



Wallace Center
AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL

Annual REPORT

2021



PHOTOS FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
CELINA FLORES, ELISABETH SPRATT,
CELINA FLORES



Letter

FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS

Dear friends,

In just a few months, we'll celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wallace Center. 40 Years! As the Wallace Center closes in on this remarkable milestone, it feels apt to reflect in this 2021 Annual Report on how much we've learned, where we are eager to grow, and our hopes for the future.

Over the past several years, we've grappled with our legacy as a predominantly white organization, owning up to the fact that by not being explicitly anti-racist, our complacency reinforced racial inequity and racism in the food system and the movement to shift it. We reckoned with our privilege as a national intermediary organization with inherited relationships, resources, and power that wasn't intentionally shared. We assessed what we've done well and what we can be proud of, revisited our vision and values, clarified what's ours to do, and named where we still need to change.

These reflections were channeled into the Wallace Center's **2021-2023 Strategic Plan** – co-created by our incredible and growing team – which articulates our theory of change and lays out a bold roadmap for this chapter of the organization's journey. As we sought tangible ways to unlearn and dismantle white supremacy culture in our organization, we collectively created the **Wallace Center's Human-Centered Cultural Agreements** – eight principles that guide us and hold us accountable to the daily practice of culture creation in our organization. To nurture the leadership and talent growing within our team, we established a coaching program for all staff members, an additional mentorship program for BIPOC-identifying team members and approved the first paid staff sabbatical. And we formed the inaugural **Wallace Advisory Group** – eight esteemed, primarily BIPOC farming and food systems leaders who offer strategic guidance and thought partnership while holding us accountable to our mission, vision, values, and racial equity commitments.

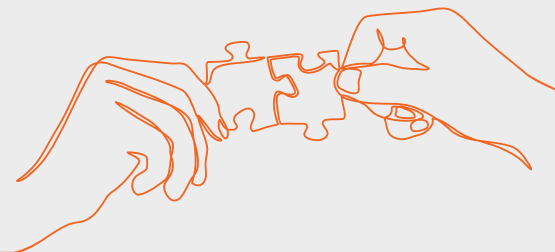
The Wallace Center, backed by a team of dynamic and dedicated staff, partners, and allies, is now charting a new course with support systems and accountability structures in place. As co-directors in our 40s, we can relate to the Wallace Center's hopes and aspirations as it embarks on a new chapter of growth and service to the world. We've lived enough years and made a lot of mistakes to have the wisdom to know how much we don't know. We have legacies to contend with, and at the same time, a future full of possibility and potential. Despite our middle age, we're still very much learning and growing, and in many ways feel like we're just getting started; like we're just getting to the good part.

Within these pages, we hope you see evidence of the transformation underway at the Wallace Center. We are growing into a more human-centered, transparent, accountable, and leader-full organization. We are excited about the years ahead, which will inevitably bring more change, growth, and possibility for all of us working to build more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems. We look forward to working in partnership with you as we grow older and wiser together.

In solidarity,



Susan Schempf and Pete Huff
Co-Directors, Wallace Center



Wallace Advisory Group

We're honored to work in partnership with the inaugural Wallace Center Advisory Group (known as the WAG), eight esteemed farming and food systems leaders who support the Wallace Center in our mission to bring together diverse people and ideas to co-create solutions that build healthy farms, equitable economies, and resilient food systems.



Renee Brooks Catacalos
*Sustainable Agriculture & Food
Systems Funders*



John Fisk
Bluestem Consulting Group



Martin Jennings
*Northwest Indian Community
Development Center*



Natilee McGruder
Growing Green LLC



Angel Mendez
Red Tomato



Kelsey Scott
Intertribal Agriculture Council



Brennan Washington
Southern SARE



Sally Worley
Practical Farmers of Iowa

Reflections from an Advisor

ANGEL MENDEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RED TOMATO

I found the Wallace Center along the winding path toward becoming Executive Director of Red Tomato; a career I never dreamed I would fall into. As a kid growing up in inner city Boston, my mom taught me and my siblings the value of food and cheering on the underdog: two things that drew me to my work at Red Tomato over 20 years ago.

In 2001, I started as the Warehouse Manager at Red Tomato, a Providence, RI-based non-profit that works to connect farmers and consumers to better understand the needs of both while supporting small farm viability and food security. I had zero experience in farming or food systems, but over the course of a decade, I worked my way from Warehouse Manager to Logistics Coordinator and Operations Manager, all while raising a family and earning my associate degree in accounting. Eventually, I earned my bachelor's degree and—during a pivotal time for the organization—became Executive Director in 2019, just months before COVID-19 turned our world upside down.

