



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR RAFI SUPPORTERS,

RAFI is proud to be a leader in the agriculture justice movement and I am thrilled to report that we are making long-sought strides toward advancing equity in our food system. RAFI remains committed to addressing the unmet needs of historically under-resourced farmers.

Your support makes this possible.

- This year, we started a new program to help BIPOC and small- and mid-scale farmers overcome barriers they face accessing USDA programs and resources.
- We met our goal of having a full-time Policy Director — just in time for our 2023 Farm Bill campaign focused on climate and equity.
- And we are expanding our reach to the Caribbean U.S. territories, often neglected by programs that focus on the states. In 2022, RAFI forged partnerships with the Alliance for Agriculture in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition in response to the unique and intense needs of our island colleagues due to the effects of climate disasters, lack of a robust USDA presence on the islands, supply chain challenges, and more.

Unfortunately, a substantial portion of Expanding Farmers Market Access funding ended this year, which since 2015 has provided more than 55,824 nutritious, locally grown meals to SNAP/EBT recipients in North Carolina and added hundreds of thousands of dollars in income to local farmers. We worked to secure another entity to take on these efforts which resulted in the Double Bucks program being housed between the participating markets in Durham and Orange counties, with the fiscal sponsorship of FarmerFoodShare.

Because farming families, BIPOC farmers, and community members know what is needed to fix the system, what they tell us informs and drives our policy advocacy, as well as our programming. RAFI's success is based on the power of community, of listening, and of working collaboratively. **Thank you for being a vital part of our community of change.**

Edna Rodriguez, Executive Director



Farmers of Color Network

RAFI's Farmers of Color Network (FOCN) was launched in 2017 to more intentionally support farmers of color and help build resilience for and among these farmers. FOCN develops, delivers, and provides access to resources, technical assistance, advocacy engagement opportunities, and funding to increase and diversify farm income, improve market access and direct sales opportunities, and build community.

In 2022, FOCN continued expanding, growing the membership by 34% over 2021. The FOCN Infrastructure Grant program funded 12 farms in four states and the U.S. Virgin Islands with a variety of projects such as new buildings or mobile refrigeration to improve their farm businesses. FOCN also provided 24 smaller supplemental awards to 2021 grantees whose projects were significantly impacted by pandemic related supply chain issues.

2022 Program Highlights

- Staff made seven farm visits to support FOCN members: two in Maryland, three in Virginia, and two in North Carolina.
- We completed our five-part Market Readiness webinar series on the following topics: Accepting SNAP and EBT, Working with Schools and Institutions, GAP, and Organic Certification, and Wholesale Readiness. These and other webinars can be found in our [Trainings and Webinar Library](#) on RAFI's website.
- We contracted with four FOCN members to provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers as part of our Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) project.

Watch RAFI's Video: [Farmers of Color Network Infrastructure Grantees](#)

BY THE NUMBERS



340
members

79%

identify as Black/African American
(FOCN has a growing number of
Latina/o, Native, Asian, and
multiracial farmers)

54%

are beginning farmers
(farming for less than 10 years)

12,203
acres in Production

58% identify as male

42% identify as female

12% are under 35 years of age

Above: Otis Stevens of Veggie 4 Life farm in Frederikstead, USVI

Making Social Change Locally

Tierra Fértil Co-op

Tierra Fértil Co-op is a worker-owned, Hispanic cooperative in Hendersonville, NC. The six farmers in the co-op began growing food on a one-acre plot in Henderson County in 2020. Farmers who are a part of Tierra Fértil are FOCN members and are working with RAFI's farmers market promotion program and the Come to the Table program to increase their market access and capacity.

How do you see farming shaping your community?



"I think we are showing that it is possible to work differently, as a collective, take care of us, support each other, and that we can make social change locally. As a group of Hispanics leading an economic initiative with social projection we are connecting resources, organizations and capabilities that make us reaffirm that we are people and a community with tremendous entrepreneurial potential.

