Established in 2015, the **National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA)** is a coalition of Black-led organizations aimed at developing Black leadership, supporting Black communities, organizing for Black self-determination, and building institutions for Black food sovereignty & liberation. The Alliance represents hundreds of urban and rural farmers, organizers, and land stewards based nationwide working together towards an intergenerational, urban/rural movement to map, assess, train and deepen the organizing, institution building and advocacy work protecting Black land and work towards food sovereignty.

Together, we are designing, building and protecting the nourishing, safe and liberatory spaces our communities need and deserve.
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2021 was a year of manifestation, but also grief, loss, and deep transformation. Communities continue to grapple with a global pandemic, and institutional violence continues to plague Black people in so many ways including food apartheid, land theft, housing displacement and the egregious carceral system. While many during this time period have started asking themselves what “the new normal” will be, grassroots Black-led organizations around the country (and world) have been building it.

This report shares an overview of the budding and growing collective movement work the National Black Food and Justice Alliance members have been inside of over the course of the past year.

We give thanks to our ancestors, our community of supporters, funders, and members who have courageously committed to making this work possible.
One of the greatest challenges we’ve had as an Alliance over the years is having enough staffing support to meet the needs and demands of our members and this incredible collective vision we’ve curated. Over the past year, we have recruited a brilliant new staff to meet these needs.

Please join us in thanking Sariyah Benoit for her service and wishing her much success in her next endeavors. She transitioned out of the Alliance at the end of 2021.
Dara Cooper, the co-founder and executive director of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (NBFJA) transitioned from her role effective January 1, 2022. After a six month sabbatical, she will serve as a senior advisor to the Alliance on an as needed, consulting basis.

Please join us in honoring and giving our beloved Dara Cooper her flowers for her stewardship and unyielding commitment to this community.

After thorough and deliberate succession planning, the Alliance’s Leadership Team unanimously voted to adopt a co-directorship model and to hire within.

Dara’s two successors who will hold the co-directorship are Cicely Garrett, formerly NBFJA’s Grants Manager, and Dr. Jasmine Ratliff, formerly NBFJA’s Self Determining Food Economies and Policy Manager. The Leadership Team is very excited about the incoming co-directors who will continue guiding such important work during this critical time.
LEADERSHIP TEAM

Savi Horne
Land Loss Prevention Project - Durham, NC

Tosha Phonix
ACRE - St. Louis, MO

Fred Carter
Black Oaks Center - Pembroke Township, IL

Dorothy Barker
Operation Spring Plant - Oxford, NC

Mark Winston-Griffith
Brooklyn Movement Center - Brooklyn, NY

Iyafalola Omobola
Peoples Advocacy Institute - Jackson, MS

Carlton Turner
Mississippi Center for Cultural Production - Utica, MS

Karissa Lewis
Movement 4 Black Lives - Atlanta, GA

Listed in order from left to right. Not pictured - Karissa Lewis of Movement 4 Black Lives
After adding 13 new members this year, the Alliance stands as a coalition of 45 Anchor and Beloved organizations with over 30 individual Cultivator members.

**Anchor**

Anchor members are Black-led organizations. This is defined as an organization with Black identifying people holding at least seventy percent (70%) of the positions within leadership, including staff leadership and the board of directors, where applicable.

**Beloved**

Beloved members are Black-centered farms, organizations, or collectives. A Black-centered organization or collective is defined as an organization with Black identifying people holding at least fifty one percent (51%) of the positions within leadership, including the board of directors, where applicable.

**Cultivator**

Cultivator members identify as Black or of African descent and are interested in and have demonstrated a commitment toward their own politicizing and analysis around Black food sovereignty, anti-Blackness, and Black liberation.
Acorn Center for Restoration and Freedom - Covington, GA
ACRE - St. Louis, MO
Backyard Gardeners Network - New Orleans, LA
Black Church Food Security Network - Baltimore, MD
Black Dirt Farm Collective - Mid-Atlantic
Black Farmer Fund - New York
Black Feminist Project - Bronx, NY
Black Food Justice Collaborative - Cleveland, OH
Black Oaks Center - Pembroke Township, IL
Black Women’s Blueprint - New York
Black Yield Institute - Baltimore, MD
Brooklyn Movement Center - Brooklyn, NY
BUGS Cooperative of Pittsburgh - Pittsburgh, PA
Cooperation Jackson - Jackson, MS
Delta Commons - Mississippi & Arkansas
Detroit Black Community Food Security Network - Detroit, MI
Dreaming Out Loud - Washington D.C.
Earthbound Builders - D.M.V. area
Earthseed Land Collective - Durham, NC
Farms to Grow, Inc - Oakland, CA
Freedom Freedom - Detroit, MI
Foxfire Ranch - Waterford, MS
Fresh Future Farm - North Charleston, SC

