



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
and **FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS**

EMBRACING A VISION FOR CHANGE

Strategic Direction: 2025 and Beyond



DEAR COLLEAGUES,

We are living in extraordinary times. Food and farm businesses and non-profits struggle amid volatile markets and climate disruptions. Workers in the food system face poverty wages, food insecurity, and political attacks on their basic protections, while unequal access to nutritious food fuels diet-related diseases in low-income communities.

The current food and farm system fails communities, harms ecosystems, and perpetuates historic injustices. The status quo—driven by prioritization of profit over people and planet—disproportionately impacts under-resourced communities and threatens future generations by depleting ecological resources and exacerbating the climate crisis.

Grassroots movements, sustainable farmers and land stewards, advocates and entrepreneurs are leading critical efforts to build a more sustainable, fair, and inclusive future of food and farming, but they lack the resources to sustain and scale their visions.

Now more than ever, funders have the opportunity and responsibility to transform the food and farm system through new investment approaches. Now is the time to transcend the silos that are too common in the funding world, embrace learning from peers, field leaders, and impacted communities, and solve for gaps in the funding landscape through increased coordination and communication. Today's complex challenges demand new approaches. SAFSF is the platform to harness the collective impact of diverse funders through strategic guidance and collaboration to navigate today's dynamic conditions.

For over 20 years, SAFSF has united funders to invest in sustainable food and agriculture systems. Now, we're building off this legacy by forging a new strategic approach:

Our new mission is to mobilize diverse capital partners in support of just and sustainable food and agriculture systems. We envision a future where food and agriculture are resilient, just, and democratic.

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We advocate for:

Resilience: Agriculture is rooted in climate stewardship, agroecology, and Indigenous knowledge, fostering healthy ecosystems and ensuring food security for generations to come.

Justice: Food systems prioritize equity, eliminate disparities, and center the needs of historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, low-income communities, and farm and food workers.

Democracy: Food systems are shaped by community empowerment, self-determination, and

inclusive participation, ensuring that all voices are heard in the decisions that affect our lives.

This work requires a systems change approach—one that shifts power and resources to divested communities, and holistically builds powerful movements for cultural, economic, policy and technological change for the benefit of people and the planet. As we continue to see a growth in impact capital for food and agriculture systems, SAFSF serves as the catalyst to turn that growth into transformative change.

We spoke with SAFSF members as well as other stakeholders in philanthropy, impact investment, and advocates across food and farming to under-

stand SAFSF's highest and best role in supporting change at this time. This document reflects what we heard. Our new strategic direction is not a traditional strategic "plan," but rather a compass for who we will become over the next several years. Despite the challenges we will face, we look to the future with hope and trust that the power of our collective efforts will create lasting change for generations to come.

In Community,



Clare Fox

Clare Fox
Executive Director

THEORY OF CHANGE

Our mission is to mobilize diverse capital partners toward a resilient, just, and democratic food and agriculture system. As a non-profit funder network, our Theory of Change reflects how SAFSF seeks to make progress on our mission.

CATALYZE FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE

Working in food and agriculture involves managing complex systems—from production to distribution—while considering farmers, workers, communities, and broader economic, political, social, and environmental factors. This requires coordination and insight from many stakeholders at a local, state, Tribal, and national level, so we need effective networks, coalitions and movement alliances. SAFSF guides funders to better understand the intersecting issues of the food system, the diverse stakeholders and solutions, and the levers that could maximize the impact of their funding. For newcomers, SAFSF provides orientation to the food system. For experienced funders, SAFSF amplifies their work across a broader platform of systems change, fostering collaboration and rippling out impact.

SHIFT POWER

True systems change demands dismantling entrenched power structures that perpetuate the status quo. Philanthropy has often reinforced these structures, sometimes causing harm when aiming to help. Impacted communities have the solutions they need. Real progress requires shifting power, resources, and decision-making to frontline communities and movements so that those solutions can thrive. SAFSF is committed to following the leadership of impacted communities, and cultivating meaningful relationships with advocates, nonprofit, and business leaders toward non-extractive practices in the funding field.

ACTIVATE IMPACT CAPITAL

Achieving systems transformation requires mobilizing and aligning all forms of impact capital across the funding spectrum. SAFSF brings together diverse capital partners across food and agriculture for increased partnership across foundations, investors and investment advisors, community development financial institutions, donor-advised fund holders, regranteeing organizations, and funding collaboratives toward a shared vision for change.



