

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

San Luis Valley  
Local Foods Coalition





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Message from Director
- Local Food Local Places
- Cooking Matters
- Mercadillo en el Rio
- Rio Grande Farm Park
- Valley Roots Food Hub

# INTRODUCTION

Since 2009, the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (LFC) has worked to foster an equitable local food system that restores the health of the people, community, economy, and ecosystem.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2024 began with the retirement of our founder, Liza Marron, so she could serve as Saguache County Commissioner. Her departure made visible the incredible scope of what she had carried for 15 years: overseeing programs, supporting nearly 30 staff, ensuring financial sustainability, and cultivating strong partnerships across the San Luis Valley and the state—all while holding fast to our core values.

I'm fortunate not to carry this work alone. Our dedicated staff and contractors, long-serving board, passionate advisory committees, and countless volunteers and partners have all helped keep us steady through this transition.

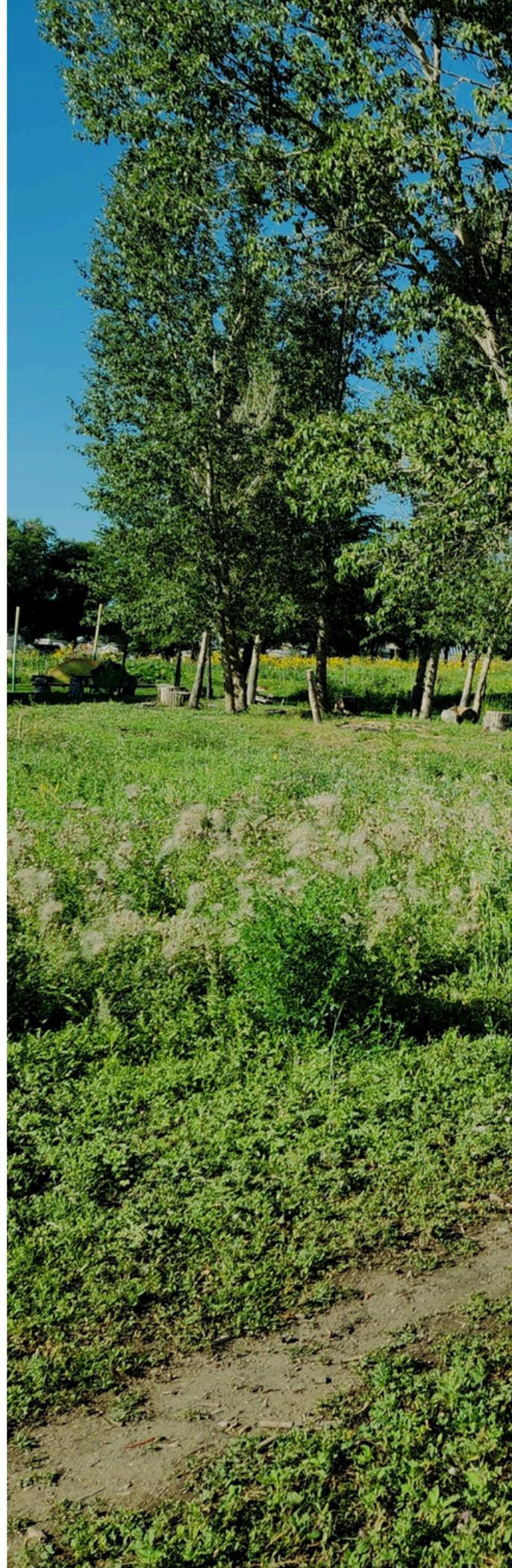
Amid these changes, we've continued to expand access to nutritious local food, support small family farmers, ranchers, and grocers, and empower community members to shape the future of our food and agriculture system. Together, we are building a thriving and healthy San Luis Valley.

Thank you for your trust as I've stepped into this role, and for continuing to walk alongside us. It's a true honor to do this work with you.

With deep appreciation,



Max Gibson  
Executive Director



# LOCAL FOOD LOCAL PLACES

In 2024, Local Foods Local Places made a big impact on local food businesses in the San Luis Valley. Our outreach helped bring in \$722,522 of grants to small local grocery stores, farmers, farmers markets and farm stands through the Community Food Access Program, the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

**". . .That money went directly into the pockets of businesses and farmers out here... we brought over \$720K to our region out of \$5 million that was available to the whole state."**

In March, we released the SLV Community Food & Agricultural Assessment report, which included input from 1,153 farmers/ranchers, food businesses, and community members who took a survey, and 185 summit participants. In the fall we began work on the Action Plan, which will bring community members and partner agencies together to create a roadmap of policies, infrastructure, and programs that our food systems needs to thrive.



