



FY22

Annual Report

Cultivating **Leaders**
Sowing **Opportunity**
Growing the Movement
to **End Hunger**

From our **Executive Director**

In 2022, I became interested in the science of hope. The leading scientists who study hope demonstrate that it is much more than just wishful thinking—it is an active approach to life. It is the practice of intentionally setting goals and working toward them with purpose. It is the most predictive indicator of well-being in a person's life. Study after study finds that people with hope are healthier and live longer. And hope can be shared.

Hopeful people—and I would argue organizations—share three things: goals, pathways, and agency. Hopeful people and organizations establish goals for themselves that are purposeful and aligned with what they most value. They find different pathways to achieve their goals when circumstances change. They believe they have the power to create change and achieve their goals if they keep trying.

A growing body of research suggests that hope plays a critical role in sustaining social movements. While anger mobilizes people to act or protest, hope keeps people engaged by framing the social issue as solvable. Hope empowers us to believe that what angers us can be changed, even if that change can sometimes feel impossible. Adversity can rob us of hope, and everywhere we look these days, we can find adversity on a global scale. The war in Ukraine, Covid, global inflation. The world's greatest leaders all bring hope in the face of despair.

The Congressional Hunger Center is in the business of developing leaders and spreading hope that we can end hunger in our lifetimes. We can end U.S. hunger by 2030. We can build

a sustainable global food system capable of feeding the world by 2050. And we all have a role to play in building the political and public will to solve these solvable problems.

Our Hunger Fellows, Zero Hunger Interns, and Zero Hunger Academy graduates all come to the Hunger Center because they have our shared goal of ending hunger. Through our leadership development programs, we help to strengthen their belief and confidence in their abilities as leaders to create change. We help them to see the multiple pathways and levers for change that can be used to get us there. And in turn, they go off and spread that hope across their organizations and communities.

As we take stock of the Hunger Center's work in 2022, I am hopeful that we're closer to our goal of ending hunger than we were a year ago. Thank you for being part of our progress. I am hopeful that a new generation of leaders will shepherd in the solutions that many of us have been working towards for decades. I am hopeful every time I speak with a current Hunger Fellow or Zero Hunger Intern or reconnect with an alum who has continued down a pathway toward our shared goal. I hope that as you read these pages, you'll feel more hopeful that we can do this. We can end hunger in our lifetimes.

In service,



Shannon Maynard
Executive Director
Emerson National Hunger Fellow ('98)



In the fight to end hunger, **people** are our most powerful resource

Hunger does not just affect an individual. The negative impacts of hunger – from poor health, to reduced educational achievement, to behavioral and mental health problems – are costs that all of society bears. And because hunger affects everyone, we can all be part of the solution. The Congressional Hunger Center, founded in 1993 by a bipartisan group of Members of Congress, invests in people to become the change agents we need to end hunger.

Cultivating Leaders

The Hunger Center's fellowship programs match the drive for social change with the leadership development needed to solve the complex problem of hunger. The Hunger Center's fellowship programs are unique in blending community work with policy-level experience. In so doing, fellows gain on-the-ground experience and expertise in policymaking and analysis – helping them to understand and inform how local problems can lead to better policy, and how good policy can solve local problems.

Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows spend six months working at a community-based organizations located throughout the country that combat hunger and poverty on a local, state, or regional level, followed by five months working at government agencies, nonprofits, or think tanks mostly based in Washington, D.C., that work on national policy.

Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows spend one working for an NGO, a multilateral, or a research organization in the Global South. The second year is spent at the same host organization's HQ, regional or policy office that is usually, but not always, in the Global North.

Sowing Opportunity

The **Zero Hunger Internship** provides college students and recent graduates with a ten-week summer internship at an anti-hunger organization in Washington, D.C. Zero Hunger Interns also participate in learning sessions about food security and complete a collaborative research project with recommended policy solutions. Unlike most internships in Washington, D.C., the Zero Hunger Internship is paid – providing an opportunity to young leaders who otherwise would not be able to afford to support themselves through the summer.

Growing the Movement to End Hunger

We cannot end hunger if we do not fully understand the problem. Our free online **Zero Hunger Academy** educates the public on the root causes of hunger and effective ways to become anti-hunger advocates in their community.



The end to hunger must be led by **people** who have lived it

The Congressional Hunger Center believes that people who have experienced hunger are the ones best able to develop and lead solutions to the problem. Because structural racism is one of the root causes of hunger, people of color are three times more likely to experience food insecurity.

We intentionally recruit fellows and interns with a lived experience of poverty and hunger.

In FY2022, 46 young leaders participated in our internship and fellowship programs:

61% identified as people of color and

52% reported that they have experienced hunger and poverty.

