



### **Organization mission/vision**

FEEST trains youth of color and working class youth to build collective power and organize for transformative and systemic change in their schools.

### **What community/communities does the organization serve?**

FEEST serves low income, refugee, immigrant, BIPOC youth in South King county with programs in: Chief Sealth, Evergreen, Rainier Beach, Franklin, and Tyee High Schools. Each year, it works directly with 40 fellows (8 per school) who organize campaigns and events which attract 25-100 students. Through these fellowships and events, the program directly affects around 500 students each year. Changes to food offerings and choices are district wide, having an impact on 18,000 students in the Highline district and 50,000 in the Seattle school district.

### **What does the organization do?**

FEEST trains youth of color and working class youth to build collective power and organize for transformative and systemic change in their schools. At the core of the FEEST program is the youth leadership development program which recruits youth leaders to develop their organizing and leadership skills so they can keep our movements for justice alive and growing for decades to come. FEEST's roots started in food justice and through that, they have won systemic improvements in school food, including advocating for healthy, culturally relevant, free food access for all students. FEEST youth leaders become ambassadors to their schools and invite other students to community gatherings. Pre-COVID, these events were dinners where students made and shared food that was fresh, nutritious and culturally relevant. During these meals youth learn and develop campaign agendas for the group. FEEST also has experimented with some direct services. Pre-COVID they piloted a free, healthy snack program. During COVID, they have delivered groceries and food gift cards to families of young people in the schools they serve. They have also increased their mental-health curriculum, and re-focused on discussing broader social justice issues with their youth, including a wide range of systemic solutions that improve student wellness at school.

**How does the organization maintain proximity to the community it serves?** FEEST is a Black-led organization with staff, youth leaders, and the great majority of the board identifying as BIPOC and a strong LGBTQ and female or non-binary leadership. FEEST organizers share similar lived experiences as the youth they serve and many volunteers are former youth leaders. FEEST's organizing goals and campaigns agenda are set by the youth leaders. Surveys and outreach ensure that the programs they are implementing are meeting their goals.

**Describe the impact of an unrestricted grant for this organization.**

As FEEST plans for the next stage, there is a lot of demand for them to expand beyond the 5 high schools they currently work in. 100K would enable them to pay for 2 additional organizers to expand to more schools in Highline School District and Seattle Public Schools. . They are also looking for organizers to help beyond youth and address/organize their parents as well in order to be able to affect policies at a higher Level – district or even state. Other schools want to join the program. According to their executive director, Jaimée , they currently have “limitless opportunity. It’s about the capacity to seize the moment.”

**Describe how the organization affects individuals/communities/systems:**

Each year, 40 youth fellows learn organizing skills and discuss food equity as well as other issues that impact their communities’ health and wellness. These young people become leaders who have an immediate impact/influence on their communities. This impact has a ripple effect that affects layers of people from inner circles working outwards to the systems level. Further, FEEST fellows have opportunities to connect with each other and practice organizing principles that join large numbers of people to support a common goal.

Developing organizing agendas with the youth leaders has made it clear that social justice beyond food equity is on their minds. In 2020, FEEST youth leaders joined with other youth organizations to develop and promote a petition to stop SPD involvement in Seattle Public Schools. Their petition worked and SPD was removed from schools. This is one example of systems change. Long term, FEEST has a goal of introducing scratch-cooked, culturally relevant, and free food to all Seattle schools. This would require true, long-term systems change. **BIG WIN:** free meals for all Seattle public schools, but just for one year.

**How does the organization’s leadership and financial position reflect stability and capacity to execute its mission?**

Jaimée Marsh, FEEST’s Executive Director, has a strong vision for the future and has shown to be able to pivot and strengthen the organization well during COVID. They are now in the final stages of developing an Organizing Strategy and Strategic Plan to guide the next 5 years of their movement work. This includes bold plans on how to continue to build strength in underserved communities by adding new schools and providing a deeper level of organizing/social justice curriculum. The organization is financially strong with a ~\$1MM budget.

**What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization?**

FEEST is a community based and community run organization that embodies all of the criteria that Impact 100 has set out for it’s grant recipients:

- Reduces inequities by addressing food equity in schools while working towards systems change and building leadership and power in underserved communities.

- Addresses root causes of inequities by impacting systems change linked to food equity and social justice--“Policy shifts must occur hand-in-hand with culture shifts”

- Builds power for systems change with low income, BIPOC youth by training them how to build power and organize for social justice (within food equity and beyond).

It has demonstrated that it works. For example, culturally relevant food choices have been added to school menus providing healthier choices to students. In 2020, FEEST built a successful movements with WA-BLOC and Black Minds Matter to demand the removal of SPD from Seattle Public Schools. Gathering 20,000+ signatures, they presented to the School Board and won the indefinite removal of SPD from all Seattle Public Schools.