

Rethink Food

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

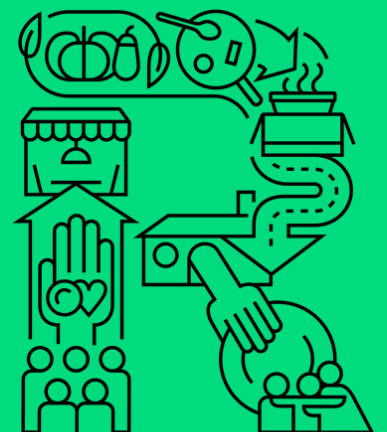
Thank you for being part of the Rethink Food community. While 2021 brought continued challenges and uncertainty that **disproportionately affected an already fragile restaurant industry and vulnerable communities**, we were also energized and inspired to forge ahead, try new things and focus on community building to **create a more sustainable and equitable food system**.

Continuing our commitment to bridging the gap between food that goes to waste and food-insecure communities, our work in 2021 was organized around two pillars:

- **Equity**—by expanding our emergency program and scaling the number of meals we served while simultaneously planning a more efficient and self-sufficient model for the future.
- **Sustainability**—by building a network of partners throughout the food ecosystem to convert more excess food into nutritious, culturally celebrated meals for communities.

To all the partners and supporters who joined our work during another challenging year, thank you. Together, we've directed **over 18 million dollars to dozens of restaurants and small businesses**—over 75% being women- or minority-owned. Along with our Commissary Kitchen, we created **3.6 million meals for communities in New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, Nashville, Washington D.C., and Miami**.

On behalf of the Rethink Food team, thank you for all you've done and continue to do to change our food system.



A DEEPLY ROOTED DUAL ISSUE

COMBINED WITH A NEW LEVEL OF NEED

It's always been clear that our food system needs improving:

Food Excess



108 billion pounds of food (40% of the country's food supply) is thrown away in the U.S. each year, making it the number one item in our landfills. It equals 8% of global, human-made greenhouse gas emissions and several dozen billion meals that are not making their way to the most vulnerable communities.

Food Insecurity



All the while in 2021, an estimated 42 million people across the country—including 13 million children—suffered from food insecurity¹, a rise of 4 million people compared to 2019². New York State ranked number 4 in the U.S. with over 2.5 million people impacted by food insecurity³.

This dual growing issue has existed long before the beginning of the pandemic and has only been exacerbated since then:

Inflation



Food prices increased at a staggering rate since the beginning of the pandemic and never came down in 2021, with an **average increase of 3.9%.** **Items like beef and veal rose by more than 9%.**

Restaurants



Since the beginning of the pandemic in NYC, it is estimated that **30% of restaurant sector jobs have still not returned** and that more than 4,500 restaurants have permanently closed. Government programs like the Restaurant Revitalization Fund provided needed support, but **only 28% of funding went to businesses in low to moderate-income communities.**

2021 RESPONSE

RAPID MEAL SCALING BY LEVERAGING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURES AND EXCESS FOOD

Equity



\$18 M

directly invested into local communities in 6 cities.



98

restaurant and small business partners—75% of which are women- or minority-owned.



3.6 M

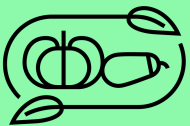
nutritious and culturally celebrated meals served.



112

community partners that serve restaurants meals tailored to community needs.

Sustainability



400K

pounds of food diverted from landfills and converted into meals.



316K

meals prepared by Rethink Food's Commissary Kitchen for the local community in NYC.

H2O

9.2M*

gallons of fresh water saved.

CO2

1M*

pounds of carbon dioxide saved**.

To Date

Since its founding in 2017, Rethink Food has directed **32.5 million dollars to restaurants and food establishments**; partnered with **over 75% minority and women-owned businesses**, and provided **over 8.3 million meals** to communities in 6 cities.

In New York City, specifically, Rethink Food has directed **over 29 million dollars** to local restaurants and small businesses; used **1.5 million pounds of excess food**, and distributed over 7.6 million meals.

