



NORTH AMERICAN  
LINEN  
ASSOCIATION

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2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# NORTH AMERICAN LINEN ASSOCIATION



## Mission

The North American Linen Association promotes commercial fiber flax agriculture, bast fiber processing infrastructure, and textile manufacturing in North America to advance sustainability and resilience in the organic agriculture, bast fiber, textile and the fashion industries.

## Vision

The North American Linen Association brings together interest groups from all stages of the supply chain to share in infrastructure development, networking, best practices, and marketing campaigns to advance the North American fiber flax to linen industry.

## Acknowledgement

The North American Linen Association (NALA) honors the Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded the lands across North America for generations. NALA recognizes their enduring presence and contributions, and we commit to respecting their rights and the natural world they have long protected.

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# Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Members, Collaborators, and Flax Enthusiasts,

As we reflect on 2024, it is with pride and gratitude that we share the achievements of the North American Linen Association (NALA). This year has been full of growth and unwavering commitment to advancing towards reviving the North American Linen Industry.

Guided by our Board of Directors, NALA has significantly strengthened its role as a trusted advocate and essential resource in revitalizing North American flax and linen production for the fiber flax sector. Our shared vision and strategic direction have driven initiatives that benefit our members, foster collaboration, and unlock the industry's full potential for the future.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Shannon Welsh, NALA's Executive Director, whose exceptional dedication and ability to engage with stakeholders have been vital to the smooth execution of our programs and delivery of valuable resources to members. As a passionate advocate for fiber, textiles, and apparel design, Shannon brings over two decades of experience in raw fiber and material development, regenerative agriculture, regional textile systems revitalization, community outreach, and education. Her work as Co-Founder and CEO of Fibrevolution and Bast Fiber Producers, Executive Director of NALA, and Founder of Pacific Northwest Fibershed reflects her commitment to bridging gaps in the regenerative textile landscape and revitalizing the historic linen industry in Oregon.

This year, we celebrated several key milestones. NALA increased membership by 63%, with an 92% membership retention rate, and introduced new educational programs and member social/networking opportunities to equip members with the necessary tools to grow fiber flax in North America. We also created a more substantial presence on social media and collaborated with industry organisations that share our goals. These accomplishments that reflect our association are gaining strength and its members' dedication.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your ongoing support and engagement. We invite you to explore this annual report to learn more about our progress and future opportunities.

With warm regards,



Board of Directors  
North American Linen Association

# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members, Supporters and Partners,

Looking back on a year filled with progress and collaboration, I am delighted to share the significant milestones we have achieved together at the North American Linen Association. The collective efforts of our members, supporters, and partners have been instrumental in our journey. Together, we have revitalized flax production for fiber, a significant achievement that we can all take pride in. My extensive research of North America's flax fiber history has confirmed its potential for restoration across the continent, a testament to our shared vision and dedication.

At NALA, we are a purposeful and active grassroots organization, and our success is a testament to the dedication of our Board of Directors and members. I am deeply grateful to each of you for your willingness to roll up your sleeves and contribute your skills and expertise to establish our shared vision of an industry trade association that promotes flax for fiber production. Your contributions have been invaluable, and I am proud of what we have accomplished together on a shoestring budget. I envision what we could achieve and offer our members with increased support, and it is your commitment that makes this vision possible.

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud of the goals we have accomplished at NALA. We have increased our membership outreach, expanded benefits for our members, and fostered network collaborations through our events. We are committed to growing our staff and operational capacity to further our mission and offer more member benefits. As the Executive Director, I have led NALA's operations with the invaluable support of our Board of Directors and members. Our mission to revitalize North America's flax fiber and linen industry remains at the core of our

work, and we are dedicated to advocating for the interests of our members.

As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. We are confident that we will make lasting and meaningful progress with your continued support. The future is bright, and we look forward to the journey ahead with optimism and enthusiasm, knowing we have a strong team of members, supporters, and partners. Together, we can achieve great things.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Your engagement and commitment empower us to fulfill our mission and create enduring value for all. We sincerely appreciate your support and look forward to continuing to thrive and build a brighter future for our industry and communities. Your support is invaluable and integral to our success.

