WHO WE ARE

At the Local First Arizona Foundation, we create innovative programs that build a more diverse and resilient Arizona economy. We believe in leveraging our existing assets in order to build opportunity for all.

In our work, we connect our small towns to opportunities, we improve success rates for under-served entrepreneurs so they can build self-reliance and community wealth, and we support food producers to increase connectivity between Arizona’s farms and its residents.

The Foundation works on broad economic development issues, implementing new tools and programs that redefine Arizona’s assets and create sweeping changes that increase opportunities for all Arizonans. We know that Arizona’s economy succeeds when everyone has opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives.

While our programs are incredibly diverse, we invite you to look comprehensively at key challenges facing Arizona and explore with us the creative solutions we’ll need to overcome them. Our programs address these challenges in innovative ways and represent a distinct shift from the old models of economic development that have too often left much of our population behind.

This past year, we saw the results of our work improve the lives of everyday Arizonans. Read through the stories included here and learn about our broad impact in communities across the state. I think you will be inspired by the many stories of self-reliance and prosperity that we are cultivating across Arizona, with the help of people just like you.

Locally yours,

Kimber Lanning
Founder & Executive Director, Local First Arizona Foundation
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Our vision is an Arizona economy that is sustainable, resilient and celebratory of diverse cultures.
POWERING ARIZONA’S ENTREPRENEURS

FUERZA LOCAL BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

The Fuerza Local Business Accelerator is a six-month program designed to teach under-served micro-entrepreneurs important basics for financial literacy and business development.

Investing in under served communities through entrepreneurship is a successful strategy that in just four years has seen incredible job creation and business expansion, along with a reduction in reliance on social services. Creating opportunities for small business development in low-income communities helps build an Arizona we are proud to call home.

Participants attend weekly classes on a variety of topics including marketing, business planning, cash flow management, and many more. They also gain critically important financial literacy through participating in a lending circle, which requires them to make on-time payments every month they are in the program. These payments are reported to Experian, building a credit history for the small business owner, often for the first time.

Their savings are then matched by a scholarship made possible through the support of our donors. Each graduate is offered the opportunity to access credit at fair market rates through several partnering financial institutions in lieu of any previous credit history.

Local First Arizona Foundation launched the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator in 2013 as a direct response to the influx of predatory lenders that target low-income Latinos who often lack financial literacy. With your support, we are able to connect this vulnerable population to resources that help them build thriving businesses and better lives for their families.
Mirna Cote had dreams of opening an electrical school to build a life for herself and her family. Her dream became a reality when Mirna and her husband joined the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator.

Her dream of opening an electrical school became a reality when Mirna and her husband joined the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator. Escuela de Electricidad Automotriz (Automotive Electrical School) opened its doors in February 2017. Through their business, they teach beginners, professionals, and women the basics of automotive electrical care.

Today, Mirna and her family live their dream every single day through running their business, and they’re already looking to expand. In addition to educational programs they offer to mechanics in the field, Escuela de Electricidad Automotriz offers free courses on Mondays - a way they give back to the community after receiving the support they needed to build their business.
“The Business Accelerator helped us tremendously. We started from zero, but little by little, we obtained valuable tools from those 12 courses. Fuerza Local was an incredible tool that helped me grow as a new entrepreneur.” - Berni Reina

Photography by Tierra Nelson

Berni Reina, Colados Coffee & Crepes

When Berni Reina arrived back home from a family vacation, his routine life quickly turned to a nightmare when he and his wife were laid off from the company they had dedicated their careers to. That milestone turned Berni into an entrepreneur, but he wasn’t sure where to begin.

Berni applied for the 2nd cohort of the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator Program in 2014. At the time, all he had was an idea and a dream for his business he would create from scratch. The first step? Building a strong business plan that could become his map to success.

Since its opening three years ago, Colados Coffee & Crepes has become a must-stop coffee shop in the West Valley. As demand has grown, Bernie has expanded his staff from 2 to 14 employees in just three years, and will open his second brick and mortar location in 2018.
MILESTONES & HIGHLIGHTS

240
TOTAL STUDENTS GRADUATED

112
NEW BUSINESSES STARTED
INCLUDING 17 GRAND OPENINGS
ALONG WITH 128 EXISTING BUSINESSES

55%
OF GRADUATES ARE WOMEN
CELEBRATING ARIZONA’S HOMEGROWN FOODS

Food is at the center of our daily lives, and agriculture and food production are major drivers of Arizona’s economy. Supporting local farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs is critical to foster food-based economic development and expand access to affordable, fresh, and local foods to all Arizonans. Our portfolio of foods initiatives demonstrates the connection between food and health, and works to create prosperity in urban and rural settings with the backing of the USDA, the Steele Foundation, and our donors.

