



2025 Impact Report

TOGETHER TOWARD A BETTER FOOD FUTURE



Provecho
COLLECTIVE



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OUR NAME

Provecho (**pronounced proh-BEH-choh** in English) comes from *buen provecho*, a warm, everyday wish in Spanish for others to be nourished and enjoy their food. It’s a phrase of care, connection, and community—all values at the heart of our work. Collective speaks to how we work: together, with and alongside Colorado communities. Combined, the name embraces who we are and the people we work alongside as a multicultural and bilingual nonprofit organization that’s rooted in equity and shared power.

Hear directly from some of the Provecho Collective team about what guides our work and how we collectively work to ensure food for all.

[WATCH OUR VIDEO](#)



Reported data covers January 1, 2025–December 5, 2025.
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Letter from Our Executive Director

This year brought significant change—for our communities, Colorado’s food system, and our nonprofit organization. As we all navigated uncertainty with a new presidential administration and state budget shortfalls, 2025 reminded us that progress isn’t linear, but lasting change is possible when we move forward together. And, throughout it all, we were grounded by what holds us steady: **connection, collaboration, and the power of collective action.**

What began as a five-year action plan to address hunger at the individual, community, and systems levels has grown into a multigenerational, multicultural food movement powered by and for the people who grow, produce, sell, eat, advocate for, and care about food. That’s why, in fall 2025, we **evolved from the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger to Provecho Collective.** Our new identity reflects who we are, how we work alongside community, and what we stand for: **food for all, today and tomorrow.** With our new name, look, and multilingual website, we created more pathways for community advocates, grassroots leaders, producers, food coalitions, and other partners to connect, learn, and lead together.


Amid a challenging policy landscape, our advocacy efforts took on renewed urgency. We partnered with advocates across the state to safeguard programs like the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** and the **Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**—and uplift community-driven solutions that center those most impacted by hunger and food injustice. We also deepened engagement through our policy-centered spaces as well as direct advocacy and capacity-building opportunities, creating more ways to elevate and amplify community voice.

We continued strengthening capacity and resilience across our statewide network. The Community Food Grants program funded nearly 70 food pantries and food banks, helping connect more people with nourishing, culturally relevant food close to home while championing local agriculture. We also offered trainings and new resources to support local advocates and organizations as they navigated change while still serving their communities during a turbulent year.

We know that **transforming Colorado’s food system starts with who’s at the table.** Thank you to all of our network collaborators, funders, and Advisory Board members for taking a seat and joining us in this work. Only together can we ensure people across Colorado get the food they need today while building a better food future for tomorrow.



With gratitude,
Dolores Ramirez
Executive Director



“ We’ve grown into a multigenerational, multicultural food movement powered by and for the people who grow, produce, sell, eat, advocate for, and care about food.



About Us



OUR MISSION

Building a movement for a more responsive, equitable, and sustainable food system by shifting power to our Colorado communities.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe everyone deserves access to nourishing, affordable, and **culturally meaningful foods** that provide nourishment beyond calories. **Food justice** focuses on removing barriers that keep people from their right to food and transforming the systems that have caused harm.

We also believe that communities should have the power to decide how every part of their own **food system** works and who benefits—from farm to fork—including how food is grown, shared, accessed, and consumed. **Food sovereignty** is about self-determination, building local food systems that center community priorities and honor the knowledge of the people closest to the land.

OUR VISION

A Colorado where everyone can access the food they choose, where they want it, and when they need it.

OUR NETWORK

Our work is only possible thanks to a diverse statewide network of collaborators, including:

- Community advocates and grassroots leaders
- Local producers and small food retailers
- Food pantries and food banks
- Healthcare and nutrition providers
- Advocacy organizations and coalitions
- Government agencies
- Philanthropic foundations and community investors

OUR ADVISORY BOARD

Jodi Walker, Chair
Brandi Adakai
Emily Olsen
Fatuma Emmad
Max Gibson

Monique Marez
Namrata Bhoomi Shrestha
Stella Zhu
Thái Nguyễn

OUR PILLARS OF COMMITMENT

Convene partners around shared priorities

Support local solutions to local problems

Strengthen resources and build capacity

Champion bold policy change

Realities Behind Colorado's Food System

In 2025, **more than 1 in 10 Coloradans struggled to afford food**—and that burden is not shared equally. Our current food system is shaped by long-standing inequities tied to income, class, identity, and access. For example, Coloradans **without health insurance are twice as likely** to worry about where their next meal will come from, and families who **do not speak English at home are 1.5 times more likely** to face barriers in accessing the food they need to thrive.

