



IFMA
**The Food Away
from Home
Association**



2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



Letter from the Chair

In future decades, our association will note 2024 as the year we changed our name and confirmed our evolution to provide services to the entire food-away-from-home business ecosystem.

Although we were founded in 1952 to focus on food and beverage manufacturers, over the decades the interconnectedness of the supply chain has become more and more apparent. Manufacturers, operators, and distribution partners need each other to address critical challenges, and our association exists to help facilitate connection, collaboration, and deeper understanding among our segments.

Our new identity – IFMA The Food Away from Home Association – and our expanded membership more accurately reflect our strategy to represent the entire community of food-away-from-home companies. We firmly believe that it's critical we all work together, not in silos, to address critical issues and advance the industry.

Of course, our new branding is just a part of what we've accomplished for our industry this year. In this report you'll get a snapshot of the programs, events, and educational opportunities we provided our members over the course of 2024. You'll find links throughout for further information.

THE YEAR'S MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Adding 200 operators and 50 additional manufacturer, supply chain, and service provider companies to our membership
- Hosting more than 2,700 attendees at our events and conferences
- Continuing to educate through our webinars – 27 over the course of the year with a combined 4,700+ registrants
- Launching a new podcast and industry-wide newsletter
- And much more!

We are heading into 2025 with more big plans! You won't want to miss it. If you're not yet a member, please join us. [Find association membership details here.](#)

On to 2025!



Phil Kafarakis

IFMA The Food Away from Home Association
President & CEO



Ben Wexler

2024 Board Chair, IFMA The Food Away from Home Association
Custom Culinary

Revealing *Our Brand Identity*

After decades of branding ourselves the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA), we realized that we had reached the time for a refresh. In early November, at our annual Presidents Conference, we announced that our 72-year-old organization is now “**IFMA The Food Away from Home Association.**”



1950s



1970s



1980s



2000s



IFMA
The Food Away
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Association

Current

The decision to rebrand involved months of research, surveying members and others, engaging an agency with experience in associations, and plain old brainstorming.

Our board did a tremendous job of guiding us to the ultimate decision.

To make the Big Announcement, we asked representatives of our membership to come together on stage at our largest annual in-person event. They each played a part in telling the story of how we got to this point in our history and why we felt a rebrand was needed. **It was a powerful presentation!**



Our Vision

To champion an inclusive FAFH ecosystem that collaborates to build innovative solutions that advance the industry.

Our Mission

Be the agent of change leading a dynamic, transparent and engaged FAFH community that will help grow our members' businesses.



Our Purpose

To empower, nurture, and connect the FAFH ecosystem so it may thrive and responsibly meet consumer needs.



Our Values

Service
Integrity
Inclusion
Open to Possibilities
Collaborative Spirit

What is the *Food-Away-from-Home Industry?*

We define the food-away-from-home industry by drawing on the USDA's Economic Research Service definition as businesses that support food purchased and consumed outside of the home.

This category covers a broad range of foodservice establishments, including restaurants, fast food outlets, cafes, bars, schools, hospitals, and other institutions. Additionally, it includes ready-to-eat foods from grocery and convenience stores, such as deli or prepared items.

We include those businesses that supply and support the foodservice segments, notably manufacturers, packagers, distributors, and others across the supply chain.

In 2023, consumer spending on food-away-from-home reached \$1.5 trillion, accounting for 58.5% of total U.S. food expenditures—a historic high that highlights Americans' increasing preference for dining out due to lifestyle changes and convenience factors.



Membership

LEVEL UP

IFMA The Food Away from Home Association is dedicated to fostering an inclusive community that integrates all segments crucial to advancing the industry.

In 2024, we maintained a very high membership retention rate while adding 50 new non-operator industry members and nearly 200 operator members to our roster. We count these categories separately because operators, in lieu of dues, become association members by active participation at either of our two largest annual events, COEX and/or Presidents Conference.

Beginning in January 2024, our membership has been structured in a tiered approach for manufacturers,

supply chain, and service provider member companies. The tiers allow for flexibility and customization so members may choose to move up a tier through additional dues payment and access more association benefits.

Operator members receive benefits based upon their category of membership: Those who participated in COEX and Presidents Conference, those who serve on a Foodservice Leadership Council, and those individual foodservice professionals who pay a nominal membership fee.