That is when the Wallace Center stepped in and showed up for me.

When I stepped into this role, I went through the 2018 **Food Systems Leadership Retreat** in Kansas City, Mo. This retreat was a gamechanger for me. It shed light on several artificial barriers that prevented me from fully embracing my own leadership. I learned how my own worldview prevented me from seeing what was really in front of me. The systems leadership training gave me invaluable tools to handle stress that comes with leading an organization, tools I still use today.

There is a fire burning inside of me, one that I try to channel into helping others. That fire tells me that I need to make the path to sustainability easier for as many people as I can—and that motivation feeds my soul and pushes me to share my experiences,



ANGEL AND RED TOMATO COLLEAGUES (PHOTO COURTESY OF RED TOMATO)

speaking at conferences and tell my story. Through this, I heal my wounds. The Wallace Center is a huge part of the work that I'm trying to do at Red Tomato. So, when they invited me to join the Advisory Group, I immediately said, "yes." We all need to work together to build a more sustainable and equitable food system; being a part of the Wallace Advisory Group is just one small piece. It is also important to me that the Wallace Center provides the same support I received to others like me that enter the good food movement and embrace social change.

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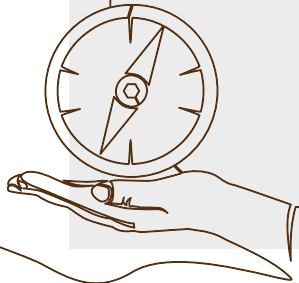
Mission, Vision, Values

OUR MISSION

The Wallace Center brings together diverse people and ideas to co-create solutions that build healthy farms, equitable economies, and resilient food systems.

OUR VISION

All communities have the power to nourish themselves and regenerate ecosystems through just food and agriculture systems. At the heart of these systems are dynamic networks of people connected through interdependent relationships with each other and the land.



VALUES

- Systems-based and intersectional approaches
 - Practitioner knowledge and leadership
- Anti-racism, equity, and multi-culturalism
 - Ecological resiliency and regeneration
 - Economic justice and fair markets
- Local and regional solutions and self-determination
- Human-centered and joyful organizational culture