Sincerely,

Shannon Welsh  
Executive Director  
North American Linen Association



## Board of **Directors**



Annette Herboth  
**Board President**



Fiona Barrett  
**Board Co-Vice President**



Arin Gintowt  
**Board Co-Vice President**



Meara McNally Butler  
**Board Treasurer/Secretary**



Jason Asch  
**Board Director**



Heidi Barr  
**Board Director**



Alvin Ulrich  
**Board Director**



Carol Hyland  
**Board Director**



Kristina Foley  
**Board Director**

## Operations of the Board

The Board of Directors is pivotal in managing the affairs of NALA. Charged with fiduciary responsibility, the Board ensures that NALA aligns with its mission while maintaining transparency, accountability, and excellence.

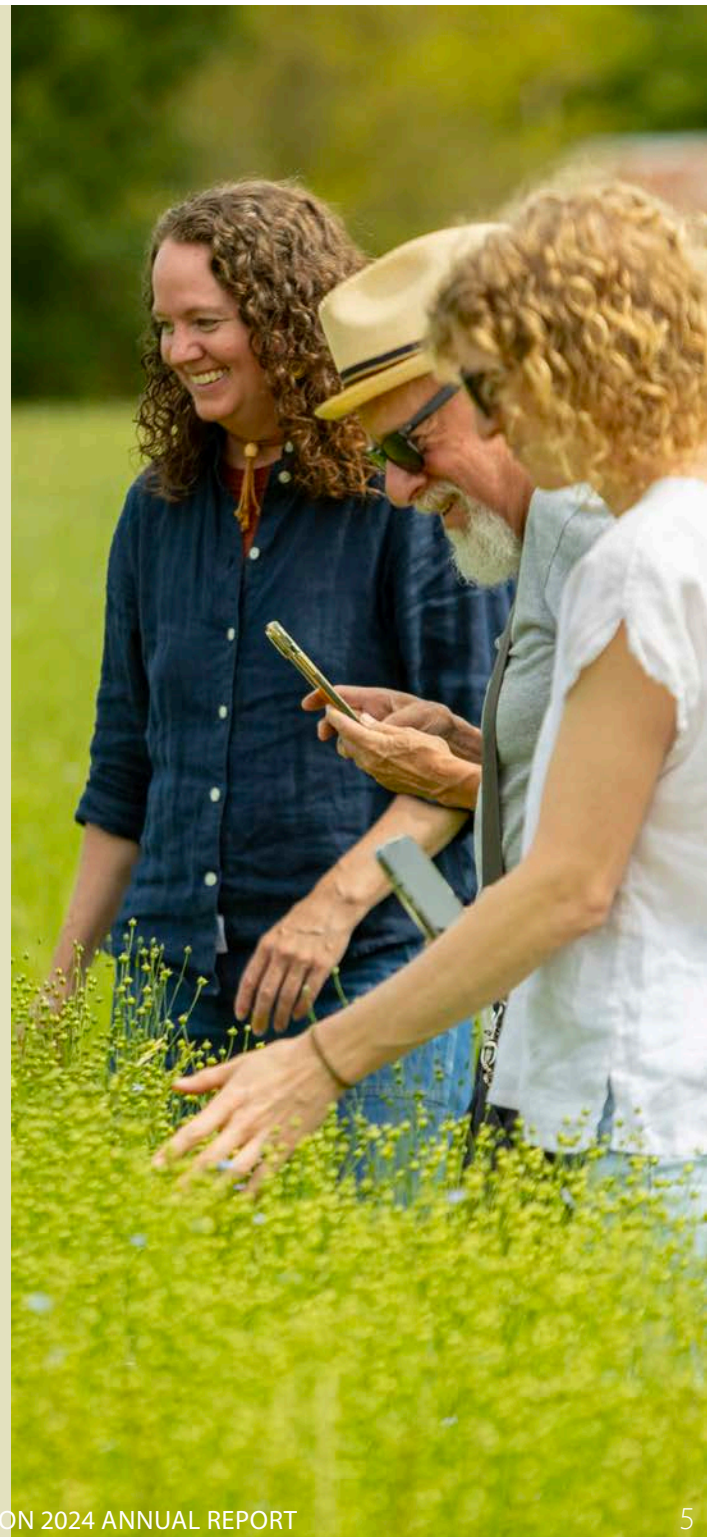
Essential duties of the Board of Directors include:

- ✓ **Budget Oversight** Adopting the NALA budget and regularly reviewing financial performance against it.
- ✓ **Policy Governance** Establishing and maintaining policies, procedures, rules, and regulations to guide the organization.
- ✓ **Professional Guidance** Retaining legal and other professional services as needed.
- ✓ **Leadership Selection** Selecting and, if necessary, removing the directors of NALA.

