

This report is the summary of four distinct surveys evaluating the Seeding Power Fellowship '23-'24 pilot. Data was collected from September 2023 to May 2024. Twelve fellows participated in the pilot fellowship. All 12 fellows completed the final evaluative instrument, and participation in surveys 1-3 spanned from 7 to 11 fellows, depending on the survey and attendance for its associated event. Due to the small size of the sample, only descriptive and qualitative statistics analyses are presented in this report.

The data demonstrates **high level of positive impact and high net positive ratings for quality and meaningfulness of the fellowship experience**. Opportunities for growth, useful critical feedback, and suggestions for subsequent cohort designs are presented near the end of this report.

Overall Quality of the Fellowship Experience

Fellows very highly rated the overall experience of the fellowship and the quality of its design. In short, comments regarding the effectiveness of the design suggest that it creates space for an honest approach to movement building. All of the

88/100

Quality of the experience

87/100

Effectiveness of the design and facilitation

fellows find the fellowship itself and the skills, lessons, and learnings to be useful and relevant to themselves and to their lives and work, with the majority indicating

that “the experience has completely changed my life/work.” Fellows were asked to reflect on their confidence that they themselves, their peers, and the Food Justice and Land Movement would benefit from this Fellowship. Ninety-two percent were confident, with over two thirds of those indicating they were **very confident**. Fellows also report similar conviction in having grown both as individuals and as movement leaders as a result of participating.



In this pilot design, CFF and EE imagined the creation of a cohort and a space that spans the diversity of roles and functions of the movement. Fellows were chosen to represent grassroots advocacy/community, nonprofit leadership, government, and philanthropy. We put great intention toward curating the fellowship to not only be a microcosm of the larger movement it is embedded within but also a space where fellows individually and collectively could get curious and explore both the role they play in movement spaces and the roles of others across sectors. The goal of this intention is to break down silos, promote critical self-reflection, and increase collaboration across diverse sectors of the movement. We knew we were taking a certain risk by coalescing this particular breadth of representation. However, when asked about the inclusion of government, philanthropy, and the full participation of CFF leadership alongside fellows, the vast majority of fellows found it **extremely helpful**, with two-thirds of the group naming it as something that helped them personally or professionally, half indicating it should be expanded upon in the next design, and nearly half finding it critical to the fellowship itself.

Toward the promotion of cross-sector understanding and collaboration, EE asserts that in order to understand another, one must first truly explore in self-awareness. **Eleven of twelve** fellows report that the fellowship container allowed them to engage openly, honestly, and vulnerably, with well over half **strongly agreeing** with that statement. **Ten of twelve** fellows agree that this fellowship helped them to be more ready, willing, and well-equipped to collaborate with peers across differences in organization types, functions, and roles within the movement. The same number feel better equipped to build transformative relationships and collaborate with diverse stakeholders across the regional food movement as a result. **All of the fellows** report their unique contributions to the food space and their applied skills are better understood by their peers due to participating in this fellowship, with over 70% of them strongly agreeing with that sentiment.

The following selection of quotes highlight the quality of the experience and overall impacts on the fellows, in their own words:

“When I started the fellowship, I was burnt out and ready to give up working in the food systems space all together. It turns out that what I needed was resources, support, and connection to feel capable of continuing the grueling efforts of big systems change.”

“The Seeding Power fellowship was thoughtfully designed and curated by some of the most intelligent and skilled facilitators I have ever met. [Our facilitators were] able to meet the unique needs of this group by being flexible and responsive. The fellowship helped me to connect to other amazing leaders in the region. It provided examples of equity in action and examples of building an alternative to white supremacy culture.”

“During these 9 months I feel like I've gained 9 years of knowledge.”

“I think the community of practice that this fellowship established for me is such a big benefit and resource that I look forward to having as we collectively continue our movement work. The diversity of people and entry points that they have in the food movement helps to provide rounded, nuanced, and critical perspectives while also providing a space to be heard and seen as we work/stumble towards liberation in our food space / system.”

“I think this will be a point that can be looked at that helped me define my future work.”

“I've been exposed to more about food justice in the many forms in which folks work in this field. I have grown in my understanding of nonprofits and how they work within food justice spaces. I've learned more about how I can use my voice and my skills in community organizing to better serve my community.”