PHOTO: CELINA FLORES

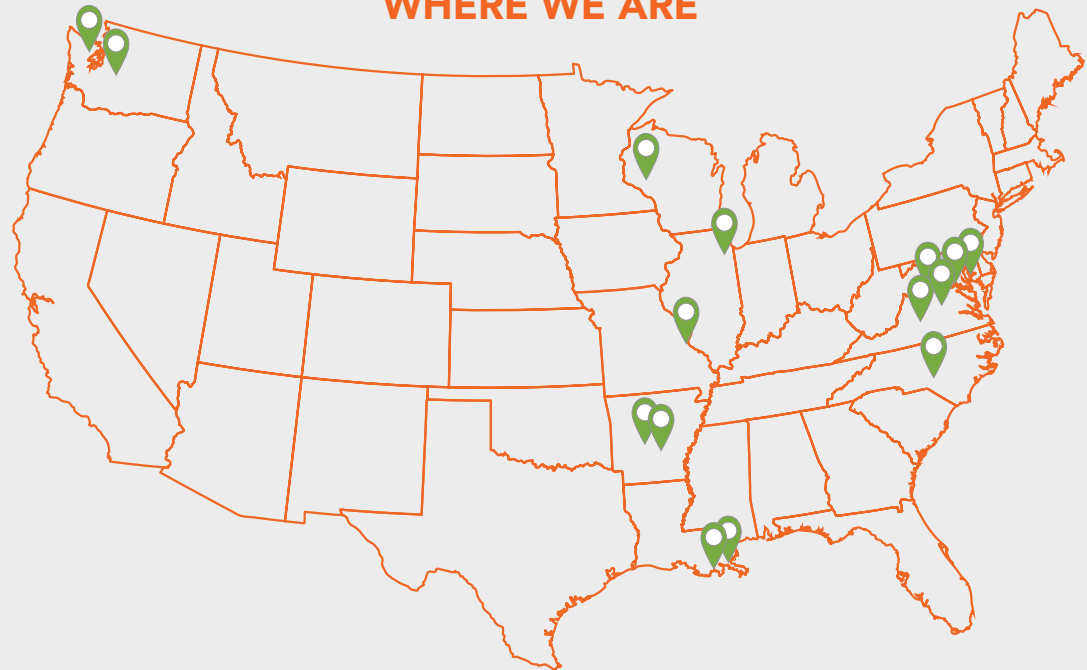
Our Team

HUMAN-CENTERED CULTURAL AGREEMENTS

- Contribute to Supportive, Empathetic, & Joyful Team Culture
- Center Emotional, Physical & Mental Wellness
- Prioritize Growth & Development
- Maintain Achievable Workloads
- Contribute to Authentic Organizational Accountability
- Cultivate Transparent & Participatory Decision Making
- Honor Personal Styles, Needs & Boundaries
- Promote Open, Honest & Respectful Communication

These agreements represent a collectively-defined commitment to shared stewardship of the Wallace Center's organizational culture. In a sector rife with burnout, these cultural agreements provide a vision for a working environment that prioritizes well-being and serve as a daily source of accountability to ourselves and to one another.

WHERE WE ARE



Elizabeth Atwell
Durham, NC

Andrew Carberry
Little Rock, AR

Jane Jordan
Chicago, IL

Elisabeth Spratt
St. Louis, MO

Aryn Blumenberg
Conway, AR

Melony Edwards
Port Townsend, WA

Annalina Kazickas
Seattle, WA

Kelsey Vergin
Charlottesville, VA

Ellie Bomstein
Washington, DC

Pete Huff
Menomonie, WI

Michelle Mathew
New Orleans, LA

Elsy Zaldivar
Fort Washington, MD

Tracey Boulandi
Reston, VA

Lucy Jodlowska
Washington, DC

**Susan Lightfoot
Schempf**
New Orleans, LA

Racial Equity Journey

For the past four years, the Wallace Center has been on a dynamic learning journey to authentically center anti-racism, racial equity, and multiculturalism in our programs, operations, and team culture. Every staff member has contributed to the evolution of our practices: from committing time to deep learning and interpersonal work to participating in working groups that advance the Wallace Center's annual racial equity goals.

In early 2021, we documented the [Wallace Center's Journey Toward Becoming an Anti-Racist and Multicultural Organization](#) and shared it broadly via an open [letter](#) to our partners, funders, and those we serve. Creating this historical document was an important step towards institutionalizing our learning, naming our blind spots and missteps, and embracing a spirit of accountability, vulnerability, and transparency.

One of our most poignant learnings to date is how we must focus on shifting our internal practices. As an antidote to the characteristics of White Supremacy Culture we recognized in ourselves and our organization, the team developed Human-Centered Cultural Agreements to codify how we want to be in relationship with one another as a team. These agreements serve as a North Star to guide our behaviors and interactions in our day-to-day work.

Part of this culture creation includes establishing structures that help hold us accountable to our goals and commitments. All Wallace Center staff serve on working groups organized according to our [Racial Equity Goals](#), which include:

- Increasing transparency to build accountability with our partners, funders, Winrock International, and those we serve
- Strengthening Wallace Center as a human-centered organization that supports the agency and leadership of its staff and partners
- Maintaining established structures for centering racial equity internally
- Engaging with Winrock staff and leadership to share resources and support conversations around racial justice.

In 2021, the Wallace Center established the Wallace Advisory Group (WAG) to help us—in part—maintain accountability to our commitment to racial justice and equity.

While we are proud of the strides we have made over the years, shifting our organizational culture and practices to be actively anti-racist takes time, intentionality, and consistency. We are learning and we will make mistakes. As we grow, we need honest feedback from our community and invite you to reflect on how we're doing on our racial equity journey via this anonymous (or not) [feedback form](#). We plan to keep a link to this form on our website year-round, so that you can offer us real time feedback. Thank you.

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Programs Overview



The Wallace Center's two overarching goals of *Strengthening the Change Ecosystem* and *Reimagining and Redesigning Farming and Food Systems* are anchored by a core **commitment** of *Forging Equity and Justice in Farming and Food Systems*. This commitment is increasingly expressed in the Wallace Center's operations, team culture, program design, partnerships, and long-term planning.

Two teams are responsible for the Wallace Center's work--the Food Systems Leadership (FSL) team, which facilitates the **Food Systems Leadership Network** (FSLN) and the Resilient Agriculture and Ecosystems (RAE) team, which manages the **Regenerative Ag Idea Network** (REGAIN). Both teams are supported through shared leadership by two Co-Directors.