Deciding for ourselves and constructing a collective dream allows us to inspire others, and above all, change the narrative that exists about us. On the other hand, it is another way to have a more active participation in the system of production and distribution of food in our community."

-Delila Jovel Dubón, one of Tierra Fértil's founding members

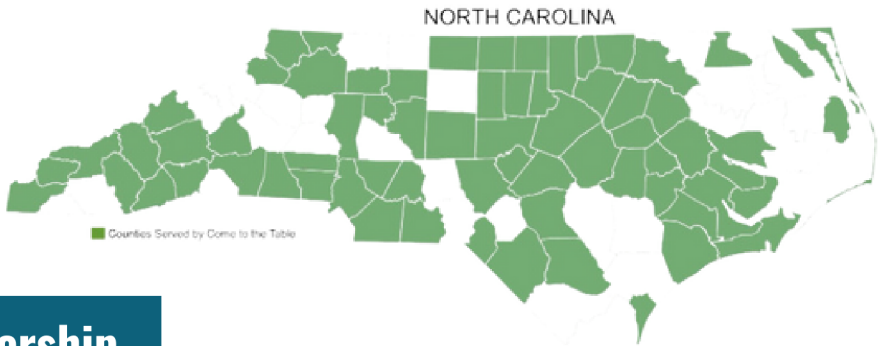
Above right: The team at Tierra Fértil.

Above left: Delia Jovel Dubón, one of Tierra Fértil's founding members.

Come To the Table

RAFI's Come to the Table (CTTT) program empowers faith communities to participate in creating a just food system through collaboration, capacity-building, and advocacy. After two years of pandemic-imposed restrictions on in-person gatherings, the CTTT team was able, by late 2022, to once again get out and about building relationships within and between communities.

In 2022, CTTT built and maintained relationships with folks from **69** different NC counties.



The Farm and Faith Partnership

The Farm and Faith Partnership Project (FFPP) connects North Carolina faith communities with farmers from RAFI's Farmers of Color Network to create mutually beneficial, sustainable food-based partnerships, usually CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture). Piloted in 2021 with the Wake County CSA, FFPP saw steady growth from initially being one CSA (eight churches and three farmers) to, in 2022, four CSAs (19 faith communities, 12 farmers, and 425 shares.)

Watch RAFI's Video: [Farm and Faith Partnerships Project video](#)



"This project guarantees us a source of income and gives us the potential to go all out with production and delivery to the churches. If your business needs a shot in the arm — this is it."

Farmer Steve McCalla, Rocky Ridge Farm



Above: Elke and Steve McCalla with their daughter, Ella.
To right: Steve McCalla and family member Zane Ruark harvesting turnips on McCalla's Rocky Ridge Farm.

Come to the Table Conference

On March 15 - 16, 2022 the biennial CTTT conference, "Spirit, Power, and Connection: Owning Our Food Future," was held on a virtual platform with 284 faith leaders, farmers, market managers, and food justice advocates to explore the role of connection and agency as crucial steps in building a just and sustainable food system. Dr. Norbert Wilson, Professor of Food, Economics, and Community at Duke Divinity School, and Natalie Baszile, award-winning author of "We Are Each Other's Harvest" and "Queen Sugar," gave the plenary speeches. The conference featured 19 workshops and two networking sessions.

CTTT followed up the conference by hosting three in-person Regional Gatherings (Goldsboro, Mills River, and Mocksville) where 45 North Carolina faith leaders networked and learned together. One of the attendees said they appreciated CTTT providing "creative answers around hospitality and food insecurity and how churches can engage in mutuality."

CTTT Mini Grants

CTTT funded 25 rural UMC churches that engage in hunger relief with mini-grants of up to \$2,000. These grants are sponsored by The Duke Endowment and support purchasing of local goods directly from farmers of color within FOCN. The goods were then distributed to food insecure community members. Sixteen farmers of color benefited from these added markets/revenue streams.