“I gained confidence and clarity on the aspects that make me unique to movements and systems change. I feel more comfortable unapologetically bringing my whole self to the work. You've showed me what a professional and accepting/inclusive environment can look like and how it should feel. I'm very grateful.”

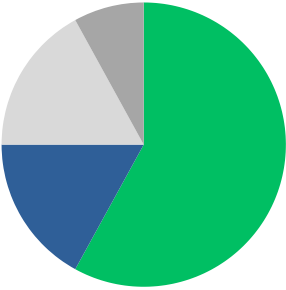
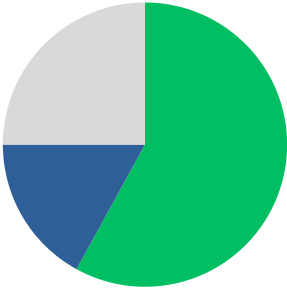
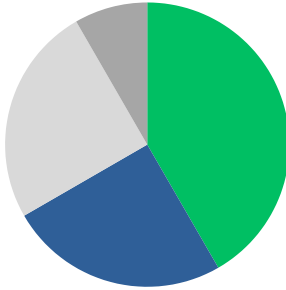
Core Components of the Fellowship

The pilot design included each of these core elements: 3 in-person retreats, the EE core equity development curriculum, virtual sessions, fellow peer panel presentations, EE coaching and responsive hours, small group collaboration projects, evaluative surveys, and the final reflection section. All of the components were highly successful across all measured indicators. In the tables and text below, results of some of those indicators are provided.

<u>In-Person Retreats</u>		
All of the fellows (100%) feel that the retreats as critical to this fellowship.		
Retreat 1 100% of respondents rated the retreat as good or excellent (82% and 18%, respectively)	Retreat 2 100% of the attendees rated the retreat as good or excellent (14% and 86%, respectively)	Retreat 3 8 of 9 (89%) attendees rated the retreat as good or excellent (22% and 67%, respectively)
Rating of facilitation- 85.5% Rating of activities/exercises- 80% Rating of structure/design- 83%	Rating of facilitation- 99% Rating of activities/exercises- N/A Rating of structure/design- 99%	Rating of facilitation- 86% Rating of activities/exercises- 80% Rating of structure/design- 87%

Across all of the retreats, some of the elements found most useful/helpful by attendees were in-person relationship building, EE facilitation, the safety and container it creates, EE philosophy and components of our curriculum that encourage contemplative applied practice, spaciousness of the agendas, and integration of land and food-based practices. Those who attended the retreats and completed the surveys clearly gained a lot from them, and most desired them to be longer.

The EE core curriculum (equity development curriculum) and the virtual sessions will be discussed together as the majority of the EE curriculum was administered via those sessions, though it is important to note that the first two sessions were built into the first retreat. Aspects of the curriculum were already named among fellows “most useful” components of the retreats for that reason. Across the four surveys, we measured the effectiveness of the curriculum by breaking it into its three primary sections: interrogation of our relationships with white supremacy culture, analysis of risk in communications and strengthening communications, and the final equity building component. In the table and text below, we provide results regarding these aspects of the curriculum, along with broader observations made by the fellows.

EE Core Curriculum		
White Supremacy Culture	Risk and Communications	Building Equity
<p>How effective is the the facilitated exploration of how the Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture show up in our beliefs, patterns, habits, workflows, etc.?</p> <p>9 of 12 fellows rated this portion of the curriculum as effective or very effective. 2 fellows were ambivalent, and one rated it ineffective.</p> 	<p>How effective is the the facilitated evaluation of risk in communications, the Shifting Communications from Risk-Averse to Risk Conscious guide, and overall discussions about equitable communications?</p> <p>9 of 12 fellows rated this portion of the curriculum as effective or very effective. 3 fellows were ambivalent, and none rated it ineffective.</p> 	<p>How effective is the the presented definition of Equity and its' related concepts, the Myths and Truths of Equity, and the overall EE framework for equity and its application?</p> <p>8 of 12 fellows rated this portion of the curriculum as effective or very effective. 3 fellows were ambivalent, and one rated it ineffective.</p> 
<p>80/100</p> <p>Helped me to explore my own power, privilege, and positionality</p> <p>80/100</p> <p>Sparked new discoveries or ways of thinking about myself</p>	<p>Most found this helpful, speaking to the tensions of remaining both authentic and accountable.</p>	<p>Most subsequent measures regarding this portion exist within the measurement of the collaborative final project, as that is where we moved to apply this final portion of the curriculum.</p>