In addition to these governance responsibilities, the Board also fulfills broader expectations to ensure the organization's success:

- » Actively contributing to NALA's strategic direction, goal-setting, and operational planning.
- » Preparing for, attending, and engaging in board meetings.
- » Sharing expertise by participating in working groups or committees.
- » Acting as advocates and ambassadors to enhance NALA's visibility and public image.
- » Leveraging personal and professional networks to support membership growth and fundraising initiatives.
- » Creating an inclusive environment that values diverse experiences and perspectives within the boardroom and organization.
- » Adhering to NALA's bylaws, policies, and board resolutions.

The collective dedication of the NALA Board of Directors ensures the organization remains a leader in the industry, advancing initiatives that benefit our members and the broader community. Their commitment to governance, advocacy, and collaboration strengthens NALA's ability to achieve its mission and goals.





# Goals, Strategy, and Achievements in 2024

Priorities	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Member Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Member Socials</li> <li>• Launch Slack Channel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add Guest Speaker to socials</li> <li>• Launch Membership Directory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of Members Only Resource Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and produce Annual Report for February 2025 release</li> </ul>
<b>Membership Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up Marketing and Membership (M&amp;M) Committee</li> <li>• Define M&amp;M's scope</li> <li>• Determine member cohorts with new infographic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop custom invitational messaging for member cohorts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership outreach</li> <li>• Promote regional events:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harvest / Field Days</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship Building:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Textile Exchange</li> <li>- Host TSA Panel Event</li> <li>- NALA to join Alphabet Soup Collaborative</li> <li>- TechTextil</li> <li>- FutureFabrics Expo New York City</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Yamhill County Grant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver video 1 of 3 to members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver video 2 of 3 to members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver video 3 of 3 to members</li> </ul>	
<b>Content and Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create website content and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase social media posts; bi-monthly member newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue social media posts and bi-monthly member newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started planning for the Flax Fiber Status Report</li> </ul>
<b>Future Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define 2024 flax processing priorities</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build influencer network for regional content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define 2025 priorities and goals</li> </ul>



**NALA Resource Library:** NALA has established a shared Google Drive that serves as our resource library. All members have access to this drive, which contains a wealth of research and resources related to flax-to-linen. In 2023, NALA launched an educational video series available on our YouTube site as part of our Yamhill County Grant Project. This series aims to demonstrate the increased acreage and mechanical harvesting techniques used in flax fiber production.

**Bi-weekly industry member newsletter:** NALA issued 20 member newsletters in 2024 with a notable 70% open rate. The member newsletter allows NALA and its members to share their knowledge, events, and press with the growing NALA community.

**The Parsons Healthy Materials Lab** showcased **Regeneration of Flax: Linseed, Linen, Shive, & Oil**, hosted by Arnold and Sheila Aronson Galleries in New York City (Parsons School of Design). The exhibition highlighted flax's story and NALA members' efforts to revitalize bast fiber production in North America. On October 7, 2024, NALA board members Heidi Barr and Alvin Ulrich, alongside Marie Demaegdt from the Alliance for European Flax-Linen & Hemp, delivered presentations and engaged in a lively discussion on flax's potential.

