



# Annual Report 2020





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# The Food Waste Opportunity

In the U.S. today, 35% of all food goes unsold or uneaten. That's \$408 billion worth of food — roughly 2% of U.S. GDP — with a greenhouse gas footprint equivalent to 4% of total U.S. GHG emissions. This is equivalent to emissions from about 58.6M cars annually — all while food insecurity skyrocketed due to COVID-19.

The good news is that food waste is solvable. In a new analysis, ReFED analyzed what it would take to achieve national and international goals to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. We found that an annual investment of \$14 billion over the next ten years can reduce food waste by 45 million tons each year — a five to one return.



**\$73B** NET FINANCIAL BENEFIT



**4B** MEALS FOR PEOPLE IN NEED



**4T** GALLONS IN WATER SAVINGS



**51K** JOBS CREATED THROUGH SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION OVER 10 YEARS



**75M** TONS GHG EMISSION REDUCTION POTENTIAL (MT CO<sub>2</sub>e)

## OUR MISSION

ReFED is a U.S. based national nonprofit dedicated to ending food loss and waste across the food system by advancing data-driven solutions to the problem. We do this by:

- Leveraging data and insights to highlight supply chain inefficiencies and uncover economic opportunities
- Mobilizing and connecting critical food system players to take targeted action
- Catalyzing capital to spur innovation and scale high-impact initiatives

## OUR VISION

A sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system that optimizes environmental resources, minimizes climate impacts, and makes the best use of the food we grow.





# Sustainability

“When the pandemic first hit, we saw food waste increase dramatically as business closures blocked normal distribution channels. Not only was this a tragic waste of food at a time when so many people were facing economic hardship, it’s also a significant environmental concern, because food loss and waste are huge drivers of climate change and resource depletion. When food is wasted, so too is the land, water, labor, energy, and other inputs that are used to produce it. Tackling food loss and waste might seem like a gargantuan task, but it’s one that is eminently doable – and it’s absolutely necessary to conserve the planet and resources for future generations.”

**DR. LIZ GOODWIN OBE**

WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

SENIOR FELLOW AND DIRECTOR, FOOD LOSS AND WASTE

ReFED ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

# A Letter from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2020 was the year that many Americans really started to think about food. Not the usual thoughts like “What should I make for dinner?”, “How’s that new restaurant down the block?”, or “Am I ever going to get my kids to eat vegetables?” Because of COVID-19, many people’s thoughts turned to more urgent concerns — “What if the grocery store runs out of food?”, “When will it be safe to eat out again?”, and “How will I feed my family if I lose my job?”

COVID-19 revealed to many of us the way our food

system works – and sometimes doesn’t. We saw how disruptions in the normal flow of food products could rock the entire system and how difficult it can be for businesses to adjust their operations to quickly account for new barriers.

Like many organizations, much of our 2020 work focused on COVID-19 — from helping the food system understand the scope of its impact, to sharing insights about how businesses could reopen and operate safely, and connecting innovators with funding to scale their food waste reduction and hunger relief initiatives. This report highlights that work, as well as some of the other efforts we thought you would find interesting — most notably, the new ReFED Insights Engine and *Roadmap to 2030: Reducing U.S. Food Waste by 50%*. Hopefully by the time you read this, you’ll have had the chance to explore both of those resources. They provide a long-term blueprint for helping to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food system — one that’s ready to meet the next challenge it faces.

We have a lot of work ahead of us in 2021 and beyond, but I am confident that we can achieve our common goal to cut food waste in half by 2030 through sustained collective action.

Thank you for your continued support of ReFED.



Dana Gunders  
Executive Director



# 2020: Year at a Glance

Despite the unprecedented challenges of this past year, ReFED has been able to make notable strides in our commitment to advance data-driven solutions to reduce food loss and waste.



## \$3.5M

Catalytic funding raised and distributed for the ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund

## \$4.8M

Raised towards ReFED's fundraising campaign goal of \$10M

## 9

Installments of our COVID-19 "Better Together" webinar series with **27 panelists** from across the food supply chain and **670+ total attendees**

## 28

Presentations at food system-focused conferences and webinars

## \$1M Innovation Challenge

Serving as managing partner and strategic advisor for The Wonderful Company's Innovation Challenge POM Pay Day

## 225

Media mentions including *Bloomberg*, *Forbes*, *Fox News*, *National Geographic*, and *Washington Post*. A **112% growth** in media mentions from 2019

## 60+

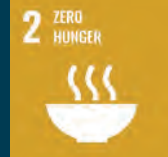
Expert Network members — a broad collective of food system experts, critical to driving the action needed to achieve the national food waste goal.