**Published a robust community assessment**  
**\$720,000 in grants to the San Luis Valley**



# COOKING MATTERS

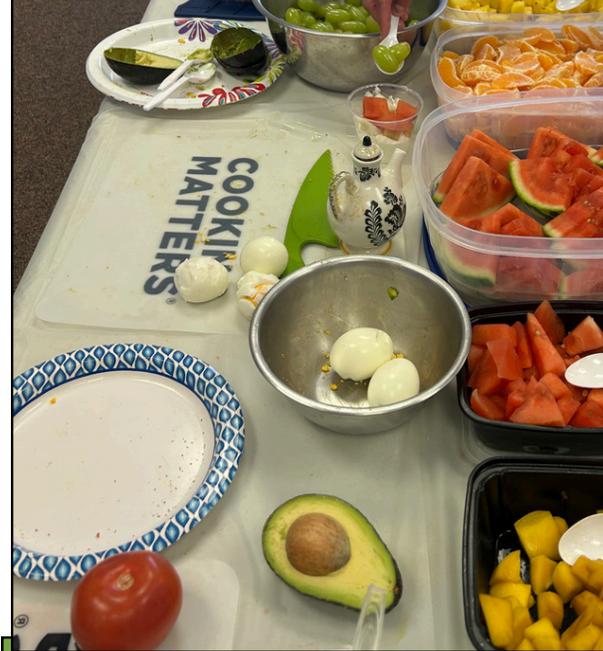
In 2024, Cooking Matters made a big impact by teaching people how to cook healthy meals and make smart food choices. We reached 879 participants in 45 classes across the six counties, including special lessons for farmworkers and rural communities.

**"Everything was new to me. I did not know how to read food labels . . ."**

One of our biggest accomplishments was holding a food workshop for H2A visa workers, with over 60 participants.

**"It took practically 8 years to do classes with our H2A workers in Center."**

We also worked with nine community partners and bought local ingredients, like Huckleberry Gold potatoes from the Rio Grande Farm Park, to support local farmers and provide healthier food. By making these connections, we're helping more people learn about healthy eating while strengthening our local food system.



**879 participants  
across 6 counties**

**45 classes taught**

**60+ participants  
H2A Visa  
Food Workshop**





# MERCADILLO EN EL RIO

In 2024, Mercadillo en el Rio brought fresh food, local farmers, and the community together. We hosted 12 weekly markets, with about 150 people attending each one. To help families afford fresh food, we processed \$4,130 in SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks.

**"This is the most legit farmers market, the fields are right behind the farmer stands."**

Farmers at the Rio Grande Farm Park sold over 1,200 pounds of produce, giving people a direct connection to where their food comes from. We worked with more than 30 farmers and vendors, including 10 who grow food right at the Farm Park.

**"There is no other farmers market like this."**

We also made it easier for vendors to succeed by launching a new website and offering classes, like cottage food training. By making fresh food more available, supporting small farmers, and helping vendors grow their businesses, Mercadillo en el Rio continues to be a special place for the whole community.

**1,200 LB of produce sold from the park**

**30+ farmers and value-added vendors**

**\$4,130 in SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks food access for low-income families.**



# RIO GRANDE FARM PARK

In 2024, the Rio Grande Farm Park remained a vibrant space where education, sustainability, and community came together. The Education Center hosted 15 trainings and conferences, helping farmers and neighbors gain important knowledge and tools. The space also welcomed 51 unique rentals, including weddings, birthdays, and community events, creating more opportunities for people to gather and celebrate.

**“This is the one public space we have that brings people together. It’s filled with joy, culture, and shared work.”**

The Farm Park also supported future food leaders through the Rising Steward Program. Six local high school students learned hands-on skills from food system experts across the San Luis Valley.

Greenhouse harvests brought over 550 pounds of hyper-local produce to our community. Meanwhile, sustainability efforts thrived, with 38.5 tons of rich compost supporting gardens and farms throughout the region.

**“Some family farmers here have been growing food for over a decade.”**

By teaching, growing, and building healthy soil, the Rio Grande Farm Park continues to serve as a vital gathering place—one that supports farmers, nourishes families, and strengthens community bonds throughout the San Luis Valley.