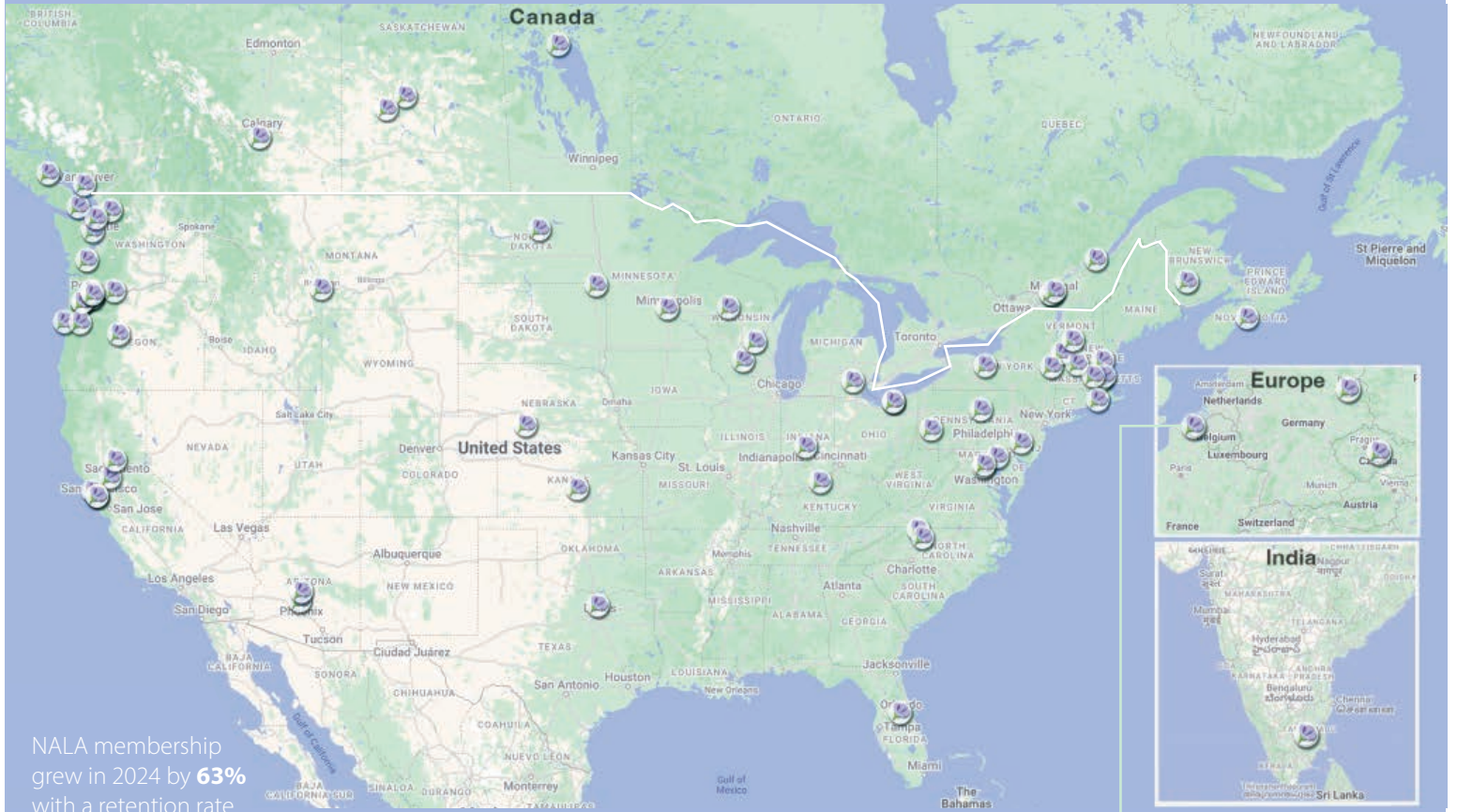
**Textile Society of America (TSA) Panel:** November 14, 2024, NALA hosted a panel discussion titled **The Re-Emergence of the North American Fiber Flax Industry: An Opportunity to Rethink**. The panel featured NALA Board Members Arin Gintowt, Fiona Barrett, and Kristina Foley, alongside Leslie Schroeder and Angela Wartes-Kahl. Representing diverse backgrounds—including farming, academia, and artisanship—the panelists shared unique perspectives on advancing a North American linen industry.

**Alphabet Soup Collective: A First-of-Its-Kind Textile Alliance.** August 29, 2024, Raleigh, N.C. — The Alphabet Soup Collective officially launched in Raleigh, N.C. This groundbreaking collaboration brings together 11 global associations—including NALA—from the textile, apparel, sewn products, and non-wovens industries. The group's name playfully acknowledges the many acronyms represented by its diverse membership. The Collective's inaugural meeting, with member Sage Shelton representing NALA, occurred during the 2024 Techtextil North America trade show. This initiative aims to foster collaboration on industry-wide events and initiatives for mutual benefit.

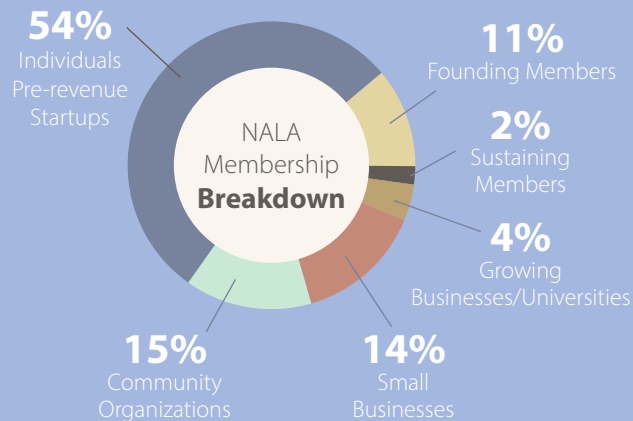
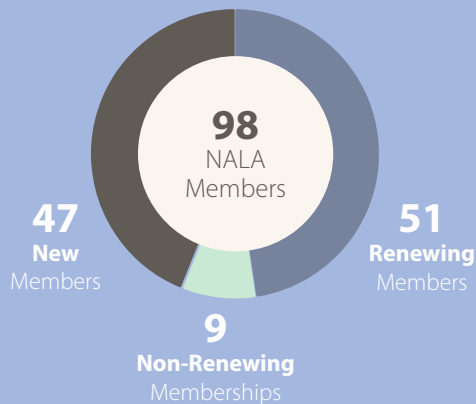
**NALA Slack channel:** NALA has established a Slack channel to help members connect and share resources related to NALA's mission. Slack is a cloud-based messaging app that facilitates collaboration and enhances teamwork, and all NALA members are encouraged to join our Slack channel.