## +32%

Follower growth on ReFED's Twitter and LinkedIn channels

Our work contributes to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:





# Resilience

"This past year has been challenging for everyone, and it is unfortunate that people who are already faced with hunger are affected the most in emergency situations and times of uncertainty. Our work is critically important, now more than ever, as we move forward in our recovery from this pandemic. The simple act of rescuing excess food to feed our communities can help build a more efficient, equitable, resilient, and sustainable food system."

**PHIL AUGUSTUS ACOSTA**

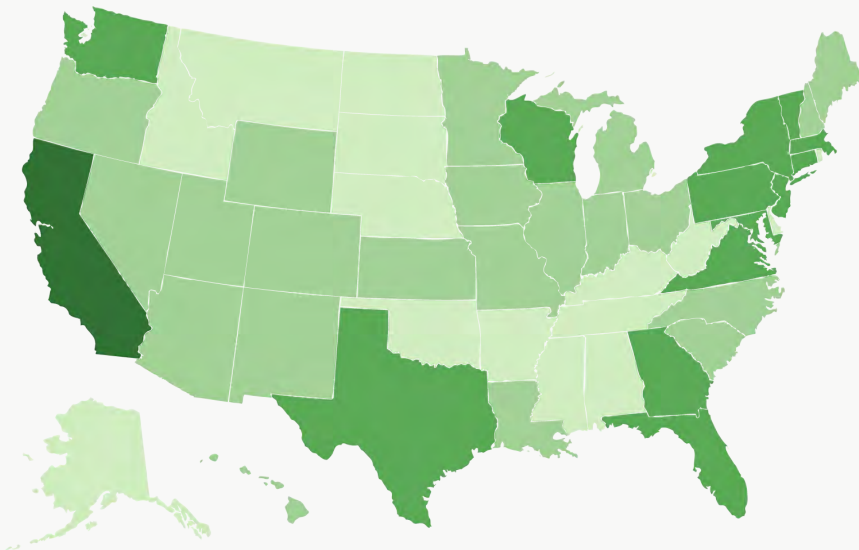
ALOHA HARVEST  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ReFED COVID-19 FOOD WASTE SOLUTIONS FUND GRANTEE

# The ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund

2020 was an extraordinary year fraught with momentous developments and uncertainty, and largely defined by the pandemic. In particular, COVID-19's spread across the U.S. completely disrupted the food supply chain — resulting in a surge of on-farm food loss, food business closures, and an increase in the number of Americans facing food insecurity to 50 million. In response to these challenges and leveraging our expertise on advancing data-driven solutions to food waste, we launched the ReFED COVID-19 Solutions Fund to quickly deliver more than \$3.5 million in vital funding to mid-sized, for-profit and nonprofit organizations across the U.S. that could rapidly scale food waste reduction and hunger relief efforts. A particular focus was placed on the rescuing of fresh, healthy food from farms and dignified, convenient last-mile delivery to the increased number of Americans facing food insecurity.

## Geographical Reach of the 37 Grantees

ReFED leveraged its research and data to design a portfolio of organizations that is well-positioned to support the areas hardest hit by COVID-19



TOTAL COVID-19 CASES IN U.S.



Source: The New York Times

KEY BY STATE

- 8 Nationwide Organizations
- 9-10 Organizations
- 11-20 Organizations
- 20+ Organizations

## Grantees

- 412 Food Rescue
- Aloha Harvest
- BlueCart
- Boston Area Gleaners
- Brighter Bites
- Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
- DC Central Kitchen
- Dreaming Out Loud
- FarmDrop
- FarmLink
- Food Connect
- Food Forward
- Food Rescue Alliance
- Food Rescue US
- Forager
- Full Harvest
- Goodr
- Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic
- Harvest Against Hunger
- L&M Companies
- Lovin' Spoonfuls
- Move for Hunger
- Natural Upcycling
- Oceanside Unified School District
- Partnership for a Healthier America
- Plentiful (City Harvest)
- Replate
- Seashare
- Second Harvest Heartland
- Second Servings of Houston
- Table to Table
- Take Care (Bitwise Industries)
- Treasure8
- United Against Poverty
- Vermont Foodbank
- The Wave Foundation
- White Pony Express