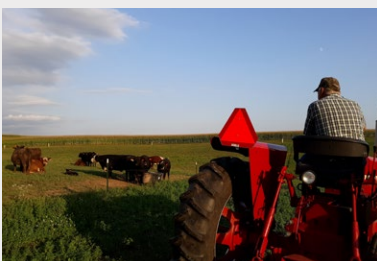
The following pages feature four highlighted projects that we are particularly proud of this year. These projects demonstrate the breadth of work we do: from expanding technical assistance for graziers in the Upper Midwest, to advocating for federal policy change on behalf of food systems leaders around the country. We invite you to reach out if you'd like to learn more about these projects or our other work.



How Our Partnerships Drive Meaningful Work

FARMER-DRIVEN WATER QUALITY PROJECT

Since the fall of 2019, the Wallace Center has worked closely with the Valley Stewardship Network (VSN) and the Tainter Creek Farmer-led Watershed Council (TCFLWC) to increase adoption of grazing in southwest Wisconsin. The project, called the Farmer-Driven Water Quality Project, is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Gulf of Mexico Division's Farmer to Farmer Program. The program includes water quality monitoring and expanding conservation-focused best management practices to achieve reductions in phosphorus and soil loss. Farmers who engage with the program work through progressive technical assistance, with the goal of adding more regenerative grazing



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VALLEY STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

practices to their farm systems. With support from the Wallace Center and VSN, farmers first map out their farms, identify soil types, and discuss resource concerns and goals with technical service providers.

The project has had a definite impact on the community, beyond just the farmers who receive direct cost share from the program. Monique Hassman, Watershed Planner for VSN, notes, "One result of this project has been a real sense of pride in the community, that this watershed was chosen to implement the project ... This group [TCFLWC] is particularly honored to be involved and participants have been both thoughtful and cautious in the distribution of funding - preferring it to be dispersed to as many farms as possible, rather than a select few."

Valley Stewardship Network is a crucial implementing partner, providing technical assistance to farmers in the watershed, conducting extensive water quality monitoring to estimate project impact, and planning on-farm educational events. The organization has been recognized through the Midwest as a leader on agricultural conservation and farmer engagement. Monique writes, "[This project] has enabled our staff to gain a deeper understanding of what is happening on the ground and provided a means to create trust and strengthen relationships with Tainter Creek producers. The demonstratable accomplishments of this project have drawn the interest and engagement of other agencies and organizations, leading to novel partnerships that continue and build upon the success in the Tainter Creek."

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Statewide Grazing Work in Illinois

STATEWIDE WORK IN ILLINOIS

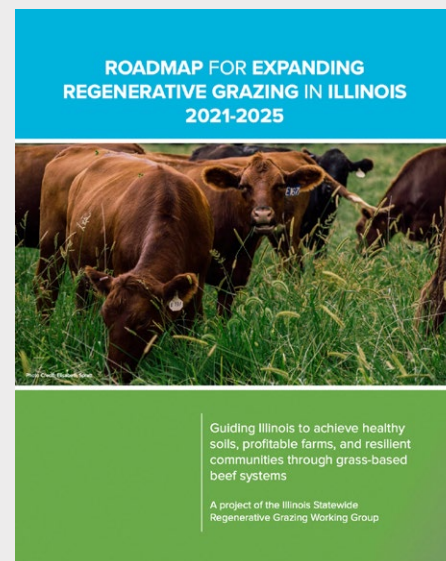
Over the past five years, the Wallace Center's **Pasture Project** has been deeply engaged on regenerative grazing advocacy and education in Illinois, conducting value chain analyses on the grass-fed beef market, working with Illinois based organizations to build capacity, and interviewing producers to understand the challenges and barriers to expanding regenerative grazing in the state. In 2021, the Pasture Project continued to support the leadership of Illinois farming organizations, agricultural educators, and farmers through three different strategies: ongoing facilitation of a statewide working group, online trainings for grazing educators, and a grazing mini-grants program.

Since 2019, the Pasture Project has convened the Illinois Statewide Grazing Group, which is comprised of Illinois farmers, graziers,



extension educators, non-profit staff, and experts. In 2021, the working group released the **Roadmap for Expanding Regenerative Grazing in Illinois** which captures a shared vision and strategy created by Illinoisans for Illinoisans to increase and sustain regenerative livestock grazing – specifically for beef production – in the state between 2021 – 2025. Moving forward, the working group will focus on implementing the recommendations in the Roadmap, including expanding technical assistance for graziers in the state, promoting grazing cover crops and other annual forages, and supporting direct farmer education activities across the state.

