



2024

Annual Impact Report

Building Momentum
Reaching Milestones



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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.

Building Momentum, Reaching Milestones

Progress is a funny thing. It tends to happen slowly and then all at once. When it comes to food waste, after years of slow, methodical, and at times agonizing build-up, there was a sudden release of energy. Milestones, unimaginable just a couple of years ago, were achieved. Successful stories spread like wildflowers across our food system, creating new momentum. As the food waste movement's "Convener-In-Chief" and central hub for intelligence, ReFED played a key role in each of these successes. In 2024, we broke through.

The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture launched the United States' first National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics and chose ReFED's annual Food Waste Solutions Summit as the place to announce it. California passed a game-changing law to standardize food date labels, clearing a path for other states and countries to follow suit—and our data and insights were used to underpin the case for it. Grocery retailers on the West Coast decreased the amount of unsold food at risk of going to waste in their operations by 25%, the largest-ever reduction reported at this scale. As a key partner in that effort, ReFED provided technical assistance and customized analytics to these businesses to chart the path to their historic reductions.

All of this movement is why the theme of this year's annual impact report is *Momentum*. The following pages are filled with stories of how we harnessed, accelerated, and channeled the energy of the food waste movement to produce results. You'll also find snapshots of the exciting momentum within our organization, including adding a new executive director and additional team members. As you flip through the moments that defined ReFED's 2024, we hope you'll join us in celebrating the wins, so important when taking on a topic as enormous as food waste.

There is still so much to be done, so we hope these stories will energize you. Reducing food waste is a collective effort. Our successes are shared by a vast network of partners and donors who empower everything we do. We'll need each of you in 2025—and beyond—because despite many changes across the country, the opportunity to accelerate and expand our progress has never been greater. If you see a place where you can contribute, please reach out. Together, we'll roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Warmly,



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dana Gunders".

Dana Gunders
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pamela B. Murphy".

Pamela Murphy
Board Chair

2024 Program Highlights

2024 was a year of incredible progress. We built upon our past successes, tapped into the power of collaboration, and accelerated already unbelievable momentum across each of our four focus areas. In the following pages, discover the highlights, metrics, and transformative moments that defined our most impactful year yet.

OUR FOUR FOCUS AREAS

Leveraging Data & Insights

Tackling food waste requires a deep understanding of the problem, yet reliable information is scarce and fragmented. ReFED is the definitive source for data and economic analysis on food waste and the solutions to fight it, with a trusted history of producing insights and tools that support action.

Catalyzing Capital & Innovation

Food waste solutions offer environmental, social, and economic returns. ReFED is driving this impact by empowering innovators and shepherding the capital needed for scale, with a suite of best-in-class resources specifically designed for funders and solution providers.

Mobilizing Businesses

The businesses that grow, sell, and serve our food play a critical role in cutting waste—and in supporting the efforts of their customers to do the same. ReFED provides the know-how to guide businesses toward sustainable, high-impact solutions, turning ambitious goals into tangible results.

Cultivating Community

Food waste occurs up and down the supply chain, making cross-sector collaboration and coordination essential. ReFED connects stakeholders from across the food system through partnerships, affinity networks, educational webinars, and events.



Leveraging Data & Insights

Smarter decisions are grounded in better data. This belief is embedded into the core of every program, initiative, and project we touch. Our tools and insights have become indispensable resources for business leaders, investors, innovators, and policymakers in the United States and increasingly around the world. In 2024, we improved our best-in-class models, added new datasets, researched new food waste solutions, and so much more—providing a critical foundation for decision-making, strategy development, benchmarking, and optimization.

