

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE &
FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS



2018 YEAR-END REPORT

AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACT TOGETHER



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 VISION

Our vision is that all resources invested in food and agriculture systems enhance our collective well-being.

OUR MISSION

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

“These achievements are in service of our continuing belief that sustainable agriculture and food systems funders can make a greater difference by working together.”*



The handful of visionary funders who started SAFSF were driven by the belief that they could achieve more together than individually, that the whole of the work they could do in alignment and collaboration with each other would move the needle much farther and faster than the sum of their individual funding portfolios.

Over the last 15+ years, SAFSF has grown exponentially, articulated a strategic plan, built an incredibly talented and capable staff, undertaken valuable programming partnerships, and been a catalyst for the development of issue- or geography-specific networks that help create new avenues for working toward a just and sustainable food system. In 2018, we took the momentous step of leaving our fiscal sponsor to incorporate as an independent 501c3 nonprofit, which enables us to be even more nimble and creative in pursuing new strategies and opportunities.

These achievements are in service of our continuing belief that sustainable agriculture and food systems funders can make a greater difference by working together. The success of SAFSF is a direct reflection of the time, effort, and experience of our members, our staff, and the community of philanthropic and nonprofit partners from across a broad spectrum of issues, networks, beliefs, and geographies, all of whom bring heart to this work. We always seek to leverage our values of collaboration, equity, respect, stewardship, and integrity to benefit both our membership and the broader field working toward a better future.

We look forward to building that future with you. **We hope you learn something new about SAFSF in the following pages and are inspired to work with us to amplify our impact together.**

Virginia Clarke
Executive Director
SAFSF

Jennifer Zuckerman
Director of Strategic Initiatives
World Food Policy Center, Duke University
Chair, SAFSF Board of Directors

* All quotes come from member survey or meeting feedback, unless noted otherwise.

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS

The strength of a network begins with the connections that hold it together. SAFSF creates opportunities to connect and build relationships among philanthropy, investors, and government agencies at all levels.

Funders Gather at 16th Annual SAFSF Forum

More than 245 attendees from 32 states, including 60 first-time attendee funders, explored new ideas, strategies and collaborations at the 2018 Annual Forum, held in Spokane, WA. The Forum Planning Committee, as always, curated a diverse slate of topics, speakers and site visits to connect attendees to current issues that impact their work. The 2018 Forum was especially notable for its focus on Native American food and agriculture topics and speakers, reflecting SAFSF's work over many years to raise awareness around the gaps in philanthropic support directed to Tribal nations.

The Spokane gathering included 18 Food System Partners of SAFSF members, bringing grantees' perspectives to the first two days of the Forum. Our funder-only day offered facilitated deep-dive sessions on broad areas of philanthropic practice, as well as a dozen ad hoc peer-hosted conversations. The



ad hoc sessions were a new feature of the Forum, which attendees praised as allowing them to deepen or make new connections with peers, and helping them think critically or strategically about their grantmaking/investing.

“Connections to other funders in this work across the U.S. have been absolutely invaluable to me.”

Connecting with Government

SAFSF arranged funder and advocate delegations to attend national and regional meetings of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), opening opportunities to connect in a collegial setting with their states' agriculture decision-makers as they discuss policy priorities. As we enter the fifth year of our NASDA engagement strategy, SAFSF and our representatives are now considered valuable partners at NASDA. We also helped funders forge new connections with USDA grantmakers through webinars and convenings around the agency's healthy food incentives program and Farm Bill funding priorities.

HIGHLIGHTS MEMBER SURVEY

97%

connected with other funders

82%

connected with a peer
for information or advice

62%

connected with NGOs or other
nonprofit organizations

43%

connected with government
officials or policymakers

FOSTERING COLLABORATION

SAFSF is dedicated to working in partnership with other funder networks, as well as farming, advocacy, policy, government, and corporate entities.