BY THE NUMBERS



\$41,000

in mini-grants
distributed.

\$130,000

earned in additional dollars in
gross income by farmers of color
who participated in CTTT projects
in 2022.

134%

growth in new CTTT newsletter
subscribers in 2022.

100%

of biennial conference participants
surveyed said they gained a
deeper understanding of systemic
justice and equity issues.

Above: Congregants from Pinehurst UMC in Pinehurst, NC.

Farm Advocacy

For 30 years, RAFI's Farm Advocacy program has provided expertise and guidance to farmers during financial crisis to save or strengthen their farms. Our Farmer Advocates provide assistance minimizing and managing risks, navigating federal farm and disaster programs, and negotiating with lenders and creditors. We serve diverse farms, ranging from small, specialty operations to livestock and commodity operations on thousands of acres. Thanks to our generous donors, our services are provided free of charge to farmers in need.

The insights we gain from our one-on-one interactions with farmers play a crucial role in shaping RAFI's policy initiatives. For example, these firsthand experiences inform the drafting of legislative proposals focused on credit-related issues. They also guide our administrative advocacy efforts, specifically in areas like debt relief and the implementation of discrimination-related payments. Additionally, these interactions help us identify the types of resources RAFI can create to keep farmers informed about important developments.

In 2022, our Lead Farmer Advocate, Benny Bunting, conducted a series of 22 training sessions for new advocates. The sessions generated over 30 hours of training footage along with supplemental documents. We plan to compile this content into a comprehensive, easy-to-use training package that covers all the essential topics a farmer advocate should be familiar with.

FARMERS: If you are in crisis (or know someone else who is in crisis) and need someone to talk to, please call 866.586.6746. The hotline is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Farm Aid

In September, Farm Aid held its annual concert in Raleigh, NC, just a short drive from our Pittsboro office, giving RAFI a great opportunity to raise our visibility and meet old and new friends. Staff were out in full force wearing our RAFI t-shirts and engaging hundreds of festival goers at our table in the Homegrown Village where we featured the "Two Truths and Lie: U.S. Ag Edition" game and moderated the panel at the Farmer Forum Event, "Equity, Climate, Ag and the Way Forward."



RAFI staff at Farm Aid.

BY THE NUMBERS

34 calls to the Farmer Hotline

39 intensive farmer cases served

21

active cases at the end of the year, collectively representing \$11 million of assets at risk

11 cases resolved; economic impact of \$2.4 million

5 of the farmers from the 11 resolved cases are still farming

10 are female farmers

38% are farmers of color

29 are male farmers

62% are white farmers

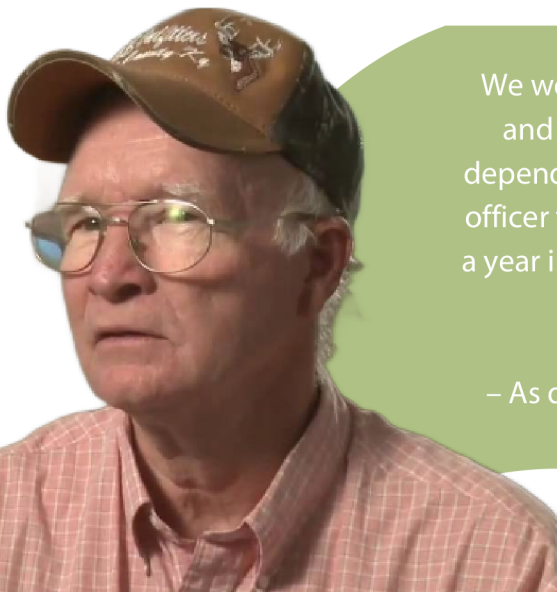
How and Why to Get a Farm Number, [blog.post](#) - 26,195 views

What is NAP Insurance and How to Get It, [blog.post](#) - 1110 views

Disaster Prep and Recovery Webpages - 540 views

Debt Relief - Winning a Last Minute Touchdown

RAFI pushed the USDA to move quickly to implement help for distressed farmers included in the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. In October, the USDA announced that more than 13,000 farmers with qualifying USDA farm loans whose operations face financial risk had their loan debt paid and brought current. Many of the farmers RAFI's Benny Bunting works one-on-one with were affected by this debt relief. Benny began calling them with the good news — those were great calls to make!



