

# 2017

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE &  
FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS



YEAR-END REPORT

STRENGTHENING  
**CONNECTIONS**

FOSTERING  
**COLLABORATION**

BUILDING  
**CAPACITY**

# OUR VALUES

## COLLABORATION

*The action of working with someone to produce or create something*

## EQUITY

*Fairness and justice in the way people are treated*

## RESPECT

*To hold in esteem or honor*

## STEWARDSHIP

*The responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving*

## INTEGRITY

*The state of being whole and undivided*

## OUR LEADERSHIP

***“Coming together is a good start, staying together is a sign of progress, but working together is when real contributions occur.”***



Over the past year, the SAFSF staff and Steering Committee took time to step back, reflect, and ask ourselves some pointed questions: What is our value proposition? How do we define success for ourselves and our members? And how can we create more opportunities for the connections, collaborations, and innovations that arise when our 100+ members come together?

The value proposition of SAFSF goes beyond our connectivity. Coming together is a good start, staying together is a sign of progress, but working together is when real contributions occur. Without question, this is our definition of success.

SAFSF is working on issues critical to the future of our planet and all living things that inhabit it. We, our members, and our partners are working on issues of hunger, health, justice, equity, and basic human rights. We are working to reclaim the soil, water, air, and food we eat. We are working to build a just, vibrant, and sustainable food system. The work is not easy, and it can sometimes be isolating, frustrating, and challenging. But, as all of us know, this work can also be triumphant and life-changing.

It is an honor to serve as SAFSF’s Chair and Executive Director. We hope you will join us and help unleash the potential SAFSF has to dramatically amplify our collective impact.

**Virginia Clarke**  
*Executive Director*  
SAFSF

**Jennifer Zuckerman**  
*Director of Strategic Initiatives*  
World Food Policy Center, Duke University  
*Chair, SAFSF Steering Committee*



# STRATEGIC PLANNING

***“Our new strategic plan puts us on a path that will lead to even more effective programming and services, and create a greater opportunity for transformational impact.”***

## 2020 Vision *Improving Our Eyesight*

At the outset of 2017, the Steering Committee recognized that SAFSF was at a critical moment in our organizational development, and that without a long-term vision and plan to move us forward, we would not be as effective and impactful in our work as we could be. At that time staff was asked to initiate a strategic planning process. Between January and July, we set criteria for the process, fielded an RFP for an outside consultant, interviewed potential firms, and ultimately brought on Daria Torres of Walls Torres Group, an exceptionally fortuitous hire.

Between July 2017 and January 2018, all staff and SC members engaged in a practical, creative, and iterative process that enabled us to clarify and own our purpose, mission, and audience. Our new strategic plan puts us on a path that will lead to even more effective programming and services, and create greater opportunity for transformational impact.



The plan articulates our goals and priorities with an emphasis on the next three years, 2018-2020. It is both dynamic and practical, and seeks to balance SAFSF's internal operations, infrastructure, staff, and revenues with externally-directed programs and services to members. A more complete summary of this body of work will be presented at the 2018 June Forum.

# OUR VISION

# OUR MISSION

***We amplify the impact of philanthropic and investment communities in support of just and sustainable food and agriculture systems***

***All resources invested in food and agriculture systems enhance our collective well-being.***

***We advance our vision and achieve our mission by:***

**STRENGTHENING  
CONNECTIONS**  
***among philanthropy, investors, and government agencies at all levels.***

**FOSTERING  
COLLABORATION**  
***which can be topical, geographical, and/or policy-oriented in focus.***

**BUILDING  
CAPACITY**  
***of the philanthropic and impact investing sector through advocacy and education.***



# 2017 PROGRAMMING

## 15th Annual SAFSF Forum Gainesville, FL

The 2017 Forum, *From the Source: Water, Culture, and Equity*, explored what it means to seek out, listen to, and learn from sources of all kinds in order to support the development of inclusive and equitable food systems. Attendees explored topics inspired by the north central Florida region, including water, climate change, fisheries, ranching, forestry, immigration, and equity.