This year also brought unprecedented federal disruptions to Colorado's food system, with:

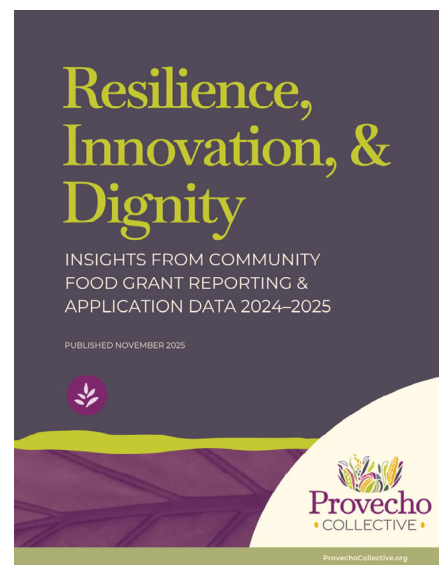
82% of food pantries reporting impacts from federal funding freezes or cuts.

Yet, local hunger-relief organizations shoulder the burden of those seeking food assistance, with:

6 in 10 food pantries seeing increased demand for their services.



Colorado's state budget allocation for Community Food Grants has been **reduced by nearly 50% for two consecutive years.**



[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

While partners across sectors agree that buying food locally is essential for strong and equitable food systems, the federal, state, and private funding to support this work continues to decline. Colorado's state budget allocation for Community Food Grants has been **reduced by nearly 50% for two consecutive years**. Federally, the Local Foods Procurement Assistance program was eliminated, leaving an **estimated \$2.3 million gap in Colorado's local purchasing power**. At the same time, 600,000 Coloradans who use SNAP are expected to see **deep cuts to food assistance benefits in the future**—meaning more neighbors will have to choose between buying needed groceries or paying rent, as they weather life's storms, with many ripple effects across Colorado's food economy and communities.

The good news is that strategic public investment, paired with community-centered approaches in administration, can transform how Colorado addresses **food insecurity**, which means not having reliable access to enough food to lead a healthy life. Even while facing uncertainty and unprecedented federal disruptions, local advocates and organizations continue to prioritize dignity, resilience, and community-driven solutions across our state's food system.



Dolores Ramirez, Leticia Macias, and Michelle Ray at a video shoot for Provecho Collective

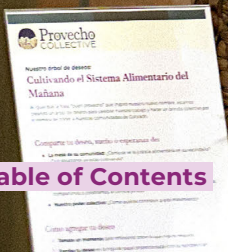


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At a Glance 2025



Advisory board member Thái Nguyễn encouraged people to add their dreams to the wish tree at Provecho Collective's community celebration



Our Reach & Impact

7 state laws enacted



with **advocacy support** from Provecho Collective, to reduce food waste, expand SNAP, fund healthy school meals, and increase accessibility of state assistance programs



69 community food providers received



\$1.7M in State funding through Colorado's Community Food Grants program

156

active collaborators

on our **network map**, representing **108 organizations, agencies, and coalitions**, alongside many Colorado communities

15

total sign-ons and public comments

for federal policy priorities, ranging from protecting SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid to supporting a strong Farm Bill

14



new resources and tools

developed by Provecho Collective, including a storytelling procedure and a resilience and action guide for times of crisis and change

23

food-focused community organizations

received direct capacity-building assistance, such as guidance on Community Advisory Board best practices

9

recurring committees and convenings

facilitated by Provecho Collective's team throughout the year, with a **total of 112 meetings hosted**

533

news features or mentions

across **TV, radio, print, and online outlets** in Colorado and beyond

130

participants each month

on average, in our committees and convenings

COMMUNITY COMPENSATION

76 community members

compensated for participating in Provecho Collective's spaces, including advising our organization, reviewing Community Food Grants, and contributing insights informed by lived or living experience with hunger

\$113,380+

in compensation

distributed to community members for their time and real-life expertise

LANGUAGE JUSTICE

17 hours/month

of simultaneous interpretation offered in Spanish and English, on average, during meetings hosted by Provecho Collective

100%

of all public communications

shared in both languages as a fully bilingual organization

Provecho Collective also continued to shift power to Colorado communities through **accessible grantmaking** with community reviewers, in addition to **feedback loops for community input** to directly shape our policy priorities, data practices, and public communications. Our commitment to equity also encompasses **accessibility for all**; we welcome accommodation requests for other languages and needs so everyone can fully participate in all of our spaces.