Fellows offered numerous positive reflections of the impacts of the emphasis on self-reflection and relationships with self and others as sites to interrogate white supremacy. The way that positionality becomes explicit in this process was also something that stood out to fellows because they got to see, across role and sector, ways that peers related to the concepts. One of the unifying features of this process is the extent to which there is unexpected overlap in our experiences that is important for embodying empathy and building bridges. We provide some noteworthy quotes regarding the curriculum at the top of the next page.



“It was helpful for me to identify how white supremacy culture and values are reproduced in both my work and approach, and the work of those around me. I think it’s helpful for me to note them, address them, and challenge them to better show up in movement.”

“[I had] a revelation about ways in which I identified that I had never considered before.”

“It was good to discuss/verbalize/foreground what I feel operated in me largely without my attention, awareness, agency at most times.”

“After reflecting with my past interactions within my community I was able to reevaluate how important it is to continue to build community. I was able to consider re-entering into spaces that were difficult and risk what would happen when I did. I found that people were willing and able to appreciate what we bring to the table and that we can work together to make a difference in the community.”

“I feel that the information, tools, and discussions around risk were extremely helpful ways to examine situations at work and even work- or life-related decision-making. This has truly informed and impacted my way of approaching most situations now, in invaluable ways (that help me protect my health while still being values-aligned and authentic - but balanced).”

“[As a result] 1. I am keenly aware of how to address issues rooted in white supremacy that emerge in my org and work 2. I have more connections to call on and into as we build a stronger org and partnership movement.”

“Our prompts helped expand our mindfulness and helped with thinking outside the box, but nothing was forced and it gave time a comfortable space to grow in.”

“Appreciate the avoidance of the “Racism 101” approach and more in favor of cultural/systems approach employed. This allowed for engagement beyond the binary of doing or being “good” or “bad” actors/activists.”

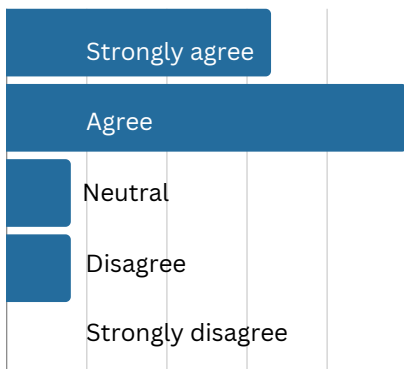
“This was the first time I saw a deeper examination of these topics. This was immensely affirming and exciting to see. [The curriculum was] one of the best components of the fellowship design for me! Thank you for your thought and labor into developing this and using it in your work.”



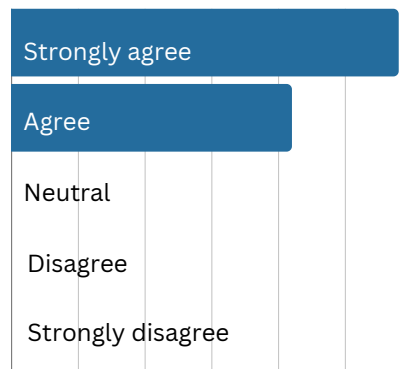
Due to funding limitations, we decided not to incorporate peer site visits into this design (though it should be noted that it is something most fellows shared they would have liked). Instead, each fellow got an opportunity to talk about themselves, their work, their organizations, philosophies, or whatever they would like to share. They got to self-determine how to share that information within a 40-minute format. In the table and text below, we share the fellow's evaluation of this component.