The 2017 Forum marked the launch of several new programs that—due to their success—will be continued in future years:

- SAFSF member organizations were given the chance to invite one of their partners to attend the Forum. 25 Food System Partners attended the first two days of the Forum, and their perspectives enriched many conversations.
- The final day of the Forum was reserved exclusively for funder-only conversations, designed to encourage peer learning and foster greater collaboration.



- Quilts made by attendees during the 2016 Forum in Louisville, KY were unveiled. Displayed prominently as a backdrop for plenary conversations, the quilts were a visual and very tangible reminder of our collective work and values. The quilts will be featured at the Forum annually, and are proudly on display year-round at the SAFSF office in Santa Barbara, CA.

We worked with nearly fifty organizations to plan and execute site visits and Forum sessions. We are grateful to those individuals and organizations that helped inform Forum programming by providing both national perspective and on-the-ground local and regional expertise.

## Policy Programming

SAFSF serves an increasing number of funders focusing greater attention and resources on public policy at local, regional, state, Tribal, and national levels. Policy work is now a key part of our core programming, akin to our equity and health work.

In addition to an evolving partnership with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and its regional divisions, our 2017 food and agriculture policy programming included:

- Monthly members-only, off-the-record Policy Radio Hour calls;
- Five webinars in our monthly webinar series;
- Seven policy-related sessions and site visits at the SAFSF Annual Forum; and
- A two-day Policy Briefing with visits to Capitol Hill and USDA.

**SAFSF's 4th Annual Policy Briefing**, entitled *Power in Action*, was held in Washington, DC and stimulated in-depth conversations on topics including the farm bill, communications strategies for connecting with broad and diverse audiences, the 2020 census, state-level soil health policies, and much more.

Attendees appreciated hearing firsthand insights and commentary from Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and former Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), and they gained inspiration for the

***“The meeting [on Capitol Hill] was particularly useful—there’s no replacement for being able to go and hear and see for oneself how the process works.”***

*-2017 Policy Briefing Attendee*



future after hearing from Fellows from the Food Policy Leadership Institute at George Washington University.

As part of the Policy Briefing, nearly 40 funders headed to Capitol Hill to meet with key policymakers and their staff from both minority and majority Senate and House Agriculture Committees. Our partners at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Organic Farming Research Foundation, and Food Research & Action Center helped to plan and lead many other Hill visits focused on sustainable food and farm policy, organics in the Farm Bill, and health and nutrition. A separate group of SAFSF members and staff met with representatives at USDA as well.



**“NASDA annual conferences and the regular regional convenings are important venues for establishing and developing relationships with commissioners that can have important implications for sustainable ag/food systems advocates over time.”**

*-NASDA Delegate*

# 2017 PROGRAMMING

## NASDA

Our work with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) has grown and intensified year over year, and 2017 was no exception. SAFSF is playing an important role in fostering stronger connections between public state agencies and the philanthropic sector, as well as between state agencies and advocacy leaders on the ground.

At the regional level, we partnered with Community Food Funders to coordinate a delegation of advocates from the Northeast to attend the regional Northeastern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NEASDA) annual meeting in New York. At the national level, we played a more visible role at the annual NASDA meeting held in New Orleans. In addition to a dinner for SAFSF staff, members, and NASDA's Board of Directors, we designed and led a site visit on *Public/Private Partnerships to Benefit Low-income Communities and Farmers*. With more than forty attendees, including a dozen state directors, the visit engendered considerable interest and positive feedback. One NASDA member commented, “*The SAFSF field trip demonstrated a sincere interest in bringing new perspectives to the NASDA community.*”

Once again, SAFSF facilitated two high-level sponsorships for NASDA's national convening, underwritten by fourteen organizations across ten states, mostly SAFSF members.