**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

Gangsters 2 Growers - Atlanta, GA
Grow Greater Englewood - Chicago, IL
Highlander Center - Jefferson County, Tennessee
Hilltop Urban Garden - Pittsburgh, PA
iLogic at Solomon’s Garden - Alabama
Jubilee Justice & Potlikker Capital - New Orleans, LA
Land Loss Prevention Project - North Carolina
Mississippi Center for Cultural Production - Utica, MS
Nature Garden for Victory and Peace - Tuskegee, AL
OnDaFarm - Atlanta, GA
Operation Spring Plant - Oxford, NC
Our Mothers’ Kitchens - Philadelphia, PA
People’s Advocacy Institute - Jackson, MS
Rethink New Orleans - New Orleans, LA
Rid-All Green Partnership - Cleveland, OH
Southeast Michigan Producers Association (SEMPA) - Royal Oak, MI
Sisters Health & Wellness - New York
Soul Fire Farm - Petersburg, NY
Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network - Southeastern U.S.
SouthEats Cooperative - Washington, D.C.
Truly Living Well - Atlanta, GA
Wildseed Community Farm and Healing Village - Dutchess County, NY
Transforming society requires deep and sustained ideological and strategic mass-based organizing, and those tactics have always been at the center of confronting and shifting power in Black communities.

Still, years of institutionalized anti-Black racism and the deliberate fracturing of Black communities have eroded the infrastructure of Black-led social justice organizations and the Black organizing base.

We believe that centering a transformative organizing praxis allows for the creation of a long-term strategy that not only transforms systems and structures but further transforms society by shifting the way we exist in the world.
The NBFJA Field Team is continuing to further our organizing theory through building power in both rural and urban context.

Over the past year, our team travelled to meet Anchor Organizations—Black Yield Institute (Baltimore, MD), Grow Greater Englewood (Chicago, IL), and Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Utica, MS) – for regional strategy sessions to share, learn from, and move land defense and sovereignty strategies forward.
On August 27th, 2021, Illinois Governor, J.B. Pritzker, approved of a bill (HB304) that green-lit a Nicor pipeline development in the historically Black community of Pembroke Township, IL, once the largest Black agricultural community north of the Mason-Dixon. The development perpetuates a legacy of environmental degradation, injustice and systemic Black land theft.

NBFJA joined the Pembroke Environmental Justice Coalition (PEJC) as a national partner to provide support, foster community partnerships, and to ultimately build collectively towards a #RenewablePembroke. While PEJC pursues political support and legal actions against Nicor, the coalition is currently working to build a local base of advocates and volunteers and to bring awareness of their fight.

#STOPTHENICORPIPELINE
Use this hashtag to stay up-to-date on campaign developments.

“This pipeline is a direct assault to the agricultural potential of this community.”

FRED CARTER, BLACK OAKS
In 1920, there were nearly 1 million Black farmers in the United States. Today, due to a history of discrimination, predatory lending, and violence, it is estimated that there are less than 50,000 remaining Black farmers.*

There have been very deliberate and systematic assaults on Black --and Indigenous-- communities that continue to dispossess us of the means to steward land and nourish our communities. Many of these attacks have been enacted or protected by actors within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

After decades of abhorrent discriminatory practices, Black farmers received a settlement agreement and consent decree in Pigford v. Glickman, a class action discrimination suit against the USDA. Those settlements Black farmers received did not come fast enough nor go far enough.

The disenfranchisement due to institutional anti-Blackness continues to be felt even today as Black farmers await the halted debt relief earmarked in the American Rescue Plan of 2021.

Until we see the rise and protection of Black land stewardship, the rates of Black farmers increase exponentially and an investment in future generations, we haven’t realized true restitution for Black farmers.
JUSTICE FOR BLACK FARMERS ACT

During the Summer of 2020, members of the National Black Food and Justice Alliance engaged in conversations with Senator Cory Booker (NJ) and Senator Elizabeth Warren’s (MA) teams about what kind of legislation would be meaningful for our constituents. We engaged in numerous conversations about the history of discrimination and displacement against Black communities and particularly Black farmers.