We strive to have our leadership ranks hold a critical mass of people of color. In 2022, people of color comprised:

33% of board seats and

40% of staff positions;

27% of our staff and

11% of our board reported a lived experience of poverty and hunger.

Our Commitment to Racial Equity

We recognize that the forces of structural racism that drive hunger and poverty cannot be eliminated overnight: it is a journey of many steps. As we continue our journey, we know that often we will be the learners, and at other times we may be the teachers. We hope that you will join us in our continuing journey towards an equitable and hunger-free future for all.

[Read more about our commitment to racial equity.](#)



Bill Emerson **National** Hunger Fellowship

Fleurian Filkins served as an Emerson Fellow in the 28th Class from 2021 to 2022. For their field placement, Fleurian worked in the Food Policy Division of the District of Columbia Office of Planning, where they investigated the causes of and potential solutions to D.C.'s persistently high senior food insecurity rate. Based on interviews with seniors, [Fleurian recommended a variety of government actions](#), including that the D.C. Government employ Senior Community Ambassadors to help with the

communication and enrollment barriers many seniors face in accessing nutrition assistance programs. They presented their findings at a D.C. Council hearing, and their research provided support for [provisions that expanded senior access to nutrition programs and groceries in the D.C. Mayor's FY23 budget](#).

Fleurian now works as a policy specialist at Feeding America, where they use data to support efforts to improve and expand federal nutrition programs.

"Being an Emerson Hunger Fellow taught me the importance of **centering people living with food insecurity** in anti-hunger work. They know first-hand what they need, and their voices carry an undeniable weight. We just need to help make sure they're heard."



Mickey Leland **International** Hunger Fellowship

Lexi Kirton is part of the 11th class of Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows from 2021 to 2023. During the first year of her fellowship, Lexi worked with Mercy Corps on two international development consortia: 1) the USAID Implementer-led Design, Evidence, Analysis, & Learning (IDEAL) program, in which she created food security educational events and learning products; and 2) the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA), where she recommended [policy solutions that would enable agricultural communities](#)

[to maintain income stability and access to food in flood-prone areas.](#)

In the second year of her fellowship, Lexi is supporting the monitoring and evaluation of Mercy Corps' BHAKARI project in Nepal, which provides emergency food assistance and increases food security and resilience for vulnerable communities in the country. She will also be analyzing the Ukraine war's effect on food prices in western Nepal.

"There are some really exceptional organizations hosting fellows this year. While I have worked in international development for four years already, getting into the doorways of these organizations is not easy. This fellowship provides the opportunity for fellows to work at their dream organizations and obtain **unique experience** both in policy and through country-level implementation. Any other job would not combine these two diverse areas so seamlessly."



Zero Hunger Internship

James Ziegeweid grew up on a corn farm in Wisconsin and is currently a student at Minnesota State University (MNSU), where he also serves as the meal planner for the MNSU Campus Kitchen. James applied to the Zero Hunger Internship program to develop his leadership capabilities and become a catalyst for anti-hunger work in rural communities. As a Zero Hunger Intern, James worked at the Food Research and Action Council (FRAC), where he created a Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) Toolkit that highlighted

best practices when working to implement the P-EBT. As James' supervisor states, "The resource James completed could go on to help advocates across the country to push their state into implementing P-EBT, which would provide millions of hungry children with benefits to purchase food."

James has also participated in the Hunger Center's End Hunger in 30 Challenge and is one of the newest members of our Alum Council.

"Being a Zero Hunger Intern has given me the opportunity to learn how I can use policy to fight hunger while also providing me with an **invaluable network of individuals** who are working towards the same goal: ending hunger by 2030. From developing leadership skills to learning about safety net programs and the importance of addressing the root causes of hunger, the Zero Hunger Internship proved to be an invaluable experience that not only **made me a better anti-hunger advocate**, but a better person as well."



Alum **Spotlight**

Michelle DeFreese served as a Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellow in Tanzania and Washington, D.C., from 2015 to 2017. She is now a Senior Officer with the Global Green Growth Institute in Kigali, Rwanda, where she works with the Rwandan Ministry of Environment on

strategic initiatives aligned with the country's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Michelle also serves on our Alum Council and is the most recent recipient of our Outstanding Alum Hunger Leadership Award.



"The Leland Fellowship helped me tremendously and is an experience I will never forget. I always feel grateful that I had that experience, which is part of why I try to remain connected by serving on the Alum Council and reaching out to current and past fellows. You can always support and motivate others, no matter what stage you are at in your career. There are leadership opportunities at every stage. The Leland Fellowship helped me to embrace that mindset. **It's something I carry with me in my work to this day** as a change-agent. That's what the Leland Fellowship is all about."