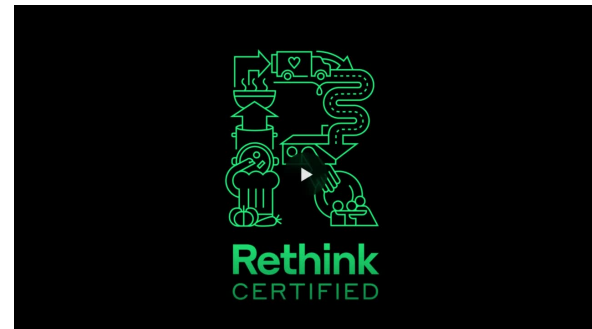
*Based on 1lb of excess food = 2.5 lbs of CO2 and 23 gallons of fresh water | **This does not include the CO2 emissions from our program.

CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Through our program's dual approach, we continued to leverage existing infrastructures and excess food to distribute more meals to vulnerable communities.

→ **Equity** through Rethink Certified Program—which was launched in April 2020 to celebrate those who operate in a culturally-celebrated way:

- We directed **over 18 million dollars into local restaurants and small businesses**—over 75% of whom were minority- and women-owned; partnered with **over 90 restaurants**; **expanded our work to Miami**; and provided up to **80,000 meals a week**—totaling **3.6 million meals**.
- **We started to transition from emergency response to a more scalable and sustainable model through restaurant fundraising.** In 2021, four restaurants in New York City, Miami, Nashville, and San Francisco committed to raising funds through their dining experience to support local meal production. **To date, they have raised over 500,000 dollars to support the production of over 100,000 meals.**



Watch the Rethink Certified Movie [here](#).

→ **Sustainability** through the Rethink Food Commissary Kitchen—our in-house hub for converting excess food into community meals:

- We received and processed **~400,000 pounds of excess and donated food from partners across the food ecosystem**—saving 1 million lbs of carbon dioxide and 9.2 million gallons of fresh water.
- We prepared **up to 35,000 meals a week**—totaling over 315,000 meals that were delivered to local CBOs 6 days a week, at no cost.



Learn more about the Rethink Certified program and our sustainability services [here](#).

In 2022:

- **Restaurants continue to leverage their existing infrastructure to support their local communities:** Chef Jenner Tomaska has incorporated fundraising for meals into the business model of Esmé Chicago. And the Yemeni-American Merchants Association (YAMA) launched a ten-week pilot to provide new and direct meal access points in Harlem and the Bronx.
- **Our commissary kitchen is converting thousands of pounds of donated excess fruits and vegetables into jams, purees, sauces, and soups that CBOs can order for free online** to stock their food pantries or utilize in their meal preparation. It is also now open to the public to look into how we operate and you can **[view our events](#)** page to book a personalized tour and tasting. Every ticket purchase will provide 20 nutritious meals.

PARTNERS IN ACTION

Throughout the past year, we had a unique opportunity to meet the urgency of the moment—supporting economic development and empowering local restaurants and businesses to be at the heart of the solution in their neighborhoods—while forging impactful partnerships to convert more excess food into meals. Our work is only possible with the support of a unique network through which resources and meals are provided to better serve communities.

FUNDRAISING RESTAURANTS



In Miami,

where 470,000 of Miami-Dade County's residents are food insecure—we launched the Rethink Certified program with Chef Michael Schwartz and The Genuine Hospitality Group. **To date the group has raised over 226,000 dollars, providing over 45,000 meals to communities.**

“At The Genuine Hospitality Group, we aspire to provide world-class food and service and be a mission-driven company that impacts our industry, community, and society positively. Food insecurity is a tragedy and through this partnership, Rethink Food has enabled us to give back to communities directly. We are excited to offer our guests a way to get involved” – **Sunil Bhatt, CEO of The Genuine Hospitality Group.**



In NYC,

we are accomplishing this through our longstanding partnership with Chef Daniel Humm and Eleven Madison Park. **Launched in April 2021, the Eleven Madison Truck serves up to 2,000 weekly meals in various food-insecure neighborhoods across NYC.**

“A meal is a touchpoint in people's lives—it's a moment to connect. Through the Eleven Madison Truck, we're looking at the restaurant model differently and giving back as part of our daily operations to address food insecurity.” – **Chef Daniel Humm, Eleven Madison Park.**



In San Francisco & Nashville,

Chef Dominique Crenn and Chef Sean Brock have furthered their commitment by including **fundraising support into their operations to support small local businesses to prepare community meals:**