Panel Presentations

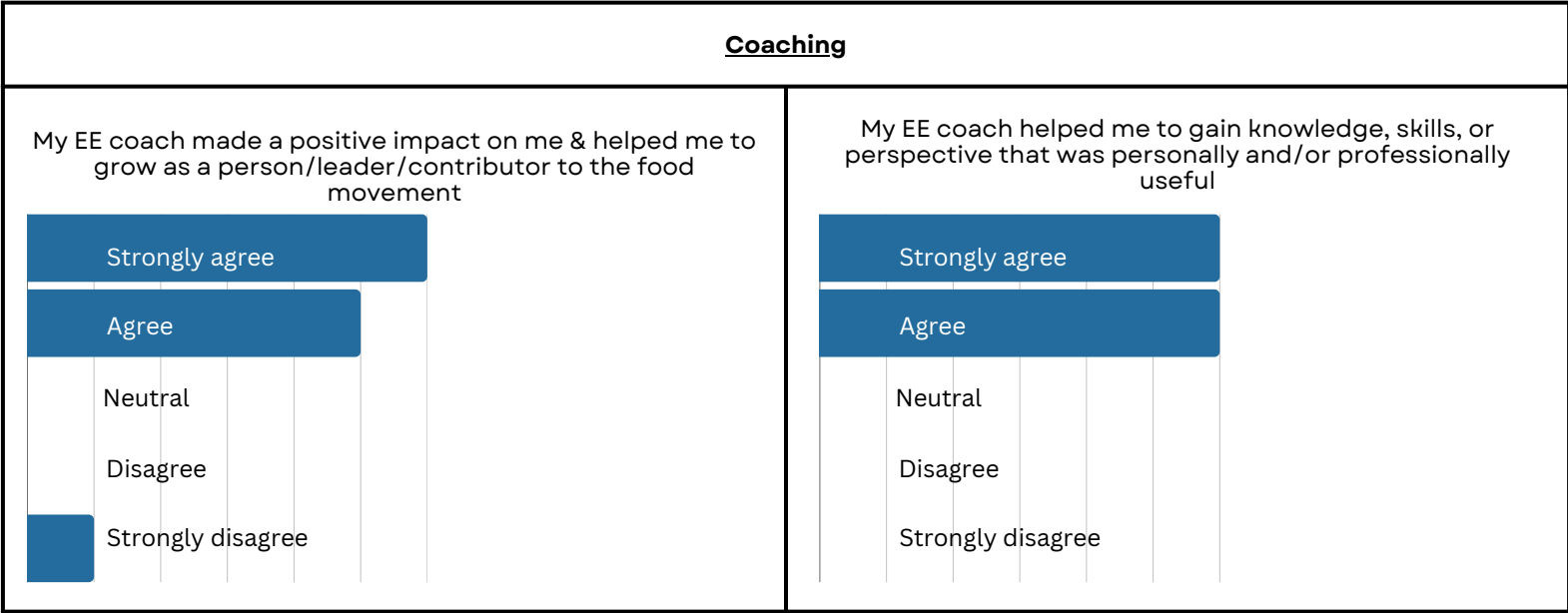
The opportunity to present was valuable to you, personally.



The opportunity to hear your peers present was valuable to you.



In addition to receiving support within the sessions and retreats, each fellow was assigned an EE team member to be their coach. Each fellow was provided three sessions with their EE coach, and four fellows requested and received additional sessions drawn from the cohort’s responsive hours (three of those four worked with additional EE coaches based on the skillsets or strengths they were hoping to gain). When measured, **all but one** of the fellows found their coaching time to be **extremely helpful**. The remaining fellow responded ambivalently, and it is impossible to know if this was one of the two fellows who had not completed all of their sessions.



Qualitative input related to coaching suggests that fellows truly appreciated and grew through the experience. They offered that it helped them to navigate issues and problems they were facing within their roles and organizations, that they learned more about their skills and values as a movement leader, and that they appreciated getting tailored and individualized support from the EE team. Below are a few quotes from fellows regarding their coaching experience:

“I really appreciated having a coach that has experience with government institutions, and also having shared values around roles within the government and their potential for support/change in the food systems movement despite being in a rigid, rarely-accountable, opaque institution. I also appreciate the open space I was provided to navigate my messy transition into a different phase of my work/professional life and mindset and what that means/look like as that process continues.”

