



Accelerating Action to Reduce
Food Loss and Waste Across
Our Food System

2023
Annual Impact Report



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Our Mission

ReFED catalyzes the food system toward evidence-based action to stop wasting food — for the climate, environment, people, and the economy.

Profound Acceleration

Dear Friends,

2023 was a landmark year for those working to reduce food waste. Investing in solutions that feed people instead of landfills became more than just a nice idea — it became a *priority*.

The U.S. federal government released its first comprehensive food waste strategy, drawing on the collective powers of three major agencies. Businesses embraced pre-competitive collaboration to reduce food waste and drive profitability. The climate community, which has historically overlooked the agriculture sector, celebrated food waste reduction for its potential to curb methane emissions. Major media outlets ran headlines that introduced the topic to millions of new readers. And the world’s leading philanthropists rallied around an ambitious new roadmap to address the root cause of waste in our food system.

ReFED’s fingerprints are on each of these advancements — as an advisor, a researcher, a translator, a convener, and a catalyst — and it shows how far we’ve come since we issued the first *Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste* in 2016. We’ve added tools to our toolkit, grown our sphere of influence, and cemented our place as the primary source of information for food loss and waste. As noted by our partners, ReFED has become the “accelerator in chief” of the food waste movement.

This year’s Annual Impact Report theme — *Acceleration* — is a tribute to that evolution and the rapid progress that’s been made. In the pages ahead, you’ll find collections of stories and moments that underscore that feeling of acceleration — moments that we will be able to point to ten years from now as having altered the trajectory of food waste in this country and beyond.

This report is also a thank you letter. Systems change is by nature a collective effort. Our acceleration — and the entire food waste movement’s acceleration — is the product of profound generosity. This year, we welcomed new partners that went all in on ReFED. Their fingerprints are on every page, every story, every word in this report. Thank you for believing in our work and accelerating us toward a world that makes the very best use of the food we grow.

Warmly,



Dana Gunders
Executive Director



Pamela Murphy
Board Chair

2023 — Our Most *Impactful* Year Yet

This year will be remembered as an inflection point for ReFED and the food waste movement. The winds shifted from awareness to action. We celebrated innovative initiatives, bold headlines, bigger stages, transformative generosity, new partners, and unparalleled impact — and each milestone brought us closer to achieving our goal of reducing food waste at scale.

Shaping the Global Climate Conversation

Food waste was on the menu in a big way at COP, the annual climate conference hosted by the United Nations. Dana Gunders spoke on four panels and at a *New York Times*-hosted dinner, introducing ReFED's work to an influential and global audience. We were honored to share the stage with several of our closest longtime partners (WWF, NRDC, Global Food Banking Network) as well as new ones like the Global Methane Hub. Our inclusion in climate's most important conference marks a turning point for food waste action.



Dana Gunders, ReFED

While at COP28, we announced...

U.S. Food Waste Pact

Working alongside WWF and building on the success of the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment, we launched the [U.S. Food Waste Pact](#). The Pact is a national voluntary agreement to help food businesses accelerate progress toward their waste reduction targets. Signatories measure and report food waste data, further improving our understanding of the issue. They also participate in working groups to share best practices and insights and pilot projects to test, implement, and scale cost-effective food waste solutions.

Roadmap for Philanthropy

In collaboration with nearly 50 expert partners, ReFED helped develop a roadmap that identifies \$300M in ready-to-fund philanthropic initiatives to reduce food waste globally. Additional roadmaps were created for seven pivotal countries — Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, South Africa, and the United States — all poised to drive transformative progress in the fight against food loss and waste.

Early business signatories include:



\$300M

In Ready to Invest Philanthropic Opportunities Identified

Enabling Smarter, Data-Driven Decision Making

Wielded correctly, data can be a force multiplier for positive change. This belief is core to ReFED's DNA. Since the release of our first Roadmap in 2016, we've been using data to better understand how, why, and where food is falling through the cracks of our food system. Our digital tools and insights have become a vital resource for business leaders, investors, innovators, and policymakers working to reduce food waste around the world. In 2023, we reset the bar.