These funds allowed SAFSF and staff from six Louisiana-based organizations to participate in the meeting, including Market Umbrella, Grow Dat Farm, Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, Backyard Gardeners Network, Food Bank of Central Louisiana, and McComb Veazy Neighborhood Coterie.

In December 2017, staff and leadership from both SAFSF and NASDA came together for conversation and dinner. Many areas of joint interest emerged and staff will be following up on these discussions in the coming months. Our organizations recognize the need to support conversations with multiple perspectives, and together we will work to elevate issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in our partnership.

**27** HOSTED OR CO-HOSTED  
CONFERENCE CALLS  
15 of which were SAFSF Members-only

**600+** FUNDERS ENGAGED IN OUR  
LEARNING CALLS OR WEBINARS  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

## SAFSF Learning Calls

In addition to our in-person convenings, we offer a monthly webinar series open to all funders that features a diverse set of speakers and covers a wide range of food and agriculture issues. Our 2017 webinar series touched on issues like immigration, agroecology, impact investing, soil health, textiles, and advocacy, among many others.

Alongside our open webinars, SAFSF also hosts regular members-only calls, including our monthly *Policy Radio Hours*, regional food/agriculture network calls, issue-specific educational webinars, and quarterly *In The Kitchen* network updates.

Monthly Policy Radio Hours not only provide the space for members to collaborate and strategize, but also allow SAFSF staff to stay plugged into the work our members

are doing around the country. In addition, these calls provided space for SAFSF to solicit valuable feedback from our members on our policy work more broadly. This feedback was then incorporated into our strategic planning work and is helping to shape the future of our policy programming.

These calls and webinars give SAFSF flexibility to provide programming that covers both time-sensitive events and critical issues. In 2017, we hosted or co-hosted 27 learning calls, and in doing so, engaged with more than 600 funders—a new record for our organization.



## NEW 2017 MEMBERS

**Chef Ann Foundation**  
**Dr. Bronner's**  
**Food Well Alliance**  
**HealthSpark Foundation**  
**Lydia B. Stokes Foundation**  
**Patagonia, Inc.**  
**Ralph E. Ogden Foundation, Inc.**  
**Regenerative Agriculture Foundation**  
**Sierra Health Foundation**  
**The Boston Foundation**  
**The Russell Family Foundation**  
**Thousand Currents**  
**Town Creek Foundation**  
**World Food Policy Center, Duke University**

## SAFSF MEMBERSHIP

***“Our SAFSF membership allows us to get ‘plugged in’ to what is happening nationally as well as regionally on the sustainable food and agriculture issues that we care about.”***

***-SAFSF Member***

The strength of SAFSF comes from a dynamic, engaged, and growing membership. Members represent a wide assortment of funder types: individual donors, investors, community foundations, family and private foundations, corporate giving programs, and various types of regrantee organizations. Each member comes to our collective table with a different expertise, a new curiosity, an eagerness to learn and share, and the willingness to work with others to build a sustainable and just food system for all.

We offer many member benefits, including:

- Members-only quarterly networking calls,
- Monthly policy-specific strategy calls,
- Discounted registration fees for our in-person events,
- Subscription to a members-only listserv,
- Access to a directory of member funding data,
- One-on-one support from staff,
- Greater opportunity to shape programming
- And more!



