

Fiscal Year 2024 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 10
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$5,224,700.22

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients. The views expressed in the descriptions do not represent the views of or endorsements by the United States Government or the United States Department of Agriculture.

Alaska

Recipient: Alaska Food Policy Council, Homer, AK
District: AK-001
Project Type: Implementation & Expansion
Award Amount: \$385,216.55
Match Amount: \$100,000.00
Total Project Amount: \$485,216.55

Collaboration, Knowledge Co-creation, and Network Weaving: Building Alaska Food Systems with Mapping, Data, and Value Chain Coordination

The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) has built a statewide, grassroots network of supporters, amplifiers, and diverse partnerships to address Alaska's food insecurity while supporting a resilient local food supply. AFPC engages in education at the city, state, and federal levels to create systemic change. AFPC hosts working groups and special focus working groups, on topics like Indigenous foods, food waste, food hubs, and more. These groups, which make up the Alaska Food System Network, include individuals and organizations from across the state, resulting in creative solutions and unique challenges that aim to address the food security needs of all Alaskans. Throughout our 2020-22 USDA RFSP Planning Grant, more than 350 Alaskans and 40+ organizations participated in developing a statewide Food Security Action Plan. From this work, along with our recent work in coauthoring both the Governor's Food Security & Independence 2022 Task Force Report and the Alaska Legislative Food Strategy Task Force Report, two pressing needs have emerged: a centralized repository of food systems data and assets mapping, and the establishment and facilitation of a multi-stakeholder value chain coordination council. Together with statewide partners, AFPC has identified clear pathways to successfully launch these projects. Through executing our RFSP work plan, it will leverage our collective expertise to turn these needs into reality and make significant differences to increase food security, while supporting resilient local and regional economies for all Alaskans.

California

Recipient: Local Area Revitalization Project, Susanville, CA

District: CA-003, ALL

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$205,303.50

Match Amount: \$70,823.00

Total Project Amount: \$276,126.50

EPIC Harvest: Building a Resilient Regional Food System in Remote Northeastern California

The Eastside Producers Informational Collaborative (EPIC) aims to unite stakeholders in Plumas, Sierra, Lassen, and Modoc counties to develop a resilient regional food system, enhancing market access for local producers and ensuring food security during crises. These four counties share similar characteristics: a remote and mountainous terrain, tight knit communities with an agricultural heritage, and economic hardship. EPIC will develop business plans for a regional network of aggregation and distribution that links this region to market opportunities, relieving prohibitive burdens on producers, and creating economic opportunities that provide food security, economic development, and environmental stewardship to the region. Three goals will be completed during the project period 1) establish plans for a Resilient Regional Food System: Forge strategic partnerships within and between four counties and engage in community outreach and feedback 2) Develop business plans that will enhance market access: Plan and develop a collaborative aggregation and distribution network in and between the four counties, and 3) Ensure food security during crises: Strategize emergency food access alongside the aggregation network to mitigate risks and ensure consistent access to nutritious food.

Georgia

Recipient: Southeast Regional Cooperative, Inc., East Point, GA

District: GA-005, ALL

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000.00

Match Amount: \$135,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$385,000.00

Boundless Distribution Systems Development Partnership

The Boundless Distribution Systems Development Partnership will bring together the Southeast Regional Cooperative (SERC) and a diverse community of partners including Feeding America, Partner State Associations, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia State University, and the Southeast Produce Council with a goal of increasing efficiencies throughout the supply chain that support the charitable food network. SERC will plan and develop strategies in critical areas including transportation management, middle supply chain logistics, value added processing and integrated data management, culminating in a project plan for a regional service center. For profit organizations and institutes of higher education will be engaged to conduct research, integrate diverse data platforms and operating systems, and optimize planning for sourcing and distribution. Partners will plan and design a regional service center offering freight supplier development and management, freight brokerage, weekend and evening support, and billing services, including programmatic grant administration. SERC will engage a wide range of community partners including growers, producers, partner organizations and our

neighbors to explore and analyze scope of work, location, value added processing, aggregation, distribution, and 3PL partnerships. Attention will be given to socially disadvantaged entities to create sustainable markets, while developing capacity to secure funding for long term stability. Twelve convenings will be conducted over two years. Two convenings will be for the partnership leaders, and ten will be held specifically for 1) freight and logistics, 2) middle supply chain, 3) engaged data/IT organizations, and 4) growers and other agricultural producers partnerships, and food banks and other engaged non-profit organizations.

Hawaii

Recipient: Hawaii Good Food Alliance, Kaneohe, HI

District: HI-ALL

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$970,429.00

Match Amount: \$500,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,470,429.00

Creating Pathways to Careers in Hawaii's Growing Food Hubs

The Hawaii Good Food Alliance (HGFA) and the Hawaii Food Hub Hui (HFHH) are partnering to establish an innovative apprenticeship program that addresses the critical workforce needs of Hawaii's local food system. The program will provide paid on-the-job training, mentorship, and pathways to career advancement for new and existing food hub employees across the state. The partnership leverages the expertise and resources of HGFA, HFHH, and key collaborators, including educational institutions and local food system stakeholders. HFHH will lead the program's implementation, working closely with participating food hubs to recruit and support apprentices, develop training materials, and coordinate learning experiences. The project's primary goals are to: (1) Develop a skilled and diverse workforce for Hawaii's food hubs; (2) Enhance the capacity and resilience of local food enterprises; and (3) Strengthen the overall sustainability and equity of Hawaii's regional food system. To achieve these goals, the program will offer a combination of paid work experience, classroom instruction, mentorship, and professional development opportunities over a 12-months. Each participating food hub will receive funding to support the wages and training of 1-2 apprentices, with a target of engaging 14-28 apprentices statewide. By investing in human capital and creating career pathways, this project will enable food hubs to scale up their operations, meet the growing demand for local food by Hawaii's public institutions, and contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive local economy. The program also aims to serve as a replicable model for workforce development in other regions.

Maine

Recipient: GrowSmart Maine, Augusta, ME

District: ME-01, ME-02

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$152,952.00

Match Amount: \$95,600.00

Total Project Amount: \$248,552.00

The Downeast Food System Partnership

The Downeast Food System Partnership (DFSP) partners are all working within the overall vision of a broader diversity of Downeasters involved with growing and regularly accessing affordable, locally grown food, and where local farmers and others involved in the local food economy are making a sustainable living. The DFSP purpose is to provide a platform for developing joint goals and plans, conducting outreach to farming communities, coordinating with relevant actors within and outside the region, and accessing additional resources for implementation of priority actions. A shared understanding of the existing resources and assets, as well as the shared needs and aspirations of the Downeast Food System will inform the prioritization of joint actions for growing an expanded, innovative and more diverse regional food system. This includes increased processing capacity and market access for farmers and food producers – especially value-added opportunities. In addition, consensus will be reached among key stakeholders on a set of recommendations for a Downeast Food System Plan, with strategic and fundable project proposals developed that advance the vision of the collective Downeast Food System. The program’s beneficiaries include, but are not limited to, farmers, processors, distributors, and value-add producers; Distressed and food insecure communities, in particular in Washington County; Institutions that purchase food and organizations that serve vulnerable and food insecure populations; Restaurants, grocery stores, farmers’ markets and other sales points that have an interest in offering local food.

New Jersey

Recipient: Pinelands Preservation Alliance, Southampton, NJ

District: NJ-03, ALL

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$946,505.00

Match Amount: \$239,258.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,185,763.00

Strategic Coalition and Capacity Building to Create New Opportunities for NJ Farmers with the South Jersey Farmers, Equity, and Sustainability Team (FEAST)

The South Jersey Farmers, Equity, and Sustainability Team (FEAST) project is designed to significantly increase the capacity and connectivity of regional food systems in Southern New Jersey. This project focuses on strengthening local food system infrastructure to improve food security and expand economic opportunities, particularly targeting underserved communities of producers and consumers. The project will establish 24 strategic partnerships that connect local producers directly with institutional consumers such as hospitals and schools. Of those, at least four partnerships will focus on engaging underserved organizations, and six will directly connect producers with institutional markets. A

critical output of this initiative is the development of eight new or improved distribution systems that are expected to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and expand customer reach. These systems are linked to the newly formed partnerships and will be supported by the creation of a comprehensive project website, serving as a central hub for information on local farms, farmers markets, information and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, FEAST will work to establish 20 partnerships between regional producers and various market access points, increasing production to meet rising demand, and facilitating more effective product transportation to markets. The project will provide training to 20 stakeholders to develop new strategies that improve food processing, distribution, aggregation, or storage. The project will establish a network of partnerships, the development of enhanced distribution systems directly benefiting local agricultural operations, and the generation of approximately \$900,000 in non-Federal financial resources through increased sales and grants.

Texas

Recipient: Central Texas Food Bank, Austin, TX

District: TX-35

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,975.00

Match Amount: \$309,223.00

Total Project Amount: \$559,198.00

Forming a Central Texas Regional Food System Council

This project is a partnership between Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB), Baylor University (BU), and the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), with support from local councils of government and local food access workgroups and coalitions. The goal is to form a Regional Food System Council that will facilitate regional food chain coordination, multi-sector partnerships, and mid-tier value chain development across Central Texas' 21 counties and Williamson Counties. The Central Texas Regional Food System Council will align and scale local efforts through a hub-and-spoke model, fostering collaboration and coordination among stakeholders across the food system value chain and developing public-private partnerships to prioritize and implement regional food system initiatives that improve marketing opportunities in the regional food system. Collaboration and coordination among the multi-sector members of the Central Texas Regional Food System Council enhances its ability to strengthen Central Texas' regional food economy by improving farm viability, preserving farmland, and bolstering local and regional food market outlets through value chain coordination. The first year of the project focuses on council formation and setting initial priorities. The second year focuses fully on setting priorities, conducting 1-2 feasibility studies and piloting strategies identified in the feasibility studies. A partnership between CTFB, BU, and UT Austin will scale current localized efforts to the regional context, facilitate the creation and co-design of food system planning toolkits to a Central Texas hub-and-spoke model and empower the council to integrate research, policy, and practice by connecting strategies through an integrated, multi-level approach.

Virginia

Recipient: Local Environmental Agriculture Project, Roanoke, VA

District: VA-006

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$844,347.00

Match Amount: \$251,315.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,095,662.00

The Roanoke Foodshed Network: Strong Food and Farm Future

The Roanoke Foodshed Network (RFN) represents over 50 diverse nonprofit and community organizations, farmers, food businesses, community members, higher education institutions, and government agencies with the collective vision to build equitable and resilient food and farm systems in the Roanoke region of Southwest Virginia. Over the past four years, the RFN built high-trust relations with partners, created shared governance that prioritizes community relationships, and crafted a collective vision that is rooted in systems thinking. This foundation will serve as the bedrock for the Strong Food and Farm Future project which will continue to build awareness, support, resilience, and future investment in the Roanoke regional food system. The purpose of this project is to advance the RFN's 3-year Implementation Plan, including the following objectives 1) facilitate idea sharing, community relationships, trust, and co-creation among regional food systems partners for collective capacity building and regional food systems change; 2) build awareness of and support for regional food systems economies through collective marketing, storytelling and branding initiatives; 3) support regional farm viability through farmer network building, farmer educational programming, value chain coordination, and shared infrastructure; and 4) compile data across sectors of the food system to identify leverage points for systems-level change and help build the case for regional food system investment.

Washington

Recipient: Sustainable Connections, Bellingham, WA

District: WA-2, ALL

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$969,999.87

Match Amount: \$242,500.00

Total Project Amount: \$1,219,999.87

Collaborative Growth – Building Shared Marketing and Communications Networks for Local Food Procurement and Promotion in Washington State

The Eat Local First Collaborative plans to unite over 25 diverse organizations to establish a comprehensive marketing and communication network that enhances local food procurement and promotion across Washington State. Leveraging the expertise of key partners Seattle Good Business Network, Tilth Alliance, and the WA Farm to School Network, this project will help transform Washington's food system, making it more equitable and just, especially for underserved producers and their communities. The project seeks to address the critical need for organized, collaborative marketing to support small farms, fisheries, and under-resourced communities, which often lack the capacity to independently create and sustain their marketing tools. Primary beneficiaries include small farms,

fisheries, under-resourced communities, state agencies, all scales of buyers including schools and institutions, and consumers. These stakeholders will benefit from improved market access, enhanced visibility, and strengthened regional food systems. Key partners and collaborators include nonprofits, government agencies, food hubs, and educational institutions such as Tilth Alliance, Seattle Good Business Network, Washington State University (WSU) Food Systems Program, and WSU Extension Regional Small Farm Programs. Partners operating statewide include the State of Washington Tourism, Washington State Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS), Washington State Department of Agriculture Farm to School Program, and Veteran Conservation Commission. These organizations will leverage their networks and expertise to engage with local producers and buyers. Regional partners, like WSU Extension programs in multiple counties, tourism agencies, and local agricultural guilds, will act as Regional Leads, ensuring authentic regional representation and support for underrepresented producers and businesses.

West Virginia

Recipient: West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, Inc., Charleston, WV

District: WV-001, WV-002

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,972.30

Match Amount: \$70,841.62

Total Project Amount: \$320,813.92

Mountains to Metropolis: Connecting West Virginia Value-Added Products to Regional Markets

This project unites food and agriculture businesses, non-profits, charitable food organizations, and universities to address improved aggregation and distribution, a critical need for small-scale value-added producers in West Virginia. With increasing demand for West Virginia-made value-added products both statewide and regionally, a notable gap in mid-tier value-chain coordination has emerged. The goal is to enhance the economic viability and sustainability of these small-scale value-added businesses by forming strong partnerships and designing an efficient distribution network. This network will extend the reach and competitiveness of West Virginia's value-added products throughout the broader Mid-Atlantic region. The primary beneficiaries extend beyond the applicant organization to include small-scale value-added producers throughout West Virginia, enhancing their market access and economic opportunities. In Phase 1, partners will conduct an in-state comprehensive assessment of current aggregation networks, identify gaps and assets, and determine necessary technical and financial resources. This phase also includes planning efficient statewide distribution systems. In Phase 2, partners will establish new out-of-state partnerships. Project Objectives include identifying, building, and leveraging strategic partnerships and networks among value-added producers, distributors, and retail entities within West Virginia; planning distribution systems to efficiently handle, process, and transport shelf-stable value-added products across the state; expanding aggregation and distribution partnerships established in West Virginia to include broader partnerships across the Mid-Atlantic region; and planning for the aggregation and distribution of West Virginia made value-added products to markets in at least 5 Mid-Atlantic Cities.

Fiscal Year 2023 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 10
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$4,418,541

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

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Arkansas

Recipient: Division of Agriculture of the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR

District: AR-2

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,966

Match Amount: \$73,258

Total Project Amount: \$323,224

The Building an Arkansas Agricultural Network Development (The BAAND) Project

The Building an Arkansas Agricultural Network Development (The BAAND) project builds on two decades of local and regional food systems value-chain work. The BAAND project will establish a statewide working group representing stakeholders currently supporting the local and regional food system across food producers, food systems practitioners, institutions of higher education, government agencies, industry partners, and community groups.