“For me the work was always the easy part, it was the messaging and feeding info to people that was the hard part. From the coaching sessions to just hearing the EE Team talk, it helped me become a better communicator and helped me define what and who I talk for.”

“Having a strong executive level staff person spend time with me 1:1 was extremely valuable. I greatly appreciated the insights gained.”

“[Coaching] helped me get in touch with my own power [and] reflect on how I show up in the world. Extremely insightful.”

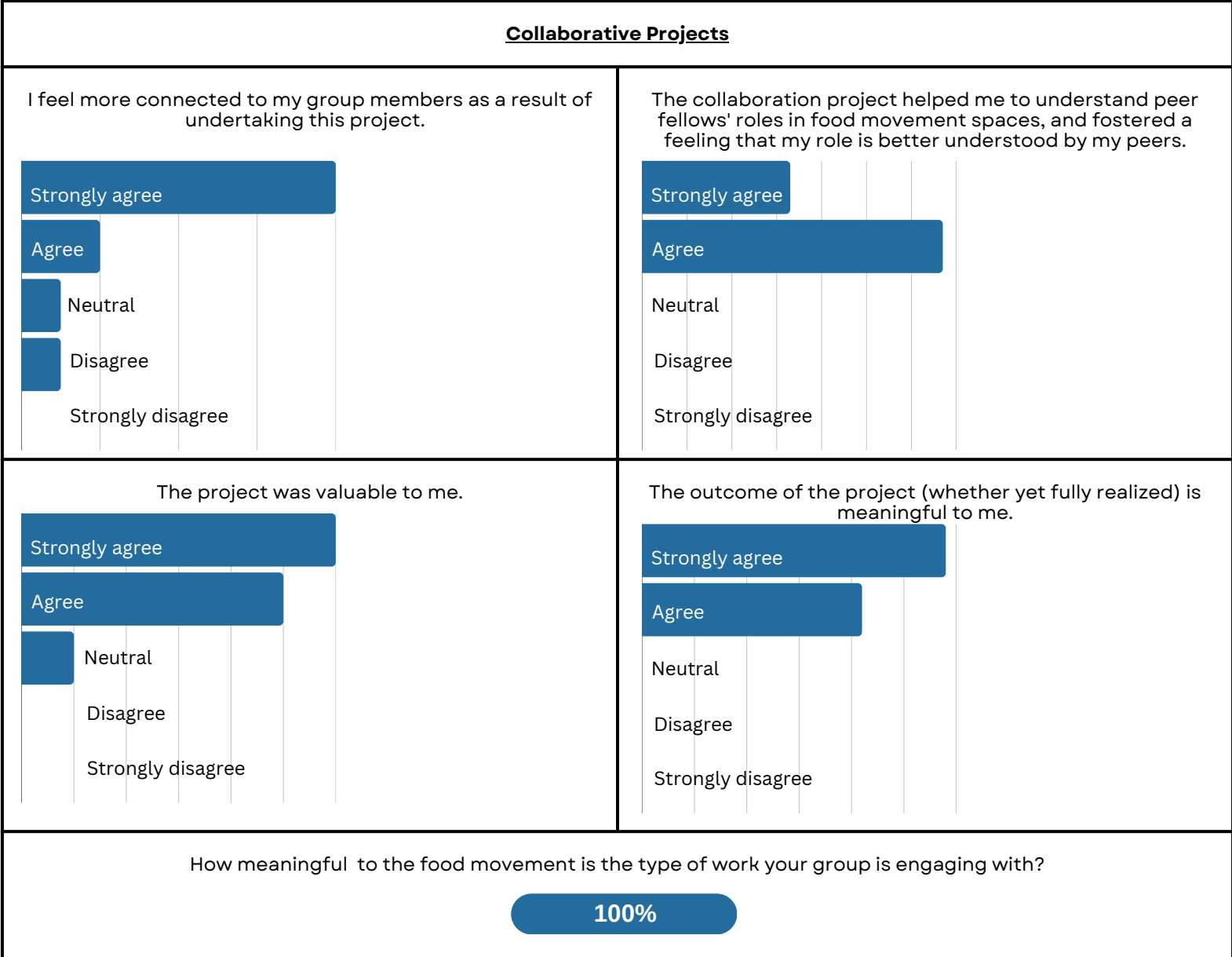
Additional responsive hours were used to assist fellows toward the development of a variety of skills. Fellows reported that they used coaching and responsive hours to gain the following types of support:

