



Q4 2024 Report

Fair Food Fund

Message from our Team

When we conceived of the **Fair Food Fund**'s unique structure – an investment fund connected to a mission-driven non-profit – we aimed to amplify our impact in the food ecosystem, interweaving investment products and services in support of a shared mission. **In 2024, we did that, making 15 investments in 12 food businesses totaling more than \$700,000.**

But Fair Food Fund is so much more than a lender or technical assistance provider. Fair Food Fund aims for impact far greater than any lender could accomplish on its own. As a pioneering initiative, we're always learning and innovating, increasing our capacity as we customize our offerings to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

As we look ahead to 2025, we're pleased to announce the onboarding of two new members to the impact investing team. Our newest investment manager, **RJ Archambo**, has nine years of experience working with startups and helping underrepresented founders access capital. Most recently RJ was the managing director of a small private investment firm where he worked with food and beverage companies in Northern Michigan. To continue to tailor support to business owners and strengthen our collaboration with partners, we've also added a Business Resource Navigator to the team. **Erin Elly** brings five years of experience providing resources and consultation to entrepreneurs and will collaborate with Fair Food Fund team members and external partners to determine the pre- and post-investment resources food businesses need to ensure they are well-prepared for loan approval and long-term success.

As we well know, those resources look different for food businesses at different stages in their development. That's why we've committed to addressing critical gaps in the business support ecosystem, especially in its ability to effectively serve growth-stage businesses. Going forward, we'll continue to innovate and experiment with financing tools and advanced technical assistance tailored specifically to growing food operations.

In the coming year, we're poised to do so much more to make sure more resources go to businesses that create access to affordable food and benefit their surrounding communities and local economies. To make our work possible, our investment fund holds two revolving capital pools designed to catalyze financing for high-impact businesses that have struggled to find financing with traditional lenders. The **Direct Investment Food Systems Change Pool** exists to provide flexible, direct investment products designed for modest return and high impact, while the **Collateral Pool** is a revolving pool of catalytic capital designed to unlock more resources for entrepreneurs seen as higher risk by conventional business lenders.

We appreciate your past support and invite you to visit our website to learn more about ways to collaborate with the Fair Food Fund to help businesses that are investing in the health and vitality of their communities.

— Fair Food Fund Team

Upcoming Events

- Fair Food Network CEO **Kate Krauss**, as well as Director of Investments, **Joel Moyer**, and Senior Fellow, **Noah Fulmer**, will be presenting at the second annual **Farm Stop Conference**, led by Argus Farm Stop and sponsored by Fair Food Network March 2–4 in Ann Arbor, MI. This year's theme is Building Strong Retail Systems for Local Farmers and Local Food. Participants will discuss best practices in farm retail; attend informational presentations on topics such as innovation in retail and supporting local growers and economies; and network with operators across the country who are joining the rising wave of local markets selling local food direct to consumers.
- We hope to see Confluence members March 11–13 in San Francisco at **Confluence Philanthropy's 15th Anniversary Practitioners Gathering**. Fair Food Network CEO **Kate Krauss** will lead a panel discussion on the appeal of deeply local economies and the movement to give communities more control, resilience, and hope. Through the lens of food, Kate and her fellow panelists will explore how we can create spaces for blue, red, and purple places and their policymakers to organize and see themselves included in a democratic vision of the future.

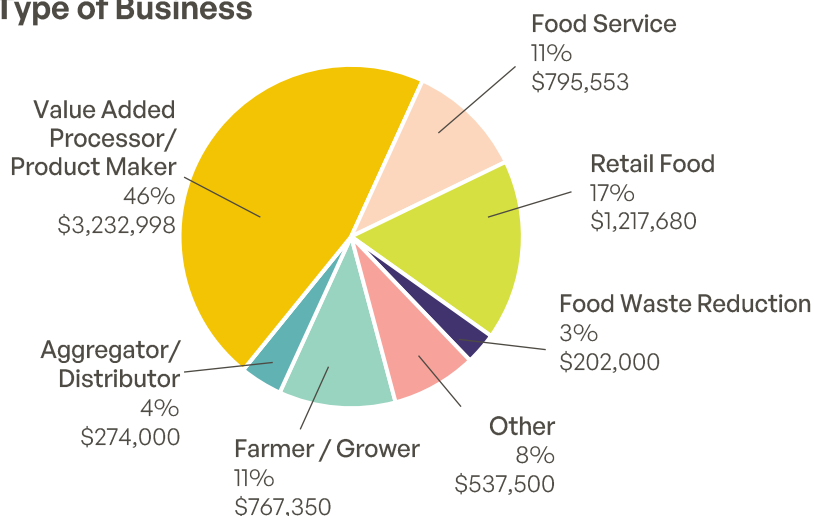


Portfolio Overview (Fund Lifetime)