# Building Resilience, Nourishing Communities, Scaling Impact



84.2M  
POUNDS OF FOOD RESCUED



8.1M  
PEOPLE SERVED



92%  
OF GRANTEES SERVING BLACK,  
INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF  
COLOR POPULATIONS



2.5K  
JOBS CREATED OR RETAINED



95%  
OF GRANTEES LED BY  
DIVERSE TEAMS



## Timeline of ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund

May 01  
LAUNCH OF OPEN CALL

July 30  
GRANTEES RESCUE +28M LBS OF FOOD -  
SURPASSING INITIAL GOAL OF 10M LBS

June 30  
\$3.5M IN TOTAL FUNDS RAISED

November 30  
GRANTEES RESCUE +80M  
LBS OF FOOD SINCE MAY

\*These metrics represent the total impact that the grantees have made since May.

The ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund was able to provide highly catalytic funding to 37 grantees across the nation – helping them to overcome barriers in light of the pandemic and focus on recovering food and serving the growing number of food insecure individuals. As the fight against food waste and hunger continues, catalytic funding is even more crucial during these unprecedented times in order to close funding gaps, de-risk innovations, and scale impact.

The grants distributed through the Fund enabled the majority of the portfolio to raise additional funding – more than 13x the average grant size.

71%

of the grantees indicated that ReFED’s funding served as a catalyst for additional funding they’ve received and generated exposure to new funders

65%

of the grantees were able to serve new populations and geographies thanks to the Fund

86%

of the grantees developed critical new partnerships during their grant period



## Donors reflect on why they supported the Fund

“The COVID-19 Solutions Fund was a true rapid response fund that turned a crisis into an opportunity. ReFED leveraged the infrastructure it had in place to direct funds where they were needed most, while engaging its network to share best practices and resources. Months after the initial grants were made, we are continuing to see new partnerships and opportunities emerge that might have otherwise taken years to realize.”



**IDA POSNER**  
POSNER FOUNDATION OF PITTSBURGH  
STRATEGIC ADVISOR

“In a swift response to issues caused by the pandemic, ReFED utilized their strengths to support the environment, food producers, restaurants, and the many who needed hunger relief. Relying on their expertise allowed us to deploy capital quickly both locally and nationally to some of the most impactful actors in the space and helped us give organizations the capital they needed to scale during a time when their innovations and services are critically needed.”



**JACKIE HINDAWI**  
THE HINDAWI FOUNDATION  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## What the grantees have to say about working with ReFED

“With support from ReFED’s COVID-19 Fund, Dreaming Out Loud was able to build critical capacity and utilize key infrastructure to support our food recovery efforts. We are proud that our food recovery efforts were highly cooperative, involving nonprofit and community-based organizations, as well as food entrepreneurs from our DREAM Food Enterprise program. In total, we produced more than 70,000 meals and delivered groceries to 1,300 individuals and families weekly through November 2020 with resources provided by ReFED.”



**CHRISTOPHER BRADSHAW**  
DREAMING OUT LOUD  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“Take Care was created as an emergency response effort built specifically to eliminate food waste and serve the most marginalized populations affected by COVID in the Central Valley. The funding from the ReFED grant came at the most crucial moment for our program. Without the ReFED grant, we wouldn’t have been able to scale and eventually turn the program into a CARES-funded initiative that was able to serve more than one million meals over the course of 2020. Working with the ReFED team was one of the best experiences with funders we have ever had. They saw the need and met it head-on with urgency and great humanity.”



**CHANNELLE A. CHAREST**  
BITWISE INDUSTRIES  
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER



[Learn more about the Fund and see the Grantees-in-action](#)



# Refocus

"We recognize that the needs of our communities and nonprofit partners shifted dramatically in 2020. We remain focused on eliminating the additional strain that COVID-19 has created for families struggling with unemployment and food insecurity, and we know that knowledge and collaboration are imperative tools on this urgent mission. That's why we're incredibly proud to be the anchor funder of ReFED's new Insights Engine — a tool we believe will empower all sectors of the food system to take meaningful action to end the disparity between hunger and waste in America."