Zero Hunger **Academy**

If you don't understand the problem, you can't be part of the solution. The Zero Hunger Academy provides free courses and videos—including the month-long End Hunger in 30 Challenge in October and the Summer Seminar Series—on the root

"We are in this fight and do this work every day at U.S. Hunger. Yet, I'm blown away at how much I am learning as the CEO of a food assistance organization. I'm also grateful for the nuggets of information that are useful to our everyday fight. Thank you for the thoughtfulness in putting this together. You have curated something that is helpful!"

— Rick Whitted, CEO, U.S. Hunger and End Hunger in 30 Challenge Participant

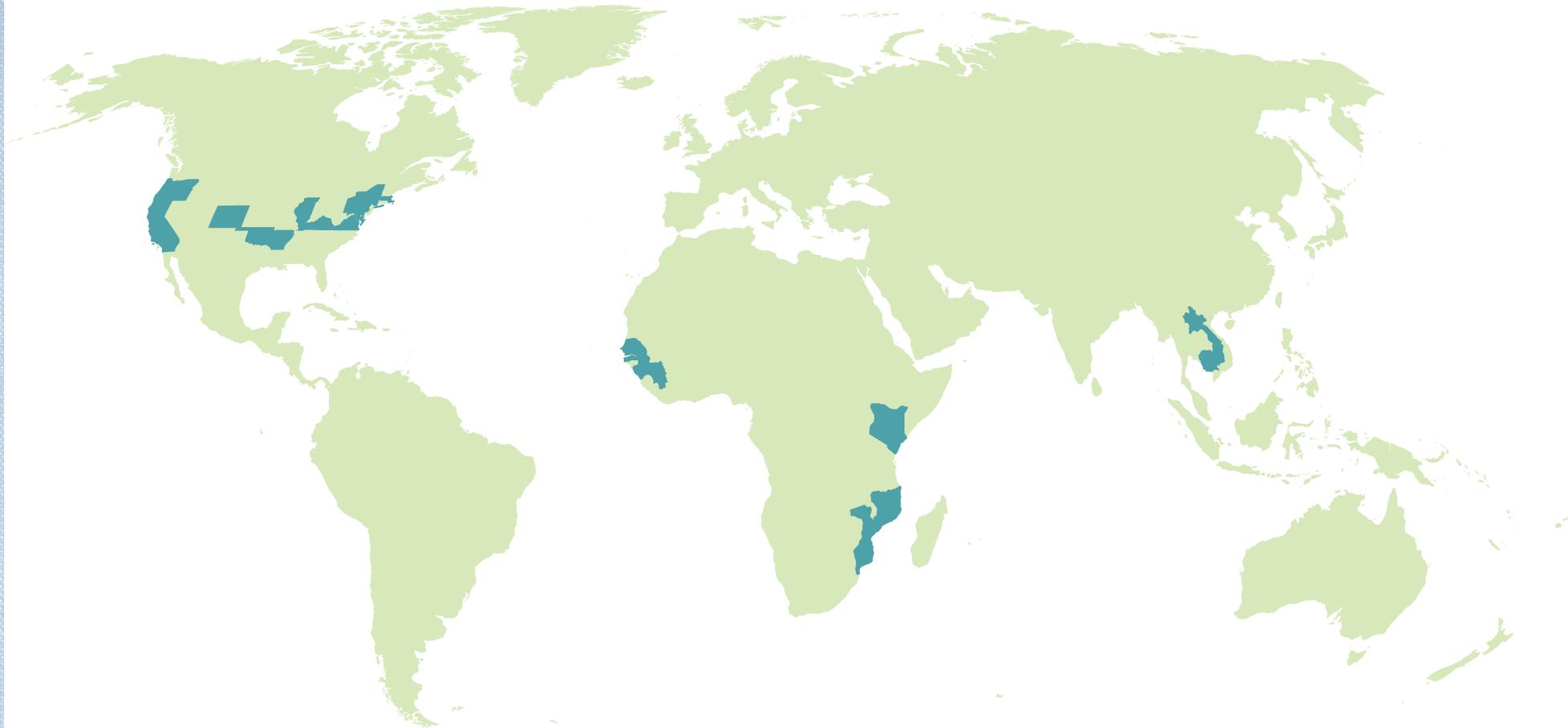
causes of hunger and ways to end hunger in their community. In the past year, **896** individuals at **35** partner organizations participated in Zero Hunger Academy courses.

"If we **understood the problem** better, we'd approach it differently."

— Dominique Hazzard, Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow ('13); Board Chair, DC Greens



Our **Impact** in FY2022



46 young leaders participated in our fellowship and internship programs

48 hunger-fighting organizations provided with critical support

placements in **12** U.S. states and the District of Columbia

placements in **6** countries

We partner with **anti-hunger and anti-poverty organizations around the country and around the world**, including food banks, food policy councils, INGOs, humanitarian organizations, think tanks, and state, federal and international government agencies.