- Workshopping data collection strategies for assessing network demographics
- Workshopping compensation models
- Fleshing out a business plan for a Land Conservancy
- Getting support with a hiring process
- Triaging organizational crisis
- Getting support with role navigation and communications
- Preparation for an upcoming presentation
- Getting emotional support specifically for a leader

As an extension of the curriculum, three workgroups were formed to match input from fellows on their unique interests in areas where movement change occurs (systems change, networking, and healing justice). This was an opportunity for the fellows to engage with skill sets developed throughout the fellowship, and to practice collaborating. Since no two fellows served in identical roles across the food justice movement, this collaboration was a modulation of what it takes to overcome barriers in the larger food justice space.

While there were some challenges due to extenuating life circumstances and decreases in capacity and participation being experienced by a few of the fellows, the fellows were deeply impacted by the process of completing the projects as well as the projects themselves. Each group was supported by an EE team member, and the groups had both time with and without the EE team member present. Data suggests that while they place a slightly higher value on the time shared with their EE team member, they appreciated more having the ability to call on that support when they needed it regardless of the structure of the time itself.

Below are some measures that capture fellow's assessment of the collaborative final projects:



Across the three groups, outcomes were a design for a webinar about the use of storytelling in humanizing people who work in various sectors across the food movement space, a design and plan for a Seeding Power Alumni support network, and an enduring zine to highlight the role of (and need for) healing for leaders in the movement that is designed like a “cookbook.”

Comments on the surveys suggest that fellows gained a great deal from the project experience. They shared gratitude for an opportunity to put EE skill sets into practice and overall found that while the process surfaces tensions and dynamics, navigating those was actually a critical (if not *the* most critical) way that they learned. We share some key quotes from fellows below:

“ *“This was a perfect way to close out the program. It put theory and growth into action. I learned some alternatives and efficiencies that could be used in my personal life that wouldn’t have been introduced to me and be fleshed out if it wasn’t for a project like this.”*

“The collaborative sessions have helped immensely the last few months. In my position I am usually one-of-one dealing with issues or building ideas so being able to have other work styles and visions to bounce off helped me slow down and think about the act of organizing and building in a way I haven’t done in years. The longer term project helped me figure out some things that I will be doing more and more as a member of this growing movement, and the nuanced way the prompt was introduced made it very low pressure and something I didn’t absorb until after the fact.”

“The collaborator sessions were a phenomenal opportunity to put in practice some of the principles we learned in the first part of this program. Thank you for that!” **”**

Opportunities for Improvement, Growth, and Expansion (Qualitative Summary Data)

We could not be more pleased with the results of this evaluation. Our team put in significant time and in-kind service to ensure the success of this pilot despite the fact that it was underfunded. Fellows did highlight some areas for improvement, growth, and expansion. We provide a synthesis of these below:

- **A more balanced selection of fellows from the various sectors (nonprofit leaders, farmers, government representatives, grassroots/community leaders, philanthropy)**
- 1/3 of the fellows desire the fellowship to be extended to one year, and for each retreat to be 3 days
- Fellows feel that the opportunity would be strengthened by the inclusion of peer site visits
- Desire for more coaching time, and inclusion of curriculum or labs focused on leadership decision-making, program management, data and evaluation, grant-writing, and other organizational skillsets
- Desire for responsive hours dedicated to supporting their organizations
- The inclusion of a (funded) alumni support network
- Connecting alums with fellows for mentorship
- **More explicit connections to philanthropy, and information about how to access that sphere**
- More intention to approach or harness tensions that exist in movement spaces
- A more formal graduation or completion ceremony
- More explicit parameters for peer presentations and collaboration projects





“I came in with some ideas about land conservation and it's importance and left creating a new land trust. The pushes to be ourselves and fight for a better world fueled that. Also from our work learning about white supremacy and nuances in adverse cultures I learned to navigate the world better.”