We were so close to losing everything. The whole family gets affected and people associated with the farm: the kids, the employees who depend upon the farm for their income. Then we got a call from our FSA officer to let us know that our account is now current and has been paid a year in advance. We couldn't believe it. It was like a movie or winning a last-minute touchdown.

– As described to Benny Bunting by a farmer who received debt relief assistance through this initiative.

Policy - Challenging Corporate Power

In 2022, RAFI established a full-time Policy Director position which enabled us to significantly increase the depth of our policy work. This happened just in time, as the policy team spent 2022 getting prepared to tackle the every-five-year Farm Bill. The team listened to hundreds of farmers through interviews or surveys about their experiences and what they needed to be more successful, and began working intensively with coalition partners.

2022 Policy Highlights

- A formal advisory group of 17 farmers, who are compensated for their time and sharing of experiences, was convened.
- An unprecedented 105 poultry farmers responded to a survey through which they shared their feedback to inform a proposed rule change that would force the mega-giant poultry processors to pay growers more fairly and provide them with complete and straight contract language previously withheld.

BY THE NUMBERS

20

farmers shared at two listening sessions on the upcoming Farm Bill.

160

interviewed or surveyed for Public Policy Advocacy.

5

farmers attended RAFI-USA meetings with key decision makers.



Based on farmer feedback, the Policy team developed an impressive number of [Public Comments](#) to government agencies on a range of topics important to the farmers with whom we work. These include:

- On Payments For Farmers Who Have Experienced Discrimination In FSA Lending Programs
- On Poultry Growing Tournament Systems: Fairness And Related Concerns
- On The Proposed Rule “Transparency In Poultry Grower Contracting And Tournaments”
- On Seed Industry Competition And The Intellectual Property System (With The Organic Seed Alliance)
- On Competition In Food Retail And Distribution Markets
- On The Modernization Of Enforcement Of Antitrust Laws Regarding Mergers
- On The Impacts Of Concentration On Poultry And Livestock Farmers
- On Data Collection in Lending

Expanding Farmers Market Access



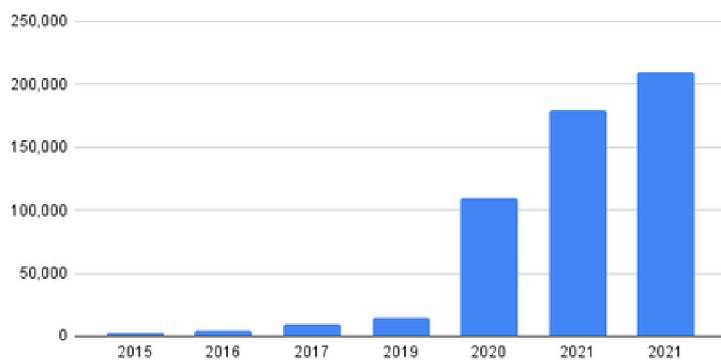
As 2022 came to a close, so did RAFI's Expanding Farmers Market Access (EFMA) program. For seven years, EFMA worked to increase access to healthy foods for low-income, food insecure North Carolinians and transform the local food system by increasing income to small-scale, direct-marketing farmers of color who produce fresh, healthy food for their communities. EFMA administered both the Fresh Bucks and Double Bucks programs, providing more than 55,824 nutritious meals to SNAP/EBT recipients in North Carolina.