Education and Information Partners

Highlights of our 2018 collaborations include a webinar series on rural philanthropy co-hosted with Neighborhood Funders Group and other partners; a series of 2020 census webinars co-hosted with our colleagues at United Philanthropy Forum, along with other United Philanthropy Forum members; a series of Farm Bill webinars co-sponsored with the Farm to Fork Initiative and other partners; and an investment webinar co-hosted with Confluence Philanthropy; and many other programs developed in collaboration with our member organizations. We maintain open lines of communication and information exchange with health and environmental affinity groups, as well as regional food and ag funder groups around the country, to identify new opportunities for collaboration.



“The colleagues I collaborate with the most are those I met through SAFSF.”

Coalitions and Internal Collaborations

Our continued partnership with Community Food Funders and with the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) in 2018 made our NASDA engagement strategy infinitely stronger and more impactful. As part of a broad coalition of advocates, we worked together to publish *Success Stories from the Field: How State and Federal Programs Support Farmers, Fishermen, Food Entrepreneurs, and Consumers in the Northeast*, which emphasized the “tiny but mighty” federal programs that were in jeopardy during the Farm Bill hearings. Our work in 2018 is helping to set the stage for regional funder networks working with NASDA members.

Working together on SAFSF activities often paves the way for meaningful collaborations between SAFSF member organizations. Representatives of more than 30 SAFSF member organizations serve on the SAFSF Board of Directors and/or one of our five committees: Forum Planning, Membership, Policy, Resource, and Strategy.

HIGHLIGHTS
MEMBER SURVEY

84%
enriched the breadth and strength of their relationships within the sector

79%
learned about a new issue area/strategy

54%
learned about a potential new grantee or investment opportunity

26%
funded a new partner

BUILDING CAPACITY

Through education and advocacy, SAFSF works to help funders expand their ability to respond to new realities and influence a changing world.

Monitoring and Shifting Policy

Our Policy Committee, working with our staff, surveyed the membership to identify areas of common interest; these include Farm Bill passage and implementation, healthy soils initiatives, and rural development and ag/food/fiber policies.

Our newly hired Policy Program Director is working within these areas, we are working on ways to leverage our collective impact to advocate for more sustainable, just, and equitable farm and food policies by:

- sharing deep expertise and curated resources in order to facilitate meaningful conversations;
- identifying and supporting cohorts of funders working on similar policy issues;
- responding more quickly to time-sensitive opportunities for collaboration and/or coordination; and
- setting clear priorities for conversations with key policymakers at the national, state, and Tribal levels.



“Many of us felt something shift in the room that now can’t be un-shifted. Credit goes to SAFSF, the brilliant plenary speakers, and the talented facilitators for curating a space for such uncomfortable-yet-productive conversations.”*

Equity–Building Knowledge and Skills

The 2018 Forum was hailed for raising awareness of assets and opportunities in Native American food systems bringing to light issues of equity that rarely if ever are discussed in national philanthropic conversations. Forum site visits allowed funders to engage and learn directly with advocates, nonprofit leaders, farmers, investors, business owners, and community members developing innovative solutions to issues within their region. The site visits lifted up the voices and lived experiences of those most deeply impacted by inequities. More than 60 percent of 2018 survey respondents said their knowledge and skills around racial equity and social justice have grown as a result of their participation with SAFSF.

HIGHLIGHTS MEMBER SURVEY

82%

shared information from SAFSF with other staff in their organization

67%

shared information from SAFSF with grantees

52%

shared information from SAFSF with their board

34%

made more impactful investments

27%

funded in a new issue area or with a new strategy

23%

increased their food/ag system funding

NEW 2018 MEMBERS

- Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT), The Ohio State University
- Merck Family Fund
- New Hampshire Community Loan Fund
- Northwest Area Foundation
- New Field Foundation
- Keller Enterprises, LLC
- Self-Help Credit Union & Affiliates

“SAFSF is a critical component of the movement that is seeking a healthy food and agriculture system that is inclusive of all communities.”

