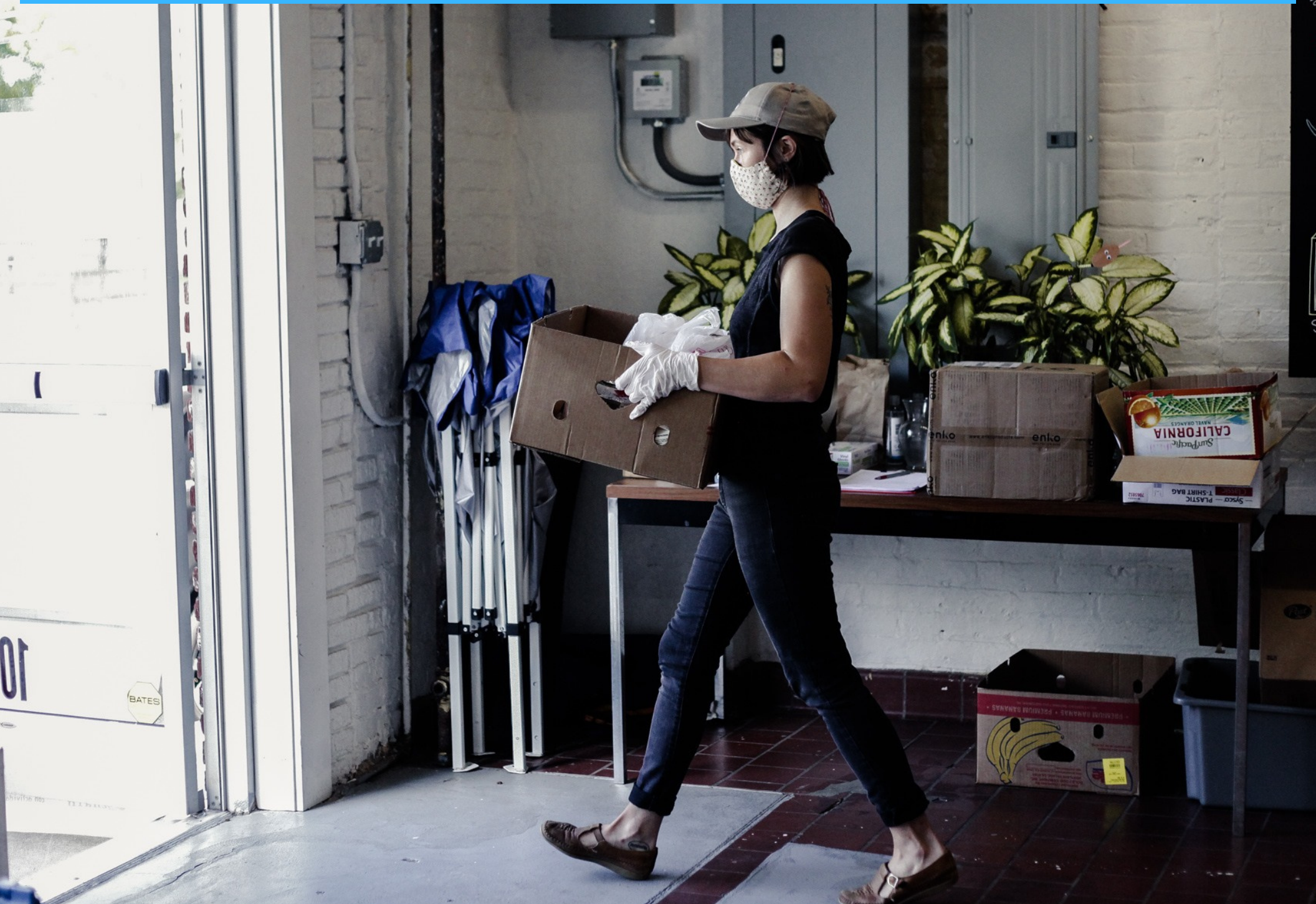
FOUNDATIONS

Murry Foundation, Blue Grass Community Foundation, Coronavirus Response Fund from BGCF & United Way, Kenan Charitable Trust, Lavin Family Foundation, Commonwealth Common Health, Mulhollem Cravens Fund, Muir House Foundation, Christian World Ministries, Cerel Family Foundation, Knight Foundation, Hoskins Family Foundation, PNC Foundation, Jenna and Matthew Mitchell Foundation, Keeneland, Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau, Marksby Family Foundation, MacAdam Early Childhood & Literacy Fund, Morgan/Novak Foundation, The Butler Gimelli Family Fund, Vanguard Charitable, Hinkle Family Foundation, Nourish Your Neighborhood Fund, Community Farm Alliance, Rex Chapman Foundation

EVENTS

FEAST sponsors: VisitLEX, Ouita Michel Family of Restaurants, Dupree Mutual Funds, Murry Foundation, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Fasig Tipton, PNC Bank, BB&T, Burnett Roofing, Clem's Refrigerated Foods, Creation Gardens, D. Scott Neal, Lexington Clinic Foundation, Traditional Bank, University of Kentucky, Wealth South, Wells + Harding, Woodford Reserve, Wyatt Tarrant & Combs, Bryant's Rent-All, Castle & Key, Eco-Products, Halfhill Auction Group, Jackson Family Wines, Marriott City Center, Michler's, Mr. Linen, West Sixth Brewing, WKYT, Wrigley Media Group, The Apiary, Eppings on Eastside, Distilled Experiences, Ryan Foster, The Kentucky Castle, Party Town, Railbird, and The Roxy. **Crafted Kitchen Pop Up Event:** Castle & Key, Kroger, Republic Distribution

Support Our Work



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Donate!

Please consider us when making your charitable donations. Go to www.foodchainlex.org and click the "Donate" tab to support us today!

Lend a Hand!

Interested in getting involved with our work? Email us at volunteer@foodchainlex.org

Follow, Like, Share!

Be our friend on social media!

Find us @foodchainlex

Be sure to sign up for our monthly newsletter at www.foodchainlex.org!

Partner with us!

Your business can sponsor an event, workforce development, or education programs. Email us info@foodchainlex.org.

Intern!

We always have different opportunities to host internships, both virtual and (safely) in person. Please email us at info@foodchainlex.org for more information.



THANK YOU FROM THE FOODCHAIN TEAM!

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