**8,000 lbs of produce to regional food pantries**

**15 unique trainings and conferences**

**550 lbs of fresh produce grown in greenhouse for locals consumption**



## VALLEY ROOTS FOOD HUB

In 2024, Valley Roots Food Hub continued to strengthen the regional food system, generating close to \$2 million in sales from 165 dedicated local producers. With a strong focus on Colorado-grown food, the hub remained true to its values while also sourcing from trusted regional partners to ensure customers received fresh, high-quality products.

**“The integrity of Valley Roots Food Hub has always been the same... They stick to their values, and that really matters.”**

Valley Roots played a critical role in expanding food access across rural communities. As grocery stores continue to close in small towns, the hub stepped up by delivering fresh food directly to residents in Conejos and Costilla counties—areas often overlooked in food distribution systems.

By backing local farmers, standing by its commitment to locally grown food, and reaching rural communities, Valley Roots Food Hub remains a key leader in building food security and supporting the future of the San Luis Valley’s food economy.

**\$1.8 million in sales, with 70% (almost \$1.3 million!) of the income going back into the pockets of 165 local producers**

**Expanded food access routes to: Conejos, and Costilla counties**

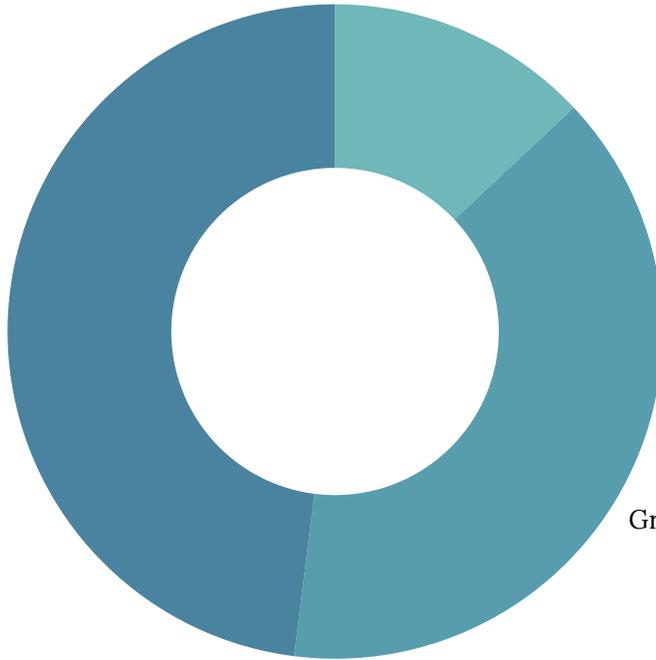


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## Revenue

Total  
\$4,019,273

Individual & Corporate Giving: \$526,948  
13%



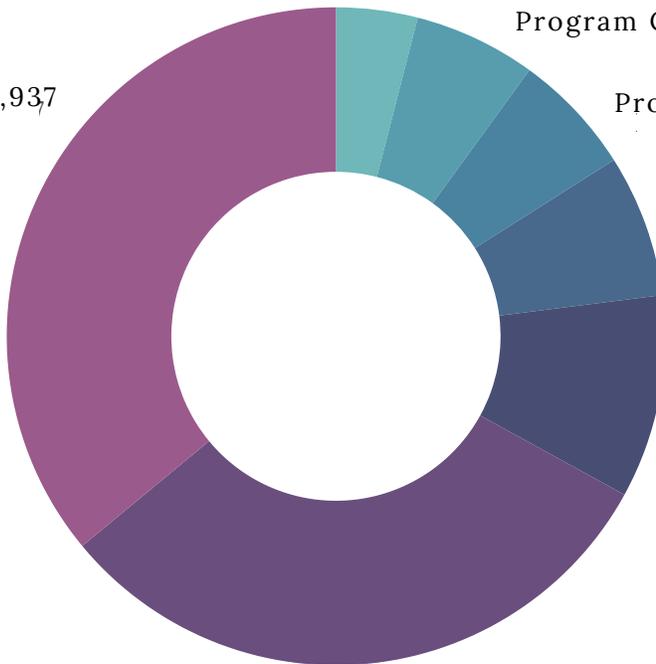
Earned Income: \$1,942,806  
48%

Grants: \$1,549,517  
39%

## Expenses

Total  
\$3,539,944

Miscellaneous: \$ 103,304  
4%



Cost of Goods: \$1,269,937  
36%

Program Costs: \$201,996  
6%

Professional Services: \$203,331  
6%

RGFP Endowment Passthrough: \$237,500  
7%

Operations and Admin: \$338,348  
10%

Staffing: \$1,110,692  
31%