Our Work in Action: **Massachusetts**

In Massachusetts, more than half of eligible children were not receiving a free or reduced-price breakfast at school – a meal proven to increase student success in the classroom. Nathan Garcia worked with partner **Project Bread** in Massachusetts to help local schools implement the state’s “Breakfast After the Bell” mandate. This law aims to increase the number of students receiving breakfast by providing free breakfast to all students at eligible schools. As part of his fellowship, Nathan also created a report that can help policymakers implement similar Breakfast After the Bell programs in their own states.

"The Emerson fellows that have been placed with our program have been fantastic to work with, have gotten along extremely well with our team and have **contributed positively** to our organization!"

— Natasha Smith, Project Bread



Our Work in Action: **Cambodia**

In the first year of her Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellowship, Bailey Adams served as a Nutrition Officer for the **World Food Programme** in Cambodia, working to combat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in children. While severe acute malnutrition (SAM) receives the most attention and funding due to its potential for grave consequences, moderate acute malnutrition remains a serious – and more widespread – threat in the country; a child with MAM is at three times a greater risk of death compared to a healthy child, and is at an increased risk of infectious disease and delayed physical and cognitive development. Working with WFP and at the request of the Cambodian government, Bailey researched proven and effective interventions for decreasing MAM in children, in addition to proposing specific recommendations that the government should include in their programming and national guidelines on the management of acute malnutrition.



Our Work in Action: **Kentucky**

Black-owned farms represent just two percent of farms in the U.S., and less than one percent of farms in Kentucky – a consequence of decades of discriminatory laws and practices. Amira Iwuala and Morgan McKinney worked with local partner **Community Farm Alliance** in Berea, Kentucky, to support and promote Black-owned agriculture in the region. They

developed a toolkit for Black farmers to help make their farms more sustainable and profitable; the toolkit not only provided information but also trusted local contacts in agritourism, universities, NAACP chapters, and other community groups. Their research and toolkit helped lay the groundwork for further coalition building among Black farmers in Kentucky.

“Hosting an Emerson Fellow (or two) provides not only additional capacity but the fellows bring an **inspiring exuberance** that ripples throughout the organization.”

—Martin Richards, Community Farm Alliance



A Once-In-A-Generation Event: the **White House Conference** on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

On September 28, the White House held the first conference on hunger in more than 50 years. The last conference on hunger, held in 1969 under the Nixon Administration, elevated hunger as a national priority and sparked major improvements and expansions to federal nutrition programs.

Our Board Chair, Rep. James P. McGovern, has been working tirelessly for years with his colleagues in Congress to make the issue of food insecurity a national priority, and was instrumental in making this new conference a reality. At the conference, the Biden Administration announced their [National Strategy on Hunger Nutrition, and Health](#), proposing broadened eligibility and reduced time limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); expansions to the Earned Income Tax credit and making the Child Tax Credit permanent as a way to reduce food insecurity and poverty; and enhancing food sovereignty for Tribal communities. The White House also invited stakeholders – community groups, nonprofits, corporations, colleges and universities, and others – to announce their own commitments toward the conference’s stated goal of ending hunger by 2030.

Our Executive Director, Shannon Maynard, [shared the Hunger Center commitments](#) in advance of [her attendance at the conference](#). By 2025, the Congressional Hunger Center will:

- Develop 150 new anti-hunger leaders through the Bill Emerson and Mickey Leland Hunger Fellowships and Zero Hunger Internship.
- Engage 12,000 individuals representing all 50 states through Zero Hunger Academy to build the public and political will to address the root causes of hunger and ensure a strong social safety net.
- Strengthen our influential network of alums by amplifying their voices in the anti-hunger movement and investing in their continued development as leaders.



Looking **Ahead:** The Hunger Center Turns 30

In August 1993, The Congressional Hunger Center was founded by a bipartisan group of Members of Congress to keep hunger at the forefront for policymakers and raise a new generation of leaders in the fight against hunger. For 30 years, cohort after cohort, leader by leader, we have worked to build the movement to end hunger.

Join us in 2023 as we celebrate the accomplishments and progress of our alums in our collective pursuit of a hunger-free

world. We will celebrate our 30th anniversary throughout the year! [Sign up for our newsletter](#) and stay tuned for information on alum reunions, a special 30th Anniversary Hunger Leadership Awards, and ways you can support the Hunger Center through online and in-person fundraising events.



We would not be able to do our work without the **generosity of our donors.** The Hunger Center is grateful for the financial contributions from the following supporters.

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** Hunger Fellow or Zero
Hunger Intern Alum*

“I was a Hunger Fellow and it **changed my life**. I would not be where I am without this experience.”

—Christine Tran, Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow ('09);
Executive Director, Los Angeles Food Policy Council

Financial transparency and prioritizing donor stewardship are core values and activities at the Congressional Hunger Center. [Read our most recent financial statements here.](#)





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