



SOUTHERN HEALING SUPPORT FUND EVALUATION REPORT



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History of the SHSF

Launched in 2018, the Southern Healing Support Fund (SHSF) is a community-driven effort to support practitioners and organizations in implementing innovative healing and support strategies in the Southern region of the United States.

Why the South?

The South is generally an under-resourced region, particularly for Black, queer, and other marginalized folx who face significant disparities and intersecting forms of oppression.

BEAM fills a critical gap by resourcing individuals and collectives to advance wellness, equity, and social justice. The goal of the SHSF is that Black practitioners in the South can feel supported, access joy, and help reduce barriers to wellness in their communities.

SHSF Reach & Distribution



SHSF Distribution Categories:

-  Healing practitioners/organizations
-  Community gardens
-  Pandemic grocery cards

SHSF Awards [2018 – 2023]

As of 2024, BEAM has distributed over **\$30,650** through the SHSF, including

- **\$1,000** to community gardens
- **\$5,650** in grocery gift cards during the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- **\$24,000** to individuals and organizations advancing healing and wellness for Black folx

Year	Recipient Name	Org./Project Name	State	Award Amount
2021	Emmanuel H. Brown	<u>Acorn Center for Restoration and Freedom</u>	South Carolina	\$4,000
	Kayla Gore	<u>My Sistah's House</u>	Tennessee	\$4,000
	Alphonso Mills	<u>Positive Impact Health Centers</u>	Georgia	\$4,000
	Crystal Monds	<u>Osatyam Wellness</u>	Georgia	\$4,000
	Sangodare Wallace	<u>Mobile Homecoming Trust</u>	North Carolina	\$4,000
2020	Sandy Rodgers	<u>Historic Mableton Community Garden</u>	Georgia	\$500
	Marva Overton	<u>Alliance for African American Health</u>	Texas	\$500
		Grocery gift cards to Black folx in the South	TX, AL, FL	\$5,650
2018	Miajenell Peake	<u>The Melanated Birth & Yoga Retreat</u>	Tennessee	\$1,000
	Dionne Hills	<u>Community Roots Clinic</u>	Georgia	\$1,000
	Lorenzo Lewis	<u>The Confess Project</u>	Arkansas	\$1,000
	Ratasha Elise	<u>Chocolate Soul Revival</u>	North Carlonia	\$1,000

Evaluation



For this evaluation, BEAM partnered with [Social Insights Research](#), a Black woman-led firm working to decolonize evaluation and research in partnership with organizations that resource and center marginalized populations.

The goal of this evaluation was to learn about how the Southern Healing Support Fund enables practitioners and organizations to positively impact their communities.

Five former recipients responded to an online survey and one person also participated in an interview. All participants were compensated for their contributions to the evaluation.

Key Findings

A summary of key themes that emerged in this evaluation.

Community Impact

Recipients reported that the grant expanded capacity to **deeply engage with their communities** in sustainable ways; amplifying and fortifying their offerings

Personal Impact

The grant helped to affirm and strengthen **recipients' commitment** to their work

BEAM's Approach Reduces Barriers

By prioritizing **trust, responsiveness, and accessibility**, BEAM reduces barriers and provides resources to practitioners who are often overlooked

Supporting Healers in the South is Critical

The SHSF addresses a significant funding gap in the South for Black and Black Queer healers, practitioners, and organizations

Community Impact

How did the SHSF enable recipients to positively impact their communities?

Percent of participants who strongly agree that the SHSF...



“[SHSF] allowed us to abide by our policy of ‘*turn no one away for lack of funds*’. We had a family of 3 that came into hardship. It helped us in being able to meet them where they were and make sure they didn't lose access to critical support during a difficult moment.”

- Ratasha Elise (Chocolate Soul Revival”

“With the funds...we purchased gardening supplies, held additional classes for the youth, expanded our outreach by delivering fresh garden-grown veggies...We held a community event and shared how and why it's important to consume non-chemicalised food.