“I was so burnt out with food systems work when I entered this fellowship but now I feel a sense of hopefulness that hasn't been there in a long time.”

“It [this fellowship] has made me more efficient and steadfast. It also has helped me figure out how to verbalize wants, needs and boundaries.”

“This experience has made my thought processes around philanthropy much more complicated and in some ways more difficult and challenging as I try to be more authentic and notice more issues around white supremacy and how it stems from myself. I hope to be more bold and take more risks.”

“I think I have more clarity in how much I can reasonably/healthily offer while also maintaining stamina within the movement within any of these institutions. Running myself ragged and slogging through burnout is real for me, and this fellowship helped put some of that into perspective. I've realized scaling back is actually a necessary and required action in movement-building.”

“The fellowship has given me a profound new perspective on how the idea of “who owns the land” plays in how we build our movement. The work of many of the fellows is distant from the work that I personally do and those diverse perspective had a lot of influence on me over this past year. Land is a foundation for building community power and sustainability; and while I knew this before, meeting people putting it into practice has been transformative. It's changing how I'm approaching conversations with my family and helping me better align myself with my professional and personal goals.”

“The insights I've received from the cohort has had a profound impact on my professional and my personal work. I'm very grateful for this opportunity and for the support you all have given to the fellowship and the space it's allowed us to create.”

“This was immensely valuable, and I am so so grateful to be a part of this. I hope I can continue/return to these relationships as I re-emerge into my new “work self,” and can't wait to see what that holds and looks like. THANK YOU. What a truly amazing endeavor you all have labored over and thoughtfully crafted, CONGRATULATIONS!!! Can't wait to see how it unfolds in the future and to see how we stay connected as alumni.”

“I think the collective experience of joy transformation [to] fun and being fully ourselves in a space is hard to overstate. It gives hope and confidence in possibility and the strength to carry on plus a lightness that is often missing in movement work.”

“Overall, being chosen for this fellowship really made me value my work, and my impact in the movement a lot more than I did. It was highly validating, and empowering. That in itself was the most valuable part of this, being directly part of something that is bigger than me.”

“Overall, this was a beautiful experience. I felt so seen in who I am as a person and also as a food justice worker. The level of intentionality and ease I felt throughout this experience was great. It was a space to rest, restore and refill my cup which I don't get in the work I do. It was nice to feel that in the space and to be able to reciprocate that to others.”

“I want everyone I know to have an experience like this.”

“This experience gave me something I lost a long time ago.”

“The Seeding Power Fellowship was a phenomenal and transformative experience for me. I look forward to witnessing my continued growth from the insights gained through this experience.”

“I'm so happy with the new community of practice I am leaving this experience with. I'm excited to think about how that community will grow with successive cohorts. What a special treat and privilege to have participated in this fellowship!”



“I am so grateful to North Star & Community Food Funders for funding this opportunity. I can't speak highly enough about it. Please consider providing funding support for the graduate of this program to participate in an alumni network- just because the fellowship program stops- doesn't mean the work stops. Thanks y'all from the bottom of my heart!”

“I truly enjoyed this experience, I grew, was nurtured, and learned so much. This was an excellent cohort and I think the program should continue. I also know that the supports were needed to make this seamless for us as participants so I appreciate the efforts of Adam and Kellie immensely. Overall, this was a great way to meet and connect with folks across the food sector. A major issue is our silos and divisions, this allowed us to connect as people and approach the work differently.”

“Truly, thank you thank you. I did learn so much from this experience at this important and I think pivotal time in my career. I sincerely honor each of your efforts and labor into providing me with this gift of space and new tools for reflection, insight, and personal/professional progress!!”

“It was like the best year of college, making new friends, learning from facilitators and peers and being in a space where growing to become a better person is the only intent. The EE team and Adam, created containers of joy and knowledge that had space for us to grow. I came into the program thinking of my next steps of my work and left with building blocks to create a new land trust. My time will never be forgotten and I think will be one of the points that define my life and future.”

“EE and Adam please know that you have birthed a nurtured an incredible organism and spirit that is this fellowship. We all came away loving and appreciating and really seeing each other and it seems we each took away a much needed gift from the group.”

Thank You!

-Emerging Equity & Community Food Funders