“Rethink Food leads the charge to develop important changes our food system needs to see. I am honored to continue our partnership and to bring this program to new heights with fellow chefs” – **Chef Dominique Crenn, Atelier Crenn.**

“During the pandemic, I found a way with Rethink Food to redefine how my restaurant could give back to the community. Now that Audrey is open, I want our guests to not only experience what is possible with Southern food but how we can use food as a force for good.” – **Chef Sean Brock, Audrey.**

COMMUNITY RESTAURANTS AND CBOs

At the height of the pandemic, **Rethink Food joined forces with Salem United Methodist Church (SUMC) and the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (GHCC) to create a coalition of Harlem-based restaurants** to support the local community. Building on our approach to understanding people's food preferences, participating restaurants ensure access to nutritious, and culturally-celebrated meals.

In 2021, Rethink Food has invested **over 3 million dollars into local restaurants and businesses** to support the production of meals distributed by volunteers from SUMC five days a week. The partnership provided up to **9,200 weekly community meals cooked by the in-house SUMC kitchen and 9 Rethink Certified restaurants—including longstanding partners FIELDTRIP—totaling over 670,000 meals.**



"So it comes full circle. I could feed people and bring my staff back to work; now, people have jobs. They feel hope."

– JJ Johnson, FIELDTRIP

FIELDTRIP is a made-to-order Caribbean soul rice bowl concept owned and operated by award-winning author, TV personality, and chef, JJ Johnson. **Since becoming Rethink Certified in 2020, JJ Johnson's FIELDTRIP has prepared over 110,000 culturally-celebrated meals for food-insecure neighbors in Harlem.**

FOOD DONORS

In September 2021, Rethink Food began picking up excess food from Whole Foods Market in through Food Donation Connection and its decades of expertise in food recovery. **By the year's end, Whole Foods donated a total of 3,837 lbs of food utilized in meal production at the Rethink Food Commissary Kitchen.**

"Rethink food has been exceptional in its execution of picking up and distributing excess food from several Whole Foods in New York City and helping Whole Foods and FDC achieves their sustainability goals while getting much-needed food to the community."

– Steve Dietz, Vice-President of Business Development, Food Donation Connection.



See the full list of all 2021 partners [here](#).

ADVOCATING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Government support and funding are critical to addressing our country's challenges. In 2021, we continued solidifying relationships with city and state officials and advocating for our model—a transformative solution that invests in restaurants and leverages their existing infrastructure to effectively and sustainably provide meals to communities in a cost-effective and culturally celebrated way.

As a prime example, we partnered with City Harvest for the **2021-2022 New York State Restaurant Resiliency Program** administered by the Department of Agriculture, which allocated 25 million dollars to the New York State food banks. City Harvest received 1 million dollars in partnership with Rethink Food to allocate to restaurants. **Together, we provided ~50,000 meals from 19 restaurants—67% of which were minority- and women-owned—and partnered with 9 emergency food providers to serve four boroughs.**

The program was successfully concluded in March 2022, and we are grateful to City Harvest for working with us. We are also thankful for the support and advocacy of former Assemblymember—and now current Secretary of State—Robert Rodriguez for advocating for the NYS Restaurant Resiliency Program.



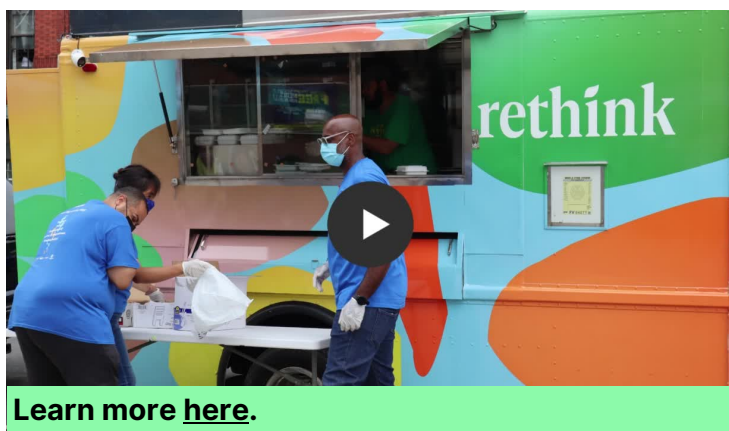
OTHER INITIATIVES & CASE STUDIES

At the core of our work, we are inventive and vulnerable. We pilot initiatives to find practical solutions that can create lasting change.