This project aims to: 1) establish an Arkansas network of stakeholders interested in growing the micro agriculture food system; 2) conduct a statewide needs assessment for outreach, training, and technical assistance to grow gardeners into producers; 3) apply the Precede-Proceed Theory of Change model to develop a strategic intervention to support gardeners to become community or commercial food producers; 4) design a foundational curriculum to teach the basics of food production on the individual, community, or market gardening scale; 5) design a model for delivering the curriculum building on other Extension education frameworks such as Master Gardener and Urban Agriculture programs; and 6) create an Arkansas Food Systems Council that can inform planning, outreach, training, technical assistance, resource utilization, industry connections, and policy for food systems. Many state efforts and federal funding opportunities to date have supported value-chain development after production, but Arkansas food systems practitioners recognize the need to build a foundational program to increase knowledge, skills, behaviors, culture, and connect to resources for micro-agriculture market model that includes anyone willing and able to become a food producer or grow their current skills.

Recipient: Winrock International, North Little Rock, AR
District: AR-2
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$250,000
Match Amount: \$77,500
Total Project Amount: \$327,500

Strengthening Midwest Agriculture Transitions Through Value Chain Coordination Peer Learning and Strategic Planning

Through this project, a group of Midwest partners – facilitated by the Wallace Center – will develop a shared strategy for advancing value chain coordination (VCC) to incentivize regenerative, equitable agriculture in the region. This planning and design grant has four objectives: interviewing relevant farming groups in the Midwest to understand their perceptions, interests and needs from VCC – particularly those supporting underserved farmers; leveraging the Wallace Center’s national value chain curriculum and training model to provide a workshop for Midwest participants on VCC fundamentals to build peer relationships and knowledge; developing a shared VCC strategy for Midwest agriculture. Wallace Center and partners will design and host an in-person strategy session to develop an actionable strategy for leveraging VCC to catalyze regenerative agriculture transitions; and focusing on promoting the strategy to regional and national audiences of decision-makers, funders, peer organizations, and networks – including the Wallace Center’s national VCC community of practice. Wallace and partners will identify and pursue opportunities to share the strategy developed in objective three such as conferences and other events.

California

Recipient: Community Partners, Los Angeles, CA
District: CA-34
Project Type: Farm to Institution
Award Amount: \$850,518
Match Amount: \$221,985
Total Project Amount: \$1,072,503

Good Food Purchasing: California

Recent policy advances in California have created a potential tipping point for the movement to use institutional purchasing of good food (food produced and procured in a way that promotes healthy and thriving communities, good jobs, local producers, environmental stewardship, and animal welfare) to achieve broad economic, health, environmental, and climate benefits.

To leverage this favorable policy landscape, project partners will establish *Good Food Purchasing: California*, a new regional collaborative to connect and amplify impacts of advanced good food purchasing initiatives in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. The collaborative will establish a multi-sector, public-private, regional partnership that will: 1) increase values-aligned food purchasing by institutions; 2) bring underserved producers/suppliers into institutional supply chains; 3) provide technical assistance to producers, suppliers, institutions, and local coalitions; 4) network local initiatives; and 5) use collected data to demonstrate regional impacts and advance good food purchasing policies/strategies.

The Collaborative will be convened by the Center for Good Food Purchasing with lead partners the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC), San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), and Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), and will build on established partnerships with cross-sector leaders from each metropolitan region (including anchor institutions, community organizations, producers, suppliers, and policymakers), as well as key California government agencies.

Recipient: Emerald Cities Collaborative, Washington, D.C. (California Chapter)

District: DC – At-Large

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$62,500

Total Project Amount: \$312,500

Catalyzing A Local Food Processing Network in the Capitol Corridor

The vision of the Anchors in Resilient Communities (ARC) Regional Food System Initiative is an equitable and resilient regional food economy – to operationalize partnerships across the food value chain to meet growing institutional demand in the region. The two-year planning process, outlined in the proposal "Catalyzing A Local Food Processing Network in the Capitol Corridor", will create an implementation strategy to incorporate aggregation, value-added processing, and distribution into critical infrastructure components within Northern California, along the I-80 corridor, and coordinate food production and processing across the region to increase institutional market opportunities. The planning and design process will be successful with the completion of the following deliverables: 1) a comprehensive landscape assessment of existing food value chain infrastructure that can support increased value-added processing and meal production capacity along the I-80 corridor; 2) a gap and opportunities analysis of current, regional food system infrastructure to meet the increasing processing demand for locally- grown food products; 3) a business plan for the development of regional, value-added products, combining ingredients grown across the region, and a process for the establishment of cooperative ownership agreements among interested producers and processors; 4) a capital strategy which articulates funding needs across the value chain and prioritizes the development of BIPOC and minority-owned farms and processing businesses; and 5) continued partnership development with participating anchor institutions and BIPOC producers and processors throughout the 2-year planning process.

Colorado

Recipient: Trailhead Institute, Denver, CO

District: CO-1

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$92,363

Total Project Amount: \$342,363

Collaborating to Define Food System Infrastructure Needs in Jefferson County, Colorado

The Jefferson County Food Policy Council (JCFPC) is a community-based organization established in 2022 that facilitates collaboration and coordination to build an equitable and resilient local food system. With a network of over 280 individuals and organizations and a recently established Supply Chain and Infrastructure Coalition, JCFPC provides a platform for partnership and collaboration among diverse

stakeholders to build an equitable and resilient food chain. JCFPC's proposed planning and design project will continue to build and diversify the coalition, which currently includes community members, local government, local retail, farmers, food pantries, and philanthropic foundations. Coalition members will work together to lead the project with the support of JCFPC staff and resources. Coalition members will receive formal training on local supply chain coordination, principles of collaboration, cooperative models for shared infrastructure, community leadership, and racial equity. Together, the Coalition will use the skills gained from training to collaboratively create an asset and needs assessment, a geospatial resource database, and a feasibility study to increase understanding of the local food value chain and to test shared infrastructure solutions. The project will benefit all food system actors in Jefferson County, especially small farmers, local food retailers, food distributors including food pantries, and low food access communities. The feasibility of a collaborative solution will be tested, resulting in increased preparedness to seek investment for implementation of the solution. The established culture of collaboration will drive and build our local supply chain and food resiliency.

Maine

Recipient: Fork Food Lab, South Portland, ME

District: ME-1

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$999,386

Match Amount: \$333,291

Total Project Amount: \$1,332,677

The Second Harvest Partnership: Adding Value to Upcycled and Surplus Produce

Portland Maine has achieved "Foodie" status as Boston magazine raved of the "Killer Food Scene" in a 2021 review. In comparison, Food Solutions New England recently reported regional institutions spend 3% of their budget on local foods. The 2017 USDA Farm to School Census reported that Maine schools purchased approximately 7% of their food budget locally, excluding the value of fluid milk. Meanwhile ReFED: Roadmap to 2030 estimates 30% or 10 million pounds of produce is relegated to food loss in the six-county Southern Maine region because there is no local processor that could transform these lower grade crops into value-added products.

The Second Harvest Partnership is a mid-scale value chain that includes institutional buyers, farmers, processors, logistics, and small, socially disadvantaged farms to open new markets for produce. With its move to a larger facility, Fork Food Lab, the state's leading commercial kitchen and food business incubator, will offer the solution that the current infrastructure has not been able to capitalize or incentivize. Through the Second Harvest Partnership, the region will establish the relationships, equipment, systems, protocols, and business model to capture upcycled and surplus product, add value to the fruits and vegetables, and sell intermediate inputs and finished goods to eager markets throughout southern Maine.

Minnesota

Recipient: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN

District: MN-5

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$111,694

Match Amount: \$40,000

Total Project Amount: \$151,694

MinneAg Network - Community Storytelling to Educate and Advocate: Growing Minnesota Farm and Food Democracy

Through this project, the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) will convene diverse farm and food systems stakeholders from across Minnesota in the MinneAg Network. The goal of the MinneAg Network is to build relationships, coordinate a community input process to define the strategic priorities, collaborate with partners to develop needed civic engagement resources, and support communications capacity building to boost community storytelling. MinneAg Network aims to lift community members and highlight their solutions to nurture vibrant food systems that provide access to sufficient, safe, culturally appropriate, and nutritious food while developing local supply chains that allow small to mid-scale farmers access to markets. This project will strengthen relationships across organizations and deepen stakeholders' understanding of civic engagement. Easy to understand, multilingual, actionable resources can support a wider group of individuals in civic engagement and offer representation for emerging and small and mid-size farmers in Minnesota's decision-making spaces. IATP will use a participatory process to design the structure of a Minnesota Farm and Food Systems Civic Engagement 101 set of resources. The partners will then develop these materials with input from our member organizations. The funding will build on MinneAg's initial success, providing key communications support to highlight successes, provide educational resources and engagement opportunities, and work toward a food system that is more equitable and better reflects the needs of all of Minnesota's communities.

Oregon

Recipient: Friends of Family Farmers, Junction City, OR

District: OR-4

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$211,060

Match Amount: \$53,300

Total Project Amount: \$264,360

The Capital Assistance for Local Farmers (CALF) Oregon Project

The purpose of this Friends of Family Farmers (FoFF) Capital Assistance for Local Farmers (CALF) Oregon project is to bring together government grant makers, conventional lenders, and USDA resources with trusted, farmer-serving regionally and culturally specific nonprofits in their communities to create more opportunities for small, highly diversified, local market farmers. This project is aided by two sets of partners. The technical assistance (TA) partners are a group of trusted, farmer-serving nonprofit entities around the state who share FoFF's desire to better connect the farmers in their network to available resources, including the Friends of Family Farmers, Black Farm Bureau, Adelante Mujeres, Willamette

Farm and Food Coalition, High Desert Farm and Food Alliance, Coast Fork of the Willamette Watershed Council, Rogue Valley Food System Network, North Coast Food Web, Rogue Farm Corps, and Oregon Community Food System Network. The Funding Partners who make up state and federal agencies and conventional lending institutions, including the USDA Farm Service Agency, AgWest, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, and Oregon Department of Agriculture. The 15-member community of practice will meet quarterly to increase service provider knowledge, discuss barriers that keep more than 13,000 farmers served by the TA partners apprised of upcoming deadlines, and provide guidance on making applications competitive. The information from the community of practice will be supplemented with network research and consolidated into a Network Resource Inventory which will easily lay out existing programs and resources, providing direction for farmers and avoiding program duplication for service providers. This information, along with producer feedback through partner focus groups and a project-wide survey, will be used to deliver a report on the gaps and barriers experienced by current applicants and the groups' recommendations for future collaboration. The report will serve as a basis for designing new technical assistance to fill that need across Oregon.

Washington

Recipient: NorthEast Washington Educational Service District 101, Spokane, WA

District: WA-5

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$998,073

Match Amount: \$274,754

Total Project Amount: \$1,272,827

Regional Farm to School Program Development in Washington State

Since 2019, small rural School Food Authorities (SFAs) across northeast Washington have engaged in building a robust Regional Farm to School (F2S) Program. This program involves a wide variety of community partners including SFAs, rural economic development corporations, food hubs, producers, processors, and state and local government agencies. The Regional Food Systems Partnership grant will allow these stakeholders to: 1) replicate Regional F2S Program models in four additional regions of Washington State, 2) continue to build up F2S activities in northeast Washington, and 3) work synergistically with other state nutrition programs to incorporate local foods into a larger network of school nutrition programming. Northeast Washington Educational Service District (NEWESD) 101 will work collaboratively with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to develop these new Regional F2S Programs and support local producers. To begin this process, NEWESD 101 will hire and train three Regional F2S Coordinators to work in four additional Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in central Washington (ESDs 105, 123, and 171) and southwest Washington (ESD 113). ESD partners will pair Regional F2S Coordinators with existing Team Nutrition mentors, who have been working for the past year to strengthen school nutrition programs in 22 small, rural SFAs across Washington State. These districts will now be able to enhance their school meal programs by partnering with community producers and processors to source more local food items. Regional F2S Coordinators will support the development of the regional farm to school model, bringing fresh local products to more school cafeterias.

Wisconsin

Recipient: REAP Food Group, Inc., Madison, WI

District: WI-2

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$247,845

Match Amount: \$62,500

Total Project Amount: \$310,345

South Central Wisconsin Food Systems Assessment and Partnership Project

There are long-standing inequities and vulnerabilities in the South-Central Wisconsin regional food system, a 13-county area with Madison and Dane County as the central marketing and logistical hub, referred to hereafter as the regional food system. Evidence for existing inequities and vulnerabilities is documented in data from numerous local and regional studies and reports. While these data sets provide important information, a more comprehensive, regional assessment is needed to capture additional supply chain gaps (anecdotally known, but not represented in the data), and to combine data from different food system sectors together. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the regional food system's gaps and weaknesses. Many sectors and food system entities were disrupted and had to innovate as quickly as possible. The pandemic amplified existing food system inequities as well. Community members hit hardest by pandemic supply chain disruptions included not only individuals experiencing food insecurity but particularly the region's producers/growers and small- and medium-sized food businesses. The pandemic has illuminated the lack of, and urgent need for, a comprehensive regional food system plan for the South-Central Wisconsin region. Building on this momentum with a comprehensive and inclusive regional food action plan will better protect our regional food system in the event of future emergencies. Utilizing the strengths of several food systems organizations and food councils, the partnership's primary goal is to build a network of diverse collaborators across the South-Central Wisconsin region who will co-create a community-driven regional engagement and assessment process that sets the stage for a regional food action plan.

USDA Announces \$64 Million in Grant Awards to Strengthen Local and Regional Food Systems

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19, 2022 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service today awarded over \$64 million for 185 grant projects to expand and strengthen local and regional food systems and increase the availability of locally grown agricultural products. The funding will be distributed through the Local Agriculture Market Program's (LAMP) [Farmers Market](#) and [Local Food Promotion](#) Programs (FMLFPP) and the [Regional Food System Partnerships](#) (RFSP) grant program.

Through RFSP, \$19 million is being awarded to [36 partnerships](#) across 24 states. The program provides funding to partnerships that connect public and private resources in planning and developing local or regional food systems. RFSP also supports partnerships in developing relationships between local and regional producers, processors, and intermediaries, and institutions, such as schools, hospitals, governments to increase local and regional foods in institutional cafeterias and meal programs.

- **Project Highlight:** Practical Farmers of Iowa will receive an RFSP grant award to scale up the institutional markets that food hubs have developed by expanding food hub capacity to capture more institutional sales, onboard new farmers, and grow sales territory to equitably serve more of the state. Food Hub partners will maximize their added capacity, along with technical assistance, to add more farmer vendors, institutional customers, and territory to their individual businesses and expand the footprint of farm-to-institution efforts.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Transportation and Marketing
Regional Food System Partnerships Program

Fiscal Year 2022 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 36
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$19,353,495.72

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients.