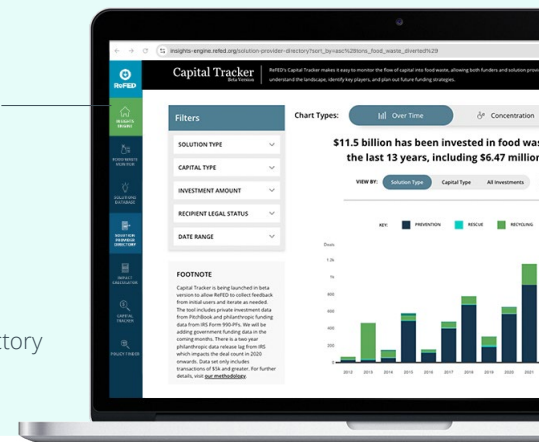
Insights Engine

Since its 2021 launch, the ReFED Insights Engine has become the go-to platform for actionable data and analysis on food loss and waste in the United States. With over 195,000 users to date, it's shaping investments, guiding policy, fueling corporate initiatives, supporting research, and sparking solutions.

This year, we released 2023 food waste data featuring groundbreaking upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emission factors. The data also incorporates updated retail waste rates from the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment, enhancing the accuracy of our estimates and enabling us to track progress over time.

6 Digital Tools

Food Waste Monitor
Impact Calculator
Capital Tracker
Policy Finder
Solutions Database
Solution Provider Directory



195K Users Since Launch in 2021

Methane Research

With support from the Global Methane Hub, ReFED released cutting-edge data that maps methane hotspots linked to surplus food across the U.S. supply chain. Our research pinpointed key sources of emissions and identified targeted solutions to significantly reduce them. This work provided essential information to the White House and other government partners designing pathways to achieve national and international climate goals.

Our analysis is the first of its kind, providing a comprehensive lifecycle view of methane emissions from surplus food—requiring the development of new methane emission factors for 48 food product types (from beef to tomatoes), spanning five supply chain stages (farm, manufacturing,

retail, foodservice, and residential) and 10 disposal pathways (including donation, composting, and landfill).

These factors have been integrated into ReFED's Insights Engine, allowing anyone to investigate the link between food waste and methane emissions for themselves. Users can learn about leading causes through our Food Waste Monitor, explore promising solutions in our Solutions Database, or even estimate their businesses' own methane emissions with our Impact Calculator. We've also incorporated the factors into our Custom Roadmaps that allow business partners in the private sector to chart an informed path to meet their sustainability goals.

14%

of total annual methane emissions in the U.S. are attributable to food loss and waste

62%

of food loss and waste methane emissions are from upstream activities

Catalyzing Capital & Innovation

Transforming our food system takes substantial financial resources, but it's one of the best investments we can make. We work with both sides of the innovation ecosystem to catalyze the multi-billion dollar investment of public, private, and philanthropic capital needed per year for food waste solutions. ReFED's analysis shows that for every \$1 invested, there's a \$4 return.

In 2024, we stepped on the accelerator, building out proven programs while experimenting with new services and event formats. We deployed capital directly through our Catalytic Grant Fund. We shared insights, resources, and funding opportunities with members of our Food Waste Funder Circle, a network of funders focused on supporting food waste solutions. We hosted in-person events in Baltimore, New York, and Seattle that introduced funders to innovators in their own backyards, while also hosting globally-minded webinars that extended our reach and impact.



167

Capital Providers in Our Food Waste Funder Circle



1919

Solution Providers in Our Solution Provider Directory



17

Connections Between Capital and Solution Providers Leading to a Deal



132

Funding Opportunities Shared Through Our 2024 Deal Flow Reports, Valued at Over \$240M

Catalytic Grant Fund

Launched in 2022, the Catalytic Grant Fund has proven to be a transformational lever for kickstarting innovation and building momentum. Leveraging our deep sector knowledge and extensive network, we identify the most promising food waste solutions for investment and deploy capital, building a growing portfolio of innovative grantees. We then share insights and lessons learned with our funder community to accelerate effective capital allocation.

In 2024, we completed an open call focused on reducing restaurant food waste, deploying nearly \$1M across six new grantees. In partnership with Toast.org, the open call's anchor funder, select grantees were provided the opportunity to pilot their solutions with restaurants.