Equity in Action

Snapshots of Impact

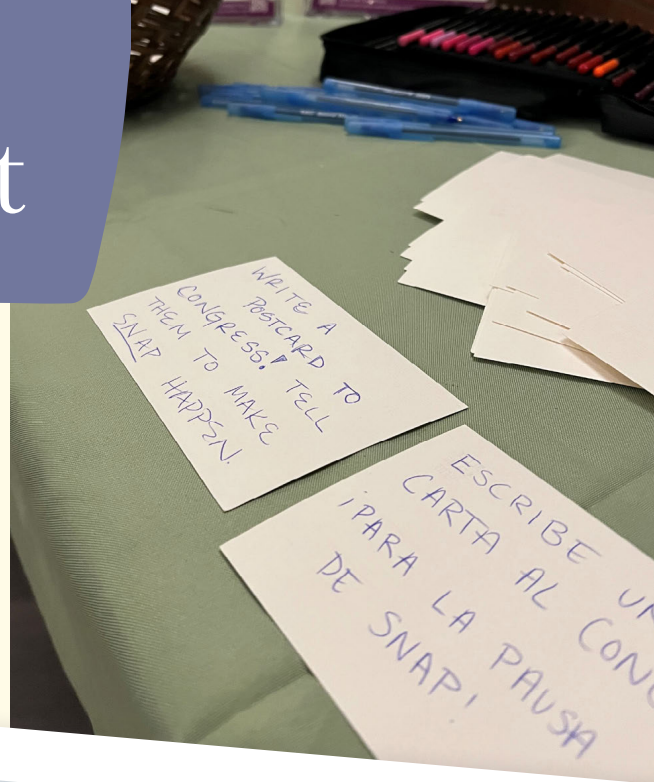
Responding to Federal Action and Inaction

Amid a year of uncertainty, Provecho Collective did what it does best—coordinating collective action, connecting partners statewide, and advocating for sustainable solutions.

During the prolonged federal shutdown and SNAP disruptions, we **elevated community needs** to state leadership, **connected community food providers** with state agencies like the Colorado Department of Human Services, and helped partners secure up to \$10 million in emergency state funding for food banks and pantries.

Our team co-organized a **letter campaign** and **hand-delivered 70 letters to elected officials** in Washington, D.C., urging them to prevent impending SNAP cuts in May 2025. Throughout the year, we **signed on to 12 joint letters** to protect SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid and support federal legislation like the Farm Bill, in addition to submitting three public comments and issuing several public statements on federal policy impacts. We also **co-authored a government shutdown resource guide** and two press releases with partner organizations, as well as published a **white paper on proposed SNAP restrictions**.

Provecho Collective took swift action to **support immigrant communities** across Colorado, so no one has to choose between nourishment and safety. We **hosted three organizational safeguard trainings with a total of 59 participants**, which focused on shared practices and policies to help protect the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of community members and staff already coping with trauma, scarcity, and threats to their sense of safety. Additionally, we **compiled and shared timely resources** on data security and knowing your rights.



Team members Grace Benasutti, Dayana Leyva, and Charlie Kestler visit Capitol Hill with partners

Investing in Community Food Providers

Provecho Collective, in partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services, **directed \$1.7 million in State funding** through the 2025 - 2026 **Community Food Grants** in November 2025. This year's funding **supported 69 community food providers statewide**, including 64 food pantries and five regional food banks, expanding access to Colorado-grown, nutrient-dense, and culturally meaningful foods.

In our **grant program evaluation report** published in November 2025, we found **protein as the most frequently cited inventory gap** since it's rarely available through traditional donation channels. Community Food Grants help food pantries and food banks build relationships with local producers and purchase culturally and spiritually relevant proteins like halal meat, goat, and bison. These funds also allow more Colorado food pantries to **stock culturally significant foods based on community input** to ensure dignity is at the heart of food access.