**Textile Exchange Conference:** NALA Executive Director Shannon Welsh and members attended this event in Pasadena, CA. This annual event brings together industry leaders to address climate challenges and explore solutions. Under the theme **The Case for Change**, participants, including brands, supply chain partners, innovators, and academics, focused on integrating holistic raw material targets and driving system-level transformation. Welsh discussed next steps in North American flax production with companies from around the world, outlining actionable measures and commitments designed to advance climate action and strengthen industry resilience.

# NALA MEMBERSHIP



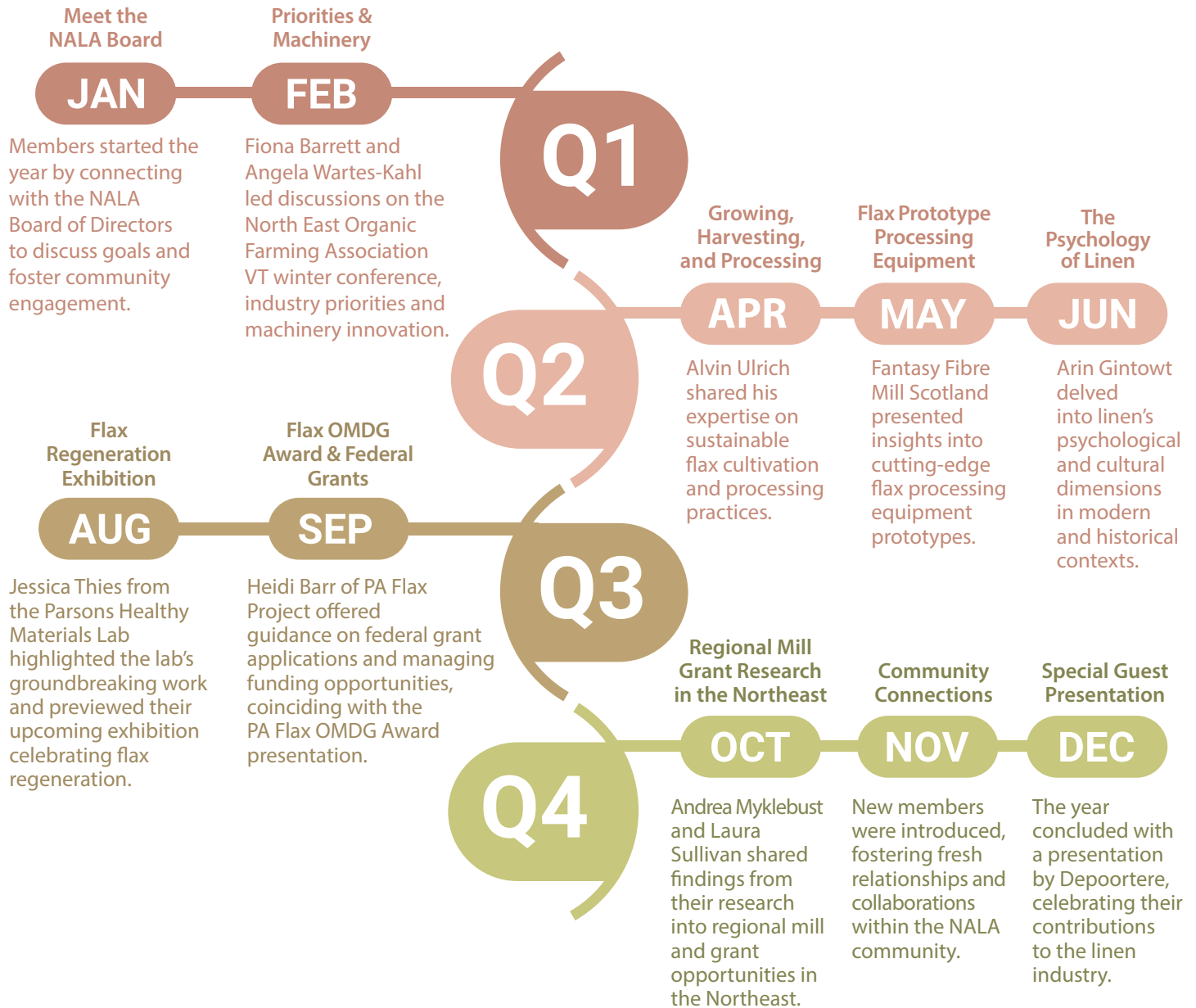
NALA membership grew in 2024 by **63%** with a retention rate of **92%**