16 Total Grantees in Our Portfolio

\$30.2M Secured in Follow-On Funding
(15x Our Initial Grant Investment)

56% of Grantees Led by Diverse Leaders



Open Call: On-Farm Food Loss

In December, we launched a new Catalytic Grant Fund open call focused on reducing on-farm produce loss. In 2023 alone, U.S. farms generated over 17 million tons of surplus food. To tackle this challenge, we're seeking innovative solutions that can boost the harvest of surplus food, maximize its value, and create new market opportunities—all while increasing profitability for farmers. This open call is expected to run through the first half of 2025.

Mobilizing Businesses

Reducing food waste isn't just the right thing to do—it's smart business. Food businesses increasingly see food waste reduction as a strategic way to meet social and environmental commitments while enhancing financial performance. Recognizing the critical need to scale these efforts, we formally launched a slate of Business Services offerings in 2024. With deep subject matter expertise and unparalleled access to data, our team offers industry-leading tools—including sector-specific waste calculators—customized analytics, and tailored strategic roadmaps to help businesses identify waste hot spots, implement effective solutions, and track their progress.

46 Businesses Engaged

19 Custom Roadmaps Delivered to Businesses

Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment: Proving Solutions at Scale

When it comes to achieving goals like reducing food waste, precompetitive collaboration with industry peers—to share data and best practices—is essential to moving the needle quickly. In April, the Pacific Coast Food Waste Commitment (PCFWC)—a public-private partnership between food businesses and jurisdictions on the West Coast, with ReFED serving as a resource partner for data analysis—released a study highlighting the astounding progress made by participating grocery retailers. Over a four-year period from 2019–2022, they decreased the number of tons of unsold food in their regional operations by 25%—nearly 190,000 tons of food valued at \$311M. Simultaneously, they achieved a 20% increase in their donation rate, strengthening the communities in which they operate.

Significantly, the analysis found that the four-year decline in unsold food led to an estimated 30% decrease in the total carbon footprint of unsold food in the region—the equivalent to taking nearly 270,000 passenger vehicles off the road annually. This report confirmed our longheld belief that precompetitive collaboration opens exciting new pathways to food waste reduction at an unprecedented scale.

25% decrease in unsold food tons in regional operations



"This is hands down the largest progress in reducing food waste we've ever seen reported. It demonstrates that the national goal to cut food waste in half by 2030 may, in fact, be possible—but we would need dramatically more action across all food system sectors for that to happen."

— Dana Gunders, President, ReFED

U.S. Food Waste Pact: Growing a Movement

Building on the PCFWC's regional success, we launched the U.S. Food Waste Pact at COP28 in December 2023 in partnership with WWF. Recruitment efforts began in earnest, with a range of businesses enthusiastically signing on. Over the last year, we expanded our signatory base to include quick-service restaurants and coalition partners representing their own memberships. These new one-to-many relationships are allowing us to support food waste reduction efforts across networks that include thousands of organizations.

FOUR NEW SIGNATORIES IN 2024



Cultivating Community

Food waste occurs at every stage of our food system, making cross-sector collaboration essential. ReFED serves as the “big tent” for the food waste ecosystem, offering educational programming and networking opportunities that foster transformational partnerships. Our flagship event, the Food Waste Solutions Summit, has grown into the largest and most impactful gathering of the food waste movement in the country.

2024 ReFED Food Waste Solutions Summit

In June, the global food waste network convened in Baltimore for ReFED’s annual Food Waste Solutions Summit. As our largest conference yet, it showcased the growing momentum around tackling food waste across the food system. Attendees—including business leaders, funders, subject matter experts, policymakers, innovators, and more—engaged in three days of dynamic programming and networking opportunities, sparking new ideas, partnerships, and actionable solutions.



Marlayna Photography



727 Attendees
40 U.S. States
23 Countries

121 Speakers
26 Sessions
10 Field Trips



Secretary Vilsack announced the National Strategy

One of the most significant milestones in the food waste movement’s history came on the second day of the Summit. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack delivered an opening keynote announcing the National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste and Recycling Organics—the first policy plan of its kind in the United States. In his announcement, Secretary Vilsack underscored the power of collaboration, stating that food waste is “an issue that ought to bring all of us together.”