Three Years of Data Released

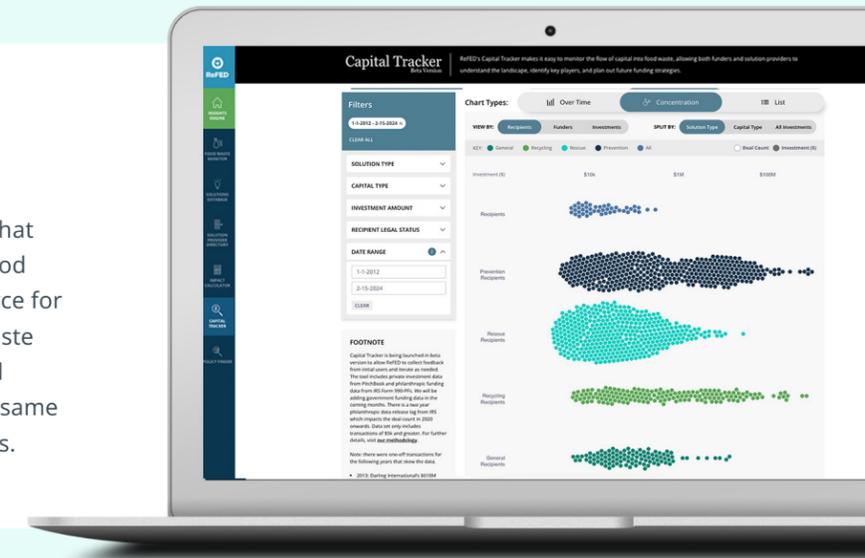
We updated our digital tools to include surplus and wasted food data for 2020, 2021, and 2022. Drawing on more than 80 distinct data sources for the update, our suite of tools represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date publicly available estimates of food loss and waste across the United States and serves as an essential resource for those working in the space.

Seven Businesses Reporting Data

Businesses are directly responsible for half of the food that is lost or wasted as it moves through our food system. New access to proprietary data from a collection of the top food retailers in the country has filled persistent gaps in our understanding of the problem and the potential impact of solutions. Establishing these high-quality data collection pathways represents a true breakthrough in food waste measurement and reporting that unlocks value for decision makers across the food system.

Added Philanthropic Data to Capital Tracker

The [Capital Tracker](#) — an Insights Engine tool that offers comprehensive and timely analysis of food waste funding — quickly became a go-to resource for investors working to deploy capital and food waste startups working to attract it. In 2023, we added philanthropic data to this resource, lending the same powerful insights to grantmakers and nonprofits.



Asch Harwood, ReFED

119,000+ Insights Engine Users

The [ReFED Insights Engine](#) — an interactive online hub for data and solutions — is the definitive source of data and analysis on food loss and waste in the United States. Since its launch in 2021, the Insights Engine has been used by more than 119,000 people to inform investment strategies, shape legislation, chart corporate action plans, support scientific research, and more.

Mobilizing Capital to Spark Solutions Adoption

There's no shying away from it — reducing food waste at the speed and scale required is going to be resource intensive. It's also one of the best investments we can make. According to our analysis, for every \$1 invested, we collectively receive \$4 back. ReFED is working to accelerate this financial shift through direct investment and by sharing insights, resources, and funding opportunities with members of our Food Waste Funder Circle, a network of private, public, and philanthropic funders interested in using their capital to support food waste solutions.



Suzy Medios, Food Shift Emeritus Culinary Director and Advisory Board Member



Niyeti Shah, Zero Food Waste Coalition

165 Capital Providers
In our Food Waste Funder Circle

201 Funding Opportunities
Shared through our 2023 Deal Flow Reports, valued at \$346M

\$99M in Grant Requests
Submitted to our Catalytic Grant Fund

Pulling Systemic Levers of Change

In order to fully address our food loss and waste problem, we need to design an environment that supports food waste solutions — one that helps businesses, funders, and others navigate financial, technical, and regulatory hurdles. To make this environment a reality, ReFED is using its data expertise to inform policy discussions and steer businesses toward food waste reduction efforts that support their bottom line.

Deploying Capital Through Our Catalytic Grant Fund

Launched in 2022, the [Catalytic Grant Fund](#) is one of ReFED's most powerful tools for expediting capital flow. It's where we put theory into practice, investing in food waste solutions and building our own portfolio of grantees. Then we share insights and lessons learned with our funder community to de-risk investments in food waste solutions broadly. This year, the Catalytic Grant Fund celebrated two significant milestones.

Welcomed Seven New Grantees

The Catalytic Grant Fund's first open call focused on reducing consumer food waste, and our high hopes for this round were exceeded in every way. We received 280 applicants with \$99M in requests, which put an exclamation point on the need for new funders to enter this space. In April, we distributed \$867K in grants and welcomed these seven grantees to our portfolio: [Transparent Path](#), [Blue Earth Compost](#), [Growing Places](#), [Food Cycle Science](#), [Food Shift](#), [University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources](#), and [Wisely](#).

Launched Second Open Call with \$1M Toast.org Partnership

In November, the Catalytic Grant Fund opened its second open call, which focuses on accelerating adoption of food waste solutions for restaurants. Further bolstering the catalytic nature of this open call, a subset of grantees will be invited to pilot their solution with with small-to-medium-sized independent restaurants.