From 2020 - 2022, the 26 markets RAFI worked with saw an average increase of 48% in SNAP/EBT purchases.

We are especially proud that EFMA's structure was fully inclusive to low-income shoppers, providing incentives with no matching cap to SNAP/EBT customers and matching purchases from WIC and Senior FMNP clients and those with Section 8 housing for any SNAP-eligible product. As far as we're aware from our seven years of administering farmers market incentive programs, we were the only such program in the country that offered this level of affordable access to shoppers.

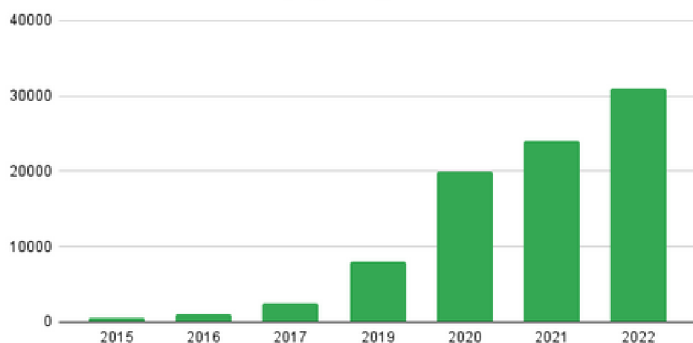
SNAP Incentives Redeemed

*no programming for 2018



Number of Meals Provided

*no programming in 2018



Above: FOCN Director, Ray Jeffers, with farmer Berry Hines at the Martin Farm Mount Olive, NC.

Resources for Resilient Farms

In 2022, RAFI launched its newest program Resources for Resilient Farms (RfRF). With the USDA's increased focus on serving socially disadvantaged farmers came more opportunity for USDA cooperative agreements to assist RAFI in serving small- to mid-scale farmers, especially those who produce specialty commodities or are beginning or BIPOC farmers. RfRF provides plain-language information, farmer trainings, and one-on-one assistance for USDA programs to support greater farm resilience for farmers' operations. An important goal of the program is to help break down the barriers these farmers have historically and currently face in accessing USDA programs.

In 2022, RAFI began two new cooperative agreements which built on the 2021 FSA project, CFAP-2 Outreach and Technical Assistance to Farmers of Color Initiative, focused on USDA disaster relief programs. In May, RAFI began a two year National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Cooperative Agreement in partnership with Alliance for Agriculture (Puerto Rico), U.S. Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition, Fountain Heights Farms (AL) and Green Heffa Farms (NC) as well as contractors Anita Roberson (VA) and Jacob Crandle (Small and Minority Farmers Agency, NC Dept of Agriculture) to assist farmers in 11 southeastern states and the Caribbean territories to develop or enhance conservation practices on land they manage.

In April, RAFI began a five-year Farm Service Agency (FSA) Cooperative Agreement subaward with the National Young Farmers Coalition to provide one-on-one technical assistance on FSA loans to BIPOC farmers in the Southeast U.S. as well as resources, webinars, and trainings on various FSA loan options.

BY THE NUMBERS

8,252

visits to the Resources for Resilient Farms [webpages](#)

4.7K+

reached by the How to Work with FSA Facebook post

1,500

views on the webinar - How to Work with FSA, [YouTube Recording](#)

120

Farmers completing the conservation assessment, in English and Spanish

22

Farmers submitting intake forms for NRCS technical assistance

134,783

reached

3,235

clicks

228

reactions

on FSA Phone Call Session Sign Up, Facebook post

Just Foods

RAFI's Just Foods program has been doing regionally adapted seed work since 2009 to benefit small- and mid-scale farmers who are looking to diversify production and market opportunities for their farms and expand the ecological assets on farms for future generations. Our current projects include the Southern Farmers Seed Cooperative and NC Seed Stewards. Because both projects are unique and there are few "knowns" to rely on, much of the current discovery phases have been devoted to trial and error research and development of best practices for growing the seed in quantity.