Keeping Everyone Up To Speed

The work to end food waste is more dynamic than ever. It’s shifting as new technologies, initiatives, and policies are introduced and scaled. Throughout 2024, we kept our finger on the pulse, sharing what we learned through guest speaking engagements, web articles, virtual events, and more. Key partnerships with leading organizations such as Project Drawdown, WWF, and Upcycled Food Association helped us bring our insights to more audiences.

58 ReFED Web Articles

7 Webinars Reaching **1,685** Attendees

36 Guest-Speaking Engagements Reaching Nearly **3,500** Audience Members

379,332 Sessions on Our Website



Turning the Tables on Food Waste

ReFED is bringing the food waste conversation to the world's largest stages. In June, ReFED President Dana Gunders delivered a TED Talk as part of their Countdown Dilemma Series. Titled "How to Turn the Tables on Food Waste," her talk spotlighted the enormous scale of food waste and presented practical, common-sense solutions that can immediately benefit our climate, our communities, and our wallets.



468K+ Views in 2024

In the Press

429

Media Mentions

5B

Reach

THE BUSINESS TIMES

AI is spying on the food we throw away

The New York Times

Restaurant portions are about to get smaller. Are Americans ready?

The Washington Post

A science-backed tip to waste less food on Thanksgiving

Bloomberg

US food date labels are broken. The government is trying to fix them.

Vox

How the world wastes hundreds of billions of meals in a year, in three charts



Modern Farmer

The staggering scale of food waste, explained



WASTE DIVE

USDA's Vilsack touts updated, 'accountability-focused' national food waste strategy



Can the government help Americans waste less food?



USA TODAY

"We all have an opportunity to waste a little bit less food. It's something that has an impact right now. If you waste less, that food is not going to the landfill tomorrow. It's not creating those greenhouse gases the next day, and it's so within our control."


— Dana Gunders,
President, ReFED

Looking Ahead

The incredible progress we've made in 2024 has set the table for our most impactful year yet. Our data, research, and tools offer brand new insights to our partners that were almost unimaginable a few years ago. With just a few clicks, funders can filter their way to promising investment opportunities matching their specific criteria. Organizations of every size and shape can calculate their own methane footprint through our Insights Engine. The list goes on.

In 2025, we'll help our partners squeeze the most out of these new insights and capabilities. Using credible data as our guide, we'll steer resources toward pockets of our food system where transformational change is on the horizon. Food waste reduction has always been nonpartisan, and with issues like the rise in food prices making better food management a priority, we anticipate leaning into policy work, providing direction on national and state legislative action—like consumer education initiatives—that can be the spark that drives change.

There is still plenty of work ahead, but the finish line is coming into focus. This year will be a big step toward our ultimate vision of a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system that makes the very best use of the food we grow.

A group of about a dozen people are hiking up a grassy hill. In the background, there is a large, prominent red rock formation. The sky is clear and blue. A large, green pine tree stands on the right side of the hill. The hikers are wearing casual outdoor gear, and some are carrying backpacks.

Our 2024 team retreat in Boulder, CO, included strategy discussions, team bonding—and hiking.

Connect With Us

Let's Accelerate Progress Together

Reducing food waste is a team sport. If you're interested in supporting our work, collaborating on a project, or amplifying the movement to end food waste—we'd love to connect with you!

Interested in Giving to ReFED? Accelerate Change with Meaningful Contributions

Donor support powers our programming. We rely on philanthropy for over 90% of our budget. We'd love to speak with you about how you can maximize the impact of your donation—helping us reduce food waste across the entire food system.