As part of the working group's focus on expanding technical assistance and grazing education, the Pasture Project team facilitated an online training for agriculture professionals and educators based in Illinois and surrounding states. The training was designed to broaden and strengthen the community of people who advocate for regenerative grazing and support farmers in navigating opportunities to implement grazing practices. The Pasture Project also offered a competitive mini-grants program to organizations and technical service providers working with farmers in Illinois. Funded activities included regenerative grazing field days, conference attendance for non-profit and agency staff, and summer convenings of a farmer-led grazing group. The breadth of funded activities illustrates growing momentum around regenerative grazing in the Upper Midwest, and increased coordination between non-profit, government, and university partners.



Putting our Racial Equity Commitment into National Food Systems Practice

CORE PROJECT

In 2021, the FSLN implemented the “Cultivating and Operationalizing Racial Equity in the Food Systems Leadership Network” (CORE) project to embed racial equity and anti-racism into the network’s framework for food systems change and strengthen the power and capacity of members to engage in systems change work at the individual, organizational, and network levels. A design team of FSLN members and partners, Aba Taylor (Interaction Institute for Social Change, or IISC), Curtis Ogden (IISC), Joseph McIntyre (10 Circles Consulting), Lindsey Lunsford (Tuskegee University), and Rachael Reichenbach (Resist Reimagine) supported and led different components of the initiative.

IISC skilled up cohorts of FSLN members around their individual and organizational capacities to operationalize racial equity and anti-racism in their organizations and their program work. The first cohort of 16 FSLN members from communities across the country learned facilitation techniques and theories for hosting meaningful, productive, and action-oriented conversations around advancing racial justice. This cohort was immediately engaged as support facilitators for the second training, playing a key role guiding 20 organizational teams from across the country to as they developed action plans for advancing racial justice in their organizations.

Providing in-depth facilitation training to a smaller number of FSLN members resulted in outcomes we couldn’t have anticipated. Participating FSLN members are now creating and delivering their own racial equity trainings for fellow members and hosting network-wide webinars to share resources they’ve developed as a result of the trainings.

We also engaged the CORE Project’s Design Team to examine and revise the FSLN’s foundational systems leadership framework

and retreat curriculum to ensure racial equity was embedded throughout the curriculum. Joseph, the retreat’s lead facilitator and curriculum designer, collaborated with FSLN members and co-facilitators, Rachael and Lindsey, to ensure the revised curriculum amplified different perspectives, embraced a human-centered approach, and centered racial justice in our understanding of systems leadership. This “systems leadership framework 2.0” was launched during the 2021 virtual Systems Leadership Retreat, with one participant reflecting how they noticed that their “previous leadership training and experience ha[d] been engrained in white supremacy culture and [this training offered ways] to intentionally move away from that.”

The third element of the CORE Project was the facilitation of an Action Learning Group of FSLN members to develop a network equity audit prototype, a tool for food systems networks to reflect on current equity practices and ensure that strategy, programs and services, and internal operations address root causes of institutional and structural racism. Action Learning Group members represented a diverse set of communities and roles in the food system and their personal experiences, knowledge, and resources have helped to shape a tool that networks across the country can adapt and use to advance racial equity and justice.

- *75% of participants reported increased knowledge, tools, and skills for operationalizing racial justice within their organizations*
- *70% of participants reported that they will make changes in their personal or professional activities to advance racial justice*

Mobilizing Networks for Policy Change

USDA ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

In 2020 and 2021, Congress allocated billions of dollars to the USDA to strengthen regional food systems, increase competition and fairness, and provide opportunities for farmers and local food systems organizations that have been purposefully or unwittingly left out of previous funding. These COVID relief funds, coupled with the Biden Administration's emphasis on supply chain resiliency and equity in the food system, have pumped hundreds of millions of new dollars into local and regional food systems.

The Food Systems Leadership Network (FSLN) – with its diverse and vibrant community of food systems leaders from across the country – is in a unique position to influence how these federal dollars are channeled, ensuring that federal programs are more accessible and meaningful to people on the ground. Through implementation advocacy efforts, the FSLN is amplifying the perspectives, knowledge, and lived experience of food systems leaders to shape how new and existing federal government programs work.

Building off our 2020 advocacy around the USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box program, we engaged FSLN members working at the intersection of small farm viability and community food security to develop recommendations for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) as they sought creative ways to leverage federal procurement to strengthen local and regional supply chains.