One of the problems farmers face is the concentration of the seed market into a small group of megafirms, which has led to fewer available varieties of seeds, less genetic diversity, less biodiversity in our agroecosystems, supply chain gaps for specific regions, and higher prices.



Just Foods Program Director, Kelli Dale, assisting with planting wildflower seeds at Sankofa Farms in Elfland, NC.

The Southern Farmers Seed Cooperative is made up of five farms comprising 11 farmers, and is, to our knowledge, the only cooperative of growers who are producing Southeast-adapted, non-GMO organic seed for market. The co-op is successfully growing out, harvesting, saving back, and selling four varieties of soybean seed. The co-op has also tested 27 corn lines. Professor Major Goodman of NCSU, now retired, developed and continues testing to confirm, or not, that the production of regionally adapted, organic corn seed is possible and identifying varieties that will work.

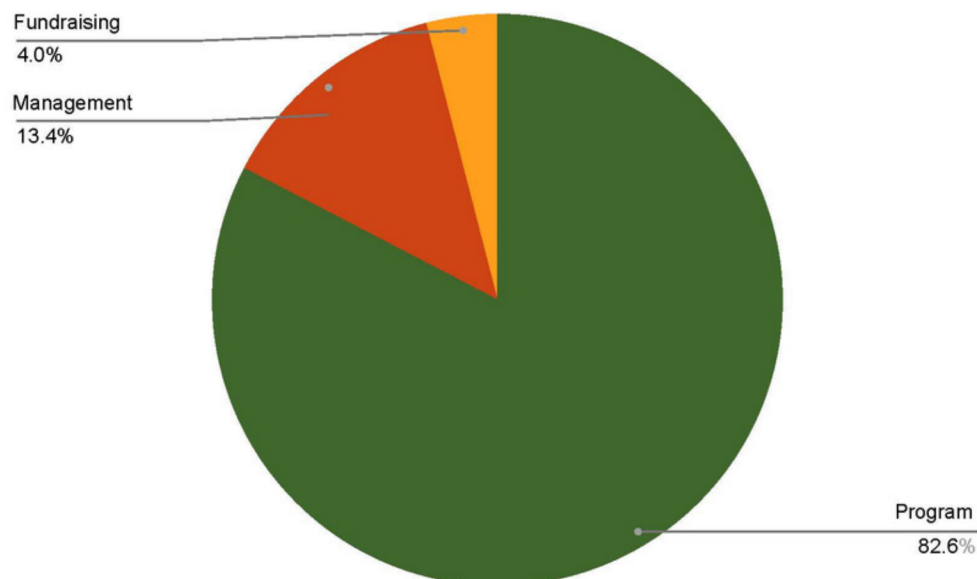
NC Seed Stewards, a farmer-directed project, is expanding North Carolina pollinator habitat by increasing the availability of native pollinator wildflower seed while also diversifying markets and income streams for small, BIPOC farmers. The only other wildflower seed producer in NC does not grow NC-ecotype. In 2022, Just Foods partnered with Sankofa Farms and Allied Organic Farms to plant two varieties of wildflowers from plugs grown out by the NC Botanical Gardens and varied the planting spacing. While wildflowers may bloom in the first year, they do not truly establish for re-seeding until year two. The project is progressing through the discovery phase.