59%

of all awarded funds were **reinvested in local food production**, creating mutual benefit across the food supply chain and hunger-relief efforts

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“ The beef producer we built a relationship with due to Community Food Grant funding is now selling to two other businesses in our town, and he has since thanked us for introducing him to new markets.

– Silverton Food Pantry, Our Community Eats

“ [This funding has been] so crucial to the resiliency of our local food system and food access efforts...Now, we are able to trust that we have a strong line item in our budget to dedicate to supporting our growers and offering culturally responsive foods.

– Community Food Bank of Grand Junction



Changemaking at the State Capitol: Expanding Access & Opportunity

Despite a \$1.2 billion state budget deficit and continued threats to federal funding, Provecho Collective **championed community-driven policy change** throughout the 2025 state legislative session. Working alongside our Policy Committee and many other partners, we **centered policy solutions grounded in equity and intersecting with other issues** like housing, health, and tax reform.



Team members Greta Allen (former) and Dayana Leyva with partners in support of HB25-1220, Regulation of Medical Nutrition Therapy



Charlie Kestler and Dayana Leyva with partners in support of SB25-008, Adjusting Colorado's Necessary Documents Program

KEY LEGISLATIVE WINS



Bringing Restaurant Meals Program to Colorado

- A key achievement was the **successful passage of Senate Bill 25-169**, paving the way for Colorado to introduce the Restaurant Meals Program. Led by Provecho Collective, this legislation positions Colorado to **become one of only ten states** where eligible SNAP participants can use their benefits to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants. The USDA program helps expand food choice and dignity for older adults, people facing housing instability, and those with disabilities while strengthening local economies and food systems.

Adjusting Colorado's Necessary Documents Program

- Provecho Collective also **co-led advocacy efforts for Senate Bill 25-008, which was signed into law**. It adjusted Colorado's Necessary Documents Program to help more people obtain IDs, birth certificates, and other vital documents at no cost. With **fewer barriers to accessing SNAP, housing, and healthcare**, more Coloradans can meet their basic needs, build stability, and improve their well-being. Staff provided public testimony, collaborated with key legislators, and shared resources with community members to help enact this bill.

Building Advocacy from the Ground Up

We celebrated the graduation of 12 community members and aspiring leaders from our **Advocacy Leadership Academy** this past summer. During the eight-week program, participants connected with Colorado staff on Capitol Hill, unlocked the power of their own stories, and gained skills and tools to become grassroots leaders within and beyond their communities. The Academy teaches power mapping and policy analysis, as well as how to craft a compelling narrative and design a winning issue-based campaign.

Graduates are already putting their advocacy skills to work across Colorado. One example is Namrata Shrestha, an Academy alum and Advisory Board member for Provecho Collective, who’s applying her training to advance the Mountain Coalition for Food Nutrition Security’s advocacy goals. She is helping lay the groundwork for a coordinated regional advocacy agenda that supports food access, local production, nutrition, and systems stability.



Dayana Leyva with fellow advocates at the Protect Our Care rally, which she co-organized with partner organizations

A 2025 Academy graduate shared how they feel better equipped to advocate for food justice and improved health outcomes—and to help others see their own power and use their voices in shaping policy—within their community:

“The tools and strategies I’ve learned will empower me to effectively communicate our needs, navigate systems, and influence policy changes.”



Team members support an advocacy training with Jeffco Food Policy Council members

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Our **Lobby Meeting Planning Form** was shared with the Advocacy Leadership Academy cohort, community leaders, and partner organizations that engage in direct lobbying efforts with elected officials.



Food justice advocate, supported by Provecho Collective, testifies during a state bill hearing