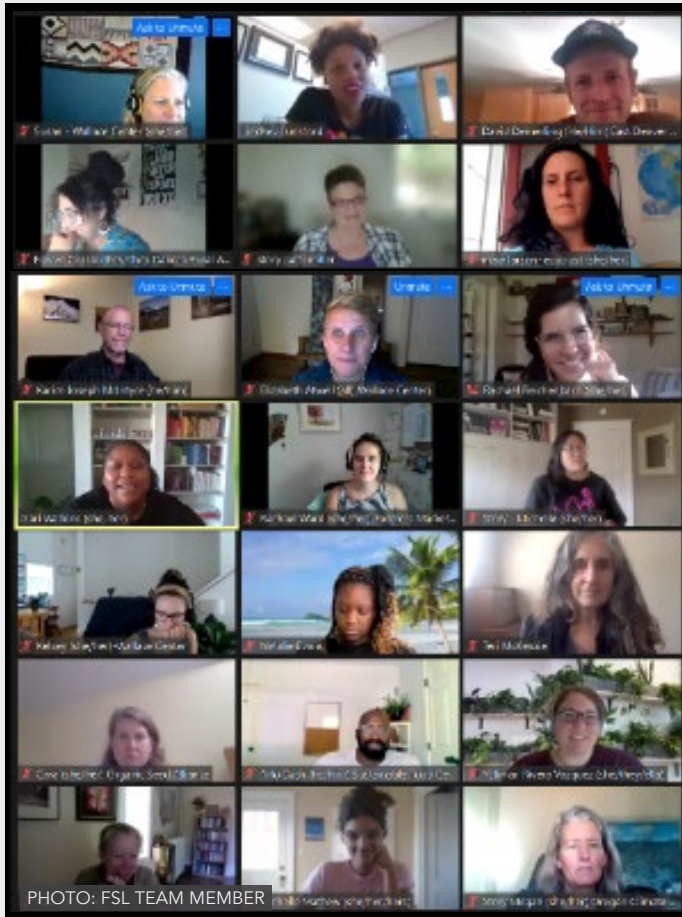
Through presentations to key USDA leadership, FSLN members advocated for future procurement efforts to explicitly support socially-disadvantaged producers and encourage partnerships with community organizations working outside of traditional charitable food programs.

When the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) – an unprecedented \$400 million investment in local and regional food systems—was announced in December 2021, we were delighted to see those recommendations explicitly stated in the LFPA's purpose, goals, and design. We quickly shifted to help network members activate around this opportunity by hosting informational calls to explain the program, discuss learnings and strategies, and share a contact list for members to connect with one another. As folks developed partnerships and applications for the LFPA, we offered office hours for food systems leaders from across the country to continue learning about the program and share best practices for developing successful programs in their communities.

Additionally, in early 2021, the USDA announced it would triple the amount of funding available for the Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP), which includes several key grant opportunities for advancing local and regional food systems. We quickly tapped into the FSLN network to help guide and encourage USDA-AMS to make this funding more accessible and meaningful to underserved communities and were delighted to see—once again—many of our recommendations incorporated into the 2021 program and associated technical assistance and outreach efforts. Once the request for applications was released, we shifted to providing technical assistance to potential applicants, prioritizing support to BIPOC-led organizations, several of whom were successful in receiving their first federal award!

This is a burgeoning area of work for the Wallace Center and we are excited to continue to engage the Food Systems Leadership Network in federal implementation advocacy efforts that advance more equitable food systems.

By the Numbers



1,454

Number of participants in trainings, webinars, and workshops



1,408

Number of participants in communities of practice



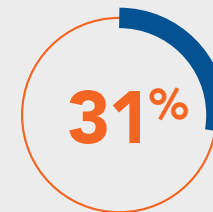
248

Number of 1:1 mentorship hours provided

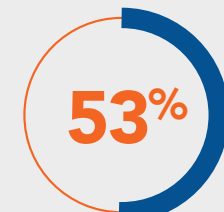


16,203

Number of watch hours on YouTube



BIPOC



Women

Demographics of participants in key Wallace Center programs, such as mentorship, multi-day trainings, retreats, etc.