Arizona

Recipient: Pinnacle Prevention Corp., Chandler, AZ
District: AZ-009
Project Type: Implementation & Expansion
Award Amount: \$475,472
Match Amount: \$146,451
Total Project Amount: \$621,923

Implementing a Vibrant, Sustainable, and Equitable Community Food System Across the Arizona Food Systems Network (AZFSN)

Arizona Food Systems Network (AZFSN) is a statewide food system council representing a diverse collaboration of nonprofit organizations, higher education academic institutions, government agencies, food system practitioners, and food producers connected through regional food coalitions across the state. After a multi-year planning process engaging over 150 food system advocates, food producers, tribal communities, practitioners, and leaders AZFSN has launched the first ever statewide food action plan. The purpose of the project is to advance the implementation of the AZFSN Statewide Food Action Plan priorities, goals, objectives, and strategies for action. The intended project goals are to 1) strengthen capacity to support plan implementation, and 2) deepen the connection across existing partners to institutionalize strategies for each plan priority area. Activities to achieve the project goals will include convening and building the capacity of partners working across the state to deepen the connection and increase access to expertise supporting the implementation of priority strategies, elevating and centering local food producer voices in the implementation of plan activities, identifying and sharing successes and lessons learned for scaling efforts, and ultimately informing investment, policies, and practices in how stakeholders grow, move, share, and think about food across Arizona. The outcomes of this project will result in a reimagined and more vibrant, sustainable, and equitable community food system for all Arizonans. Intended beneficiaries include historically underserved farmers and ranchers, local food producers, individuals experiencing nutrition insecurity, and institutions implementing food system programs and services. This grant will include subcontracts for food action plan implementation support with eight (8) Arizona-based regional food coalitions including: Flagstaff Foodlink, Verde Valley Food Policy Council, Yuma HEAL Coalition, Pima County Food Alliance,

Ajo Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Maricopa County Food System Coalition, Coalition for Farmland Preservation; and a Tribal Collaborative workgroup.

California

Recipient: The Regents of the University of California – Agriculture & Natural Resource, Davis, CA

District: CA-003

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$990,752

Match Amount: \$499,874

Total Project Amount: \$1,490,626

Building Community Resiliency and Strengthening Local Food Systems During Emergencies in Coastal Northern California

The California North Coast Emergency Food System Partnership will create additional markets for local food producers in emergency food supply chains to reduce the risk of lost income and strengthen local and regional food systems. Over the past five years, Northern California has experienced catastrophic wildfires, landslides, persistent drought, the pandemic, and economic downturns, putting increasing pressure on local producers, the local/regional food system, and emergency food aid. The project encompasses chronic emergency food assistance (i.e., groceries) and crisis emergency food assistance (i.e., prepared meals at evacuation shelters provided during disasters). The project brings together a diverse set of project partners including food producers, food policy councils, community-based organizations, local and tribal governments, cooperative extension, and emergency planners to build upon shared experiences from responding to climate-change induced natural disasters and the pandemic. The Partnership will create an emergency food network across six Northern California counties (encompassing 12,545 square miles). The project will implement activities that expand economic efficiency, strengthen the economic viability of local producers, build community resilience, and center equity in emergency food systems. The project objectives are to (1) create additional market opportunities for local producers within emergency food supply chains to mitigate risk and maintain income during disasters; (2) build collective capacity to improve emergency food systems by creating a strong network of partners, develop emergency feeding plans, and inventory local emergency food supply chain infrastructure; and (3) identify recommendations to address barriers to establishing effective local and regional emergency food supply chains.

Recipient: Impact Justice, Oakland, CA

District: CA-013

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$100,000

Match Amount: \$37,090

Total Project Amount: \$137,090

Nourishing Justice: A Feasibility Study for Farm to Corrections Work in New England

This project brings together a diverse group of partners to explore an innovative strategy to direct nourishing, locally and regionally produced food into New England's correctional facilities. Led by Impact Justice, a national research and innovation center working to foster a humane, responsive, and

restorative system of justice for all, partners will also include Farm to Institution New England (FINE), the Maine Department of Corrections, and organizations and individuals with expertise in food system-focused reentry programming and cooperative development.

This project will focus on exploration and planning for a technical assistance entity that would increase regional food procurement by prisons and jails in the six states of New England: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The collaboration will 1) Conduct a comprehensive assessment of food procurement needs and constraints in New England correctional facilities. 2) Investigate perceived and actual barriers to local and regional producers/food hubs selling food to New England correctional facilities and identify types of support needed to do so. 3) Determine the feasibility of developing a technical assistance consultancy that would facilitate farm to corrections procurement in New England, and if the model is deemed feasible, draft a blueprint for such a consultancy that functions as a cooperative owned and operated by people who have been directly impacted by incarceration.

Recipient: Siskiyou County Economic Development Council, Yreka, CA

District: CA-001

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$353,442

Match Amount: \$118,548

Total Project Amount: \$471,990

Connecting Siskiyou's Small Farms and Institutions

The agricultural economic sector in Siskiyou County is facing a dire crisis due to persistent drought, year-over-year wildfires, and environmental pressures faced by small farms. This, paired with major market shifts, is culminating in the urgent decision for small farms across Siskiyou to innovate or exit. Siskiyou Economic Development Council (SEDC) is pairing with key partners throughout Siskiyou and the greater region to launch an initiative to expand market opportunities for Siskiyou producers. These efforts will create opportunities for farms to diversify and create business resiliency in the face of catastrophe.

Connecting Siskiyou's Small Farms and Institutions will establish a critical network of local farms and regional institutional food buyers throughout Siskiyou County and its bordering communities. Through one-on-one technical assistance, SEDC will work to develop business plans and strategies that will connect key stakeholders and identify gaps in the necessary infrastructure to cultivate a thriving farm-to-institution economy.

This project will provide technical assistance to producers to develop capacity, skill, and scale to address the institutional markets and will cultivate a strong foundation for ongoing connections between buyers and small farms. This program will build upon the SEDC's work in the agriculture sector and community food system and will leverage existing relationships with agricultural producers, support organizations, and expert business consultants.

This program will strengthen the institutional local food system, identify gaps in infrastructure and supply chain partners, and connect local small farms to viable new markets to create long-term sustainability for one of Siskiyou's most important economic sectors.

Colorado

Recipient: El Paso County Public Health, Colorado Springs, CO

District: CO-005

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$147,084

Match Amount: \$46,274

Total Project Amount: \$193,358

Central Colorado Foodshed Partnership

The Central Colorado Foodshed Partnership's overarching purpose is to establish a baseline understanding of our food system while bringing together a new partnership that includes private, higher education, and city and county government entities. This is an innovative partnership that brings new energy and approaches to traditionally siloed areas of work.

The 2-year planning grant activities include: inventory and catalog farms and ranches beginning with El Paso, Pueblo, and Fremont Counties while assessing future expansion of our described region; conduct a food system resilience assessment; host agricultural producer, food access, and consumer focus groups; utilize a developmental evaluation approach; plan and host the inaugural Central Colorado Foodshed Summit (Summit); and develop a strategic plan that outlines objectives, outcomes, indicators, and evaluation methods.

Farmers and producers within Central Colorado (including El Paso County (EPC), Fremont, and Pueblo Counties initially) are the intended beneficiaries who will benefit from a robust food system resilience assessment and farm and ranch inventory. The inventory will help regional stakeholders better understand how local and regional food is grown, including direct distribution points and any retail or institutional buyers. The inventory will also help inform EPC consumer awareness campaigns about opportunities for purchasing local food, thereby strengthening the region's farm and ranch direct-to-consumer network. The food system resilience assessment will identify areas for needed support such as infrastructure and resource development. In addition, beneficiaries will include food system partners working in other sectors, as we intend to include and connect their work via project communications, key informant interviews, and other methods to be determined.

Recipient: Nourish Colorado, Denver, CO

District: CO-001

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$ 998,758

Match Amount: \$ 250,000

Total Project Amount: \$1,248,758

Collaborative Models and Standardizing Metrics for Local Purchasing among Rural Institutions Project (CMSM Project)

The CMSM project aims to infuse more resources and cooperation among institutions, farmers, and food hubs so they can build their capacity and networks. The goal of the project is to develop baseline local procurement data and metrics and create and test a model for collaborative purchasing in southeastern Colorado. This will allow us to strengthen partnerships in the region, provide more training and technical assistance support, agricultural producer support, evaluation support, and build the

overall capacity of the program to promote farm to institution programs in southeast Colorado and build a model that can be replicated in other regions of Colorado.

The partnership will include Nourish Colorado, which will manage the overall project, the Colorado Departments of Education (CDE), Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), and Human Services (CDHS), as the providers of publicly funded meal programs like K12 school lunches, early childhood education (ECE) meals, and Older Adult (OA) Meal Programs to assist us with developing relationships with institutional partners. We are partnering with Ogallala Commons to assist with strengthening partnerships with farmers and producers in southeastern Colorado, as well as Colorado State University (CSU) Food Systems Institute for Engagement to assist with engagement and evaluation. Each partner will have a role in each focus area. Additionally, the project will include one to two convenings of all partners every year of the project to discuss initial goals, data collection, and next steps.

District of Columbia

Recipient: Dreaming Out Loud Inc., Washington, D.C.

District: DC – At-Large

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$ 999,512

Match Amount: \$ 270,375

Total Project Amount: \$1,269,887

Scaling Cooperative Social Enterprise: Expanding Market Access for Underserved Farmers and Food Makers in the Washington, DC Region

Our proposed implementation project offers creative solutions to barriers to market access faced by historically underserved farmers and food entrepreneurs. As an expert provider of technical assistance and accelerator programming to food entrepreneurs and farmers, Dreaming Out Loud (DOL) will partner with the DC Office of Planning's Food Policy Division (OP) and DC Central Kitchen (DCK) to carry out the project. This is particularly timely since in Summer 2022, DOL is set to expand by co-locating its services in DCK's new 36,000 square foot urban food hub and workforce development center. This facility will give DOL and DCK the infrastructure to expand training, technical assistance, marketing activities, and direct sales opportunities through DOL and DCK's social enterprise supply chains. This project will increase access to (1) food system infrastructure such as traditional and non-traditional commercial kitchen space, refrigerated trucks, and cold storage through technical assistance and network development; (2) qualified mentors and coaches; (3) proven accelerator programs and workforce development services; and (4) contracts offered by public institutions, federal and local nutrition programs, and other anchor institutions. Together, these efforts will improve marketing opportunities in our regional food system for historically underserved participants by closing gaps in physical, social, and financial capital. The cross-cutting networks of the project partners reflect decades of market-building expertise and the unmatched visibility produced by their value-chain-building successes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Florida

Recipient: THF Natural Resources LLC, Hilliard, FL

District: FL - 004

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$215,750

Match Amount: \$72,375
Total Project Amount: \$288,125

Ensuring a Resilient Food Distribution System in Florida

In 2020, THF Natural Resources LLC / DBA Traders Hill Farm (THF) received a USDA AMS Local Food Promotion Program grant (“Building a Sustainable Food Hub: Farm2Fork Connection”) based on its pilot program to purchase and accumulate products from farmers unable to sell product (with pandemic shutdowns), repack the value added mix of products with THF lettuces, take orders electronically, and distribute value added product directly to consumers across Northeast and North Central Florida and South Georgia. This ongoing effort has sustained farmers, reduced farm waste, and provided consumers with a value-added food experience of fresh, local, and regional products.

More importantly, THF has been boots on the ground in addressing the food supply aggregation, packing, and distribution dilemma with an extraordinary group of partners who are willing and committed to addressing how to leap past the hard lessons to a next iteration solution. This project is a broad collaboration of farmers, non-profit organizations, K-12 school systems, institutions of higher learning, regional and local government entities, and private enterprises to optimize access and distribution of fresh regionally grown food in Florida and South Georgia. The proposal focuses on strengthening the viability and resilience of regional food economies through collaboration and coordination and has three parts: 1) Using professional food system experts, THF proposes to capture lessons learned regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, gaps, and barriers to food access and distribution in Nassau County (and Alachua County), map present food access and distribution points, and map effective, efficient alternatives. These discussions will serve as the basis for a Community Nutrition Alliance, an aggregator of food donated, gleaned, or purchased with the intent to redistribute to alliance members based on their customers’ needs. 2) Revisiting a conceptual feasibility study for a regional food processing hub done pre-pandemic, overlay the many lessons learned about direct marketing and value-add products by producer farmers participating in the Local Food Promotion Program grant. Capture the many economies of scale, speed to market, and sustainability advancements into a pandemic-proof Food Innovation Hub that provides benefits for all participating producers. 3) Designing a risk mitigated agricultural complex that addresses gaps, removes barriers, and lowers accumulation and distribution costs to better support distributing fresh food and products to residents of Northeast and North Central Florida, and customers throughout the Southeastern US.

Iowa

Recipient: Practical Farmers of Iowa, Ames, IA
District: IA-004
Project Type: Farm to Institution
Award Amount: \$861,356
Match Amount: \$227,080
Total Project Amount: \$1,088,436

Strengthening & Expanding Iowa’s Food Hubs to Develop & Retain New Institutional Markets

This project will preserve and significantly scale up the institutional markets that food hubs have developed in Iowa. This project will expand food hub capacity to capture more institutional sales, onboard new farmers, and grow sales territory to equitably serve more of the state. The work will also leverage upcoming, short-term institutional purchasing incentives to convert new institutions to permanent local food customers, thereby transforming the scale of farm-to-institution in Iowa. A

centralized food hub, FarmTable Procurement & Delivery, provides aggregation, storage and delivery services across Iowa's food hub network, and in turn to farmers and markets across Iowa, and the partnership shares a commitment to transitioning the FarmTable food hub to a non-profit and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

As a support partner with a strong state-wide farmer network, Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) will provide key outreach and education for farmers to learn about food hubs and become food hub vendors. PFI will also administer and evaluate this project. Iowa Valley RC&D will facilitate continued spaces for food hubs to collaborate with each other, while key experts at Kitchen Table Consultants will optimize food hub KPIs and provide business management coaching. Food Hub partners will maximize their added capacity made possible by this project, along with technical assistance, to add more farmer vendors, institutional customers, and territory to their individual businesses and expand the footprint of farm-to-institution in Iowa.

Recipient: Eat Greater Des Moines, Des Moines, IA

District: IA-003

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$946,665

Match Amount: \$236,975.50

Total Project Amount: \$1,183,640.50

Statewide Regional Value Chain Coordination for a Stronger Iowa Food System

Eat Greater Des Moines, with the Iowa Food System Coalition, brings together the Regional Food System Working Group, existing Value Chain Coordinators (VCCs), the Iowa Farmers Union, Iowa State University Small Farm Program, and the Food Hub Managers Working Group in support of value chain coordinator expansion.

The project will create two new regional value chain coordinator positions, support three current value chain coordinators, and a central coordinator. Five regions across Iowa, including two critical geographic voids, will be supported to connect farmers, producers, purchasers, and resources. The central coordinator will help the VCCs improve processes, share examples of leveraged infrastructure developments, and collaborate on policy recommendations. Including VCC impact assessment with education and policy development is essential to support the sustainability of the relationship infrastructure.

VCCs enable producers and buyers to improve their competitive position leading to more profitability and viability. VCCs can engage retailers and institutional purchasers to lead them through the process of local purchasing and connect them with food hubs, thus reducing costs and navigating hurdles for them. Having consistent local buyers will reduce risk for farmers, create more demand for local food, and enable local producers and food businesses to scale up production with confidence and sustainability. This is especially true in rural regions. This project benefits both producers and buyers in the five regions identified.

The project includes subrecipients such as University of Northern Iowa to perform project evaluation and VCC impact analysis, partial funding to existing VCCs at Iowa State University Extension and Healthy Harvest, the Iowa Farmers Union to engage in statewide advocacy for project outcomes, and StoryStruck Marketing to develop dissemination tools and a website for the project.