GOOD FOOD FINDER ARIZONA

Good Food Finder AZ is Arizona’s bilingual online directory of local foods, serving as a hub where consumers and institutional food buyers alike can discover and contact Arizona’s local food producers. This free resource shortens food supply chains and improves access to local production. Additionally, the Good Food Finder Resources pages navigate users to food education opportunities, food access programs, and new market opportunities.

FOOD & FARM FINANCE FORUM

The fourth annual Arizona Food & Farm Finance Forum was held May 2017 at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The two-day forum was programmed to influence the way Arizona feeds itself and does business locally, and was the first event to be sanctioned by the Tucson City of Gastronomy. New in 2017, three additional 1-day Regional Food Forums were held in Ajo, Clarkdale, and Young in order to bring region-specific programming to rural agricultural hotspots, celebrate culture, and advance sustainable economic development.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Local First Arizona Foundation staff hold leadership positions in food policy groups and networks across the state in order to influence policy, share successful models, forge partnerships, and connect Arizonans to existing resources.

PARTNERSHIPS

Maricopa County Food System Coalition
City of Tucson Commission for Food Security
Flagstaff Foodlink
Arizona School Garden Network
Les Dames D’Escoffier
Arizona Farm to School Advisory Council
U of A Center for Regional Food Studies
Arizona Small-Scale Farmers Alliance
Slow Food Phoenix
Blue Watermelon Project
Arizona Department of Agriculture
Windswept Acres, a small veteran-owned family farm producing pickled products and jellies in Chino Valley, originally began by growing their own produce. But by the end of 2016, they couldn’t keep up with demand and were at risk of losing significant business.

Utilizing Good Food Finder’s search features, Pam and Dave connected with several small farms to utilize 2,000 pounds of produce that would have ended up in the landfill otherwise. This allowed for expansion that brought their products to new markets and prompted them to hire four additional staff.

After attending the 2017 Food & Farm Forum, Pam and Dave learned about scaling their operations and began processing in a larger licensed commercial kitchen later that year. They also subsequently presented their products available for wholesale at the Farmer + Chef Connection, where their products were picked up by four new retail outlets in northern Arizona. Pam and Dave took full advantage of LFAF programs and events to create prosperity for their business and their community.

"The contacts and connections we made through Local First Arizona Foundation have been invaluable, helped us grow, and have given us insight into the future and the direction we want our business to go!" -Pam Harris

**THE COLLABORATORS**

**Pam Herndon & Dave Harris, Windswept Acres**

Windswept Acres, a small veteran-owned family farm producing pickled products and jellies in Chino Valley, originally began by growing their own produce. But by the end of 2016, they couldn’t keep up with demand and were at risk of losing significant business.

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To increase capacity and productivity, LFAF partnered with on-the-ground Economic Development Corporations in Southern Gila County to conduct a Food Hub Feasibility Study to determine public demand for local food and identify the needs of producers to create a business development plan and local food toolkit.

After convening 89 community members at meetings and conducting additional survey outreach, food producers in Young, Globe, Miami, Superior, and Kearny self-identified the need for formal connection and are investigating possible legal structures for collaboration, such as a cooperative or non-profit. This structure will enable them to receive resources, share the cost of aggregation, and offer mentorship to new producers and gain more reliable access to labor. Arizona-based produce distributor Stern Produce has stepped up to support the efforts of these collaborations with their infrastructure.

We also held conversations with over 100 Culinary Arts and Agriculture students from the Globe, Superior, and Miami area high schools. It was clear that though the students enjoyed their food-and agriculture-based projects, they plainly did not see a career for themselves in food production. Afterwards, we asked one student in particular if he could, in fact, picture himself raising additional head of livestock for sale into the local market. His mind has notably shifted gears and he enthusiastically responded with a, “why not?”

In order to grow this type of programming, community and donor support is vital to help facilitate the producers’ efforts to organize with a legal structure to support resource acquisition (such as refrigeration and transportation) and food aggregation. This structure will allow for local foods to enter local kitchens as well as provide framework for formal mentorship of young food producers into entrepreneurs. We also determined a huge opportunity to provide direct business education to youth to scale their agricultural and culinary arts projects into viable local food businesses to increase personal opportunity and offer residents increased availability of fresh, healthy, local food.