Financial Statements

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	2022			2021
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
Private foundations	\$ 835,000	\$ 468,481	\$ 1,303,481	\$ 3,085,454
Government grants and contracts	775,317	-	775,317	322,095
Individual contributions	160,502	6,801	167,303	186,225
Member dues	-	161,393	161,393	167,000
Other income	11,851	-	11,851	1,800
Net investment income	909	-	909	919
	<u>1,783,579</u>	<u>636,675</u>	<u>2,420,254</u>	<u>3,763,493</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>1,730,758</u>	<u>(1,730,758)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	<u>3,514,337</u>	<u>(1,094,083)</u>	<u>2,420,254</u>	<u>3,763,493</u>
EXPENSES:				
Program services:				
Program services	2,205,433	-	2,205,433	1,925,696
Fiscal sponsorships	425,183	-	425,183	292,434
Total program services	<u>2,630,616</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,630,616</u>	<u>2,218,130</u>
Supporting services:				
Management and general	425,253	-	425,253	329,193
Fundraising	128,352	-	128,352	92,100
Total supporting services	<u>553,605</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>553,605</u>	<u>421,293</u>
TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES	<u>3,184,221</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,184,221</u>	<u>2,639,423</u>
Bad debt expense	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>3,184,221</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,184,221</u>	<u>2,640,423</u>
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	<u>330,116</u>	<u>(1,094,083)</u>	<u>(763,967)</u>	<u>1,123,070</u>
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>1,521,064</u>	<u>2,837,708</u>	<u>4,358,772</u>	<u>3,235,702</u>
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 1,851,180</u>	<u>\$ 1,743,625</u>	<u>\$ 3,594,805</u>	<u>\$ 4,358,772</u>

EXPENSES



Financial Statements

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	2022	2021
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 174,825	\$ 79,765
Accrued wages and benefits	79,317	59,111
Accounts payable, current portion	101,622	9,000
Operating lease liability, current	3,491	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	359,255	148,482
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:		
Security deposit	150	150
Accounts payable, noncurrent portion	25,294	91,093
Operating lease liability, net of current portion	1,520	-
TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES	26,964	91,243
TOTAL LIABILITIES	386,219	239,725
NET ASSETS:		
Without donor restrictions	1,851,180	1,521,064
With donor restrictions	1,743,625	2,837,708
TOTAL NET ASSETS	3,594,805	4,358,772
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 3,981,024	\$ 4,598,497

Thank you to our generous financial supporters!

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our generous financial supporters, who make RAFI's vital work possible. Our initiatives are funded by a diverse group of donors ranging from individuals, businesses, and faith communities. Special acknowledgment goes to the 46 households who provide us with ongoing monthly or quarterly sustaining gifts. Their consistent support has contributed to RAFI's impressive 68% donor retention rate.

We are also grateful to the more than 25 foundations and federal agencies that have provided grants to RAFI. We are especially proud that 24% of our total 2022 budget was allocated for grants and awards that we have regranted to farmers, farmer collectives, faith-based hunger relief programs, and farmers market incentive projects.

Committed to transparency, ethical accounting, and responsible stewardship of donations, we are pleased to have earned the 2022 Platinum GuideStar Exchange Seal, and the seventh consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

Board of Directors

Elijah Brunson
Board President
Freelance Facilitator & Curriculum Designer

Beverly Bowen
Vice President
Owner/Operator Blackwell's Farm

Claire Kelloway
Treasurer
Reporter-Researcher, Open Markets Institute

Jerry DeWitt
Member at large
Professor Emeritus, Iowa State Univ.

Phoebe Gooding
Member at large
Program and Organizing Director, Toxic Free NC

Archie L. Hart
Member at large
Special Assistant to NC Commissioner of Agriculture

Helga Garza
Member at large
Executive Director Agri-Cultura Network

Lariza Garzon
Member at large
Director of NC and Mid-South Operations
Hispanic Federation

Ben Miller
Member at large
Farm Manager, Reedy Fork Organic Farm

Michelle Osborne
Member at large & staff representative
Operations Director

Maria Dominique Villanueva
Member at large
Executive Director, Fountain Heights Farm

RAFI EXECUTIVE STAFF
Edna Rodriguez
Executive Director



RURAL ADVANCEMENT
FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL



ADDRESS

P.O. Box 640
Pittsboro, NC 27312

PHONE

919.542.1396

WEB

rafiusa.org