Kansas

Recipient: Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS

District: KS-001

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$749,696

Match Amount: \$187,500

Total Project Amount: \$937,196

Implementing a Kansas Local Food Systems Collaborative: Building Resilient and Equitable Local Food Systems Together

The purpose of the Kansas Local Food Systems Collaborative project is to convene local and regional food systems (LRFS) stakeholders to enhance local food systems. This collaborative program supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop LRFS focused on building and strengthening economic viability and resilience throughout the state. The objectives of this statewide effort include: 1) increasing local food system education and coordination capacity, 2) facilitating access to resources and local food systems workforce development, and 3) providing access to marketing expertise and educational materials on the benefits of local and regional food system work across the state. An over-arching priority is to increase equitable access to resources and technical expertise.

Recipient: Rice County Community Foundation, LLC, Lyons, KS

District: KS-001

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$106,416

Match Amount: \$35,847

Total Project Amount: \$142,263

Harvest Hub: Growing local food systems by connecting partners and resources.

The Rice County Community Foundation will establish the Harvest Hub, a regional food council that develops the local food system by connecting partners and resources to address the needs of consumers, producers, processors, and distributors. Particularly, new, small-operation, and underserved farmer populations will be poised to greatly benefit from the activities of the Harvest Hub. By developing a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, conducting stakeholder needs assessments, developing educational programming, and optimizing the use of local resources, the Harvest Hub will increase access to locally produced agricultural products, develop new local marketing opportunities for farmers and ranchers, increase the capacity and efficiency of the regional food system, and create a digital hub to coordinate the inputs and outputs involved in an effective food system. The result of the project will be a sustainable food system that continues to support the local stakeholders and look toward the growth of new opportunities and partnerships.

The need for a more coordinated and expansive food system became clear after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. For the past few months, a grassroots group of community leaders, farmers, producers, and consumers in Rice County, Kansas have gathered to discuss how to create a more localized food system. The Harvest Hub has the potential to unite community partners through a comprehensive program that brings people closer to their food and the producers who raise it.

Kentucky

Recipient: Cowan Community Action Group, Whitesburg, KY

District: KY-005

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$100,000

Match Amount: \$53,650

Total Project Amount: \$153,650

Building a Regenerative Agriculture Coalition in Appalachia

The long-term goal of the project is to extend proven regenerative agriculture practices into coalfield communities in eastern Kentucky as a means of resurrecting local food production and creating economic opportunity.

The partners will build the capability for regenerative agriculture knowledge and skill transfer between farmers and other regenerative agriculture practitioners, and in particular, 1) launch a coalition to educate and assist in regenerative agriculture in this region; 2) refine and widely share a regionally specific restorative agriculture site assessment; 3) identify sites for regenerative agriculture demonstration projects in 2023 and 2024.

The project will result in (1) a functional coalition promoting the application of regenerative agriculture practices in areas of Appalachia impacted by surface mining, (2) a site assessment checklist that can be used to assess a prospective site for regenerative agriculture, and (3) characterization of four prospective regenerative agriculture demonstration and training sites, with an inventory of their assets, capabilities, and gaps. The results of the project will be communicated among the coalition and other stakeholders.

Recipient: Kentucky Horticulture Council, Inc, Lexington, KY

District: KY-006

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$689,908

Match Amount: \$225,224

Total Project Amount: \$915,132

Grow Up! Expanding Kentucky's regional produce market opportunities

Grow Up! Expanding Kentucky's regional produce market opportunities is an integrated systems approach that will expand Kentucky's regional food system impact by providing technical assistance focused on production, processing, distribution, and consumption of produce crops. The project will leverage a public-private partner network to increase production and market literacy while reducing known production and market barriers to support farms, businesses, and entrepreneurs that grow, store, process, market, and distribute produce locally and regionally. With focus and intentionality, the multi-disciplinary project team will collectively address the needs of at least 2,500 producers, 10 distribution partners, 43 institutional buyers, and 75,000 consumers of food products, with resulting system benefits including increased opportunities across market channels, economic improvement, job creation, enhanced ecosystem services, and expanded access to healthy food.

Recipient: Community Farm Alliance, Berea, KY

District: KY-006

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$242,566

Match Amount: \$62,992

Total Project Amount: \$305,558

The Partnership for a Greater Louisville Food Council and Food Vision 2030

This project will reevaluate the post-pandemic local food system landscape, create a Greater Louisville Food Council, and develop the Louisville Food System Vision 2030 to coalesce broad stakeholder buy-in around goals of decreased diet-related health disparities, increased food security, food system resiliency and climate change mitigation, and equity across the Louisville foodshed. Guided by a new Greater Louisville Food Council, Food Vision 2030 will be an 8-year Strategic Plan that identifies and employs substantial investment of public and private funds to achieve these goals.

Over 24 months, the Partnership for a Greater Louisville Food Council and Food Vision 2030 will tap the wisdom of directly affected communities to identify and deploy the many stakeholders and resources available in and around Louisville to bring greater food security for all Louisvillians, especially low-income people living in areas with limited access to affordable, healthy food, while supporting farmers and building resilience, equity, and sustainability into the food and farm economy.

The Food Vision 2030 will identify and enable substantial investment of public and private funds to achieve these goals, outcomes, and actions that a) promote a healthy, community-based, and economically viable food system, b) prioritize all Louisville residents' ability to access an abundance of nutritious, safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate food c) acknowledge, mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts on farmers, consumers, historically underserved communities, and the greater food system, and d) improve marketing opportunities for producers in the regional food system.

Louisiana

Recipient: marketumbrella.org, New Orleans, LA

District: LA-001

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$970,087

Match Amount: \$242,523

Total Project Amount: \$1,212,610

Strengthening Community Access and Systems Support in the Greater New Orleans Regional Food System

This 3-year implementation project will increase community access, systems support and communications and data sharing, for a stronger, resilient, community-based food system in the greater New Orleans region. The project includes diverse public-private partners in various aspects of the local food system, including food processing, direct-to-consumer markets, local food promotion, environmental policy, producer support, food distribution, and higher education. It builds on the work of longstanding partnerships and addresses identified food systems gaps. Activities are technical assistance, value chain coordination, policy support, marketing and outreach, and monitoring and data collection and analysis. The team will create an emergency plan for post-disasters, and host monthly partner meetings and quarterly topic-based collaborative meetings for collaborators to increase cooperation and relationship building and plan marketing efforts. Intended beneficiaries are producers

and the broader community, especially from lower-income and/or historically underserved populations, and/or women and Veterans. Partners will focus on key systems needs and implement solutions to address the persistent poverty and food access challenges in our region.

Massachusetts

Recipient: Third Sector New England, Inc., Boston, MA

District: MA-007

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$968,375

Match Amount: \$369,500

Total Project Amount: \$1,337,875

Rooted in Community: A localized approach to growing the farm to institution movement in New England

This project invests in strengthening regional, equitable farm to institution (FTI) relationships and value chains in three New England Communities, which in coordination will lead to greater regional and values-based food procurement across New England while shifting institutional power dynamics around race. Springfield, MA; New Haven, CT; and Cumberland County, ME will form a Cohort, represented by three community-based organizations—Springfield Food Policy Council, Cumberland County Food Security Council, City of New Haven Food System Policy Division—who are already driving food systems change at the local level. Each of the community organizations will receive subawards to carry out their local organizing, community engagement, and value chain coordination activities. The partnership will be supported by three state departments of agriculture, who will connect partners to additional collaborators and technical assistance. Farm to Institution New England, a regional network backbone organization, will provide project coordination, connect the cohort with regional partners, resources, and training, and share stories and strategies developed in each community with the broader network. We believe that strong, inter-woven and community-driven foundations of FTI work lead to sustainable regional impact for New England producers and residents who eat at institutions.

Recipient: Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, Springfield, MA

District: MA-001

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$309,931

Match Amount: \$106,980

Total Project Amount: \$416,911

Increasing Fresh Produce in Food Insecure Communities While Determining Equitable Economic Models for Small-Scale Sustainable Farmers

Hunger in Massachusetts is on the rise, with 16% of individuals and 21% of children not having enough to eat. Simultaneously, over 30% of food grown on farms is wasted and farming is unprofitable. Farmers are often unable to sell all their crops or cannot afford the cost of labor/processing to harvest or donate surplus crops. Farmland converted to urban development and methane emissions from crop waste are contributing to climate change. Meanwhile, many factors are creating instability and increasing rates of food insecurity in local economies.

The goal of this project is to co-create pathways of greater reciprocity between farmers, consumers, and food insecure communities, resulting in increased equity and resilience in the local food system in the face of climate change and a changing economy.

This project will impact the region by supporting its climate resiliency and response plans by matching produce demand with supply, mitigating a portion of greenhouse gasses through reducing landfill food waste, and supporting regenerative farming practices that create healthy topsoil, sequester carbon, and keep land out of development. The project offers not only a significant increase in the amount of fresh food available to food-insecure people but supports their participation and agency in local food system development and decision-making. By nurturing network relationships, the partners will provide other gleaning organizations in the region with a way to learn alongside each other and to track evolving trends, strategies, challenges, and opportunities in food redistribution and expansion/opening of markets throughout the network region. As the climate changes, as war refugees continue to arrive, and as populations and demographics shift, an adaptive and responsive regional gleaning network will help tend to change needs and demands from the regional food system.

Recipient: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Pittsfield, MA

District: MA-001

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$645,194

Match Amount: \$245,099

Total Project Amount: \$890,293

Strengthening the Berkshire County Regional Food System with Locally Sourced Mobile Farmers Markets to Serve Low Access Populations

The Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market Project will build on prior and ongoing collaborative efforts to expand local food production and delivery systems and bring the benefits of fresh and healthy locally grown food to underserved communities and individuals. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission joins with sub-awardees Berkshire Bounty, Berkshire Grown, and the Southern Berkshires Rural Health Network and partners Berkshire United Way and Community Health Programs in this partnership. Each partner addresses a distinct aspect of food production, storage, purchase, and distribution. By joining skills and networks, we seek to create sustainable local food systems in the county.

By addressing community food security in which all community residents have access (economic, physical, social) to adequate food supplies, the Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market will provide the following benefits to farmers (food producers): Higher direct-to-consumer sales and income, lower marketing and transaction costs, and stronger social connections.

Maryland

Recipient: Montgomery County Food Council Inc, Bethesda, MD

District: MD-008

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$163,680

Total Project Amount: \$413,680

Maryland Community Food Council Collaborative

In 2021, the State of Maryland's Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) was created through legislation by the Maryland General Assembly to address the food system challenges highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rates of food insecurity and demand for food assistance programs sharply rose, as thousands faced unemployment, business closures, and limited access to normal support services. In Maryland, food banks reported an 88% increase in food distribution since March of 2020 compared to the prior 16 months. Farmers and food businesses in the state faced unanticipated drops in demand and distribution challenges. Food producers had few options to remain viable, as few systems were in place to connect their agricultural supply with increased demand for food consumption and assistance.

The FSRC used a statewide collaborative process to establish food system recommendations. Although limited staffing is available for FSRC operations, as a government body there are limitations on its ability to pursue the implementation of recommendations. There are also significant capacity limitations for the local food councils and other community-based organizations to collectively advocate for plan implementation. By formalizing a community of practice between Maryland's existing and emerging local food councils, we will fund local conveners and leaders to collaborate, pursue shared priorities, ensure effective implementation of statewide initiatives at the community level, and connect the insight and expertise of local stakeholders to inform efforts statewide. Through this collective effort, we will also create the capacity to effectively apply federal resources at both the state and local levels.

Michigan

Recipient: Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities Inc, Traverse City, MI

District: MI-001

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$891,100

Match Amount: \$247,360

Total Project Amount: \$1,138,460

Resilient Relationships, Resilient Supply

Resilient Relationships, Resilient Supply builds upon established partnerships to strengthen the food system in lower Michigan's Western Lakeshore Region to increase sales and consumption of locally grown foods from small and mid-sized producers to schools, early childcare, and education (ECE) centers and emergency food providers. The project increases community nutrition security by increasing access to healthy, local food for low-income children, families, and citizens. We will support over 34 stakeholder partners in filling gaps they have identified in infrastructure and supply chains to help markets grow. We will leverage Michigan's innovative state program, 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids & Farms, currently funded at \$4.5 million, increasing local food purchasing power for schools, ECE centers, and eligible organizations feeding children via USDA child nutrition programs. Partners will leverage proven regional farm to food pantry initiatives that have grown in response to COVID-19. Lead partners—Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, the principal of a food processing association, a supply chain logistics expert, and a local foods marketing enterprise with vast farmer connections—will convene 5 Peer Learning Networks (PLNs) and provide farm to institution support and technical assistance to create stronger collaborations among 5 key stakeholder groups: producers, distributors, processors/aggregators, schools/Early Care and Education (ECE) centers, and emergency food providers (EFP). The PLNs will provide the chance to network, identify needs, find opportunities and solutions, and build relationships. PLN members will attend Learning Journeys to PLN member sites to share best

practices. They will have scholarships available to 5 key Michigan-based food systems conferences to build knowledge and gain professional development.

Through technical assistance and coordinated efforts, we aim to increase capacity, develop new market opportunities for producers to expand local and regional food business enterprises, and promote food safety practices to ensure a safe and productive local and regional food system. The 501,620 expected beneficiaries of this project include students in schools and ECE centers participating in 10 Cents a Meal, families and low-income individuals utilizing EFPs, small and mid-size farmers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and businesses along the value-added supply chain across the 16-county project region. We expect that our efforts in bringing together and engaging stakeholders of the food supply chain will lead to increased resilience and efficacy of work within the regional food system of Michigan's Western Lakeshore region.

Nevada

Recipient: Board of Regents, NSHE, obo University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, NV

District: NV-002

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$256,592

Match Amount: \$64,148

Total Project Amount: \$320,740

Nevada Farm Apprenticeship Program

The Nevada Farm Apprenticeship Program (Program) unites diverse public-private partners to address the lack of practical agricultural training opportunities that currently prevents would-be farmers from going into production in northwestern Nevada. The region is afflicted by poverty and food insecurity, and current fruit and vegetable processing is falling increasingly behind the demands of a rapidly growing population. Partners will combine diverse skills and expertise to develop and implement a Program that trains new farmers to successfully face the challenges of food production in a changing climate and fill gaps in the regional food system. The partners will collaborate to develop the apprenticeship program that includes on-farm grower-to-grower training, practical curriculum covering production and business aspects of farming, such as food hub operations, farm incubator and local food marketing opportunities. Special recruitment efforts and consideration will be given to those from or aspiring to serve Hispanic and Indigenous populations which are underserved in the region. The partnership that will guide and implement the program includes the Desert Farming Initiative at the University of Nevada (UNR), UNR Horticulture and Agronomy faculty Felipe Barrios-Masias, UNR Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program, Nevada Grown, Churchill Entrepreneur Development Association, and four leading produce farms (Lattin Farms, Holley Family Farms, Custom Gardens and Reno Food Systems' Park Farm). Partners have a successful history of collaboration on food system development and are committed to creating and implementing a program that can be sustained in the long term.

New Jersey

Recipient: CUMAC-ECHO INC, Paterson, NJ

District: NJ-009

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$200,464

Match Amount: \$65,725
Total Project Amount: \$266,189

CUMAC's Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study

CUMAC's Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study will bring together multi-sector partners in the agriculture sector, the emergency feeding network, and food policy efforts to assess feasible, effective, and supported strategies for developing a Regional Food Hub.