View details of the [varying membership benefits](#), based on category and tier.

Our four membership categories are:



Includes sectors such as food & beverage production, equipment manufacturing, packaging, food safety & cleaning, and ingredients supply



Covers broadline and specialty distributors, cash & carry services, and redistributors, ensuring the efficient movement of goods across the industry



Encompasses commercial restaurants, non-commercial entities (K-12 schools, colleges/universities, healthcare facilities, business & industry dining services), convenience store foodservice, grocery foodservice, and foodservice management companies



Includes businesses involved in commerce and/or transaction facilitation, financial services, sales & marketing services, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support the industry's infrastructure

2024

New Members



Events



Our annual Chain Operators EXchange (COEX) brought several hundred operators, food manufacturers, suppliers, and industry service providers to Kansas City, MO, March 3 to 5. COEX was coordinated by a planning committee of 40+ operator companies to address common concerns and offer business-building networking sessions.



The conference theme, Evolution Engaged, was used to highlight the transformations happening across food-away-from-home and the responsive strategies available to leverage those evolutions for positive results.

IFMA The Food Away from Home Association

Operator Speed Meetings drew record attendance and engagement, and for the first time, we facilitated match-making meetings between chain and manufacturer attendees.



Keynote speakers included CEO of Brinker International, Kevin Hochman, and leaders from McDonald's, Chick-fil-A, Bloomin' Brands, Dairy Queen, Zaxby's and more.



[Review highlights of COEX 2024](#)

[Review of the culinary activities at COEX](#)



For over 70 years, we have brought together leaders from across the food-away-from-home ecosystem to tackle the macro and micro issues at hand. This year, with our newly expanded membership, we focused on bringing together diverse perspectives and voices to address the critical issues we face as a collective industry.



In breakouts and the general sessions, we brought in leaders from across the industry to share perspectives on developments within their segments that may impact others.



Speakers included: George Holm, CEO of Performance Food Group Company (PFG); Joel Neikirk, President and CEO of Restaurant Services, Inc. (RSI); Aaron Wiese, President of HyVee; Gina Tobin, President of Texas Roadhouse; Shelley Harris, President, Restaurant Brands at GoTo Foods, and many more.

[Review the highlights of the 2024 Presidents Conference here.](#)



The Next Gen Exec Program is designed to develop and empower the next generation of foodservice industry leaders. Through dynamic learning experiences, networking opportunities, and insights from industry experts, this program equips emerging professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to drive innovation and success in their organizations.

[Cont. on Page 11](#)

Gold & Silver Plate Weekend

On Saturday, May 18, nearly 600 industry leaders gathered to celebrate IFMA's 70th annual Gold & Silver Plate Awards Celebration, the industry's longest-standing and most respected legacy awards program.



The awards ceremony was held in the beautiful Great Hall of Chicago's Union Station. An inspiring program and dinner recognized the Silver Plate winners and all cheered for the announcement of the 2024 Gold Plate honoree – **Chris Tomasso**, President & CEO at First Watch Restaurant Group.



Grocery, Convenience, & Specialty Retail Category
Jen & Jon Corto,
 Owners & Founders,
 Buffalo Strive



Healthcare
David Reeves,
 System Director, Food & Nutrition Services,
 Lee Health



Director of Culinary Services
Aaron Smith,
 Director of Culinary Services,
 Seattle Public Schools



Travel & Leisure
Roz Mallet,
 President & CEO,
 PhaseNext Hospitality



Independent Restaurants
Melvin Rodriguez,
 President
 Galatoire Restaurants



Chain Full Service & Gold Plate Winner
Chris Tomasso,
 President & CEO,
 First Watch Restaurant Group



Business & Industry, Foodservice Management
Damian Monticello,
 Directory of Enterprise Hospitality & Event Services,
 GuideWell



Colleges & Universities
Kirk Rodriguez
 Sr. Director of Hospitality Services and the Student Union & Activities,
 Texas Tech



Events

NEXT GEN EXECS +

These rising leaders are nominated by industry executives for their exceptional potential, dedication, and ability to make a lasting impact.