- Sandy Rodgers (Mabelton Garden)

“We were able to consult with a Licensed Therapist who specializes in trauma healing...to see clients for free sessions, most of whom have continued with her. The impact is far greater than we expected. Many expressed feelings of relief from childhood trauma.”

- Kayla Gore (My Sistah's House)

Sowing Seeds of Wellness

“Our community garden was faced with fewer financial resources as the need for fresh foods grew. **We were extremely pleased that BEAM acknowledged the work we were doing in educating our youth and supporting local residents to living healthier lives by being taught the art of growing your own food.** With the funds, we purchased required supplies to continue supporting the community.

We held a community event where the largest number of community volunteers attended. With the modernization of our communities, many people were not educated on growing their own food and the impact on the longevity of their family lifeline. We could not have done the work without the funds that we received!!”

Sandy Rodgers, 2020 SHSF Recipient
Historic Mableton Community Garden



Shifting Perspectives

How did the SHSF shift recipients' perspectives of their work/role in the community?

Percent of participants who strongly agree that the SHSF...



increased confidence and affirmed my ability to offer healing services



strengthened my commitment to the work



expanded understanding of my community's needs

“It supported me to dream bigger. The labor that I was doing was unsustainable. I was the camera person, sound person, choir, band, live stream producer, preacher, web designer, etc. For the most part the award meant that I was able to do the work more sustainably and imagine sustainability and additional offerings for the future.”

- Sangadore Wallce (Mobile Homecoming Trust)

“As a community leader, I recognized that this grant wasn’t just to support me, but to help me support my community by me learning how to budget and create a plan for the funds in a way that benefits the people I need to reach.”

- Alphonso Mills

(Positive Impact Health Centers)

From Dream to Reality: Healing Through Media and Storytelling

"At the time, I was in the beginning process of learning about content creation and the impact of media on health literacy. I was full of ideas with no tangible way of bringing them to life. I had no equipment, no team, just a dream that came to me in 2017. It wasn't until receiving the grant that I saw the opportunity for impact.

Receiving this funding was the launch I needed to help other people heal through storytelling. I got my first content creation studio kit, and was able to submit to a competition for a web series that showcased a person living and thriving with HIV. That led to the development of not just a web series but a pilot for a whole network providing sexual health education in a cometary relevant way: "This Is Your Moment (TIYM) Network."

The SHSF grant helped me believe in the vision I had in my heart to use storytelling in a way that allowed videographers, writers, organizers, and advocates to come together to create media that provides humor while facilitating the healing our community needs. I'm forever grateful for this blessing that helped me believe in myself."



Alphonso Mills
2021 SHSF Recipient

BEAM's Approach Reduces Barriers

by prioritizing trust, responsiveness, and accessibility

MUTUAL TRUST

Participants shared that BEAM trusted them as experts and the SHSF gave them the flexibility to use the funds in ways that best addressed their community needs. In turn, the recipients trusted BEAM and felt comfortable applying for the grant because of BEAM's mission and reputation as a Black-led, healing justice organization.

"The fact that BEAM trusted the individuals to use the funding in whatever way we saw best fit our needs...it gave the flexibility to use the funds in an unrestricted way allowing the funds to be impactful in a wider range of ways."

- Alphonso Mills

RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Participants highlighted that BEAM has a way of being in tune with community needs, meeting folx where they are, and ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed. This is critical for those who may not otherwise be able to access such financial resources.

"We were struggling to find resources to support community based healing justice work for Black women, girls, and gender expansive people. For me, [the grant] was deeply affirming because of who it came from. It validated our work. The process was humane, and easeful."

-Ratasha Elise

ACCESSIBILITY

All of the evaluation participants noted that they felt comfortable and safe throughout the grant process. They described it as easeful and seamless. BEAM's simplified application and low-burden granting requirements allows for equitable distribution of resources.