Donations to food banks and pantries are decreasing, and food banks were forced to purchase 40% more food in 2021 due to the pandemic. CUMAC's Regional Food Hub Feasibility Study will assess the interests, capacity, and infrastructure of farmers, food pantries, and food policy partners regarding establishing a Regional Food Hub headquartered at CUMAC's 28,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Paterson, New Jersey. Through a qualitative-driven feasibility study that will utilize in-depth partner interviews, observational assessments, focus groups, and feedback sessions, the project will leverage these multisector, symbiotic relationships to build a resilient food access ecosystem with a partnership network that can withstand shock. With shared goals of ensuring all people, including those who use pantry services, have access to farm-fresh food, the Feasibility Study will determine if and how this untapped sales market for farmers and growers can effectively provide farm fresh food to low-income families.

New York

Recipient: Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson Co, Watertown, NY
District: NY-021
Project Type: Implementation & Expansion
Award Amount: \$588,431
Match Amount: \$239,101
Total Project Amount: \$827,532

Fresh and Healthy Initiative: Food Policy Council of Jefferson County Partnership Project

The Food Policy Council of Jefferson County partners will connect public and private resources to further develop our local food system with goals to maximize healthy food accessibility, economic opportunity, and growth of the agriculture/local food industry. Specifically, project partners will implement the Fresh and Healthy initiative through (1) implementing mobile delivery of food pantry packages; (2) advancing nutritious food accessibility in small communities through partner convenience stores; and (3) increasing use of SNAP and other food resource programs at farmers markets. The project will improve marketing opportunities for local farmers/food producers by serving as a conduit to directly connect them to the mobile food pantry and convenience stores where their products will be available to consumers in areas where options have traditionally been limited. The intended beneficiaries are the food policy council partner member organizations; under-resourced community members, particularly those in rural areas; and local food producers.

Recipient: Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
District: NY-023
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$248,193
Match Amount: \$62,056

Total Project Amount: \$310,249

The NY Food Hub Collaborative

The NY Food Hub Collaboratives brings together 29 local food system stakeholders representing 21 organizations to realize the long-term goal of improving the economic viability of mid-tier value chain partners targeting local markets by improving efficiencies, maximizing profits, and increasing demand for NY food products. Three objectives guide the project team toward that goal: (1) Establish a Collaborative of interdependent food hubs designed to work collaboratively to efficiently, affordably, and effectively market food products to institutional markets. (2) Identify the potential for small, mid-size, and historically underserved producers to be competitive in state agency and institutional contracts. (3) Develop strategic business relationships between mid-tier value chain partners including food hubs, producers, processors, distributors, and markets that emphasize organizational interdependence, trust, and transparency and equitably distribute responsibilities and rewards. Objectives will be met through strategic planning amongst Collaborative partners, virtual field trips to learn best practices from national partners, business-to-business development opportunities, producer and market partner trainings, and a series of outputs.

Recipient: Syracuse Grows, Inc., Syracuse, NY

District: NY-024

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$765,394.06

Match Amount: \$322,600

Total Project Amount: \$1,087,994.06

Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance: Strengthening Local Capacities & Community Connectivity Toward a Thriving Regional Food System

The Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA) is a multi-sector food council that works to strengthen the food system so that it works for all people in our region. Our partnership aims to foster relationships, develop projects, and align resources to improve the health of our neighbors and our environment. The proposed implementation project will strengthen local capacities and community connectivity toward a thriving regional food system.

Our region is home to a diversity of both populations and landscapes, presenting a unique opportunity for a regional food systems partnership. The county is home to communities experiencing concentrated poverty within the urban center, a large refugee population situated mostly on the city's Northside, Onondaga Nation whose territory is located just to the city's south, both urban and rural agricultural producers, and numerous other food business enterprises. The proposed project will knit together the shared interests of this county's unique composition to support a coordinated, equitable, and resilient regional food system.

Our project aims to serve anyone who "eats, grows, or just loves" food in Onondaga County. The partnership covers the city of Syracuse (pop. 148,620), surrounding Onondaga County (pop. 476,516), and neighboring Onondaga Nation – a total geographic area of 780 square miles. We anticipate that our project will benefit all residents of our region as well as many outside the county's geographic bounds given that several of our partners – including the food bank and regional farmers market – serve a much wider audience including the whole of the eight-county Central New York region. These include segments of the food system – including producers, distributors, and farm- and food service workers – as well as whole communities – including Indigenous partners, individuals with lived experience of food insecurity and poverty, new Americans, youth, and Black and Latinx communities.

North Carolina

Recipient: North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

District: NC-002

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$847,541

Match Amount: \$371,190

Total Project Amount: \$1,218,731

Food Councils Partnering to Develop Viable and Equitable Regional Food Value Chains

This project aims to strengthen existing partnerships and opportunities to invest in local food infrastructure that creates long-term regional food economic resilience. Increasing federal and state-level resources have provided significant opportunities for short-term local food markets and institutional engagement. However, more sustainable channels of financial and institutional support for food hubs and local food intermediaries are needed to build sustainable opportunities for farmers and communities. Local governments have a great opportunity to learn, engage, and innovate for systems-level solutions that benefit the health and wealth of farmers and their communities. The growing network of food councils that exists across North Carolina can partner with their regional Council of Governments (COGs) to educate local governments, leverage existing funding streams, and advocate for long-term value chain and local food infrastructure investments. This proposal will build capacity and innovation in two multi-county foodsheds in North Carolina, while leaning on a statewide network of partners, by assessing existing and new opportunities to leverage economic drivers that cultivate regional food value chains. The project will create a grounding for more investment in food value chain development that centers on BIPOC farmers; existing food hubs; and the cultivation of regional efforts that elevate the rural assets necessary for vibrant regional food chains to thrive. Food councils will lead community outreach and advocacy efforts. COGs will provide capacity building, assistance with regional data collection and analysis, and a strong connection to local governments. The Food Hub Network will provide a food value chain needs analysis. CEFS provides program management and evaluation for this proposal, a statewide structure to the network of food councils, and coordinates Statewide and Regional Summits where cross-county analyses will be compared regionally and opportunities for action will be galvanized.

Ohio

Recipient: Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Parma, OH

District: OH-016

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$700,000

Match Amount: \$210,265

Total Project Amount: \$910,265

Feed Our Future: Planning, Partnerships and Projects to Increase Local Food Spending

This project leverages local and regional partnerships to advance the collaborations necessary to build a regionally innovative and responsive farm to school (F2S) initiative that serves school-aged children across Northern Ohio. The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) serves as the backbone organization for Feed Our Future (FOF): Local Foods for Growing Minds, convening individuals and stakeholders throughout Ohio to advance the policy, environmental, and systems changes needed to

drive systemic change and build a more resilient food system. The project goals are to strengthen the mid-tier value chain and increase local and regional food procurement by K-12 school districts. The key objectives of this partnership are to 1) strengthen the mid-tier value chain to effectively serve K-12 school systems by increasing the number of producers in the supply chain; 2) increase local food purchasing by K-12 school systems through the execution of a farm to school bid; 3) increase the knowledge and skills of school meal program staff to menu, serve, and teach about local foods through the creation of two new curriculums; and 4) expand organizational capacity to support regional local food system efforts, planning, partnership, and advocacy by hiring an equity consultant, facilitating ongoing meetings of the Feed Our Future Leadership Council, and engaging in new and enhancing existing partnerships to generate a regional farm to school strategic plan.

Pennsylvania

Recipient: Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, Johnstown, PA

District: PA-013

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$564,046.62

Match Amount: \$156,512.56

Total Project Amount: \$720,559.18

Building Regional Resilience: The Greater Pittsburgh Food Systems Partnership

The project takes a holistic approach to strength the Southwestern Pennsylvania food system, with a focus on building connections between purchasers, growers, and funders. Building off the success of our region's first comprehensive food system plan, the Greater Pittsburgh Food Action Plan ('the Plan'), the Partnership will connect and cultivate regional food economies through public-private partnerships, support the development of strategies for regional food system infrastructure, and strengthen capacity through community collaboration.

The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC) will utilize our 13 years of experience as a convener of food systems partners to bring about transformative change through a collective impact model. As a backbone organization, the PFPC will convene growers, institutional purchasers, funders, and community leaders to identify and address regional food system's needs. Through deeper coordination among and between these stakeholders, the Partnership will support the development of diversified regional markets, increase investment in the community and institutional food system's needs, and build a more resilient and equitable food system in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

South Dakota

Recipient: Dakota Rural Action, Brookings, SD

District: SD – At-large

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$114,673

Total Project Amount: \$364,673

Strengthening the Capacity of South Dakota Local Food Coalition by creating a social systems map of local food stakeholders and formalizing the Coalition's organizational structure.

South Dakota Local Food Coalition (SDLFC) is growing with membership reaching over 50 people and 20 organizations. South Dakota State University (SDSU) as sub-awardee will build a social system map, which is an interactive online support tool that allows people to visualize the network and identify people with shared interests or resources they need. To ensure that the SDLFC continues to grow and equitably serve the diverse needs of South Dakotans, Dakota Rural Action will organize SDLFC stakeholders and improve the capacity of the Coalition by contracting with a Food Systems Planner to facilitate solidifying the Coalition's organizational structure and developing our first multiyear strategic plan. As the SDLFC expands and includes more diverse perspectives, together we will also conduct research to characterize challenges and opportunities to prioritize action items for the SDLFC. The strengthening of the Coalition's institutional capacity will allow it to continue to become more inclusive and amplify the priorities and needs of local producers so that local food economies and rural food based agrarian communities can thrive in South Dakota.

Tennessee

Recipient: Appalachian Resource Conservation & Development Council, Johnson City, TN

District: TN-001

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$505,758

Match Amount: \$270,546

Total Project Amount: \$776,304

Northeast Tennessee Food Vision

Northeast Tennessee Food Vision (NTFV) is a movement led by a partnership of local food system stakeholders whose goals are to increase investment in, improve access to, and increase consumption of locally grown or produced food in the eight-county region of Northeast TN. Northeast TN has a strong agricultural foundation and high demand for local products, but the region lacks producer training and technical support, and a cohesive brand for locally grown and produced foods. Local farmers consistently report a need for marketing and technical support and training to achieve certifications required to sell goods to larger markets. NTFV will establish a Food Policy Council (FPC) to advocate for county and state-level policies that support a healthy food system, and for community investment in food system infrastructure improvements. NTFV will also establish a Regional Farmer Cooperative (RFC) which will connect producers to wholesalers, distributors, grocery, and restaurant buyers, and will launch a regional local food branding and marketing campaign titled Northeast Tennessee Grown to support producers and increase demand for locally grown food. NTFV will provide marketing, technical assistance, and training to regional producers and markets. The project will also launch a virtual local food hub where farmers can network with grocery, restaurant, institutional, and wholesale buyers, and can access the resources established by the RFC. The counties included in the project are Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington. The partnership is led by the Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council and includes: First TN Development District, Appalachian Producers Cooperative, First Bank & Trust, and Jonesborough Locally Grown.

Texas

Recipient: Texas Center for Local Food, Elgin, TX

District: TX-010

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$112,640

Match Amount: \$37,230

Total Project Amount: \$149,870

Bastrop County Local Food Action Partnership

The Bastrop County Local Food Action Partnership will connect, cultivate, and support the regional food economy in the region of Bastrop County, Texas through meaningful public-private partnerships and a healthy collaborative process. Connections between private companies including farms and ranches, public entities, and nonprofit organizations, will facilitate collaborative work to strengthen the capacity and resilience of the local food system in Bastrop County Texas. The goal of this Partnership is to create a unified approach to local food system economic development and equitable healthy food access in Bastrop County and across the local region. Specific issues the Partnership will address include (i) a lack of active and durable connections between the public, nonprofit, and private sectors in support of local and regional food system development, which has led to (ii) underdeveloped capacity to build robust local food economic value chains.

Utah

Recipient: Association of Gleaning Organizations, Salt Lake City, UT

District: UT-002

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$112,346

Match Amount: \$44,494

Total Project Amount: \$156,840

Regional Gleaning Network in Washington State

Gleaning, an ancient practice of farmers leaving crops in their fields for the poor to harvest has morphed over the years into coordinated groups who extract and distribute this produce on a relatively large scale. Gleaning organizations across North America communicatively harvested 55,528,183 pounds of produce in 2020. This practice reduces food waste left in the fields and increases the accessibility to fresh produce for low to no-income families.

In 2020 The Association of Gleaning Organizations (AGO) conducted research as part of the first-ever Gleaning Census. This research found that one of the main correlations with highly effective organizations was their participation in a regional network. At the beginning of this year, we gauged interest in a few regions and decided those in Washington state had the most drive and capacity to begin a network in their area. Through this grant, we aim to continue our meetings and develop a regional network comprised of gleaning organizations in Washington state.

Our long-term goals are to reduce food waste and hunger in the state through our increased capacity to glean more produce. To reach this goal we will conduct a network assessment, build an implementation plan, and publish a paper documenting the results of our experience. By working collaboratively, we

believe we can identify common problems and collaborative solutions that will increase our capacity and efficiency, ultimately providing Washington state with more quality produce for those in need.

Vermont

Recipient: Vital Communities, Inc., White River Junction, VT

District: VT – At-large

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$198,351

Match Amount: \$60,536

Total Project Amount: \$258,887

Food System Resilience from the Ground Up

“Food System Resilience from the Ground Up” is a two-year planning effort to strengthen food security, farm viability, farmland integrity, distribution systems, and climate stability in the Upper Valley by coordinating between existing sub-regional agricultural and food system support groups using a Collective Impact network (“Upper Valley Resilience Network”). Our grant partners (the founding members of the UVRN) consist of both “Local Hubs” (the subregional, grassroots, often farmer-led food resilience groups with local expertise) and Technical Assistance providers (support organizations with a wide range of food system expertise.) By the end of the grant period, 7 to 10 local hubs will have a strategic plan of action appropriate for their unique circumstances but complementary between sub-regions and will have built the relationships and gained technical skills necessary for the successful implementation of these plans. In aggregate, these local initiatives will create a significant impact on the Upper Valley while reducing duplication of efforts.

Virginia

Recipient: Health Care Without Harm, Reston, VA (Project is in Oregon)

District: VA-011

Project Type: Farm to Institution

Award Amount: \$999,524

Match Amount: \$412,620

Total Project Amount: \$1,412,144

Oregon Farm to Institution Collaborative (OFIC)

For more than a decade, the Farm to Institution (F2I) movement in Oregon has made significant strides in engaging and coordinating efforts of institutional purchasers, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and supply chain producers and processors. While successes have helped create lasting change in many institutions, the impact of these resources and partnerships has largely been focused on the Portland Metro Region. While almost 100,000 meals per day are served in institutions in the Portland area, there are more than twice as many meals served in institutions throughout the State.

The purpose of this project is to leverage existing proofs of concept in farm to institution (F2I) and take them to scale at a state level. F2I will be catalyzed in different regions and rural areas of Oregon by establishing the Oregon Farm to Institution Collaborative (OFIC).

This project will benefit Oregon producers and processors through improved value chain coordination and connections to new institutional markets, thus providing institutions with more options and

streamlined processes to purchase locally and meet values-based purchasing goals. Additionally, the project will benefit communities served by institutions throughout Oregon, like students, patients, and state employees, who will have improved access to healthy, locally grown, and produced food.