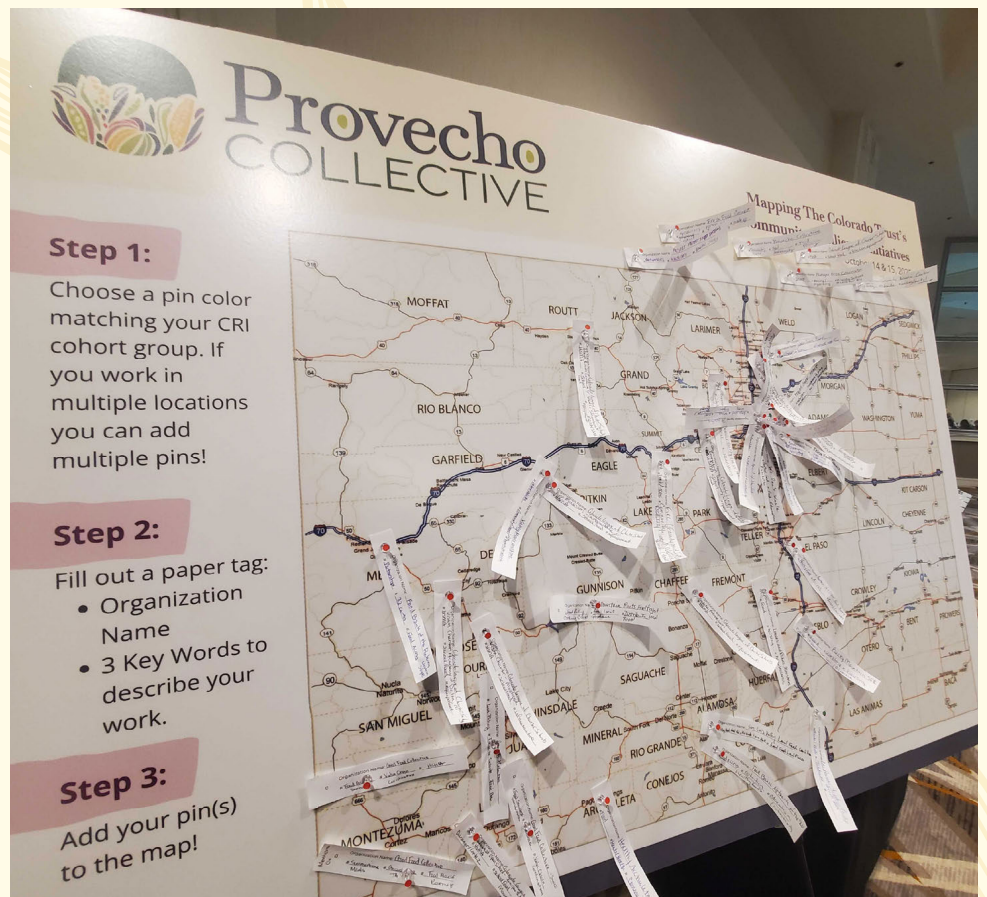
Kasey Neiss, Grace Benasutti, and Charlie Kestler connect with partners during The Colorado Trust's statewide convening



“ The Cohort Connect monthly space was a great space to come together and stay connected. The facilitators were great and responsive to the needs and context of attendees. The content was informative and relevant. It was great to hear what people in the space had to share.

Helping Organizations Build Capacity

As a capacity-building organization, Provecho Collective partnered with The Colorado Trust to support **grantees of their Community Resilience Initiatives** focused on increasing healthy food access and building resilient food systems within local areas across the state. We offered a **total of 55 coaching sessions and 12 peer-learning and connection opportunities** around data and evaluation, storytelling, media relations, and more. About 95% of organizations that participated in capacity-building work were satisfied with the services provided.



Partners showcase where they work and how they serve their Colorado communities



Kasey Neiss co-leads a data and evaluation training in Summit County

Thank you...[for presenting] to our group on the importance around data and evaluation and the powerful benefits it can bring to community efforts. Your support has been extremely helpful and practical.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT



Rooted & Ready Guide

- We created and piloted two toolkits with **19 community-based organizations and coalitions**, which guide groups through risk assessment, mitigation planning, and adaptability strategies.

Storytelling Standard Operating Procedure for Organizations

- We co-crafted a process for one food-focused community organization, which can easily be adapted to other nonprofit and grassroots organizations; Provecho Collective used the template for their own storytelling efforts.

Uplifting Community Voices for Policy Change

In 2025, community members continued to help shape Colorado’s food future through our **Community Voice Committee and Storytellers’ Corner**, spaces centering people’s lived or living experiences with hunger. About **10 community members participated regularly**, building relationships and drawing on their expertise to guide Provecho Collective’s policy priorities and strengthen the impact of advocacy efforts for communities across the state. This year, we reshaped our policy agenda development process and consistently engaged the Community Voice Committee to ensure our policy priorities remain rooted in the lived realities and wisdom of community partners.