NALA's membership has expanded into many sectors and countries.

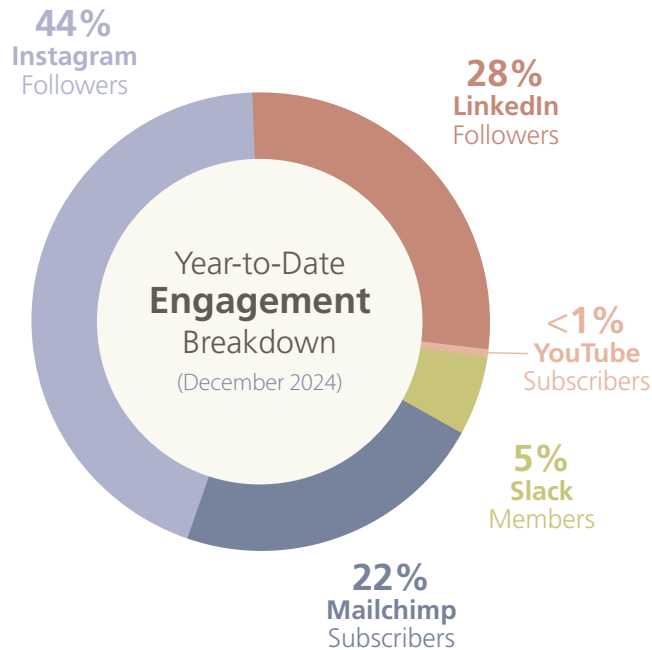
In 2024, NALA welcomed a new **Sustaining Member**, Depoortere, Flax equipment manufacturer, Belgium.

# SOCIAL NETWORKING





# MEMBER TOUCHPOINTS / KPIs



**Instagram** has been a standout performer, achieving 44% growth from 471 followers in January to an impressive 800 by year end. This consistent upward trajectory highlights the platform's ability to strongly engage and resonate with our audience.

**LinkedIn** has also demonstrated remarkable progress, growing from 134 followers to almost 500 by the end of the year. The notable growth periods, particularly between March and May, showcase its effectiveness in reaching a professional demographic during the work done by the Media & Marketing committee.