## STEERING COMMITTEE

**Stacey Barbas**  
The Kresge Foundation

**Kyle Datta**  
Ulupono Initiative

**Linda Jo Doctor**  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

**Erin Eisenberg**  
TomKat Foundation

**Kathleen Fluegel**  
HRK Foundation

**Brad Leibov (Vice Chair)**  
Liberty Prairie Foundation

**Carol Pickering**  
Dietel Partners

**Michael Roberts**  
First Nations Development Institute

**Mailee Walker**  
Claneil Foundation

**Jennifer Zuckerman (Chair)**  
World Food Policy Center, Duke University

*January 2018; SAFSF staff, Steering Committee, consultants, and advisors at TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation in Pescadero, CA for our annual retreat.*



**“Having been involved in many an affinity group, I haven’t found one as well-run and thoughtful as this one is.”**

*-SAFSF Member*



REVENUE .....	\$752,477
EXPENSES .....	\$1,199,444
NET OPERATING SURPLUS.....	\$(446,967)
BEGINNING BALANCE .....	\$890,409
ENDING NET ASSETS .....	\$443,442
FUNDS HELD FOR RESERVE.....	[\$300,000]
ADJUSTED NET ASSETS .....	\$143,442

SAFSF received large, multi-year grants in previous years. As expected with accrual-based accounting, those grants led to a large beginning balance and an operating deficit on our financial statements in 2017. We ended the year in line with our FY17 budget, without dipping into our reserve, and carrying a strong balance into 2018.

Our new strategic plan outlines specific goals to help us continue to build our fiscal strength and accountability. The staff and Steering Committee are dedicated to achieving our goals and building on our financial success to date.

2017  
**FINANCIALS**

**“I am pleased to report that the Finance Committee—and Steering Committee—stand firmly behind SAFSF in their capacity to maintain financial stability now and into the future. The staff and Steering Committee’s strategic deployment of resources for new programs and initiatives has consistently shown a return on investment while meeting the emerging needs of the field. This entrepreneurial yet prudent approach, coupled with a healthy reserve, strong base of members, and a core group of multi-year operating support donors, ensures the financial and programmatic sustainability of the organization.”**

*-Kathleen Fluegel, HRK Foundation  
Member, Finance Committee  
Member, SAFSF Steering Committee*

SAFSF spent time in 2017 working on our garden. Not the part of the garden that everyone talks about—the flowers, fruits, and vegetables—but rather the parts that commonly get overlooked, like irrigation and soil nutrients. In our case, this means we worked on the operational infrastructure required for us to deliver the content and programming we’re known for.

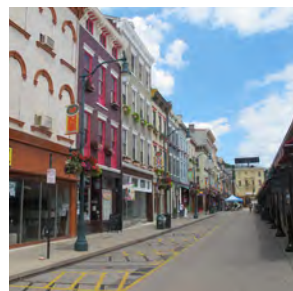
Healthy soil can mean the difference between plants that survive and plants that thrive. Like most organizations today, SAFSF relies on a database that can hold, sort, and deliver information in ways that allow us to thrive. Therefore, a large part of our work on operational inputs involved upgrades, redesigns, and integrations with our database.

Farmers need an efficient irrigation system to deliver water to all their plants, and SAFSF needs an efficient communication system to deliver content to nearly 1,000 funders, so we upgraded our email infrastructure.

Farmers plant many different crops and often have multiple field locations, so they need plans and maps to manage their work. To manage our many programs simultaneously, we need tools, processes, and systems to keep everything on track, so we migrated to a new project management software.

We are thrilled with the improvements that we’ve made to our garden thus far, and we are confident you are already benefiting from the new flowers, fruits, and vegetables that have grown.

2017  
**OPERATIONS**



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Have a question for staff but don't know who to ask?  
Send an email to one of our general inboxes below!

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[policy@safsf.org](mailto:policy@safsf.org)

[admin@safsf.org](mailto:admin@safsf.org)

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***"I have learned so much from SAFSF and found so many good friends (including your whole team) and our participation has made a world of difference for our partners doing the hard work on the ground. Y'all are the best!"***

*-Network Participant*



SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE &  
FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS



**REGISTER NOW!**

**16th Annual SAFSF Forum**

**Pathways to Impact:**

Leveraging Our Power to Challenge Inequity  
in the Food System

June 19-21, 2018

Spokane, WA

[www.safsf.org/2018forum](http://www.safsf.org/2018forum)

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