The 2024 cohort included 44 outstanding individuals who came together quarterly to address shared challenges and gain valuable insights from industry leaders on professional development topics. Throughout the year, they participated in small group discussions, fostering meaningful connections and cultivating a strong peer community. The Next Gen Execs also played a pivotal role in the success of our 2024 events including: COEX, the IFMA Education Foundation Summit, and Presidents Conference by introducing sessions, contributing to a panel discussion, providing guidance to students from Association partner schools during Career Advisory Sessions, and engaging with key stakeholders. Through these activities, the program continues to shape the future of foodservice by investing in its most valuable resource—its people.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION SUMMIT +

The 2024 IFMA Education Foundation Summit is the lead-in event for Gold & Silver Plate Weekend. At this year's Summit, we hosted six different colleges and universities for a jammed packed day of education and networking. Attending students and their advisors came from Purdue, University of Illinois, Kansas State University, Florida International University, Northern Arizona State, and Michigan State University - making this the biggest and most robust event to date.

[View Highlights of the Education Foundation Summit.](#)

MARKETING & SALES DIGITAL CONFERENCE +

Over three engaging days, a thousand registrants enjoyed a comprehensive program featuring 25+ insightful sessions packed with cutting-edge go-to-market strategies.

Experts from across and outside the food-away-from-home industry shared the latest data on consumer trends and behaviors, information and examples of what's working today and what's expected to make a real impact tomorrow, and a look at the inside track on exactly what sort of tactics are needed for success.

[Review highlights of the 2024 Marketing & Sales Conference here.](#)

NEW IN 2024 OPERATOR / SUPPLIER XCHANGE +

We held a pilot event for the College & University foodservice segment in Q4. Over a dozen C&U operators and an equal number of manufacturer companies participated in one-on-one meetings over the course of a day in Dallas with the goal of developing active business partnerships. The feedback was so positive that we plan additional segment Xchange events in 2025.



WEBINARS

27

HOSTED WEBINARS

4.7K+

REGISTRANTS

Our most popular webinars in 2024 were:

New, Now & Next: Menu Trends to Watch

College & University Operators - A Supplier Collaboration Guidebook

2024 Foodservice Industry Forecast

Our webinars featured speakers from multiple companies, each offering a unique perspective to their area of expertise. AI was a hot topic, along with menu trends and forecasting. A look at the new government guidelines for school nutrition, featuring Donna Martin EdS RDN SNS, was a highlight. All 2024 webinars are available on our Resources section.



NEW ALLIANCE TO ADDRESS FSMA 204

We joined with seven other prominent food industry organizations in 2024 to form the "Food Industry FSMA 204 Collaboration" to enhance industry-wide awareness of the FDA's FSMA Rule 204. The goal is to share clear, concise messaging and resources that will enable our industry to prepare for implementation of the rule.

The Collaboration will provide a forum where business and government officials can come together to educate industry and potentially help ease the burden of compliance.

FOODSERVICE FUNDAMENTALS™

REGISTER

This one-day course is designed for anyone new to the industry and for those needing a refresher on the U.S. food-away-from-home supply chain and how the overall marketplace is structured. It's the longest-running course in the business, and over 2,000 professionals have attended in the past ten years.

2024 was the most successful year in the program's history. We hit maximum capacity for the three in-person courses we hosted at our Education Center in downtown Chicago, and we presented a customized class for six companies – including a large, national pizza chain. Due to the success of the program, we plan to host the class quarterly in 2025, along with continuing to offer it on-demand digitally and on-site at our members' headquarters.

DONATE



IFMA The Food Away from Home Association

Education Foundation

Our Education Foundation provides support to qualified business, marketing, supply chain, culinary, and food science students. Our commitment is to ensure the next generation of food professionals receives support and encouragement to make the food industry a lifelong career choice.

One of the major ways we do that is in partnership with some of the nation's leading colleges and universities. We collaborate to award \$5,000 scholarships and \$1,000 internship stipends to a variety of students each year.

The Education Foundation also hosts an annual Education Summit in conjunction with Gold & Silver Plate Awards weekend each May. Additional activities are under development for the future – including building pathways to engage students directly with the association's food manufacturer members.



Scholarships Awarded

\$240K



PennState



Expanding Our Audience

Our new branding is, in part, a recognition of the breadth of our community. We know that not everyone in the industry knows who we are or what we offer, and we focused efforts this year on expanding awareness through new communication channels and digital engagement.