One November 19, 2020, Booker, Warren, and Gillibrand announced the Justice for Black Farmers Act, a comprehensive bill to address the history of discrimination in federal agricultural policy.

DEBT RELIEF FOR BIPOC FARMERS

The American Rescue Plan of 2021 included provisions from the Justice for Black Farmers Act including $5 billion in debt relief for BIPOC farmers, farmers who were notably excluded from COVID related relief programs.

In a blatant act of anti-Blackness, three US banking groups fought back; and then shortly following, the earmarked $5 billion got suspended in court (where it currently still remains) by right-wing radicals proclaiming reverse discrimination.

In response, NBFJA:

- Hosted an emergency call on June 17, 2021 with over 15 partners
- Participated in a Press Conference w/ Representative Rashida Tlaib on US Banks resisting debt relief for Black farmers
- Launched a debt relief petition with Color of Change
- Published USDA Public Comment on Advancing Racial Justice
When we engage in building institutions that center our struggle, leadership, and solutions, we ultimately create entities/space that can allow for the building of our collective power and advances our work in ways that are strategic, aligned and rooted in our collective and historical wisdom.

The National Black Food and Justice Alliance continues the tradition of Black institution building. We know that one of the most effective strategies for building power in our communities is creating and maintaining institutions dedicated to building Black organizations and investing in Black leadership, strategies and innovations around food and land. Doing so builds Black food security infrastructures that have the capacity to identify issues and develop/implement strategies that systematize solutions to Black food and land struggles.
Black Land and Power (BLP), coordinated by the National Black Food and Justice Alliance, is a strategic alignment of Black land institutions and organizations around the U.S. working to deepen collective strategy towards regional and national Black land retention, protection and recovery.

The coalition was formed because of the essential need for deeper, coordinated and strategic organizing among food and land justice organizations--particularly in this political climate. If our history is an example, we must move past individual notions of ownership, which still left us vulnerable under racial capitalism.

Black communities have a deep connection to the earth with land as a source of spiritual, economic, cultural and communal grounding. Land, safe space and the means for self-determination continues to be assaulted and undermined thus the need to form an organized, multifaceted and collective long-term response is urgent.
The vision for the National Black Food and Justice Alliance’s (NBFJA) Resource Commons (RC) is to regain stewardship of 15 million acres of land - the approximate amount of land stolen from Black people from about 1920 through present day. The purpose of the Resource Commons is to take land off of the speculative market, to put it into a trust for the benefit of Black land stewards and farmers, and to defend land that is at risk of being stolen from Black people.

This year, NBFJA elected a Resource Commons Council representing the Alliance’s most heavily concentrated bio-regions; that reflect the Alliance’s strategic priorities; and who actively work to realize BLP’s goals and purposes as farmers or land stewards, leaders of community land trusts and cooperatives, capacity partners, organizers, and movement builders.

CARLTON TURNER
MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR CULTURAL PRODUCTION

JENGA MWENDO
BACKYARD GARDENERS NETWORK

ASANTEWAA GAIL HARRIS
SISTERS HEALTH & WELLNESS COLLECTIVE

MIKE STRODE
KOJA NUT COLLAB

TANZ WALKER
EARTHEED LAND COLLECTIVE

ED WHITFIELD
DELTA COMMONS

ÇACA YVAIRE HALLER
NORTHEAST FARMERS OF COLOR LAND TRUST, INC.
In partnership with 8 member organizations, NBFJA has set out to train 100 Black land stewards and farmers over the course of 12 months as a part of our commitment to build the capacity of Black people to sustain collective land space, increase community resilience, and to ensure food security in the Black community.

This initiative is an opportunity to grow and strengthen a much needed cadre of new and returning Black land stewards. Participants in this program will be armed with tangible knowledge about launching and sustaining land and food-related operations, as well as gain a better understanding about political education around land sovereignty and food justice.
The Partnership Funds, National Black Food and Justice Alliance, and Piece by Piece Strategies have partnered with local Black-led cooperatives across the country to develop the Collective Courage Fund. Named after “Collective Courage: The History of Black Cooperative Thought and Practice” by Jessica Gordon Nemhard, this fund is committed to building a robust cooperative movement of urban and rural Black cooperatives.