Sam Buck
Director of Development &
Strategic Impact
sam.buck@refed.org

Are You a Food Business? Turn Insights into Action

Partner with ReFED to reduce food waste and unlock value for your business. We provide tailored solutions, from precise measurement and actionable insights to strategic advisory and capacity-building support. Together, we can turn ambitious goals into measurable results while driving sustainability and strengthening your bottom line.



Jackie Suggitt
Vice President of Business Initiatives &
Community Engagement
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Are You a Solution Provider, Investor, or Grantmaker? 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, &
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alexandria.coari@refed.org

Are You a Reporter? 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 responses or inquiries.



Jeffrey Costantino
Communications Director
jeffrey.costantino@refed.org

Not sure who to reach out to?

Send an email to info@refed.org with your request or question, and we'll connect you with the right member of our team.

Leadership

ReFED's Board of Directors and Leadership Team bring unmatched passion and expertise to the fight against food waste. Their strategic guidance and collaborative approach are shaping the future of the movement, empowering partners across the food system to reduce waste and achieve meaningful change.



Our New Executive Director

This year, we were thrilled to welcome Sara Burnett as our new executive director. With nearly two decades of experience at Panera Bread, where she served as Vice President of Food Beliefs, Sustainability, and Public Relations, Sara brings a wealth of expertise and a passion for driving meaningful change. At Panera, she championed transformative programs like the Clean Food Commitment and the Day-End Dough-Nation initiative, which partnered with over 3,200 nonprofits to donate unsold baked goods. She also led Panera to become the first U.S. brand to certify menu items as low carbon.

After leaving Panera in 2023, Sara founded Burnett Strategy and Communications, helping purpose-driven organizations achieve business growth while advancing social and environmental impact. A food scientist and supply chain expert, her leadership spans ingredient quality, food safety, climate strategy, and animal welfare.

Since stepping into her role in September, Sara's positive impact has already been felt across the organization, energizing our mission and strengthening our efforts. As ReFED's executive director, she will continue to collaborate closely with Dana Gunders, who transitioned to the role of president, to lead the charge in reducing food waste and transforming our food system.



2025 ReFED Leadership Team

Dana Gunders
President

Sara Burnett
Executive Director

Alexandria Coari
Vice President, Capital,
Innovation, & Global Initiatives

Asch Harwood
Vice President, Data & Insights

Jackie Suggitt
Vice President, Business Initiatives
& Community Engagement

Shawn Shepherd
Vice President, Operations & Finance

Travis Wright
Vice President, Product

Katy Hart
Director, Finance & Administration

Jeffrey Costantino
Communications Director

2025 Board of Directors

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Chair, ReFED Board of Directors
Philanthropist and Nonprofit
Board Leader

Emily Ma
Secretary, ReFED Board of Directors
Head, Special Projects in
Sustainability, Real Estate and
Workplace Services, Google

Jeff Rhodes
Treasurer, ReFED Board of Directors
Vice President Finance, Trane
Technologies, Commercial HVAC Americas

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Special Advisor, ISSB

Shashank Mohan
Senior Advisor, Rhodium Group

Jack Pestello
Chief Operating Officer, Branded Services,
Advantage Solutions

Ida Posner
Founding & Managing Partner,
Hawthorne Food Ventures

Eduardo Romero
President & CEO, Hana Group

Chuck C. Savitt
Climate and Nonprofit Leader

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Vice President,
Environmental Sustainability,
The Walt Disney Company

Katherine Silverthorne
Principal, Silverthorne Associates

Wendelin Slusser, MD, MS
Associate Vice Provost of the Semel
Healthy Campus Initiative Center &
Clinical Professor, UCLA's Schools
of Medicine and Public Health

Steven Swartz
Food System Leader





Our Funders

ReFED's work would not be possible without the generosity of our donors. With over 90% of our funding coming from philanthropy, donor support provides the fuel to deliver our programs and services. We're deeply grateful for the trust and commitment of funding partners that share our vision of a food system that makes the best use of the food we grow.



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THREE SISTERS FUND



ANONYMOUS
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Foundational Data Contributors



* = Perennial Partner

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

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

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