"The process was simple enough to not intimidate anyone from applying...Plus it demonstrated respect to those unsung heroes who are making a difference."

- Sandy Rodgers

Rooted in Trust and Shared Values

“We don’t usually apply for a lot of grants. There's a lot of foundations that are cis, white lead. They don't have an analysis of queer communities or communities of color, especially trans people. It's a lot of work that goes into a grant processes. That's physical, mental, and emotional labor usually with the probability of it not going in our favor. I think that's a factor in why we've only applied to certain funding, only where we know that the playing field is level.

Historically, we've been a mutual aid project where we receive in-kind donations. So for us to apply [for the SHSF grant], we knew there had to be a lot of factors in place. I didn't personally know anybody [at BEAM], but just seeing how vivacious and vibrant and diverse the leadership is, I felt comfortable,

And then [BEAM] didn't come in like a funder who wants to nitpick and say, ‘*Oh, you should do this this way*’. They allowed us to serve our community the way we had been serving our community without interference.”

Kayla Gore, 2021 SHSF Recipient
[My Sistah's House](#)



Supporting Healers in the South is Critical

The SHSF Fills an Important Gap

ADDRESSING UNDERFUNDING

Participants highlighted that the South is historically underfunded despite its pressing needs. The SHSF represents BEAM's commitment to addressing the resource gaps. This investment is crucial for tackling significant disparities and advancing equity among Black and marginalized communities in the South.

"Most life threatening diseases Black folks experience are directly influenced foods! The South is highly impacted by the over consumption of chemicals. Many areas in the South are classified as 'food deserts'! More resources like [this grant] are needed to equip folks to change the trajectory of their families. - **Sandy Rodgers**

FACILITATING OPPORTUNITIES

Some participants made a direct link between BEAM's support and opportunities for knowledge-sharing and healing in the South. Through a commitment to healing justice, BEAM provides essential resources that facilitate critical conversations and foster community-led innovations for healing.

"Black people in the South face harsher realities. Having support like that provided by BEAM is necessary to achieve positive health outcomes. Black Southerners have always been told it's taboo to discuss family trauma, but BEAM allows to for the dialogue to happen." - **Kayla Gore**

SUPPORTING BLACK VISIONARIES

Participants shared their excitement that BEAM is investing in Black and Black queer visionaries in the South who are uniquely positioned to drive innovation and change in the region.

"[Southerners] have a disproportionate need due to being underfunded. The South leads the nation in many ways. So, if Black and Black queer innovation in the south is well-funded our creative futures will be better, faster, sooner, stronger." - **Sangadore Julia Wallace**

Conclusion

This evaluation highlights key insights regarding the impact of BEAM's Southern Healing Support Fund on recipients and their communities. Due to BEAM's commitment on trust, accessibility, and healing justice, recipients felt empowered to utilize the funds in ways that best served their communities, demonstrating BEAM's responsiveness to their unique needs.

This evaluation also underscored the historical underfunding of the South and the critical role that the SHSF plays in addressing disparities and advancing equity. **By investing in these visionary leaders, BEAM is not only honoring the legacy of resistance and creativity within the South but also cultivating a future where their innovations are honored and can create transformative change.**

“In the South, there is a need for low barrier grant opportunities. When opportunities *are* available, everyone and their auntie is applying for that little \$25. This type of grant funding [the SHSF] creates opportunities for the rich history and innovation happening amongst Black people in the South to get recognition, and increase and sustain our efforts.”

- Alphonso Mills

Acknowledgments

Heartfelt gratitude to all the recipients- the healers, wellness practitioners, and food justice workers- who are resourcing the South with such love and care. We are moved by your impact and passion for your communities.

We are deeply grateful to the evaluation participants who generously contributed their time and shared their personal experiences. Your contributions have been pivotal in demonstrating the impact of the Southern Healing Support Fund.

Finally, we thank BEAM for allowing us the honor to partner in this work and uplift the impact of the fund.

With gratitude,
Social Insights



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