Recipient: 4P Foods, Inc. PBC, Elkwood, VA

District: VA-007

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$992,152

Match Amount: \$614,500

Total Project Amount: \$1,606,652

Building a Regional Food Ecosystem for the Mid-Atlantic

Led by 4P Foods, a \$10M food hub and distributor, the Building a Regional Food Ecosystem for the Mid-Atlantic (RFEMA) project will demonstrate a replicable and scalable model for implementing a regional transportation network to connect local producers with institutional and consumer markets. The RFEMA project is designed to address the challenges of scale that prevent individual food ecosystem players - producers, food hubs, aggregators, and processors - from ramping up the supply of local and regional food to meet rapidly growing demand. To build out a competitive and efficient regional food ecosystem, the RFEMA project will: (1) leverage existing regional partnerships to connect local producers with institutional buyers; (2) implement system-wide inventory and management solutions that support full product traceability; (3) build the regional transportation and logistics infrastructure necessary to scale the throughput of local/regional production from farm to customer; and (4) replicate and expand the model to the Eastern Shore. Strategic investments will bring economies of scale to the regional food ecosystem while connecting local farmers to otherwise inaccessible wholesale and institutional markets.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Transportation and Marketing
Regional Food System Partnerships Program

Fiscal Year 2021 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 30
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$14,809,185

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients.

Alaska

Recipient: Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, Sitka, AK
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$189,100
Match Amount: \$20,000
Total Project Amount: \$209,100

Feeding Change: Increasing Food Security and Workforce Development Opportunities in Alaska

The impacts of Covid-19 highlighted long standing workforce development and food insecurity issues in Alaska. The seafood industry has long provided the backbone of coastal economies but relied on outside labor for processing, marketing, and shipping. Quarantine requirements led to significant labor shortages and high costs. In addition, currently less than 1 percent of the seafood caught in Alaska stays in Alaska to benefit the local economy. Alaska is one of the top five most food insecure states in the nation. 95% of the \$2 billion of food Alaskan's purchase is imported. 14% of Alaskans, including 20% of children, face food insecurity. In March 2020, the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association and Catch Together formed a state-wide-coalition of non-profits, tribal organizations, military organizations, city and boroughs, foundations, fishermen, and seafood processors to address food insecurity and workforce development challenges. This initiative provided stipends and workforce support to the seafood industry and deployed \$2.5 million to purchase local seafood for distribution, providing 630,000+ free meals of Alaska seafood to individuals and families facing food insecurity.

The goal of the proposed 2-year project is to build on this successful pandemic initiative by designing and implementing a planning and assessment process to establish a 10-year, statewide, seafood distribution and workforce development plan that includes a sustainable non-federal financial strategy to serve Alaska's rural and historically marginalized communities.

California

Recipient: The Regents of the University of California – College of Agriculture & Environmental Science, Davis, CA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$813,744

Match Amount: \$85,082

Total Project Amount: \$898,826

Creating High Value Market Opportunities for California's Small- and Mid-Scale Meat Producers

Our July 2021 UC Davis Food Systems Lab (FSL) study derived from interviews with over 30 supply chain stakeholders, a literature review and consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, revealed challenges and opportunities. The pandemic, drought, and fires intensify the already acute processing challenges linked to California's inspection system, insufficient producer collaboration and NIMBYism often associated with anti-meat sentiments. The study recommends how producers can improve processing access and market opportunities. This proposal builds from that study and seeks to facilitate development of effective collaboration among links in supply chains and to optimize processing, inspection and marketing systems that convey the value propositions of the small and mid-scale producers. The FSL team, its collaborator from the Niche Meat Processing Assistance Network, and our strategic advisors will work with two cohorts of producers, processors and buyers over three years in two regions to implement synergistic actions that will optimize processing and marketing of high value meat from small and mid-scale producers. Our primary goal is to create two new regional supply chains that highlight product attributes conveying quality and value. We aim to supply institutional systems such as UC Davis Health and sports venues with ground meat and restaurants and other retailers with the more expensive cuts. The work will ultimately result in more economic opportunity for producers and increased system resilience.

Recipient: San Diego Food System Alliance, San Diego, CA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$711,624

Match Amount: \$237,706

Total Project Amount: \$949,330

San Diego County Food Vision 2030 Implementation - Local Food Economy Lab

The San Diego Food System Alliance (Alliance), is a diverse and inclusive multi-sector network that works across the region to promote collaboration, influence policy, and catalyze transformation in the food system. After a 2 year planning process engaging with over 250 cross-sector organizations and nearly 3,000 individuals—primarily low-income residents, tribal communities, food producers, businesses, and workers—the Alliance is launching San Diego County Food Vision 2030 in July 2021. Food Vision 2030, visualized through a report and a website including an indicator dashboard (sdfoodvision2030.org), outlines 10 objectives positioned to transform our regional food system to accomplish 3 goals: 1) cultivate racial justice, 2) fight climate change, and 3) build resilience.

To advance several Food Vision 2030 Objectives, the project goal is to launch a "Local Food Economy Lab" that centers equity and community ownership and works to improve the viability of local farms,

fisheries, and food businesses. The Lab will engage with a diverse set of public and private partners within the Food Vision 2030 network, including local farms, fisheries, food hubs, food businesses, institutions, mid-tier value chain businesses, technical assistance providers, government, philanthropic, financing, and economic development partners to coordinate customized business and technical assistance, mobilize funding, influence policy, and scale up local, equitable, and sustainable value chains. The Lab will also facilitate the economic case-making for investing in the regional food system. Through deep collaboration with partners, the project will involve two phases: 1) co-design the Lab and reimagine value chains, 2) implement the Lab services.

Recipient: San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, San Francisco, CA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$163,133

Match Amount: \$63,407

Total Project Amount: \$226,540

San Francisco Bay Area Local Food Purchasing Collaborative

The San Francisco Bay Area Local Food Purchasing Collaborative is a transformational collaboration that will leverage the power of institutional purchasing to build a more resilient, sustainable and equitable regional food system in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Collaborative brings together all the stakeholders necessary to create this much-needed change. It includes: some of the largest public institutions in the region – school districts, hospital systems, corrections facilities – collectively serving 100,000+ people per day and spending more than \$40 million annually on food; communities spanning the geography of the region, including the three largest cities; local and regional food policy advocates working to align food purchasing with community values; City and County governments from across the region; and three leading organizations with expertise providing technical assistance to schools, hospitals and corrections institutions.

The Collaborative is built around the Good Food Purchasing Program, which provides the structure and tools needed to measure and track institutional food purchasing, determine aggregate demand for food aligned with community values, identify and break down barriers to local food procurement, and enable participation of local suppliers in institutional supply chains.

This planning and design project will result in a Bay Area Good Food Purchasing Roadmap and technical assistance toolkit, including a detailed implementation guide to support institutions in meeting local food purchasing targets. By identifying and addressing roadblocks to good food purchasing, the Collaborative will accelerate institutions' local food procurement and create a model for scaling local food purchasing in other regions.

Colorado

Recipient: Northern Colorado Foodshed Project, Longmont, CO

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,262

Match Amount: \$58,857
Total Project Amount: \$308,119

Designing and Building an Equitable, Vibrant, and Resilient Local Food System in Northern Colorado

This project brings together public, private, and nonprofit organizations, along with community members, producers, and resources, to design and build a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient local food system in Northern Colorado. Our goal for the project is to address three key areas of growth and opportunity: food sovereignty and access, community outreach and education, and production growth and land access. To achieve this goal, we will: (1) Convene authentic community collaborations with established and potential partners to envision, define, and design the local food system scope and structure. This includes developing data-informed planning processes and frameworks to build an equitable, vibrant, and resilient local food system that is inclusive of all people and addresses the three key areas of opportunity and growth; (2) Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data within the three key areas of opportunity and to create innovative, sustainable, and community-driven solutions toward a more equitable, vibrant, and resilient local food system. This includes conducting assessments and feasibility studies, as well as researching metrics to measure, evaluate, and document the partnership's work. We will also establish time-defined performance benchmarks for achieving partnership goals; and (3) Form and establish a local food equity advisory council to promote interconnectivity and inclusivity by prioritizing marginalized voices in the local food system, generating a dialogue between diverse stakeholders and community members, and building capacity for leaders in a more equitable framework.

Connecticut

Recipient: Windham Regional Community Council, Inc., Willimantic, CT
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$249,715
Match Amount: \$75,292
Total Project Amount: \$325,007

Rooting Deep and Scaling Up: A Roadmap for Food System Equity and Viability in Eastern CT

“Rooting Deep and Scaling Up: A Roadmap for Food System Equity and Viability in Eastern CT” is a partnership facilitated by the Windham Community Food Network, FRESH New London, the CT Food System Alliance, and Community Foundation of Eastern CT, that convenes producers, community members, stakeholders and allies to capture community-level food system innovation and momentum, particularly that catalyzed by COVID-19, and scale it up to strengthen regional food system resilience. Specifically, the partnership will explore and develop opportunities that integrate viability for small-scale producers in Eastern CT with equitable access to healthy food and food system decision-making for the diverse residents of the region, one-third of whom struggle to make ends meet, to the mutual benefit of both. The values-based partnership is structured around a cohort of Producer and Community Advocates, supported by a core of non-profit, philanthropic and university allies, and integrated with a

broader coalition of regional and statewide food system stakeholders and networks. Through this project, the partnership will: Capture current regional food system innovations, stakeholders, needs and opportunities, through a Landscape Assessment and Roadmap, and Community Survey Campaigns to identify marketing opportunities and community priorities; Explore, develop and fund projects and community campaigns around Roadmap “leverage points” that simultaneously expand markets for small-scale producers and support equitable food access; Sustain partners and the partnership, by facilitating connectivity, collaboration and capacity-building through communication tools, common goals, shared resources, and trainings; and Leverage findings through integration into the statewide policy agenda and Food Action Plan.

Florida

Recipient: Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, Fort Myers, FL

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$643,500

Match Amount: \$108,926

Total Project Amount: \$752,426

SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh

In 2017, following Hurricane Irma, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) worked with small to mid-sized growers in Southwest Florida (SWFL) to identify negative impacts on their production capacity and how to make them more resilient. An Agricultural Sustainability Study funded by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) resulted in an analysis that identified numerous threats and opportunities these growers face. The research confirmed consumers, producers, and retailers all find value in marketing a “local” brand for agricultural products. The Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) then funded the development of a SWFL brand: “SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh.”

Our project will implement the trademarked regional brand to showcase SWFL food producers and their products through multiple marketing platforms. The brand will support the development of new markets for farmers, increase public knowledge of healthy, local food sources, and connect food producers to consumers. Our marketing campaign will expand markets, increase farmer profitability, and promote the local economy in our six-county region while exposing consumers to higher quality and healthier food. This includes expanding access to farmers’ markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture, and farm-to-school initiatives. By supporting the creation of markets for locally produced foods with government subsidies and the adoption of tools that encourage healthy food choices among socially disadvantaged populations, we will improve food security for low-income individuals.

Hawaii

Recipient: Hawaii Good Food Alliance, Honolulu, HI

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$829,510
Match Amount: \$211,914
Total Project Amount: \$1,041,424

Hawaii Food Hub Hui: A Statewide Partnership for Supply Chain Integration

The Hawaii Good Food Alliance (HGFA) and Hawaii Food Hub Hui (HFHH) will increase the success and collaboration of twelve food hubs across five Hawaiian Islands, thereby fostering a growth in local food enterprises and sales, while developing resources and sharing best practices to strengthen Hawaii's local food system and supply chain integration. Key partnerships include 12 Hawaii food hubs, the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture, Hawaii Investment Ready, City & County of Honolulu, Hawaii Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program, Hawaii Pacific Health system, other food systems stakeholders.

This project aims to increase food hubs' sales and profitability by:

- Increasing collaboration amongst food hubs, including assessment of individual hub market areas and development needs within the statewide landscape. PDs will share best practices, deliver technical assistance, provide coordination and leadership to the food hubs, and facilitate the development of a resource database for shared information and capacity building.
- Leveraging public-private partnerships to further food hub development to address the processing, storage, and transportation gaps in the food system supply chain through public-private partnership investments. This will include investing in equipment upgrades to meet expansion needs, advocating for institutional buying statewide, and identifying public and private sector funding sources to provide capital to food hubs.
- Growing the number of local farmers/producers benefiting from Hawaii food hubs by supporting the hubs with staff time for producer outreach and on-boarding, along with marketing funds to build the demand for local food in their regions.

Idaho

Recipient: Valley Family Health Care, Payette, ID
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$203,590
Match Amount: \$125,122
Total Project Amount: \$328,712

Western Treasure Valley Food System Partnership

This proposed 24-month Western Treasure Valley Food Systems Partnership planning and design project builds on a recent history of collaboration as well as regional food system assessments. This project will create the container for previously disparate or siloed public and private partners to come together and determine how to build capacity and develop a systems approach to support an integrated and health-based regional food economy. Focusing on Malheur County, Oregon and the Western Treasure Valley region that spans south eastern Oregon and western Idaho, the Partnership will develop a food hub and shared use kitchen feasibility study and business plan to increase regional capacity for processing, food distribution and storage, small to mid-scale value chain market development, coordination and delivery

of nutrition education, and food access solutions. The Partnership will facilitate cross-sectoral and peer-led planning sessions and workshops to develop an approach that is inclusive, providing a forum for participants and community to identify and prioritize strategies or collective impact actions.

Indiana

Recipient: Northwest Indiana Food Council, Crown Point, CT

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$998,298

Match Amount: \$240,150

Total Project Amount: \$1,238,448

Partners IN Food: Centering Collaboration, Resilience, and Equity for the Indiana Food System

Partners IN Food formalizes longstanding partnerships from Indiana's public, private, and nonprofit sectors to create Hoosier Grown, a new statewide food/farm nonprofit organization with collective action metrics tied to the Indiana Food Charter. The proposed project builds on a previous USDA grant that established the Indiana Value Chain Network, an association of public, private, and nonprofit groups that researched and produced information on the roles, values, and impacts of value chain work in Indiana. Though direct, intermediated, and value-added sales have increased in Indiana, most recent data (USDA, 2017) indicate that, for each market channel, the majority of Indiana's sales dollars are captured by a small percentage of the farm businesses reporting sales. To address this disparity, Partners IN Food has two objectives: (1) Serve the needs of all farmers seeking local and regional sales channels for their diversified farm production and aggregation businesses and (2) Reflect the needs of communities and a diversity of farmers including those historically underrepresented. Rooted in equity and sustainability for all Indiana producers, businesses, and eaters, project activities support the fulfillment of those two goals. Through project activities and aligned partner events, Indiana communities will have the opportunity to contribute to the conversation around local food systems, community health, equity, and Trauma-Informed Learning Collaboratives. Proposed activities will bring state agency partners to the grassroots table to work together toward a more resilient, sustainable Indiana food and farming system where producers of color, female-identifying, and non-traditional farmers and food businesses can launch, grow, and thrive.