**CURRENT COHORT PARTICIPANTS:**
- Gem City Market - Dayton, OH
- Fertile Ground Cooperative - Oklahoma City, OK
- Black Yield Institute - Baltimore, MD
- The Come Up Project - Atlanta, GA

**UP & COMING CONFERENCE**

NBFJA planned & hosted a Black takeover day of an historically, predominantly white co-op conference (Up and Coming); and in doing so, reclaiming Black space in the cooperative movement which we have been instrumental in. Our Black-led Co-op day included 10 recorded and live sessions with an average of 70 participants registered for each session.
As we know, Black farmers have been drastically reduced in the United States by an estimated 98%. It is essential that we galvanize the support of our movements, organizing, resourcing and institutions to learn from the insights and brilliance of our ancestors, elders and scholars to carry forward the intergenerational cultural knowledge needed to confront the crisis facing Black farmers/land stewards and the climate catastrophe our communities face.

The Blackademics* work group of NBFJA has identified a critical need for a central location—an agro-ecological hub—to gather critical data, disseminate information, develop innovative solutions, and provide cross-institutional support. We are committed to deepening our capacity, growing the body of work and carrying forward the critical legacy of regenerative agriculture and Black land stewardship. We have partnered with Florida A&M University to establish the first center at FAMU, The Lola Hampton and Frank Pinder Center for Agroecology.

Currently there is no existing center or program rooted in agroecology that has a holistic regenerative agriculture department. There also is no current land tenure center (the previous one at University of Wisconsin has an archive, however, but not an active center). The future of agriculture and land tenure has to include strong coordination rooted in deep principles focused on solid culturally relevant research, retention of information, sustaining and connecting to the work and training the next generation of farmers rooted in regenerative agriculture.

Blackademics* is the research arm of NBFJA comprised of academic and research partners to anchor projects supporting NBFJA member organizations’ research needs as well as our collective work.

The Lola Hampton and Frank Pinder Center of Agroecology opens its doors this upcoming 2022-2023 school year at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL. Named after local land stewards in Tallahassee—Hampton, the grandmother and teacher of the new center’s co-director, Dr. Jennifer Taylor and Frank Pinder, a local champion of sustainable agriculture throughout the South and in Liberia where he led resistance against a “plantation economy” led by Firestone.
We see raising visibility via mapping Black food and land work, resources, and strategies as a means to connecting Black people interested in entering this work with resources to do so, in addition to investing in basic infrastructure to build out self-determining food systems and economies. Reframing narratives around Black food and land via our historic struggles and our own family histories (documented and told through our own lens) deeply transforms the relationships our people have with food and land.
In creating self-determining food economies and centering the principles of self-determination in building our collective power, we work to reclaim our economies within the food system.

We have made intentional efforts to combine and collaborate with existing Black food maps and directories to build a collective National Black food map & directory. This map displays a web of Black farmer stories while also identifying and creating opportunities to connect producers to community institutions and markets along with developing local maps of food infrastructure.

**BLACK FARMER NARRATIVES**

Since the announcement of the halting of BIPOC Farmers Debt, NBFJA has worked closely with HEAL Food Alliance to gather and amplify Black farmer stories including those of Operation Spring Plant’s Philip Barker in Newsweek and Brennan Washington of Phoenix Farms in Thomson Reuters Foundation News. In addition to amplifying stories, we launched a petition with Color of Change in support of debt relief for BIPOC farmers. The petition is now live with over 5100 signatures.

Since Summer 2021, we have shared 20 Black farmer stories through the digital campaign #BlackFarmerFriday via Instagram and Facebook in partnership with Black Church Food Security Network.
Radical Care is an initiative created for NBFJA membership as a means of not only self-preservation and healing for those on the front lines of Black food and land sovereignty work, but as recognition for the necessity of care so that the lived struggle is not only bearable but surmountable. We are charged with advocating and supporting the wellbeing of those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to Black liberation as to see it through and to embody the future we are creating. What does it mean to live well and free? What is freedom if we are not well enough to do something with it, to bask in it, and to prepare the ground for future generations to inherit it? Radical Care is an offering to our membership base so that we may collectively live our freedom dreams.
Mutual Aid is the long held practice of meeting our needs through collective care and pooling resources. It is built on the belief that we have to create the networks and institutions to support our communities through crisis and uncertainty -- that we can't wait on others to save us. We must support mutual aid, collective work, and responsibility.

Mutual Aid Resource Council

Black farmers across the country are inside of incredible work and National Black Food and Justice Alliance wanted to make sure we had the infrastructure to share resources that we have allocated for member needs and beyond. In April 2021, NBFJA launched the Mutual Aid Resource Council (MARC) and the NBFJA Leadership Team selected five members + a Leadership Team member to serve for 1 year as the decision-making body for resource allocations.

