Community Food Advocates (CFA)

Suggested by: TCC Group

Current Request	$20,000	**Organizational Budget**	$1,733,272
Previous Grant Amount	$15,000	**Last Site Visit**	n/a
Grants Since 1998	6	**Project Budget (if applicable)**	n/a
Total Grants Awarded	$80,000	**Purpose**	General operating support

Mission

To ensure all New Yorkers have access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate foods through equity-centered, high impact public policy.

Organization History

Founded in 2010, Community Food Advocates (CFA) uses strategic coalition-building and policy advocacy to ensure all New Yorkers have access to healthy, affordable, culturally affirming food. CFA has led landmark victories, including universal free school meals for one million NYC students in 2017 and securing free meals for all 2.7 million students statewide in 2025. With food insecurity affecting one in three adults in NYC, disproportionately impacting communities of color, CFA strengthens coalitions, advances values-based food procurement, and recently launched a supermarket access initiative to counter federal cuts that threaten nutrition programs and safeguard food security for New York's most vulnerable families. CFA currently has a full-time staff of seven, after hiring a Director of Development.

Update on Last Grant and Current Request

Support from the Vidda Foundation last year helped CFA build on major policy victories and advance implementation across school food, food systems reform, supermarket access, and youth leadership, including:

- Strengthened NYC school meal programs through continued implementation of the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience and development of the Nutrition Collaborative with NYC Public Schools. The latter engages students, families, educators, administrators, and cafeteria staff in improving school meals and participation.

- Strengthened youth leadership through Youth Food Advocates, engaging high school students in policy research, advocacy, and civic leadership. At two Nutrition Collaborative schools (East Bronx Academy and Stuyvesant High School), youth helped test the model as student ambassadors, leading to the creation of paid Ambassador internships.

- Advanced values-based food procurement statewide by expanding partnerships with municipalities, institutional buyers, producers, labor organizations, and community partners. The Good Food New York bill passed both the State Assembly and Senate and is waiting for the Governor's approval, which would allow municipalities to consider values such as nutrition, local economies, environmental sustainability, fair labor, and animal welfare rather than awarding food contracts solely on lowest cost.

- Launched the Groceries For All Coalition and advanced its six-pillar policy agenda for affordable, accessible supermarket access. CFA's advocacy helped advance New York City's municipal grocery initiative, with the first two city-owned grocery stores planned for East Harlem and Hunts Point in 2027 and 2028.

CFA requests an increased renewal of $20,000 in general operating support to sustain its staff, coalitions, policy analysis, advocacy, and community engagement. Priorities include supporting effective implementation of universal free school meals and NYC school food improvements; advancing Good Food New York and preparing municipalities for values-based procurement; expanding the Groceries For All initiative and supporting implementation of NYC's municipal grocery stores; and continuing to develop youth leaders through Youth Food Advocates.

Notes

CFA identifies securing sustained City funding for its school food and supermarket access initiatives as a key challenge and priority. During the last grant period, delayed City funding temporarily slowed the Cafeteria Enhancement Experience, although implementation has since resumed and is back on schedule. Proposed and enacted federal changes to nutrition assistance programs are also creating uncertainty for the communities CFA serves, increasing the importance of strong school meal- and food-access systems.