Kansas

Recipient: KC Healthy Kids, Kansas City, KS

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$79,145

Total Project Amount: \$329,145

Envisioning A Collaborative Kansas City Food Shed

The coalition will conduct the Envisioning A Collaborative Kansas City Food Shed initiative, led by key partners KC Healthy Kids (KCHK), Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), GroundWork, and New Growth, and informed by a diverse and inclusive array of collaborators and stakeholders, located throughout a geographically and demographically diverse food shed region comprised of eight (8) counties: Allen, Douglas, Wyandotte, Leavenworth in Kansas; and Cass, Jackson, Lafayette, and St. Clair in Missouri. By conducting a food access policy equity assessment and continuous, robust engagement of stakeholders at each level of the growth to consumption process, the Coalition expects to significantly strengthen the mid-tier value chain and form a strategy for policy change through measurable objectives and corresponding activities. The project objectives are as follows: 1. Convene impacted stakeholders to build connections, collaboration, and shared understanding of the current food system and establish a collective vision for a resilient, equitable food system. 2: Conduct an equity-based food system assessment to understand a) gaps and inequities in the regional food system for bi-state Kansas City, and b) assets and opportunities, including an inventory of food system organizations and their efforts, as well as associated impacts, gaps, or duplications. 3: Synthesize findings and collective vision into recommendations and action planning for building a cooperative, resilient, and equitable food system.

Kentucky

Recipient: University of Kentucky Research Foundation, Lexington, KY

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$244,801

Match Amount: \$25,695

Total Project Amount: \$270,496

Growing Healthy Appalachia Partnership

The Growing Healthy Appalachia Partnership (GHAP) cultivates regional food economies of Central Appalachia through public-private partnerships that combine institutional procurement, cooperative economic models, culinary confidence building, and value chain coordination for small and mid-sized farms. Through community-informed design and evaluation, our planning project sets the stage for future implementation across the Appalachian Regional Healthcare system and beyond.

GHAP combines the powers of a regional healthcare system (Appalachian Regional Healthcare) as both a major employer and mid-tier purchaser of food, the expertise of community-based food and agriculture organizations (Community Farm Alliance, Grow Appalachia), and the research strengths of a land grant and medical research Institution (University of Kentucky). We seek support from the RFSP program to grant us the time and resources necessary to identify how we can best leverage our respective strengths and resources to serve the communities of Central Appalachia and grow a regional food economy that fosters a culture of health.

Building on previous research, GHAP works to simultaneously 1) Expand markets for direct-to-consumer markets for local food in ways that directly address barriers for accessing and enjoying seasonal produce (time, money, knowledge, skill) and 2) Establish mid-tier markets for local foods by leveraging the

purchasing power and infrastructure of institutional dining. Through the formation of the GHAP and the support of this planning grant, our region will evolve from short-lived and disconnected efforts to support local foods to strategic and sustainable initiatives that foster a vibrant and healthy food system in Central Appalachia.

Louisiana

Recipient: Greater New Orleans Development Foundation, New Orleans, LA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$25,000

Total Project Amount: \$275,000

GNOFAB: Greater New Orleans Food & Beverage Entrepreneur Ecosystem

New Orleans is synonymous with Food & Beverage and boasts world-renowned brands like Zatarains and Tabasco. Despite this reputation and success with regionally known brands like Blue Runner, the GNO F&B entrepreneurial ecosystem is difficult to navigate. To successfully launch and scale an F&B business/product, an entrepreneur needs significant funding, access to resources, and deep industry connections. While GNO's F&B start-up ecosystem is fairly robust, many companies are forced to leave the market to scale because the region 1) Lacks the necessary value chain production capabilities and capacity (i.e. pasteurization, cold storage, FDA warehouses); and 2) Lacks a critical mass of investors familiar with F&B.

GNOFAB seeks to build on GNO's F&B legacy and create a sustainable framework for entrepreneurial success by:

- Conducting a S.W.O.T. Analysis and Solutions Report of current F&B ecosystem
- Formulating Business Development, Retention, and Expansion strategies to foster growth, increase capital investment, and grow revenues of F&B businesses
- Providing Technical Assistance to both emerging F&B companies and to legacy F&B companies positioned for growth
- Expand the New Orleans Food & Beverage Industry Group.

Massachusetts

Recipient: Berkshire Agricultural Ventures, Great Barrington, MA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$480,948

Match Amount: \$51,441

Total Project Amount: \$532,389

Strengthening Support for Local and Regional Livestock Processing in the Berkshire-Taconic Region

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures (BAV) recognizes that the Berkshire-Taconic region, a three state, four county area in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut, is well-positioned to develop a formal collaboration of existing producers, agencies, and agricultural service providers to address long-standing food system issues in the livestock supply chain. BAV will serve as the project manager, leveraging existing relationships with livestock supply chain enterprises, economic development and planning agencies, and agricultural service providers to build capacity for partnership activities. Building on previous planning work, the proposed project will support the partnership in its continued development and implementation of a \$1.5M regional meat processing support fund and technical assistance program and a livestock working group to improve value chain coordination and identify next steps for shared infrastructure improvements and regional marketing opportunities. The outcomes for the proposed project will be improved processing, new supply chain infrastructure, and enhanced marketing opportunities for 3 meat processors and 20 livestock producers.

Recipient: Growing Places Garden Project, Inc., Leominster, MA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,404

Match Amount: \$157,114

Total Project Amount: \$406,518

North Central Massachusetts Food System Partnership

In its 27-town footprint, North Central Massachusetts (NCMA) hosts 250+ farms, with most identifying as small or medium in size. However, agriculture only comprises about 2% of the region's total employment, and residents are among the unhealthiest in the state.

Representing diverse sectors of the food system, the North Central MA Food System Partnership has been building momentum over two years to create a sustainable and resilient local food system. During its development, COVID-19 forced the region to move local food through new channels to keep the food system viable. This further increased awareness about NCMA's untapped potential and laid a solid foundation for the Partnership to build from.

Consequently, the North Central MA Food System Partnership is poised to create a vibrant local food economy and improve the health of residents. Over the next two years, they will conduct a comprehensive planning process to create a sustainable and resilient NCMA food value chain and business model.

Key activities that will help achieve Partnership goals include a Strategic Planning process via a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results 'SOAR' analysis to formalize the partnership's vision, mission, values, goals, membership, and structure; a Feasibility Study to develop an operating and business plan for a regional Food Campus; development of a Resource Library with available funding, technical assistance, and evidence-based information to help grow the Food Campus; and the activation of a bi-directional Communication Network to connect diverse sectors within the NCMA food system.

Maryland

Recipient: Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center, Easton, MD

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$104,956

Match Amount: \$34,985

Total Project Amount: \$139,941

Delmarva Farm to Freezer Program

The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) and the Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC), two nonprofit organizations on Maryland's rural Eastern Shore, are partnering as leaders in adapting, initiating, and executing a regional Farm to Freezer value-chain coordination program. The partnership combines each organization's expertise in a more resilient/sustainable food system. ESEC is a leading provider of entrepreneurial technical assistance and programs that enable the commercialization of innovations/technologies in the agriculture sector. CCC is the region's guiding force in operating a community kitchen, processing local produce, and making pre-prepared meals available to populations with limited food access. The objectives of the program include: extending the rural region's growing season by preserving fresh fruits/vegetables using advanced IQF technology that retains the fresh-grade nutrition levels; increasing local market revenues for local rural farmers/growers to scale their production by providing a 12-month guaranteed purchase order for produce in pursuit of increased margins/profit; expanding access to local, nutritious food throughout the year for residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore by extending the accessible season to local produce through our advanced processing and distribution system; and setting an example for other regional parts of Maryland to improve their food systems by replicating/adapting their own Farm to Freezer programs. During this project period, the partnership will plan and develop an implementation strategy for establishing an appropriate-sized processing facility (include an IQF system), a storage and distribution system that will increase food access, an approach to control pricing and increase farmer margins, and a fully sustainable business going forward.

Maine

Recipient: Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland, ME

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$882,165

Match Amount: \$88,533

Total Project Amount: \$970,698

Strengthening and Building Resilience in a Regional Seafood System

Our partnership shares the goal of achieving a resilient regional seafood system by building value and demand for seafood from New England. Regional seafood represents a great opportunity to provide a healthy, responsibly harvested, climate-friendly source of local protein for New England, as well as a decent livelihood for coastal communities, fishing families, and the seafood supply chain. This has only

become clearer in the wake of the pandemic, which served to amplify the challenges already faced by our region's seafood economy. Despite the healthy, abundant fisheries available in our region, regional fish is challenged to compete with inexpensive, imported seafood. There is a need to build and strengthen infrastructure to improve quality and value for the seafood industry, and to build awareness and demand through buyer education and connecting the often-disconnected participants in the regional seafood supply chain. Our partnership is comprised of organizations that have long histories of working individually and together to improve the business opportunities for fishermen and markets for regional seafood. We include two fishing associations, one nonprofit research institution, two lending and business assistance partners, a seafood offloading site and auction, and a mid-tier seafood value chain business.

We will also engage with other organizations and businesses through this project's convenings. We plan to work together to address the challenges of improving quality and consistency of product, to provide fishermen and processors with better information and access to capital to invest in innovation, and to build meaningful demand for regional seafood through buyer education.

Recipient: Harvesting Good, Yarmouth, ME

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$792,966

Match Amount: \$198,255

Total Project Amount: \$991,221

Creating a Mid-tier New England based Value Chain to support Farmers, Processors, and Food to Insecure Populations

Harvesting Good (HG), a Maine based public benefit corporation, and its partners including Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB), University of Maine Cooperative Extension, agricultural processors and farmers, Hannaford regional grocery chain and Sodexo an institutional food service corporation, present this RFSP application to support the development of a value added mid-tier, regional food chain to supply fresh processed vegetables throughout the six New England States. Under this proposal, HG will purchase local vegetables (broccoli) grown in Northern Maine from Circle B Farms (CBF), contract with food processors W.R. Allen (WRA) and Wyman's to floret, blanche, freeze, pack and store, and sell it initially through Hannaford's 132 store retail chain and to Sodexo's higher education clients. This application supports the implementation of New England's only regional vegetable processing operation to operate at scale. This grant will support HG's administrative costs, development of a marketing program, training and technical support for farmers and processors, and distribution of frozen vegetables throughout the foodbank network. This public/private partnership will generate over \$8.4M in new revenue to the agriculture sector, create 52 full and part time jobs, use underutilized processing facilities, establish a new market for Maine's vegetable growers, and extend the season for crop growth and processing. HG will invest over \$2.5M to purchase state of the art processing equipment, renovate processing facilities, and supplement technical support. This project opens the door for Maine's local vegetables to reach New England's regional markets year-round.

Mississippi

Recipient: Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Workers Opportunities, Inc., Clarksdale, MS

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$990,764

Match Amount: \$105,456

Total Project Amount: \$1,096,220

The Delta Food System Partnership

The Delta Food System Partnership is our next step in the evolution of the northwest Mississippi regional food system, building on the organizing, recruitment, training, and capacity building efforts the partners have conducted during the last decade. Focusing on building an equitable, sustainable, and resilient regional trade network in the Delta region (from Memphis to Jackson), the Partnership will address the following needs:

- Local self-organization, to improve community self-awareness and cohesion
- Improved training and infrastructure, to grow volume while improving product integrity
- Helping producers, food businesses, and local communities think and work together by building and empowering relationships – and trust –throughout the food value chain.

The Partnership will meet these needs by:

- Investing in organizing and community development
- Expanding our existing communications and FarmQMS quality management tools and implementing an anchor farm program with the Partnership as a distribution intermediary
- Expanding the cooperative relationships we have built within the regional food supply chain.

Our work plan will proceed on three tracks: Community and Content, Scale and Integrity, and Market Facilitation. Led by the Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Workers Opportunities (MDC), which has a fifty-year history providing agricultural technical assistance, our team includes Up In Farms, University of Mississippi's Community First Research Center for Wellbeing and Creative Achievement, Chatham University's Center for Regional Agriculture, Food, and Transformation (CRAFT), DRA Resources, Southern Rural Black Woman's Initiative, and the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

Montana

Recipient: Lake County Community Development Corporation, Ronan, MT

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$999,184

Match Amount: \$280,363

Total Project Amount: \$1,279,547

Scaling the Northwest Food Hub Network: Leveraging institutional demand to build strong, resilient, regional agri-food value chains

In 2020, the Northwest Food Hub Network launched as a pilot program to support the 3 most established cooperative food hubs in selling regional, sustainable food to institutions across the Northwest. Partners in this pilot include Farm Fare, (provides software to share inventory, logistics, and marketing) Kitchen Sync Strategies (brokers shared sales), Mission West Community Development Partners' Cooperative Development Center (provides project coordination and administrative support) and Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, (provides value-added processing). This pilot effort has helped the food hubs begin growing their presence in the complicated but largely untapped institutional food market channel (in healthcare, higher education, and K-12 schools) across WA, ID, and MT. This proposed project builds on this pilot and develops the critical infrastructure of a growing regional food hub network and enhances its capacity, efficiency, and sustainability. NWFHN will support the 3 hubs and their 200+ farms to develop improved food safety protocols, develop strategic regional production plans, leverage a shared sales brokerage model to increase sales to regional institutions, and design and implement interoperability between the existing food hub software and Farm Fare's network technology to scale operations seamlessly. This project will result in integration between Farm Fare and Local Food Marketplace software platforms and a 160% increase in sales (~\$610,000) to regional institutions and will create a holistic evaluation of the Network's economic impact and operational model that will be shared with emergent regional food hub networks across the US.

North Carolina

Recipient: North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$993,825

Match Amount: \$234,891

Total Project Amount: \$1,228,716

Strengthening Food & Agriculture Value Chains in NC Through Farm to Child Care Collaborations

Our goal is to develop, evaluate, and disseminate Farm to Early Care and Education (Farm to ECE) local food procurement models that increase market viability for producers. Farm to ECE is often framed as a win-win for farmers and children under five, increasing healthy food access. Since 2016, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems has partnered with county-based Partnerships for Children to convene a Farm to ECE Community of Practice that provides technical assistance to childcare centers to purchase local food and conduct experiential learning. However, our program evaluation and research indicate that there are challenges to making Farm to ECE a profitable market for producers and food businesses. The principal issues are that childcare facilities purchase low volumes of local food (due to small serving sizes and enrollment), and purchasing and delivery are decentralized. We propose extending our existing partnerships to explore models of local food procurement that aggregate demand to address these challenges. We will work in six geographically, racially, and ethnically diverse rural counties across North Carolina with high child food insecurity rates to pilot four innovative procurement strategies: (1) collaborative purchasing among childcare centers; (2) working with caterers that serve multiple centers; (3) collaborating with K-12 school districts; and (4) selling to the families of enrolled children. Successful strategies will promote regional collaboration, coordinate menu development, and address delivery

logistics. We use an inclusive, participatory approach to convene cross-sector teams in a community of practice to identify replicable Farm to ECE procurement models.

New York

Recipient: Glynwood Center, Inc., Cold Spring, NY

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$120,290

Match Amount: \$31,234

Total Project Amount: \$151,524

Hudson Valley Livestock Producer Network: Investigating collaborative solutions to improve the regional livestock system

Given its proximity to New York City markets and agricultural land well suited to grass-based livestock production, New York's Hudson Valley has long been a region with promising potential to support growth in the livestock sector.

This project builds upon the collective experience of the Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming (Glynwood) and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (Cornell) in serving the livestock industry. Glynwood and Cornell will partner to engage directly with the Hudson Valley Livestock Producer Group, formed in 2020 by Glynwood, to identify trade challenges and brainstorm strategies to address them.