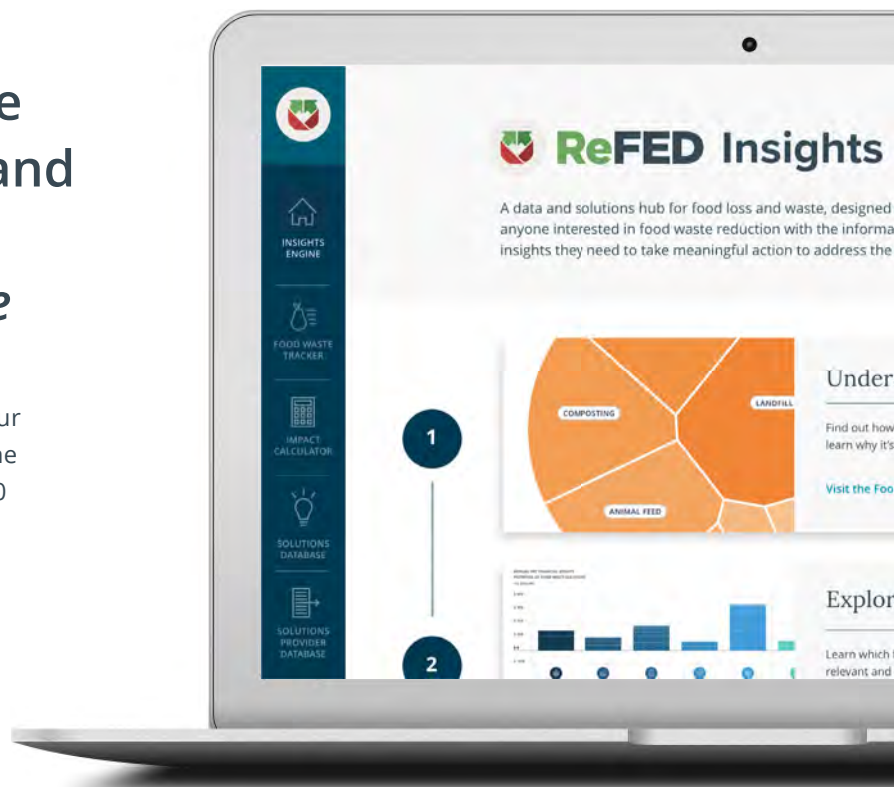
**SUNNY REELHORN PARR**

THE KROGER CO. ZERO HUNGER | ZERO WASTE FOUNDATION  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ReFED FUNDER

# A Pathway to Action: The Development of the ReFED Insights Engine and *Roadmap to 2030*: *Reducing U.S. Food Waste*

Our primary objective for 2020 was the development of the ReFED Insights Engine and our accompanying *Roadmap to 2030* in order to lay the foundation for action towards achieving our 2030 national and international goal of reducing food waste by 50%.

Take a deep dive to explore the ideation behind this platform and the role ReFED envisions it playing for the sector at large.



## WHAT IS THE INSIGHTS ENGINE & ROADMAP TO 2030 AND WHY DID WE DEVELOP THIS?

In 2016, ReFED launched its landmark *Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste by 20 Percent*, which soon became a touchstone for those in the food waste space. While that initial report filled a critical need for information in the space, the field has continued to rapidly evolve and there has since been an ever-increasing need for more granular and robust data about the issue to fill in knowledge gaps and arm decision makers with the information they need to take meaningful, prioritized action. ReFED set out to develop a dynamic and interactive platform, offering more extensive analyses, more customized views, and the ability to be updated regularly.

The newly developed ReFED Insights Engine is the next generation of data, insights, and guidance on U.S. food waste. This online data and solutions hub for food loss and waste is designed to provide anyone interested in food waste reduction with the information and insights they need to take purposeful action to address the problem and move a step forward towards achieving national and international goals of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030. Importantly, the digital, continuously updated nature of the platform means that users can have current information at their fingertips in a way that ReFED's original printed *Roadmap* wasn't able to provide.

To guide action across the food system, ReFED has also created a framework for implementing the solutions in the Insights Engine in its new *Roadmap to 2030: Reducing U.S. Food Waste by 50%*. The *Roadmap to 2030* looks at the entire food supply chain and outlines seven key action areas with recommended priorities to help guide the food system in its food waste reduction efforts over the next ten years. It also provides a detailed financial analysis to help direct the public, private, and philanthropic capital investments needed to fund these efforts. In line with the Target-Measure-Act framework for food waste reduction that's been adopted around the world, the *Roadmap to 2030* is a comprehensive blueprint to help the food system to action towards our collective goal of a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030.

## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM USING THESE RESOURCES?

From corporate CEOs to data-savvy analysts working for businesses, to governments and investors, the Insights Engine has something to offer everyone — making information quickly attainable and providing specific direction on which actions food system players should take to achieve our achieve our collective goal, featuring:



### FOOD WASTE MONITOR

A centralized repository of information built with data from more than 50 public and proprietary datasets and providing granular estimates of how much food goes uneaten in the U.S., why it's happening, and where it goes.