We also hosted a **series of free webinars with a combined total of 32 participants**, offering practical ways to engage in local advocacy, share stories for narrative change, and connect directly with elected officials. These sessions helped community leaders strengthen their skills, confidence, and connections to drive change in their own communities.

Andrea L., founder of Andrea’s No Cost Farmer’s Market and member of our Community Voice Committee, shared:

I have never felt so comfortable being a part of an amazing organization. I feel I can call on them for help and if they can’t help they will go above and beyond to find someone who can.



Charlie Kestler and Dayana Leyva, with community leader and advocate, Andrea L.

Empowering Retailers, Nourishing Communities

The WIC & SNAP Retailers project team helped connect more Coloradans and local retailers to resources that make healthy food easier to access and afford. In partnership with other groups, they **hosted two free webinars that reached more than 140 participants statewide** during Spring 2025. One session guided community members through a step-by-step process of applying for SNAP benefits, while the other supported retailers and nonprofits interested in expanding food access through SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, and Colorado’s SNAP Produce Bonus Program.

One participant is already putting their learning into action and sharing it with others to expand awareness and access in their community:

“ I learned what Double Up Food Bucks are, and I can now talk with our retailers to give them this information.



Greta Žukauskaitė, Bryanna Patinka, and Brace Gibson at Provecho Collective's community celebration

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Data & Technology Leadership in Action

In 2025, we updated existing data tools to help partners understand community need, track progress, and strengthen local solutions. **More than 903 visitors accessed our data dashboard** with indicators on poverty, food insecurity, and federal nutrition program participation across Colorado. **Over 254 people visited the child nutrition story map** from our website, which visualizes after-school and summer meal participation rates and site locations.

As an AI-native organization, Provecho Collective also **presented at Denver's Open AI Summit** to help others explore responsible, equity-centered uses of emerging technology.



Looking Forward, Together



Our team is energized by the impact that we have achieved with our network of collaborators and partners this year—and we know there’s more work ahead as we look to 2026.

With looming federal cuts to SNAP benefits, increasing pressure on hunger-relief organizations, and declining funding sources, **Provecho Collective is committed to doing everything in its power to help mitigate the impacts.** Our **2026 strategic plan** focuses on strengthening rapid response and statewide communication while expanding the capacity of local coalitions and organizations so they can weather whatever comes next. We’ll continue to center communities in all of our efforts; it’s essential for our network and Colorado communities to stay informed, supported, and able to act on their priorities when policies and programs change.

We’ll **keep investing in our policy and community justice work, including leadership development, organizing support, and storytelling for narrative change**, so community advocates have the knowledge, skills, confidence, and platforms to influence policy and systems-level

change. This includes creating a power-building toolkit, executing a new advocacy storytelling process, and shaping our 2026 policy agenda around the needs and expertise of Colorado communities directly impacted by hunger and other food injustices.

In addition to updating our data dashboard and child nutrition story map, we’ll **develop new tools and coordinate data efforts that are responsive to our network’s needs**, such as improved support for Colorado local producers and documenting the upheavals and disruptions occurring in our food system.

Provecho Collective is also **supporting major long-term wins as part of the Protect Colorado’s Future coalition, which aims to pass a graduated income tax ballot measure** in 2026. Through the steering committee and workgroups, we’re helping coordinate strategy, deepen community engagement, and ensure accessibility across

every coalition effort—all to ensure sustainable funding for the essential services that Coloradans rely on, such as public education, healthcare, transportation, and food access.

Our collective action is more important than ever—and we hope you’ll take a seat at our shared table so we can work together to **nourish our communities today and reimagine Colorado’s food system for tomorrow.**



Folks selecting produce at a partner’s free farmers market in Colorado Springs



Join us at the table to create
a Colorado where there's **food**
for all, today and tomorrow.



JOIN THE COLLECTIVE

Participate in one of our [committees or convenings](#).

Stay informed via our [newsletter](#), [blog posts](#), and social media.

Explore our growing [resource library](#) of reports, data tools, toolkits, and more.



ProvechoCollective.org



Provecho Collective respectfully acknowledges that we operate on the land of the Cheyenne, Ute, and Arapahoe nations. At least 48 tribal nations are the original stewards and historically tied to the lands known as the state of Colorado. [Read our full land acknowledgment.](#)