Co-Founded the Zero Food Waste Coalition

Alongside WWF, NRDC, and the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic, ReFED co-founded the [Zero Food Waste Coalition](#) (ZFWC), a national effort focused on informing food waste policy at all levels of government. Recognizing the exponential power of coordinated action, 104 organizations across 31 states have joined so far. In 2023, the ZFWC released a state policy toolkit, shared food waste reduction priorities for the upcoming Farm Bill, hosted information sessions at the Summit and via webinars, and more.



30 Businesses Engaged

While ReFED has engaged businesses since its inception, in 2023 we took the important step of formalizing our Business Services program. This program encompasses our many touchpoints with businesses such as: U.S. Food Waste Pact, Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment, EDF Climate Corps Food Waste Fellowship, strategic advisory services, and capacity building workshops.



Reaching New Audiences in the Press

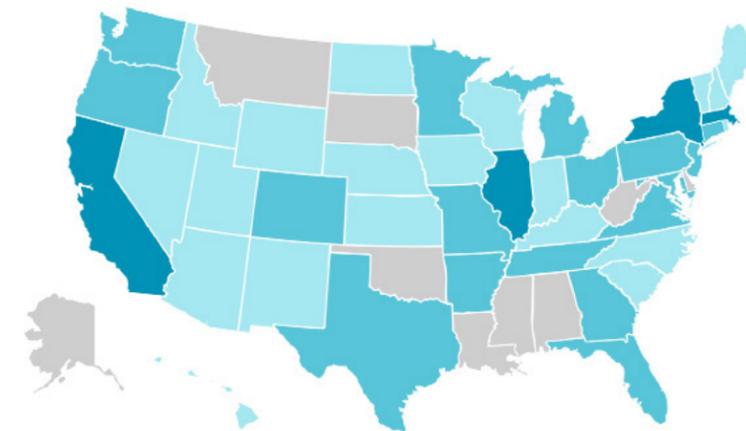
369 Articles & 2.2B+ Impressions

in media such as *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *Reuters*, *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *AgFunder News*, *ImpactAlpha*, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, and *NPR*.



Convening the Food System Around Loss and Waste

In May, the food waste network from around the world paid a visit to St. Louis to attend ReFED's annual Food Waste Solutions Summit. This was our largest conference yet, underscoring the explosion of interest in the topic. Attendees soaked up three days of inspiring keynotes, eye-opening panels, and roll-up-your-sleeves workshops.



1-10 Attendees 10-30 Attendees 30+ Attendees

Stephen Satterfield, Food Writer, Media Entrepreneur, and TV Host.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Here's Something Past Its Expiration Date: The Expiration Date Itself

The Washington Post

The Unexpected Benefit of Choosing a Smaller Portion at Thanksgiving

CBS NEWS

Eating Trash: The Chefs Turning Food Waste Into Trendy Eats | CBS Reports

BUSINESS INSIDER

If a Single Farm Produced All the Food Wasted in the US, It Would Be the Size of California and New York Combined. We're the Culprits.

Bloomberg

New Data Shows US Food Waste Is Getting Worse

The New York Times

How Central Ohio Got People to Eat Their Leftovers

"The media play such an important role in raising awareness about the extent and impacts of food waste – and more importantly, that solutions exist! To help reporters with their coverage, we offer the most up-to-date facts and information, along with subject matter experts to explore specific story angles or just to engage for a general overview of the food waste landscape."



Jeffery Costantino
Communications Director, ReFED

652 Attendees

Converged in St. Louis in person and virtually, representing 36 U.S. states and 21 countries.

23 Sessions

Covering topics such as fighting climate change through food waste reduction; investment trends in the sector; emerging technologies; the public health and environmental justice implications of food waste; the role of packaging in food waste reduction; new frontiers in recycling; and more.

11 Field Trips

Bringing attendees to compost facilities, food banks, upcyclers, gardens, and innovation centers across St. Louis.



36 U.S. States



21 Different Countries

Looking Ahead

2023 was a banner year for ReFED and the food waste movement, but the challenge demands even greater acceleration, focus, and collaboration in the years ahead. In November, ReFED's Leadership Team and Board of Trustees put the finishing touches on a three-year strategic plan, which will take us through 2026. The plan describes how ReFED will navigate the complex challenges of addressing food loss and waste in an ever-changing world that is grappling with climate change, environmental degradation, and food insecurity.

Our north star is driving the rapid adoption of food waste solutions. We'll accomplish this by doing what we do best — harnessing the power of data. Using numbers as our medium, we'll share stories that mobilize new audiences. With increasingly powerful tools, we'll enable partners to make smarter decisions. Using evidence-based insights as our guide, we'll steer limited resources where they'll be most impactful.

The next few years will undoubtedly bring obstacles — both expected and unexpected — but we are more optimistic than ever that we will realize our vision of a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system that makes the very best use of the food we grow.