Providing meals to NYC kids during the summer

1 out of every 5 children relies on school lunches—making summer break a challenging time for families across New York City. During the summer months of 2021, we operated Meals on the Move—a four-month-long program to provide nutritious meals to kids and families. **With restaurant partner, Gyro King, two Rethink Food trucks distributed up to 4,000 weekly meals to 10 schools and sites in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx** as part of our goal to provide upwards of 100,000 weekly meals last summer throughout the city.



[Learn more here.](#)



Piloting a brick-and-mortar destination for community meals

The Rethink Cafe opened in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, at the height of the pandemic in March 2020, when food insecurity was at an all-time high. As **one of New York City's first pay-what-you-can community cafés**, it invited everyone to enjoy a nutritious meal for a suggested donation of 5 dollars.

Over the following 18 months, the Rethink Cafe proudly served over 15,000 meals and over 9,000 pantry and to-go items to the local community.

Though we saw success, we recognized our impact is more significant when focusing on restaurant support and sustainability services rather than a direct service approach, which community partners do best. This is why at the end of 2021, **we worked with long-term partner Collective Fare—a full-service catering company located in Brooklyn—to take over operations and launch Collective Fare's Kitchen and Canteen**, a plant-forward sliding scale takeout/delivery concept that leverages subsidies from organizations such as Rethink Food.

SUPPORTERS

Everything we do to change our food system for the better would not have been possible in 2021 without the help and generosity of our community—including corporations, foundations, and individuals. We are beyond thankful for your support of our mission and for joining us in this important work.

Anonymous (5)
The Alphadyne Foundation
Athletic Brewing
The J. Baker Foundation
H & F Baker Foundation
Michele and Timothy Barakett
The Chervenak-Nunnalle Foundation
Clark Foundation
Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation
Julia and Jonathan Cohen

Cheryl and Blair Effron
Eleven Madison Park
The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust
Tracy Tang Limpe
Pershing Square Foundation
Marshall and Amy Smith
Ben and Blair Stein
Zachary Sternberg
Oscar Tang and Agnes Hsu-Tang
Tiger Global Philanthropic Ventures
Natasha and Dirk Ziff

Click [here](#) for the full list of 2021 supporters.

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the above list, but errors and omissions may rarely occur. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or misspelled, please [contact us](#).



HELP BRING MUCH-NEEDED MEALS TO COMMUNITIES

Over 38 million people are still food-insecure in the U.S.

100% of your gift will bring nutritious and culturally celebrated meals to local communities.

[DONATE NOW](#)

[GOVERNANCE](#)

[GET INVOLVED](#)

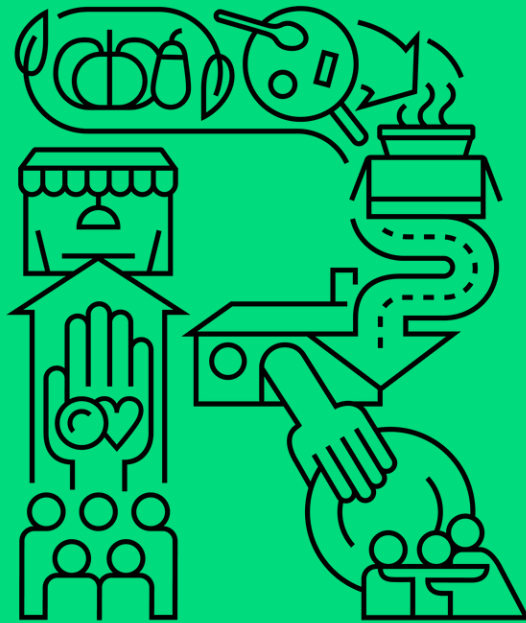


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- Lacko, A. M., & Henchy, G. (2021). Hunger, Poverty, and Health Disparities During COVID-19 and the Federal Nutrition Programs' Role in an Equitable Recovery. Washington, DC: Food Research & Action Center.
- Feeding America, [The Impact of the Coronavirus on Local Food Insecurity in 2020 & 2021](https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research) (released March 31, 2021) from <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research>



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