MARC made 55 awards for a total of $451,124 in support to Black-led organizations in our network.
In the wake of the North American winter storm of February 2021, the catastrophic weather system that brought severely destructive weather to Southeastern United States and Mexico, over 9.9 million people experienced prolonged blackouts. Hundreds lost access to running water for weeks. NBFJA directed $25,000 to grassroots organizations to support post storm emergency relief.

Hurricane Ida was a deadly and destructive Category 4 Atlantic hurricane that became the second-most damaging and intense hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. state of Louisiana on record, behind Hurricane Katrina in 2005. NBFJA directed over $1 million in donor support to southern partners responding to storms affecting the south.

Additionally, over $6 million in general operating support was directed in trust-based donations to the ecosystem and field, focusing largely on Black-led food and land justice organizations (including multi-year funding) to focus on building the incredible infrastructure we know our communities deserve.
RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Image Credit/Details
- Page 02 - Jamila Norman of Patchwork City Farms in Atlanta Georgia, Dara Cooper on NBFJA, Karen Washington of Rise and Root Farm in Chester, New York at Patchwork City Farms, captured for the New York Times Magazine February 2021 Issue by Nydia Blas
- Page 03 - NBFJA Field Team w/ staff of Black Yield Institute, Spring 2021 at Cherry Hill Urban Farm in Baltimore, MD
- Page 04 - Dr. Jasmine Ratliff & Cicely Garrett at Truly Living Well in Atlanta, GA, captured by Melissa Alexander
- Page 06 - NBFJA Leadership Team at Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Atlanta, GA September 2021
- Page 07 - NBFJA Field Team and Black Yield Institute Staff in Baltimore, MD in Spring 2021
- Page 09 - NBFJA Field Team with local Chicago farmers and organizers at Urban Growers Collective’s farm in Chicago, Ill Summer 2021
- Page 14 - Archival photo of Greenwood neighborhood “Black Wallstreet” in Tulsa Oklahoma
- Page 17 - Farm manager, Myeasha Taylor, while giving NBFJA Field Team a tour of Black Yield Institute’s Cherry Hill Urban Farm in Baltimore, MD Spring 2021
- Page 18 - Exterior image of Gem City Market in Dayton, OH - source unknown
- Page 20 - Collage of images including: (1) Sept. 17, 1965 archival photo, Fannie Lou Hamer speaks to Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party sympathizers outside the Capitol in Washington after the House of Representatives rejected a challenger to the 1964 election of five Mississippi representatives - William J. Smith for AP Photo (2) Farmers Loyd Johnson (L), Hezekiah Gibson (C) and Henry King (R) from Manning, South Carolina, stand by a farm tractor during a National Black Farmers Association protest in front of the Department of Agriculture August 22, 2002 in Washington, DC - Mark Wilson for Getty Images (3) Poster designed in 1970 by Emory Douglas, former Minister of Culture and Revolutionary Artist of the Black Panther Party - Library of Congress
- Page 22 - Tia Loren-Marie Haynes of Orange Moon Sanctuary in Atlanta, GA 2018
- Page 26 - NBFJA Leadership Team & Staff during the Leadership Retreat September 2021 at Russell Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; from left to right - Tosha Phonix, Dara Cooper, Mark Winston-Griffith, Dorothy Barker, Savi Horne, Fred Carter, Dr. Jasmine Ratliff, Iyafalola Omobola, Randolph Carr III, Kenya Crumel, Carlton Turner, and Sariyah Benoit

Resources
- Renewable Pembroke Campaign - https://www.blackfoodjustice.org/preserve-pembroke
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“Our work is only made possible because of the collective brilliance of our members on the frontlines. Together we dream, we map, we connect, we build, and we make possible what our communities absolutely need and deserve: Connection, safety, nourishment, and a clear path towards our collective Liberation.”

DARA COOPER
NBFJA CO-FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (2015-2021)

To make a donation, please visit:
www.blackfoodjustice.org/donate-2

Please mail checks to:
The Praxis Project
c/o National Black Food and Justice Alliance
P.O. Box 7259
Oakland, CA 94601

This report was designed by LC Morrissette as an ode to "The Resiliency of Wildflowers," a poetic imagining of Black liberation struggle.

www.blackfoodjustice.org
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