SAFSF MEMBERSHIP

In 2018, we welcomed our first two community development finance institution (CDFI) members, as well as new members with a focus on impact investing. Increased member engagement resulted in an amazing response rate of nearly 60 percent to our first comprehensive member survey in five years. We created and filled the new position of Member and Strategic Partnerships Director in late 2018, expanding our outreach capacity to ensure that the full range of funders and investors in sustainable agriculture and food systems are represented through involvement and membership in SAFSF.

2018 BY THE NUMBERS

more than **\$130M** in members' food & ag funding  **245** Forum attendees

THE ONLY NATIONAL AFFINITY GROUP SERVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS

135 Forum speakers  **120** from organizations **1200+** Email outreach to individuals  **25+** education & policy webinars

8 professionals now on staff* **38** Forum sponsor organizations **101** Members

* Including three new staff who started in Oct 2018, Jan 2019, and Feb 2019.

2018 FINANCIALS



SAFSF Board of Directors and staff at the annual planning retreat at the offices of Grace Communications Foundation in New York, January 2019.

Unofficial financials as a fiscally sponsored project of New Venture Fund *January 1 – December 31, 2018*

In 2018, SAFSF transitioned from a fiscally sponsored project to a stand-alone, 501c3 organization, incorporated on November 14, 2018. Therefore, our official 2018 year-end financials as an incorporated entity will show \$0 revenue and \$0 expenses.

REVENUE	\$1,406,764
EXPENSES	\$1,189,649
NET OPERATING SURPLUS	\$217,115
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$443,442
ENDING NET ASSETS	\$660,556
FUNDS HELD FOR RESERVE	\$300,000
ADJUSTED NET ASSETS	\$360,556

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stacey Barbas
The Kresge Foundation
Linda Jo Doctor
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Erin Eisenberg
TomKat Foundation
Kathleen Fluegel
HRK Foundation
Leslie Hatfield
GRACE Communications
Foundation

Brad Leibov (Vice Chair/Secretary)
Liberty Prairie Foundation
Jaime Love
Interact for Health
Carol Pickering
Dietel & Partners
Michael Roberts (Treasurer)
First Nations Development Institute
Jennifer Zuckerman (Chair)
World Food Policy Center,
Duke University

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Stacey Barbas, Policy Committee
Linda Jo Doctor, Membership Committee
Erin Eisenberg, Resource Committee
Carol Pickering, Strategy Committee
Michael Roberts, 2018 Forum Committee
Jen Zuckerman, 2019 Forum Committee

2018 OPERATIONS

The SAFSF Steering Committee (now officially the Board of Directors) and staff spent considerable time preparing for and implementing the new legal structure and internal financial systems that will carry us forward as an independent entity. Staff leadership and our Treasurer are working to identify those areas that may need more immediate attention and looking to the long-term financial health of the organization. We are confident that based on our internal structure, financial sophistication, understanding, and years of oversight of our finances while under fiscal sponsorship we are poised for success “on our own.”

SAFSF’s staff continues to be our greatest asset, and 2018 provided the unexpected opportunity to restructure our staff in ways that support the execution of our strategic plan. Although two valued staff members moved on to other opportunities, we created three new positions, which we filled through an intentional process of outreach to a more diverse pool of candidates. While expanding the racial and ethnic diversity of our staff, we also added geographic diversity with two hires who work remotely from Nebraska and Maryland, in addition to our core California-based staff.



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“SAFSF is a huge asset for my foundation and is a great source of information and inspiration to help deepen and extend the impact of our work.”

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE &
FOOD SYSTEMS FUNDERS



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& Food Systems Funders

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GATHER
WITH US

2019 FORUM

Pittsburgh, PA

2020 FORUM

Kansas City, MO

2021 FORUM

Washington, DC

LADYWITHAFAN *design*

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