FSLN

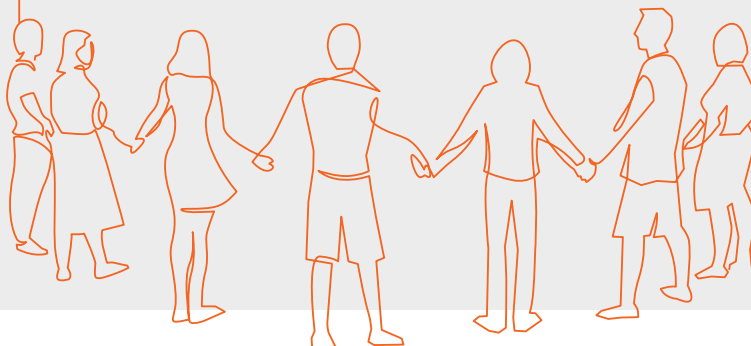
2,200+

Members from 50 states

REGAIN

367

Members from 44 states

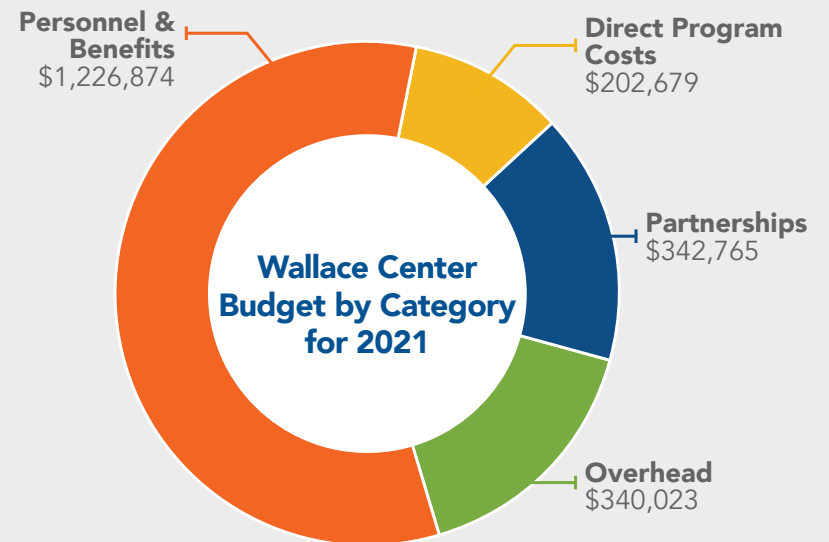
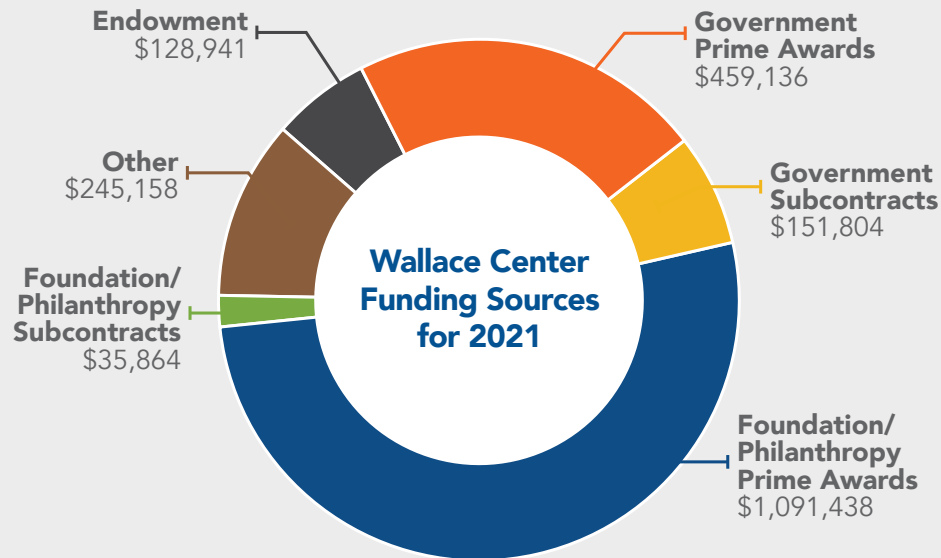