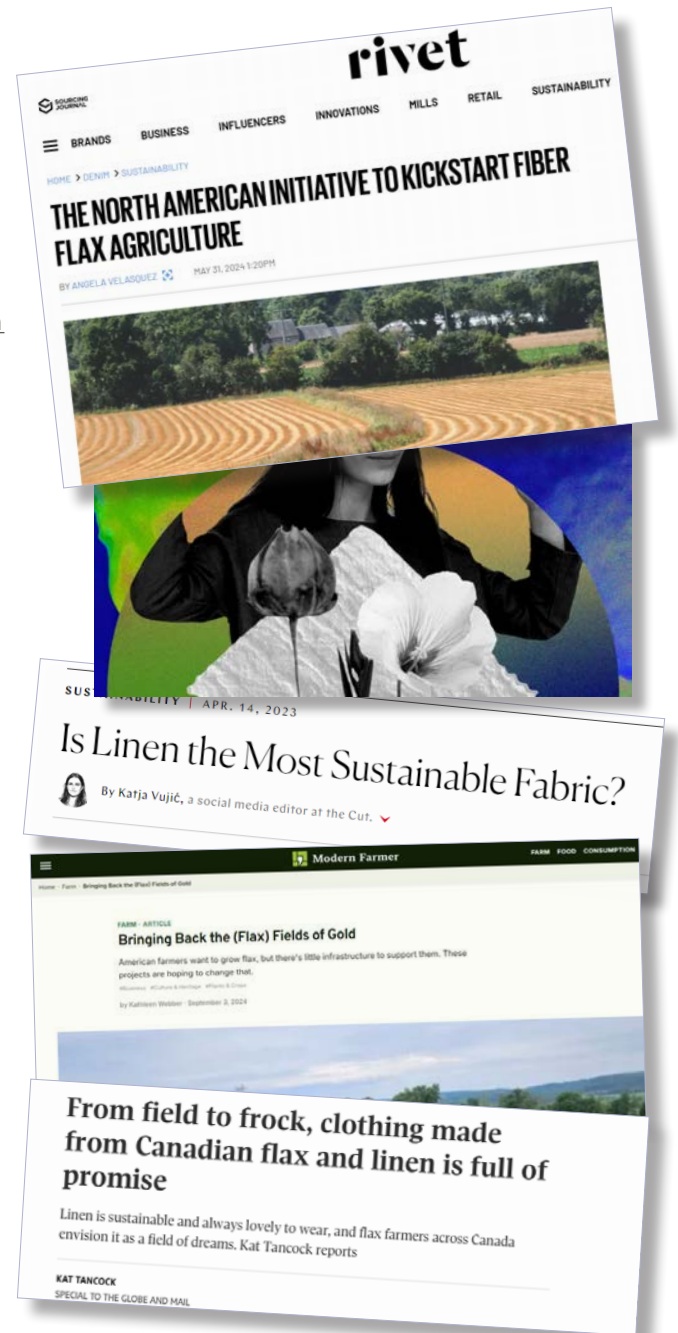
**YouTube** had less than 1% engagement in 2024 but we recognize with more resources and it's unique ability to captivate through video, represents a promising avenue for creative storytelling. Its untapped potential offers an exciting opportunity to elevate engagement and diversify content offerings.

Our **Slack** channel has made steady strides, nearly reaching 100 members by year's end. This signals great potential for cultivating a close-knit and interactive community, adding a personalized dimension to NALA's social engagement.

**Mailchimp** has emerged as a powerful tool, for NALA growing from 200 subscribers in January to 400 with steady, consistent increases each month. Its success highlights the effectiveness of targeted email marketing, in building and maintaining a loyal audience base.

# Publications and Press

- Modern Farmer, by Kathleen Webber on September 3, 2024 – [Bringing Back the \(Flax\) Fields of Gold](#)
- eTextile Communications, August 29, 2024 – [AN ALPHABET SOUPER BOWL](#), Textile and related associations create first-of-its-kind collective to support allied efforts
- The Globe and Mail, by Kat Tancock on August 17, 2024 – [From field to frock, clothing made from Canadian flax and linen is full of promise](#)
- Textile World, by Kathleen Webber on July 18, 2024 – [Bringing Flax Growing Back To The United States](#)
- Sourcing Journal, by Angela Velasquez on May 31, 2024 – [The North American Initiative To Kickstart Fiber Flax Agriculture](#)
- Farm and Fiber Knits, by Jacqueline Harp on April 9, 2024 – [Flax Grows through Creativity, Community, Conscience](#)
- EarthHand Gleaners Society, by Sharon Kallis on April 4, 2024 – [Flax to Linen Time!](#)