SALES AGENCIES NEW ADDITION

This year, we have invited sales agencies to join the association. Several segment leaders spoke during a session at Presidents Conference and we will be adding a brand-new Foodservice Leadership Council representing sales agencies in 2025. It's important to us to include their concerns and challenges as we move to serve the entire ecosystem. [Read more here.](#)

A NEW PODCAST: FOOD CEO XCHANGE

We launched a new podcast in the fourth quarter of the year. In the podcast, called [Food CEO Xchange](#), the Association President & CEO, Phil Kafarakis, holds personal conversations with industry executives, giving listeners direct access to their hard-won wisdom and practical insights. Initial guests included Frances Allen of Checkers and Rally's, Lance Trenary of Golden Corral, and Dick Tracey of Dot Foods. More great foodservice leaders are already lined up for 2025.



FOLLOW

APPLE PODCAST

SPOTIFY

SOUNDCLOUD

INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER LAUNCHES: THE FOOD INDUSTRY PULSE

SUBSCRIBE

Food Industry Pulse

The newsletter, [The Food Industry Pulse](#), provides need-to-know information from across the industry of food producers, manufacturers, distributors, supply chain, service providers, and operators.

BUILDING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS

FOLLOW US



The association maintains a presence on LinkedIn, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and Facebook. Most of our activity is on LinkedIn, with **9,685** followers on that platform.

- Nearly **13K** social media followers
- Over **343K** organic impressions
- **13%** average engagement rate on LinkedIn



IFMA The Food Away
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Foodservice Leadership Council



In future decades, our association will note 2024 as the year we changed our name and confirmed our evolution to provide services to the entire food-away-from-home business ecosystem.

The five councils are made up of more than 150 food-away-from-home operators, representing major segments of foodservice: K-12, College & University, Business & Industry, Healthcare, and Restaurants. Active participants in the FLCs are all designated as association members in recognition of their ongoing service.

[LEARN MORE](#)

In 2024 the FLCs discussed multiple topics of interest to their segment. Labor challenges, menu planning, FSMA 204, and the growing influence of technology were common topics across all the FLCs. Sustainability, with a focus on reducing food waste, stood out as a topic that brought a lot of new ideas and a passion for continued work to address the issue. Looking ahead to 2025, the FLCs are all curious on how the new administration will impact immigrant labor, tariffs on food and beverages, and the expansion of AI capabilities.

The 2024 chairs of the FLCs were:

Elementary and Secondary Schools:

Chair: Whitney Ellersick, Portland (OR) Public Schools

Colleges & Universities:

Chair: Peter Testory, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Business & Industry:

Chair: Daniel Cramer, CBRE @Credit Suisse (interim)

Healthcare:

Chair: Michael Vetro, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Restaurants:

Chair: Aaron Weedy, Ledo Pizza System

2024

Board of Directors

We thank these individuals for their commitment and service to our association in 2023:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Chair: **Ben Wexler** – Custom Culinary

Vice-Chair: **Teri Trullinger** – Cargill

Treasurer : **Greg Cocchiarella** – Ecolab

Membership: **Oliver Kelly** – Kerry

Education Foundation Chair: **Tim Wayne** – J.M. Smucker Company

At-Large: **Kristin Bird** – T. Marzetti

At-Large : **Fleur Veldhoven** – Nestlé Professional

At-Large : **Eric Blumenthal** – The Coca-Cola Company

Past Chair: **Hugh Roth** – PepsiCo Global Foodservice

Past Chair: **Herb Ring** – The Hershey Company

BOARD DIRECTORS:

Tom Bell – Wayne Farms

Reilly Berk – Berk Enterprises

Erin Buntin – Schreiber Foods, Inc.

Kelly Crouse – C.H. Guenther & Sons

Stephanie Luross-Gilbert – BSI

Christin Illes – Illes Foods

Adam LeDonne – Ventura

Lauren Lopez – Rich Products

Art Michaels – Smithfield Foods

Beau Netzer – Aspire Bakeries

Ashley Peeples – Royal Cup Coffee

Barbara Powell – Mount Franklin Foods

Ian Roberts – Conagra

Tom Rupkey – High Liner Foods



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