Full results of this study can be found on our website at localfirstazfoundation.org.
MILESTONES & HIGHLIGHTS

379
ATTENDEES AT 4 FOOD FORUM EVENTS

2,800
SEARCHES PER MONTH
ON GOODFOODFINDERAZ.COM

105
STUDENT ATTENDEES
AT FOOD & AGRICULTURE CAREER EXPLORATION EVENTS
GROWING ARIZONA’S SMALL TOWN ECONOMIES

We grow Arizona’s small-town economies by working directly with businesses, leaders, and organizations to create unique solutions that result in prosperity within these communities. We offer technology training, in-state tourism development, youth engagement programs, and community assessments that help identify existing assets and challenges that impact the success of the state’s overall economy.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Local First Arizona Foundation and the Arizona Rural Development Council merged in 2013, and since then we have worked to create innovative community and economic development programs across the state. Working with a rural advisory board, we build collaboration, assess economic leakage, and develop strategic solutions for some of rural Arizona’s most pressing problems.

WEEKENDZONA

WeekendZona aims to redirect the billions of dollars Arizonans spend vacationing out of state into our unique and diverse small towns. By creating a curated experience to showcase each small town in its best light, we expose Arizonans to hidden gems and create a measurable economic impact in these communities.

Arizonans annually spend $6 billion vacationing in California. If we can redirect even a small portion of that into Arizona communities, we will create jobs and vitalize local economies across the state.

SCIENCE HAPPENS HERE

Science Happens Here is a trading card game for kids in 3rd through 6th grades which features the science that happens in the small businesses around them every day. Kids collect the cards at local businesses and visit the website to conduct science experiments at home using household items. Over 250 students in Graham County competed for the top prize: the opportunity to dissect a shark! Businesses there reported an uptick in traffic as families headed out to collect the cards.
“The Local First Arizona Foundation has taught our community that collaboration is the key to success. Being able to develop relationships with countless like-minded individuals and businesses has been critical to my success.” - Rosalie Lamentola-Ayala

In February 2001, an early retirement dream came to fruition for Rosalie Lamentola-Ayala and Dom Ayala when they opened Noftsger Hill Inn in Globe, Arizona. With Rosalie’s hospitality background and Dom’s “Mr. Fix-It” abilities, the two agreed they could successfully own and operate a bed and breakfast by combining their talents.

Through the Local First Arizona Foundation, Noftsger Hill Inn has become more involved in local economic development through the Foundation’s presence in the Globe community. Attending webinars offered by the Arizona Rural Development Council, presenting and attending at the Rural Policy Forum, and being a part of the Mayor of Globe’s Marketing Task Force have given Noftsger Hill Inn networking and growth opportunities that have extended their relationships with countless like-minded individuals and businesses not only in Globe, but statewide.

The relationships and partnerships that Rosalie and Dom have formed have kept them involved in the local community. They continue to be leaders in historic preservation, statewide collaboration, and healthy community and economic development in Globe.
Large companies that are heavily invested in Arizona’s future are recognizing that by leveraging their own procurement, they can grow jobs and the local economy. Utilizing this concept, Resolution Copper hired Local First Arizona Foundation to help build a pipeline of small business providers in the Copper Corridor.

The result is the Copper Corridor Supplier Source website (ccsuppliersource.com) where Resolution Copper and all of their subcontractors can easily find and hire companies in the nearby region for everything from catering to manufacturing, and from printing to earth moving. With over 120 categories of goods and services, the site can be utilized by anyone in the state looking to hire a locally owned company in the region known as the Copper Corridor, which spans from Superior through Kearny and Winkelman and over to Globe-Miami. Use of the website keeps dollars in the region to grow jobs and opportunities to build a healthier local economy.
MILESTONES & HIGHLIGHTS

100% OF RURAL POLICY FORUM ATTENDEES SURVEYED SAID THE EVENT PROVIDED NEW IMPLEMENTABLE IDEAS

407 RURAL DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR ATTENDEES

120 CATEGORIES LISTED ON CCSUPPLIERSOURCE.COM TO GROW LOCAL PROCUREMENT

SCIENCE HAPPENS HERE PROGRAM EXPANDED TO THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS THROUGH 27 & 5 BUSINESSES & SCHOOLS
WHAT’S AHEAD FOR THE LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA FOUNDATION

Thanks to our generous donors, community partners, and advocates, the Local First Arizona Foundation’s innovative and exciting programs will continue to build opportunity in Arizona. In the coming years, we hope to expand our current programming to benefit under-served communities as well as adopt new initiatives that will help Arizonans build prosperity in their communities.