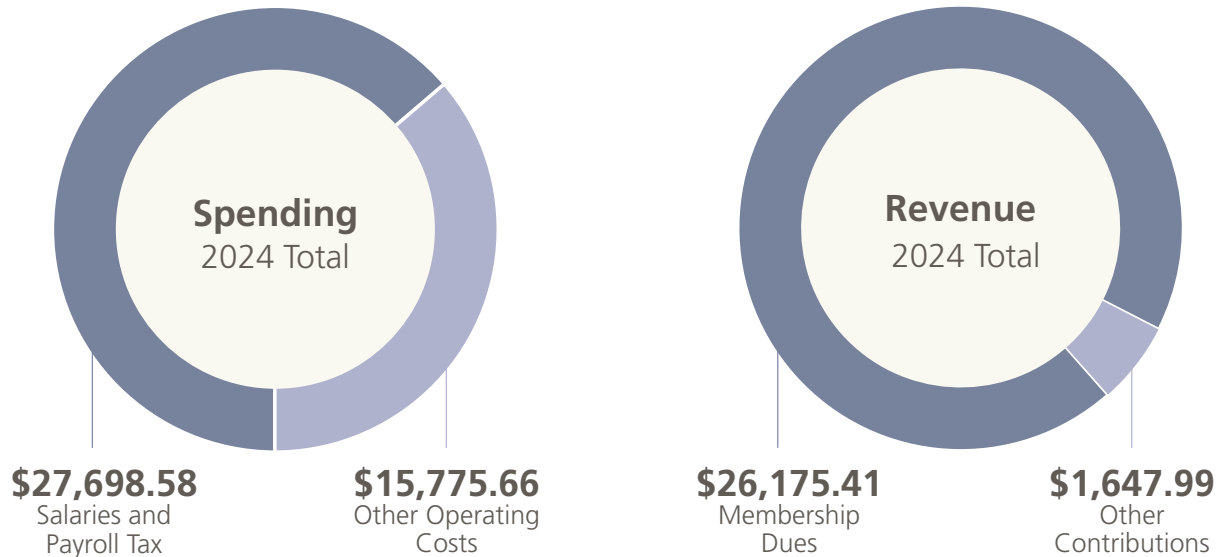
# NALA and Member Activities

This year, NALA and its members hosted a calendar of events that connected members and showcased industry innovation. They fostered learning through seasonal workshops, networking sessions, and field visits. Highlights include:

- Producer Series and Field Visits
- Workshops and Exhibitions
- Industry Networking and Conferences
- Social and Networking Events
- Educational Initiatives

# Financial Overview

NALA was founded in September 2022 as a volunteer-led organization. The first two years have been focused on establishing the organization, executing a grant, and recruiting members. NALA is seeking to develop a stable and sustainable financial foundation based on membership, sustaining sponsorship, and grants. Establishing a secure and sustainable revenue stream is our top priority and will allow NALA to meet financial commitments, secure resources, and advance programming.



**NOTES:**

- Other Operating Costs include insurance, software and applications, interest payments, and professional fees.
- Other Contributions include one-time donations, such as those received through GoFundMe.



## Testimonials

*As a hobby weaver who is committed to using natural fibers, I am grateful to be a part of NALA. I'm learning about the modern challenges to building and restoring local flax networks. Through the efforts of this organization, I am looking forward to being able to source local linen fiber to weave for my personal home and clothing use!*

*Many thanks,  
Claudia Cocco*

*I am impressed that there is a robust group of people across North America dedicating themselves to getting fiber flax back on the map on our side of the Atlantic. In my journey of flax, the group has given me knowledge, a sounding board, and friendships. I 100% recommend looking into NALA if you have anything to do with natural bast fibers in North America.*

*Spencer L. Marchand*

*Joining the North American Linen Association (NALA) has been tremendously rewarding. It's inspiring to connect with a community that shares a mutual passion for the renaissance of bast fiber crop production and processing, creating a new value chain for climate-smart natural fiber beyond organic cotton in North America.*

*Eric Singular*

## Thank You

As we reflect on this transformative year for the North American Linen Association, we are deeply grateful for you—our dedicated community of flaxperts, farmers, artisans, and industry champions. Together, we are not merely supporting an industry; we are driving the revival of fiber flax in North America.

From planting fields of flax to spinning its fibers into beautiful, durable products, your efforts lie at the heart of this movement. You honor a rich agricultural heritage while embracing a vision for the future with renewed passion and purpose. Every step forward—expanding acreage, refining production techniques, and educating others about the value of flax—brings us closer to re-establishing a vibrant and thriving fiber flax industry in North America.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on the momentum we've created together. With your continued dedication, we will nurture this revival, strengthen our community, and shape a sustainable, innovative, and impactful future for North American fiber flax.

Thank you for being an integral part of this inspiring journey. Your contributions fuel this vital movement, and NALA relies on your unwavering support to continue making progress.



Together, the future of fiber flax is bright.  
Board of Directors, North American Linen Association

# NORTH AMERICAN LINEN ASSOCIATION

Are you considering joining the North American Linen Association (NALA)? Membership offers numerous benefits, including networking events, access to an extensive resource library, training programs, and bi-weekly newsletters.

As a member, you will gain access to valuable resources that empower your organization and connect you with industry professionals in our vibrant NALA Slack community. You will also receive a digital membership badge to proudly display on your website, showcasing your commitment to the linen industry. At NALA, we provide educational initiatives and promote the linen industry. Additionally, we aim to raise awareness about the benefits of flax and linen as sustainable, regenerative fiber sources from North America.

Visit our membership page at

**<https://members.northamericanlinen.org/>**

**We hope you join us on this journey toward a more sustainable future!**