Three Core Strategies To Drive Adoption of Food Waste Solutions



Cultivate and convene the food community



Deliver actionable evidence and insights



Seed and accelerate solutions and levers

“ReFED’s strategic plan is more than just a roadmap for the next few years. It’s an invitation for collaboration and a promise to future generations. Working alongside a vast network of partners, we will reshape our relationship with food and make waste a thing of the past.”

Jesse Fink
ReFED Founder
Emeritus Board Member



ReFED Leadership Team

Dana Gunders
Executive Director

Asch Harwood
Vice President of Data & Insights

Katy Hart
Operations Director

Shawn Shepherd
Vice President of Operations & Finance

Alexandria Coari
Vice President of Capital, Innovation, & Engagement

Jeffery Costantino
Communications Director

[Meet Our Entire Team Here](#)

Board of Directors

Pamela Murphy
Chair, ReFED Board of Directors
Philanthropist and Nonprofit Board Leader

Emily Ma
Secretary, ReFED Board of Directors
Head, Special Projects, REWS Sustainability

Shashank Mohan
Managing Director, BlackRock

Steven Swartz
Treasurer, ReFED Board of Directors
Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Technology Officer, The Wonderful Company

Jeff Rhodes
Vice President Finance, Trane Technologies, Commercial HVAC Americas

Jesse Fink
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Eduardo Romero
President and CEO, Hana Group

Stacey Greene-Koehnke
Chief Operating Officer, MedShare

Chuck Savitt
Trustee and Treasurer, The Windward Fund

Katherine Silverthorne
Principal, Silverthorne Associates

Yalmaz Siddiqui
Vice President, Environmental Sustainability, The Walt Disney Company



Alexandria Coari, ReFED



Celebrating a Transformational Gift

We closed out 2023 by celebrating a truly transformational \$15M gift from Ballmer Group — \$5M per year for three years. This investment paves the way for our next generation of tools, resources, and partnerships to rapidly scale food waste solutions.

Ballmer Group's profound generosity is a testament to what we've accomplished and underscores their conviction that our most impactful work is yet to come. This gift opens an exciting new chapter for ReFED and the food waste movement — a chapter that will be defined by *accelerated action*.

Our Funders

* = Perennial Partner

A special thanks to our Perennial Partners that have made multi-year gift commitments to ReFED.

Our Supporters

We're thankful for the support and generosity of our donors. Your contributions are essential to our success.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|
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| RICHARD ADCOCK | ISAAC SAMUEL ESKIND | PETER LUNDGREN | KATHERINE SILVERTHORNE |
| ALLIANCE FOR LEADERSHIP FELLOWS | MARTIN FLUSBERG | EMILY MA | DANE SMITH |
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| NICOLA DIXON | JAMES LENZ | MICHAEL SCHILTKNECHT | |
| CHRISTINA DUNCAN | LIFE IS A GIFT LEGACY FUND | SHARON SCHLAFF | |
| SUGAR FIRA | | AMANDA SCHOCKLING | |





Accelerating Connections

Break Save Bread with Us

Supercharge your impact by connecting with ReFED! Our dynamic team boasts a kaleidoscope of skills and backgrounds, spanning food business strategy, sustainability, finance, data analytics, research, agriculture, development, and communications — uniquely positioned to bolster your efforts. Connect with the driving force behind our impactful work to amplify your efforts to transform the food system.

Interested in Giving to ReFED? Accelerate Change with Meaningful Contributions

Ready to make a difference? Explore opportunities that eliminate guesswork, strategically allocating your donations for maximum impact. Our team dedicates itself to guiding you on the path to purposeful contributions.



Shawn Shepherd
Vice President of Operations & Finance
shawn.shepherd@refed.org

Are you an Investor, Grantmaker, or a Solution Provider? Engage ReFED as an Advisor

Whether you're growing impact or exploring investment portfolios, ReFED has the answers. Dive into a comprehensive range of funding opportunities, guided by detailed information for strategic decisions. Your transformative journey starts with us.



Alexandria Coari
Vice President of Capital, Innovation,
& Engagement
alexandria.coari@refed.org

Are you a Food Business? Translate Your Insights into Actionable Results

Empower your business! We facilitate the adoption of viable solutions through precise measurement, strategic advisory, and internal capacity building — turning ambitious goals into reality.



Jackie Suggitt
Capital, Innovation, & Engagement Director
jackie.suggitt@refed.org

Are you a Journalist? Uncover Your Next Story with Us

Discover your next compelling story with us. Explore what we do, delve into available data and resources, and find out which expert on our team is best suited to assist you with interview questions or inquiries.



Jeffrey Costantino
Communications Director
jeffrey.costantino@refed.org





Acknowledgements

Report Authors

Sam Buck

Vanessa Mukhebi

Designer

Ocupop

refed.org

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ReFED, Inc. 4602 21st Street, #1531,
Long Island City, NY 11101-9998