POWERING ARIZONA’S ENTREPRENEURS

- Continue to increase the number of graduates from the Fuerza Local business Accelerator across Greater Phoenix
- Expand the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator to Tucson
- See an exponential upward trend in job creation from graduates of the program
- Watch our graduates improve their lives and the lives of their family members

CELBRATING ARIZONA’S HOMEGROWN FOODS

- Facilitate more collaboration between producers for working together to access new markets
- Create a pilot program in youth agribusiness that will establish an entrepreneurial pipeline and aid in youth retention in rural communities
- See Good Food Finder become a more robust resource for beginning and expanding farmers and bolster statewide networking

GROWING ARIZONA’S SMALL TOWN ECONOMIES

- Increase the reach of rural youth engagement programs including bringing Science Happens Here to more communities
- Develop a youth scholarship to attend the Rural Policy Forum
- More WeekendZona excursions to Arizona small town communities
- Create a micro-loan program that will invest solely in business development for small town communities
- Expand our Community Profiles and Assessments to help rural communities identify existing assets to increase local revenue and grow new businesses
2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeffrey Brodin, Board Chair
Principal, Brodin HR Law

Angie Harmon, Board Vice-Chair
Social Investments Manager, Freeport-McMoRan Foundation

Levi Esquerra, Board Treasurer
Director, Rural Policy Institute
Program Director, Center for American Indian Economic Development
Northern Arizona University

William Mandeville, Board Secretary
Director of Development, The Nature Conservancy

Dr. Jonathan Koppell
Dean, College of Public Service and Community Solutions
Arizona State University

Keisha Tatum
State Conservationist,
Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA

Liz Gerlach
Division President, James W. Imports and Quench Fine Wines
Hensley Beverage Distributing

Gary Kellogg
President/CEO, Partnership for Economic Development
Lake Havasu City

Deanna Salazar
Senior Vice President and General Counsel
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
THANK YOU TO OUR 2017 PARTNERS

OVER $100,000

Freeport-McMoRan
LISC Phoenix
Maricopa County
IDA

$50,000-$75,000

the Steele Foundation
USDA

$25,000-$50,000

Marley Foundation
Pakis Family Foundation
Arizona Community Foundation
Ameriprise Financial
City of Phoenix
Mesa-AZ

$15,000-$25,000

SRP
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
CopperPoint Insurance Companies
Vitalyst Health Foundation

$10,000-$15,000

desert Financial
Hensley Beverage Company
yelp foundation

$7,500-$10,000

ASU Arizona State University

$5,000-$7,500

Ideas Collide
Arizona Community Action Association
Advancing Education and Partnering in Presence and Action for Poverty
Localists are the dedicated group of people like you that believe in transforming Arizona's economy and building community along the way.

When you join as a Localist you can know that your support sustains our mission of building opportunity in Arizona year-round. And whether it’s a farmer’s tour of their harvest, a Fuerza Local Accelerator graduate’s grand opening, or a group kayak down the Verde River, Localists will grow the local love, and have fun doing it!

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT, BE A LOCALIST**

**LOCALIST CHAMPION - $50/MONTH**
- Early-bird purchasing window for signature events (Devour, Savor, Timeless Phoenix, Weekendzonas).
- Reserved seats at Fuerza Accelerator graduations.
- Invitation to specially-curated insider events where you can meet the people that grow our food, power our economy, and enrich our small towns.
- Exclusive Donor updates.
- Mailed annual report.
- 15% off all LFAF merchandise.
- & more to come.

**LOCALIST LEADER - $20/MONTH**
- Early-bird purchasing window for signature events (Devour, Savor, Timeless Phoenix, Weekendzonas).
- Invitation to specially-curated insider events where you can meet the people that grow our food, power our economy, and enrich our small towns.
- Exclusive Donor updates.
- Emailed annual report.
- 10% off all LFAF merchandise.
- & more to come.

**LOCALIST INFLUENCER - $10/MONTH**
- Early-bird purchasing window for signature events (Devour, Savor, Timeless Phoenix, Weekendzonas).
- Invitation to specially-curated insider events where you can meet the people that grow our food, power our economy, and enrich our small towns.
- Exclusive Donor updates.
- Emailed annual report.
- & more to come.

LOCALFIRSTAZFOUNDATION.ORG

Sign up today!