BUILDING A STRATEGY MAP FOR CAPITAL PARTNERS

In the next three years, we will focus on helping funders strategically map their efforts to broader systems change. Systems change requires a holistic approach that encompasses culture, policy, economics, and tools. To accomplish this, we will focus on the following strategic priorities:

Building a Culture For Change

We help funders deepen their commitment to social and racial equity, shifting power and resources to impacted communities, and amplifying community-led solutions through narrative and networked communications.

Fuel Policy Advocacy and Movement Building

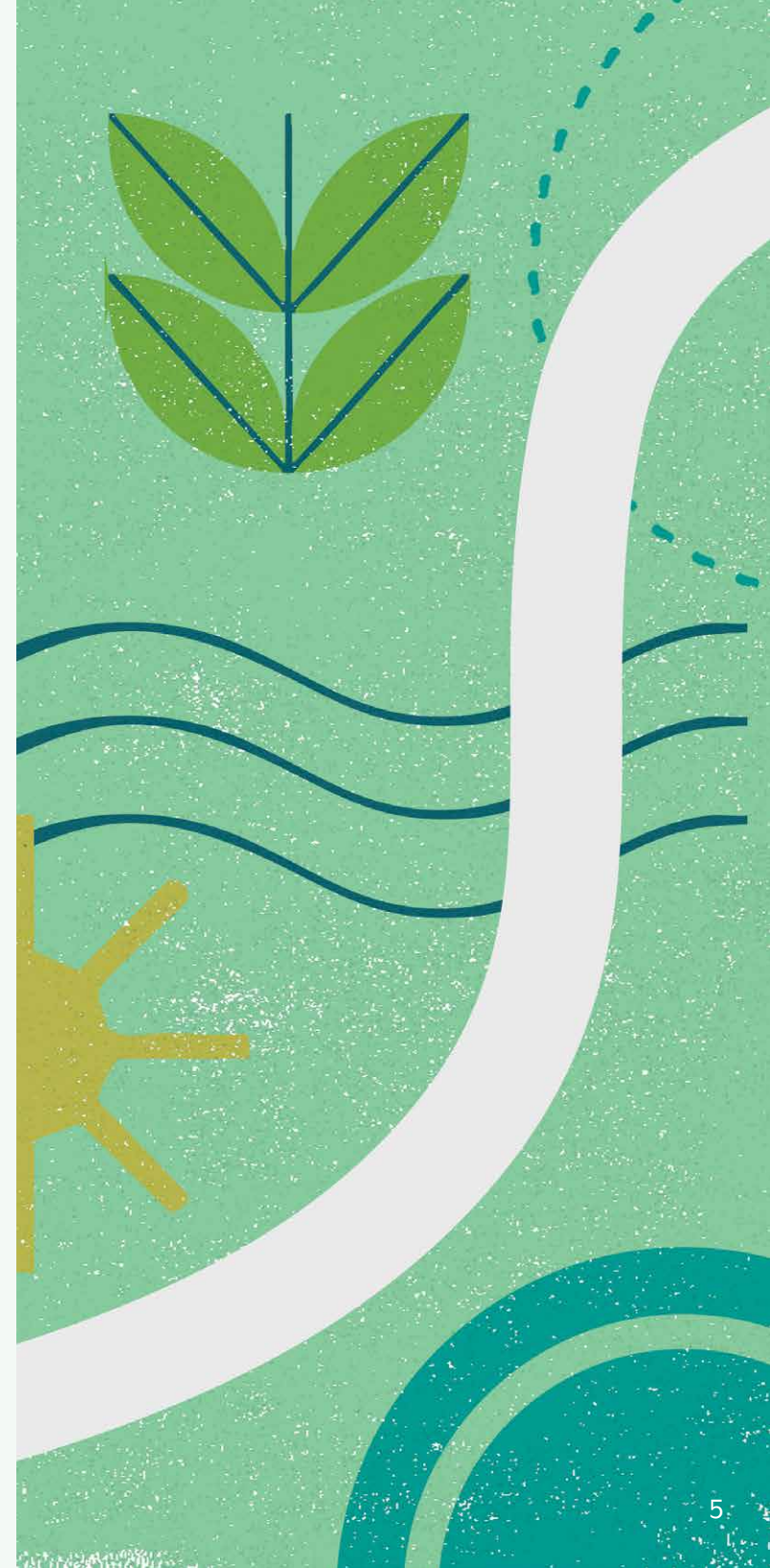
We organize funders around policy change, helping them understand and invest in solutions that support workers, farmers, consumers and other vulnerable communities in the food system, while identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities for funding policy change and movement infrastructure, including networks, alliances and coalitions.