2021 Funding and Budget

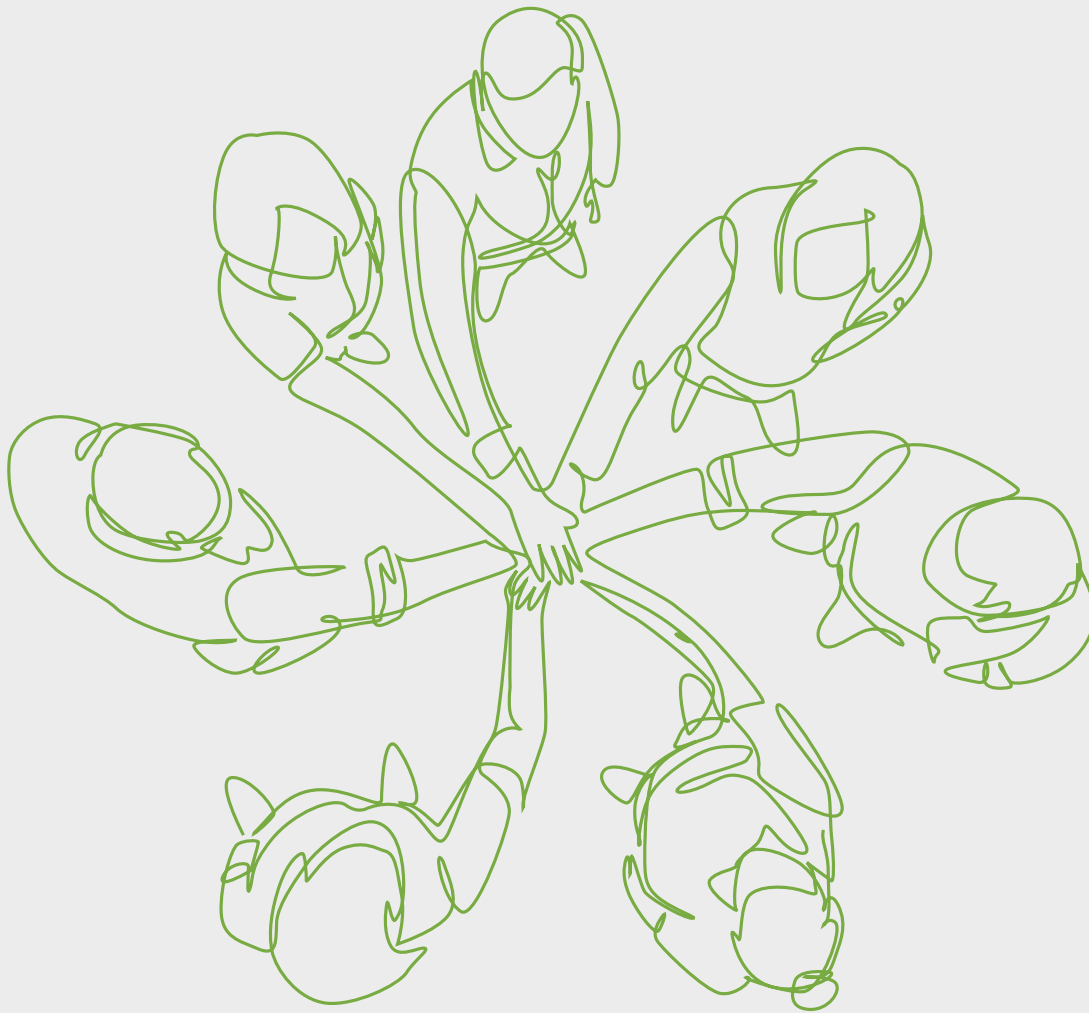
The Wallace Center staff were responsible for generating over 80% of the funding for the 2021 budget. Through deep collaboration with partners and well-written proposals, the Wallace Center team leveraged funding from over 20 awards during the year that spanned prime awards made directly to the Wallace Center by foundations/philanthropy and government agencies to subcontracts from partner organizations operating their own government and non-government awards. The Wallace Center also drew support from our long-standing endowment and from other sources provided by our parent organization, Winrock International.

This resulted in a total budget of \$2,112,341.

To accomplish its work in 2021, the Wallace Center team allocated its 2021 budget to develop strong partnerships and high-quality programming. Personnel & Benefits costs were the most significant allocation and include staff benefits. Partnership costs include consultancies, subawards, and other payments to fuel collaboration. Direct program costs include our travel, events, communications, and other expenses. Our overhead costs help to pay for our general operating expenses (e.g., liability insurance, etc.) and back-office staff.



Funders



We're grateful to the following foundations and partners that make our work possible:

- **AgLaunch Initiative**
- **Cedar Tree Foundation**
- **Food:Land:Opportunity**
- **Garfield Foundation**
- **Illinois Grazing Lands Coalition**
- **Kresge Foundation**
- **Lilah H. Fisher Foundation**
- **McKnight Foundation**
- **Regenerative Agriculture Foundation**
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**
- **USDA Agriculture Marketing Service**
- **USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture**
- **W.K. Kellogg Foundation**
- **Walton Family Foundation**



PHOTO: ELISABETH SPRATT



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