### SOLUTIONS DATABASE

A stakeholder-specific, comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of 40+ food waste reduction solutions based on impact goals (diversion potential, financial, environmental, etc.), plus detailed fact sheets on each.



### SOLUTION PROVIDER DIRECTORY

A vetted list of 700+ nonprofit and for-profit organizations ready to help implement food waste reduction initiatives.



### IMPACT CALCULATOR

A special resource that quantifies the impact of specific amounts of wasted food on the climate, natural resources, lost meals, and the economy.

Launch the Insights Engine

Special thank you to the following ReFED contractual partners for their support in the development of these tools:

DELOITTE

OCUPOP

QUANTIS INTERNATIONAL

JUNIATA ANALYTICS

NIELSEN

VIZZUALITY

# Our Organization

## THE TEAM

The nationwide lockdown of businesses and workplaces that was implemented to curb the spread of the virus generated a wide array of unique and fundamental strains for both employees and employers across the country – but as a 100% virtual team, we were already well-versed in Zoom etiquette and staying connected despite not working in the same physical location.



And as our mission continues to grow, so has our team. We welcomed a number of new staff over the past year, all of whom have been instrumental in enhancing ReFED's work. Together, we bring a diverse blend of expertise and experience in food business strategy and sustainability, innovation, finance, data analytics, research, agricultural development, and communications — united by our unwavering commitment to achieve a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system.



## 2020 Financials



### INCOME

- Contributions & Grants (Restricted) **26%**
- Contributions & Grants (Unrestricted) **20%**
- Contributions & Grants (COVID-19 Fund) **48%**
- Program Revenue **6%**



### EXPENSES

- Administration **7%**
- Fundraising **5%**
- Programs **37%**
- COVID-19 Grants **51%**

## OUR BOARD

This year marked an exciting maturation point for our Board, who continue to share their multidisciplinary expertise, making valuable contributions that position ReFED to deliver and scale its impact. After two years at the helm, Jesse Fink ended his term as ReFED's Founding Board Chair, but he remains an active Board member and Chair of the Development Committee. He is succeeded by Nicola Dixon, Executive Director of the General Mills Foundation, as Board Chair.



**Nicola Dixon**  
*Chair, ReFED Board of Directors*  
*Executive Director, General Mills Foundation*



**Steven Swartz**  
*Treasurer, ReFED Board of Directors*  
*Chief Strategy Officer, The Wonderful Company*



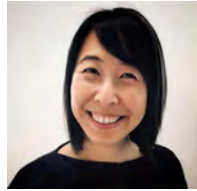
**Ed Romero**  
*Secretary, ReFED Board of Directors*  
*President and CEO, Hana Group*



**Jesse Fink**  
*Non-Executive Chairman and Co-Founder, MissionPoint Partners*  
*Trustee, Fink Family Foundation*



**Stacey Greene-Koehnke**  
*Chief Operations Officer, Atlanta Community Food Bank*



**Emily Ma**  
*Head, Food for Good, Google*



**Charles C. Savitt**  
*Director of Strategic Client Relationships, Sher Edling LLP*  
*Trustee and Treasurer, The Windward Fund*



**Yalmaz Siddiqui**  
*Vice President Corporate Sustainability, MGM Resorts International*

◀ ReFED also welcomed three new Board members — Stacey Greene-Koehnke, Chief Operations Officer for the Atlanta Community Food Bank; Emily Ma, Head, Food for Good, Google; and Charles C. Savitt. Additionally, the Board appointed Steve Swartz, Chief Strategy Officer of The Wonderful Company, as the new Board Treasurer, and Eduardo Romero, President and CEO at Hana Group, as the new Board Secretary. Rob Kaplan, Founder and CEO of Circulate Capital, retired from the Board after serving as one of ReFED's Founding Board Members.

## OUR ADVISORY COUNCIL

ReFED's strength has long rested in the power of the people who surround, advise, and contribute to our work. The Advisory Council is a group of thought leaders helping to provide expert input to ReFED's priority programs and long-term strategy.