Expand Capital Innovation

We catalyze investment in climate resilient and equitable food system change, and guide funders toward collaboration across different types of funding tools in order to bridge capital gaps, sustain and scale community solutions, and unlock the resources necessary for systems change.

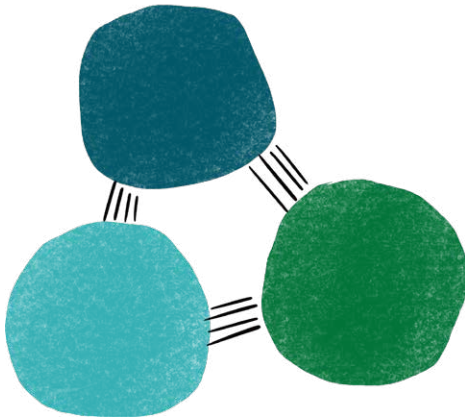
Guide Trends in Tools and Infrastructure

We monitor and guide conversations about emerging technology, infrastructure, and tools to ensure these efforts empower farmers, foster community ownership, create inclusive markets, and benefit local economies and communities.



WHAT WE DO

SAFSF builds the capacity of funders in food and agriculture through a three-prong approach:

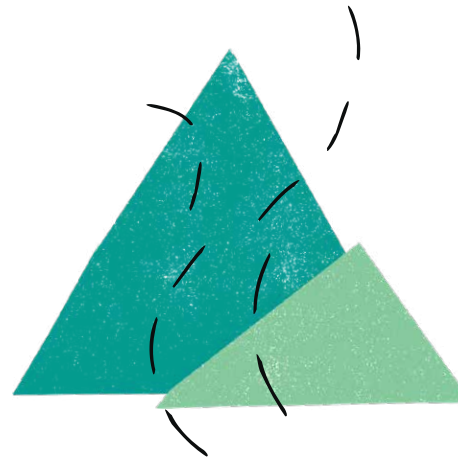


CONNECT

Build The Field of Changemakers

We create a diverse community of capital partners who collaborate, share best practices, and motivate one another.

Our convenings, newsletters, and other resources provide the latest field insights to funders looking to increase their impact, whether they are new or seasoned in food and agriculture work.



GUIDE

Lead Transformational Learning

We offer educational experiences and communities of practice that help funders grow their impact. Our programs build skills and capacity, empowering our members as leaders and changemakers.



MOBILIZE

Drive Capital for Communities

We unite members toward a shared vision for change. Our diverse network and facilitated projects drive collaboration among funders and community partners, growing investment opportunities for a more just and sustainable food system.

OUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Since our origin as a Working Group of Environmental Grantmakers Association in 1999 until today as an independent non-profit organization, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) serves as the only national convener of funders working across the entire system connecting farming, food, and communities. Our members represent diverse geographies, communities, and issues ranging from hunger and nutrition to climate change and sustainable farming. Looking ahead, we build on our legacy as a diverse “big tent” of ideas, and serve as a space where funders can break through siloes and “connect the dots.” Throughout our past and continuing into our future, we offer impactful programs for our members to connect, grow, and learn from each other. As we evolve, we will expand our partnership with and learn from frontline communities, movement leaders and social innovators. While historically SAFSF members hailed primarily from philanthropy, we have grown to include the entire capital spectrum, from grantmakers to intermediaries to finance and investing. Our ability to mobilize diverse capital partners around a holistic platform for change in food and agriculture systems will be the strength that braids together past, present, and future of SAFSF.

COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RACIAL EQUITY

SAFSF is committed to working for social, racial, and environmental justice and equity in food, farming, and funding. Throughout all of our work with funders, we acknowledge centuries of harm, divestment, and disenfranchisement of communities, including by the field of philanthropy. To that end, our new strategic direction includes a comprehensive Social Justice and Racial Equity Framework to guide our events, services, programs and organizational development. This supplemental framework will continue to evolve as we learn and grow with accountability to the most impacted communities in food and agriculture. Please visit our website to read the framework.



GRATITUDE AND INSPIRATION

We are grateful to the many people and organizations who shared their thoughts with us to inform our new strategy. Special thanks to our consultant Joanne Cheung of New Economy Workshop, and the members of our Strategic Planning Committee: Bridget Dobrowski (SAFSF), Caesaré Assad (Centipede Collective), Clare Fox (SAFSF), Esperanza Pallana (Wildseeds Fund), Fabiola Greenawalt (The Russell Family Foundation), Katherine Pease (Pathstone), Mailee Walker (Claneil Foundation), and Stacey Faella (Woodcock Foundation), and the SAFSF Board of Directors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ist Course Capital	City of Atlanta	Great Lakes Protection Fund	Missouri Foundation for Health	San Diego Foundation	The Russell Family Foundation
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AgroEcology Fund	Clementine Fund	Henry P. Kendall Foundation	National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition	Self-Help Credit Union	The Shachar Fund
Agua Fund	Clif Family Foundation	HRK Foundation	New Hampshire Community Loan Fund	Sierra Health Foundation	The Western New York Foundation
Akiptan CDFI	ClimateWorks Foundation	Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation	New York Health Foundation	Stray Dog Institute	Thornburg Foundation
Americana Foundation	Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)	Illumine Service Foundation	North American Food Systems Network	Surdna Foundation	Thread Fund
Angell Foundation	Crown Family Philanthropies	International Community Foundation	North Star Fund	Tamalpais Trust	Three Sisters Fund
Arabella Advisors	CS Fund	Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT	Northwest Area Foundation	Tao Rising	To-Mi-Da Fund
Avila Fund	DAISA Enterprises, LLC.	J.R. Albert Foundation	Panta Rhea Foundation	The 11th Hour Project	Together We Rise Fund
Ben & Jerry's Foundation	Dirt Capital Partners	Johnson Ohana Foundation	Patagonia, Inc.	The Boston Foundation	TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation
Better Tomorrow Fund	EarthShare	Kansas Health Foundation	Pathstone	The Casey and Family Foundation	U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc
Black Farmer Fund	Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation	Kinship Foundation	Potlikker Capital	The Common Market	United Natural Foods, Inc. Foundation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation	Equitable Food Oriented Development	Lacebark Investments	Presbyterian Hunger Program	The Conservation Fund	Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District
Broad Reach Foundation	Farm Aid	Lawson Valentine Foundation	Prince Charitable Trusts	The Duke Endowment	Urban Health Solutions
Builders Initiative	Feed the Hunger Fund	Lenox Hill Neighborhood House	Proofing Station	The Farmers Land Trust	Vatheuer Family Foundation
Bullitt Foundation	First Nations Development Institute	locus	Ralph E. Ogden Foundation, Inc.	The Germeshausen Foundation	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Butterfly Equity Foundation	Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)	Lora and Martin Kelley Family Foundation	Rasmuson Foundation	The Heinz Endowments	Wallace Center at Winrock International
California Certified Organic Farmers Foundation	Food Culture Collective	Los Angeles Food Policy Council	Rauch Foundation	The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment	Walter S. Mander Foundation
California FarmLink	Food FutureZ	Lydia B. Stokes Foundation	ReFED	The Kresge Foundation	Walton Family Foundation
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association	FoodCorps	Marisla Foundation	Regenerative Agriculture Foundation	The Lumpkin Family Foundation	Waverley Street Foundation
Castanea Fellowship	Foodshed Capital	Mark Michael DAF	Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA	The Marcus Foundation	West Central Initiative
Cedar Tree Foundation	Gaia Fund	McKnight Foundation	Rural Climate Partnership	The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation	WhyHunger
Center for Regional Food Systems, Michigan State University	Global Alliance for the Future of Food	Michigan Health Endowment Fund		The Nell Newman Foundation, Inc.	Wildseeds Fund
Chef Ann Foundation	GRACE Communications Foundation	Minnesota State University Moorhead			Woodcock Foundation
Chicago Food Policy Action Council					



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