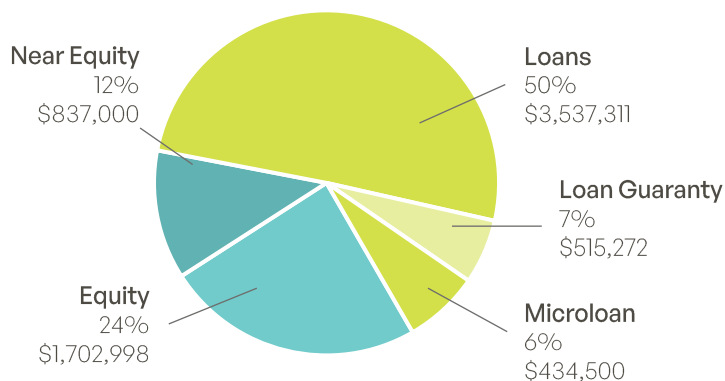
Financing Invested	\$7,027,081
Financing Outstanding	\$4,415,592
Investment Income	\$1,925,696

Loss Rate: As of December 31, 2024, the annualized loss rate since the Fund's inception (2012) is .73% or 9.2% cumulatively. This includes all realized write-offs on an investment capital pool of \$8.4 million.

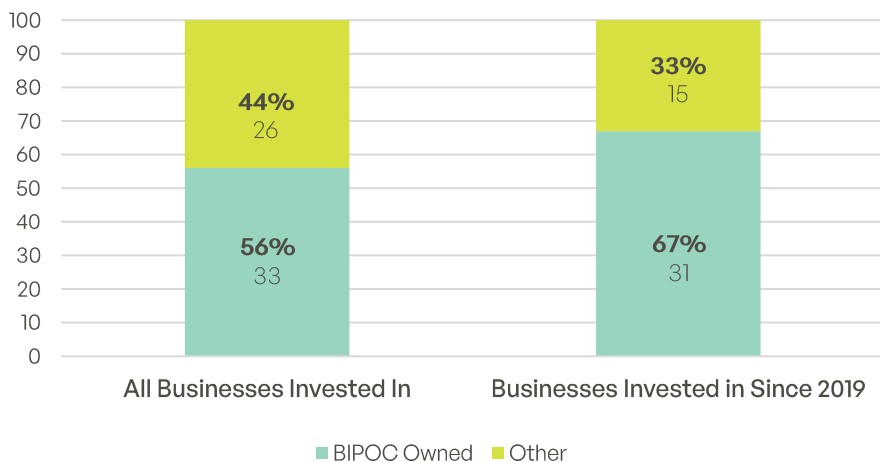
Type of Business



Type of Structure



Portfolio by Demographics (Race)



Investment Spotlight: Sprout Urban Farm

As the founder and director of **Sprout Urban Farms**, **Jeremy Andrews** knows the value of patience, having spent more than a decade building community gardens, operating a multi-farm CSA, launching an incubator kitchen, and providing educational opportunities to “build a stronger Battle Creek [MI] through the food system.”

“I came to farming through food activism and community organizing, so I understand that it takes time to establish healthy food access and food sovereignty in a community,” says Andrews. “At Sprout, these things are ingrained in our work.”

Andrews’ next project has been more than five years in the making. In 2025, Andrews and his team will launch **Uproot Market and Eatery**, a full-service, member-owned food co-op emphasizing local, sustainable, and humane natural food systems. The grocery store is committed to selling locally grown products to support local farmers and food entrepreneurs and anticipates creating eight full-time and 22 part-time jobs. An attached café will feature house-made prepared foods.

Sprout Urban Farms began developing this project back in 2019, in a part of Battle Creek with little access to healthy foods and few grocery stores. Throughout their journey, they’ve been supported by technical assistance and catalytic funding from **Fair Food Fund** and our **Michigan Good Food Fund** partners. In late December, we provided a loan to support the build-out and equipment purchases in preparation for Uproot’s official launch in the spring.

Sprout has been responsible for a number of community-based institutions devoted to providing healthful, affordable food in the Battle Creek area. “Uproot Market is a way for us to weave together a lot of what we’ve been building over the past 10 years or so,” says Andrews. “As a not-for-profit and a co-op, the market is owned by the community, so our focus is on the well-being of the community.”

With support from Fair Food Fund, **LISC**, and nearly 300 co-op members, it’s clear that for the Battle Creek community, the coming launch of Uproot Market and Eatery has been well worth the wait.