**Dr. Jonathan Foley**  
*Executive Director, Project Drawdown*

**Elise Golan**  
*Director for Sustainable Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

**Ami McReynolds**  
*Chief Equity and Programs Officer, Feeding America*

**Milen Mahadevan**  
*Chief Operating Officer, 84.51°*

**Tejal Mody**  
*Managing Director, Rabobank*

**Susan Robinson**  
*Senior Director of Sustainability, Waste Management*

**Jigar Shah**  
*Co-Founder and President, Generate Capital*

**Ryan Shadrack Wilson**  
*Founder, Boardwalk Collective LLC*

**Dr. Liz Goodwin OBE**  
*Senior Fellow and Director, Food Loss and Waste, World Resources Institute*

**Andrew Shakman**  
*Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, LeanPath*



# Ways to Engage with ReFED

Help ReFED create a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food system:



## EXPLORE THE INSIGHTS ENGINE AND ROADMAP TO 2030

The ReFED Insights Engine and *Roadmap to 2030* provide anyone interested in food waste reduction with the information they need to take meaningful action.

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## BECOME A FUNDER

Your support and contributions sustain ReFED as a critical resource to accelerate purposeful action in addressing the food waste problem. To learn how you can support our mission, please email us at [development@refed.com](mailto:development@refed.com).

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## JOIN OUR EXPERT NETWORK

The ReFED Expert Network is a group of over 60 experts who share their food system knowledge and time on key projects at ReFED, as well as connect with, teach, and learn from their Expert Network peers.

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## EXPLORE OUR RESOURCES AND GUIDES

ReFED offers a range of solutions for organizations to advance their own food waste initiatives. Our interactive tools, reports, and strategic solutions can help your team get started.

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## ENGAGE ReFED AS AN ADVISOR

Find out how you can engage ReFED as an advisor on a dedicated, confidential, in-kind or fee-for-service project.

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



## Follow Us on Social Media



Twitter | [@ReFED](#)



LinkedIn | [@ReFED](#)

For more ways to get involved, email us at [info@refed.com](mailto:info@refed.com)



# Inclusivity

"The U.S. produces more than enough food to nourish our entire population, yet waste in the supply chain continues to inhibit our ability to do so. What is so powerful about our industry's collective mission is how it very tangibly sits at the intersection of hunger relief, climate change, and food justice. Consistent and equitable access to affordable and nutritious food is a basic human right, and it should never stand in the way of allowing our population to innovate and thrive. The more we can do as an industry to create dynamic and interconnected food systems, the closer we will get to building a nation with increasing access to affordable nutrition, a decreasing number of food deserts, and a more promising outlook for those experiencing food insecurity."

**RICKY ASHENFELTER**  
SPOILER ALERT  
CO-FOUNDER & CEO  
*ReFED EXPERT NETWORK MEMBER*

# Our Funders

The movement for food waste reduction is at a tipping point. We are very grateful to the many funders and partners who have generously supported the implementation, advancement, and growth of our organization to be a galvanizing force for the sector and enable us to scale our impact.



## The ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund Donors:

We are very appreciative of the many donors who contributed the just-in-time capital needed during COVID-19. Through a generous gift from Betsy & Jesse Fink and an anonymous donor that covered the Fund's administration costs, 100 percent of each donation went where it was needed most.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>AJANA FOUNDATION</b>                                | <b>POSNER FOUNDATION OF PITTSBURGH</b>                    |
| <b>ATTICUS TRUST</b>                                   | <b>ROY A. HUNT FOUNDATION</b>                             |
| <b>CAERUS FOUNDATION, INC.</b>                         | <b>THE HINDAWI FOUNDATION</b>                             |
| <b>CROWN FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES</b>                     | <b>THE JPB FOUNDATION</b>                                 |
| <b>FINK FAMILY FOUNDATION</b>                          | <b>THE KROGER CO. ZERO HUNGER   ZERO WASTE FOUNDATION</b> |
| <b>FOOD AND NUTRITION RESOURCES FOUNDATION, INC.</b>   | <b>TILLER FAMILY FOUNDATION</b>                           |
| <b>HOWARD AND GERALDINE POLINGER FAMILY FOUNDATION</b> | <b>VERMONT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION</b>                       |
| <b>JOSIE MERCK</b>                                     | <b>ZEGAR FAMILY FOUNDATION</b>                            |
| <b>JUNE &amp; PAUL ROSSETTI</b>                        | <b>ANONYMOUS DONOR (2)</b>                                |
| <b>PETER WELLES</b>                                    |   |

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Allie Wist  
Amanda Jones  
Amy Theobald  
Barbara Brabetz  
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Cody Hazen  
Donna Wine  
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