With support from RFSP, Glynwood and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Livestock Program Work Team will form a Project Working Group, which will include representatives from the Hudson Valley Livestock Producers Group. The Project Working Group will design and facilitate a feasibility study to explore livestock sector:

- Production and capacity
- Human resource needs
- Sales opportunities
- Processing, storage and transportation
- Educational opportunities and needs

The Project Working Group will evaluate the data, write recommendations, and pursue funding to enable future implementation of projects detailed through the study. While this project is regional in scope, it is our hope that these efforts will be informative and catalytic to similar efforts elsewhere in the country.

Oklahoma

Recipient: University of Oklahoma Health Science Center Board of Regents, Oklahoma City, OK

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$945,779
Match Amount: \$407,277
Total Project Amount: \$1,353,056

Oklahoma Local Agriculture Collaborative

The Oklahoma Local Agriculture Collaborative (OLAC) will be a cross-sector statewide partnership among universities, state agencies, non-profit organizations, farmers markets, and agricultural entrepreneurs. The overarching goal of OLAC is to strengthen and grow the capacity of Oklahoma’s local agriculture in three areas: improving communication and access to underutilized resources; developing technical support systems to foster innovative practices; and creating a statewide registration and membership network for producers and direct-to-consumer markets. OLAC will specifically focus on rural markets and underserved communities to ensure that all Oklahomans have equal access.

Needs assessments conducted in 2019 and 2021 with Oklahoma farmers market managers and producers indicated a significant need for education, resources, and opportunities for networking and promotion. By providing trainings and membership options, OLAC will address these needs and create a more resilient infrastructure for Oklahoma’s farmers markets, food hubs, cooperatives, and other direct-to-consumer markets and producers.

Through the Regional Food Systems Partnership Grant, OLAC will design a digital resource hub, provide virtual and in-person regional trainings, develop technical resources for business expansion, and create a membership platform for farmers and growers. OLAC will establish an Advisory Board— consisting of diverse members from across the state—that will guide the organization and ensure all grant goals are being addressed and met. Oklahoma has many individual efforts to improve the local food system; however, a collaborative, statewide effort with a collective vision and goals is necessary for the local food system to meet its full potential and better serve growing consumer demand.

Oregon

Recipient: Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$229,351
Match Amount: \$64,971
Total Project Amount: \$294,322

Embedding Oregon Food Sector Development in Racial Equity, Climate Change Resilience, Fair Labor Practices, and Strategic Collaboration

The goal of this project is to create a set of action plans for regional food system development in Oregon that: (1) identify opportunities for shared infrastructure (physical and human capital), and (2) prioritize, in values and practices, racial equity, climate change resilience, and fair labor practices. Our partnership centers on an existing network of eight local food hubs who will collaboratively research, train, vision,

and plan. These hubs will focus on connecting local growers to local/regional markets and/or on incubating and making local/regional market connections for value-added food businesses.

Our long-term goal is a future where Oregon food hubs are successful because they:

- Share and practice a set of core values and principles that are fundamental to resilient and equitable regional food systems: racial equity, fair labor practices, and climate change resilience.
- Share costly but vital operational infrastructure, including physical assets like trucks and cold storage and human capital/systems like food safety expertise, marketing, and logistics.
- Source and market local food with unique attributes reflecting their individual regions.
- Aggregate food from their individual regions to sell collaboratively, under a shared brand or aligned set of brands, into larger urban markets in the Pacific Northwest.

The partnership includes the Oregon Food Hub Network, the Oregon Community Food Systems Network, the Oregon State University Center for Small Farms, Oregon Economic Development Districts, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and other partners who bring specific expertise.

South Carolina

Recipient: Wholespire, Inc., Columbia, SC

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$479,893

Match Amount: \$133,687

Total Project Amount: \$613,580

Growing Local South Carolina

The Growing Local South Carolina project formalizes a cross-sector local food system network aspiring to cultivate a thriving, equitable, inclusive, resilient, and just food economy providing access to healthy food for all. An investment from the USDA will enable the network to 1) connect and cultivate South Carolina's local food economy, 2) develop a plan centered on addressing systemic inequities in the state's food system, 3) catalyze action to address farmland loss, 4) increase capacity of the local food system, and 5) refine metrics for measuring partnerships.

The project is managed by Wholespire, governed by the South Carolina Food Policy Council, executed and evaluated by contracted project managers, and supported by partners as follows: the SC Department of Agriculture providing financial, programmatic, and marketing support; USC School of Public Health providing administrative, stakeholder, and food council support; the Rural Resource Coalition as an organizer for gatherings, facilitating a farmland working group, and providing engagement to indigenous communities; Bonita Global providing outreach to African American communities; Alianza Latina of the Midlands providing outreach to Latina communities; SC Food Hub Network expanding mid-tier value chains; and SC State University Small Business Development Center and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association providing technical assistance to food and farming businesses. The activities of the network are guided by input gathered at annual meetings and through several stakeholder engagement mechanisms designed to elevate minority voices. The project prioritizes

strategies to fill food systems gaps, meet stakeholder needs, and facilitate market opportunities and food access solutions.

Texas

Recipient: Padilla Farm LLC, Harlingen, TX

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,996

Match Amount: \$73,920

Total Project Amount: \$323,916

Equitable Access to Farm Animal Harvesting for South Texas Farmers and Ranchers

Padilla Farm LLC, based in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, shares a common problem with small farms with animals to harvest – there are no federally or state inspected harvesting services in the vicinity. We are located on the U.S.-Mexico border and travel over 400 miles (8 hours round trip) to a site in central Texas (Poth, Texas) to deliver our animals to the nearest slaughterhouse site. Due to a lack of other facilities, our animals are queued for processing at a later date. We then make an additional trip (another 8 hours of travel) to pick up our products.

This lack of access burdens small farmers and ranchers in South Texas, a region of 25 counties south of San Antonio. One large processor operates in Corpus Christi; however, it will only accept large volume animal processing. Our partners—small ranchers, farmers with a mix of agricultural products and animals, and small businesses that raise their own animals for harvesting—are left with one site option and an inequity that other livestock producers in Texas do not face. The situation creates a substantial disincentive to grow our production of quality animals such as grass-fed cattle for healthier choices for consumers and businesses that seek locally sourced meats.

We expect that solutions identified in the study may call for significant funding. A feasibility study will ensure that future public and/or private investments will be sound and motivate our fellow producers to continue supplying proteins for the food chain.

Virginia

Recipient: Local Food Hub, Charlottesville, VA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,666

Match Amount: \$94,233

Total Project Amount: \$343,899

Resilience and Opportunity Through Partnership: Eastern Food Hub Collaborative

The Eastern Food Hub Collaborative (EFC) is a group of 15 food hubs and regional networks focused on increasing transactions among its members. This collaborative seeks to solve problems of supply and

seasonality of local food, increase efficiency and market opportunities, and promote transparency, all in the interest of supporting small farmers and local economies in the Eastern United States (from Southern Maine to South Carolina). Working together, hubs plan for and procure from other hubs specialty crops that are not yet or no longer in season in their own region. They take advantage of existing hub infrastructure such as centrally located warehouses and coordinate logistics to maximize efficiency, ensuring that trucks do not travel without product. They support each other in marketing, and they source food from one another to help with hunger alleviation and food access programs in their respective regions. This planning grant will help build the systems needed to support this network. Its goals are to a) understand gaps in regional food systems in the EFC footprint, b) accurately measure the progress made by food hubs over time, improve efficiency, and address weaknesses in data collection and in the supply chain, c) better coordinate supply and demand needs throughout the network, increase the number of transactions, and ensure that the network has resources needed to operate effectively, and d) increase food system resilience and mitigate future crises by having a system to track and quickly deploy local food resources.

Recipient: Virginia Foodshed Capital, Charlottesville, VA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$47,000

Total Project Amount: \$297,000

Building Capacity and Collaboration to Develop a Regenerative Meat Value Chain in the Mid-Atlantic

Regenerative grass-fed farming sequesters carbon, builds soil health, and provides a marketing opportunity for economic development, but is limited by processing capacity. Decentralizing meat processing strengthens resilience to food shortages as occurred with the Covid-19 pandemic. For viable investment in small-scale processing, animal production for local slaughter must increase, which means building capacity of farmers and growing the market for local grass-fed meat. The processing constraint is multi-faceted and requires a systemic solution along the value chain addressing supply and demand factors and access to capital focused on investment to increase small-volume processing serving the regional market, training meat cutters, capacity building in regenerative grass-fed farming, and marketing programs.

This planning grant solidifies a partnership that will develop a regional mid-tier grass-fed meat value chain in the implementation phase by establishing a regenerative meat certification and producer network; transitioning small/family farms to regenerative practices; facilitating investment in processing capacity; and linking to distribution and processing. This project builds on existing cooperation between partners, federal investment implemented by partners in a farmer capacity building network and grassfed marketing campaign, and existing market research and feasibility studies. Virginia's central location anchors the Mid-Atlantic grass-fed meat value chain. An established multi-use food enterprise center/value-added processor and a food hub distributor provide market access for increased meat production, as supply-side (production and slaughter) constraints are addressed.

Wisconsin

Recipient: Cooperative Development Services, Inc., Madison, WI

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$120,000

Match Amount: \$30,000

Total Project Amount: \$150,000

A Cooperative Local Foods System for Chicago

The natural foods co-op sector is the nation's farmer-friendliest retail sector, representing a value chain of products and a values chain of support for local economy, environment, and sustainability. Such a sector is rapidly emerging in the greater Chicago food shed. The intent of this project is to convene a systemic conversation among consumers, distributors, and producers to study, develop and implement a shared vision leveraging cooperation to simultaneously meet consumer preferences via economically competitive consumer-owned retail stores while creating a projected new producer marketing opportunity valued at \$3-4 million in farmgate income annually. Cooperative Development Services, supported by three other nonprofit business development organizations, will convene 15-20 new and existing grocery co-ops, philanthropic partners, at least one farmer-friendly cooperative distributor, and an association of specialty crop producers. The Applicant will be responsible for grant management, with support from an Advisory Committee of business development professionals and a project manager. All participating organizations will convene quarterly to create shared understanding and vision for a cooperative local foods production, distribution and marketing system serving the region. The work plan will be implemented in part through contracts for specific research/study activities; producer business expansion and capitalization support; and outreach presentations to extend the value of the project. Key outcomes include 1) Creation of shared vision and plan; 2) Feasibility assessment for a cooperative warehouse distribution location serving the project area; 3) Engagement with producers interested in serving this market, with support for business planning and capitalization by those producers; 4) Efficient project administration.

Recipient: FairShare CSA Coalition, Madison, WI

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$873,721

Match Amount: \$219,231

Total Project Amount: \$1,092,952

Grower to Grower: Building a participatory vegetable farmer network across the Midwest

As demand for organic produce remains strong and consumer interest in CSA and other direct markets continues to rise, farmers—especially those who have been historically underserved—need support in key areas in order to more fully participate in these markets, fortify their businesses, and build resiliency. However, many Midwestern producers are spread out geographically and often lack access to the community and critical support services they require locally. The Midwest Vegetable Grower Support Network aims to address these needs. A partnership that consists of TA and farmer partners and focused on supporting organic production practices, this Network will operate as a training and

community-building hub supporting diversified vegetable growers in 8 Midwestern states: WI, MN, IA, MO, IL, MI, OH, and IN. By leveraging partners' unique strengths, the Network will deliver language accessible training and education in priority areas, including technical assistance, business planning and marketing support for CSA and other direct markets, and assistance with navigating certification and endorsement processes—all while creating a peer-to-peer community that growers want and value.



Fiscal Year 2020 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 23
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$9,331,027

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

NOTE: The below project descriptions were provided by the grant recipients.

Alaska

Recipient: Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Anchorage, AK
Project Type: Planning & Design
Award Amount: \$250,000
Match Amount: \$130,786
Total Project Amount: \$380,786

Building and Strengthening Local and Regional Food Systems in the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region

The overarching goals of this project are to better understand local food systems in the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region and to begin planning and designing a regional food system through local and regional partnerships. This will be accomplished through local discussions and assessments as well as through a regional gathering of stakeholders.

The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) will facilitate this effort in collaboration with Tribal partners in the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region, together with a Project Team including: Alaska Village Initiatives, University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association, and Aleut International Association.

Year One will focus on developing and/or adapting food system assessment tools in a collaborative effort between Tribal partners and the Project Team. The Project Team will travel out to participating communities to conduct food assessments and facilitate community dialogue around food systems to: develop and build community connections (public and private), share opportunities and challenges, and define the food system scope and structure. This will be accomplished using a community-based participatory framework and community meetings, interviews, surveys, and other assessment tools.

Year Two will focus on completing community visits and analyzing local food system assessment results and producing and disseminating assessment reports. In addition, APIA will convene Tribal partners and

key stakeholders for a regional gathering to disseminate assessment findings, identify partnership opportunities, and identify priorities and avenues of sustainability for a regional food system.

Recipient: Alaska Food Policy Council, Anchorage, AK

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$106,710

Match Amount: \$27,278

Total Project Amount: \$133,988

Growing Connections and Building Networks for Greater Food Security

“Alaska” is derived from the Aleut word "Aleyska," meaning "great land," and provides a variety of local food resources from ocean, land, and sky. Despite this, Alaska imports 95% of its food from outside the state, significant in terms of economic loss and food security. Food insecurity affects residents statewide - 14% of the state is food insecure, while 20% of all children share this designation. The state’s vastness, coupled with limited infrastructure and funding, have left residents with a crippled food system, vastly dependent on outside resources to meet nutritional needs.

The Alaska Food Policy’s goal is to create a healthier, more secure, and resilient Alaska by improving our food system through advocacy, education, and connection. Our project aims to connect localized food system organizations to create a statewide network of “regional nodes.” Through direct facilitation, each node will be guided through a series of planning discussions, including node specific asset mapping to identify unique capacities for local food systems, while revealing barriers and system deficiencies.

Through regular statewide connection, communication and collaboration regional nodes will collectively identify linkages and partnerships which can be leveraged to create a 10-year statewide food security action plan.

All food systems affect the environmental, social, and economic well-being of communities. By acknowledging the range of place-specific community needs, limits, and priorities of a variety of communities, from rural to urban, we aim to create an action plan for a statewide food system that is rooted in resilience, equity, representation, and sustainability.

California

Recipient: Green Technical Education and Employment, Sacramento, CA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,892

Match Amount: \$72,220

Total Project Amount: \$322,112

Sacramento Food System Assessment and Partnership Project

Sacramento Food System Assessment and Partnership Project is in the early stages of planning for the development of its local food system. With only a mere 2% of food that is consumed in the region being produced locally, major local food system infrastructure gaps persist, and along with it, opportunity gaps

for many small, limited resources producers and consumers in the food system. To address these gaps, this partnership has the following goals:

- To strengthen partnership capacity and authentic community collaborations, for a more resilient local food system with opportunities for all, from producer to consumer,
- To advance shared stakeholder decision making and data-informed planning processes for a more equitable food system in Sacramento County.

The project applicant and administrator, Green Technical Education and Employment (GTE) will coordinate with the lead project manager, Sacramento Food Policy Council (SFPC). In collaboration with 11 eligible partners/entities, including Sacramento County Public Health Department, the project will conduct a comprehensive, countywide, food system assessment to increase the understanding of the barriers and opportunities in the local food system.

We also seek to lay the groundwork for a future countywide food action plan. The partnership will host upwards of 40 stakeholder and community engagement opportunities focused on building sustained working relationships and listening to stakeholder needs. Results will be shared broadly with community, food sector stakeholders, and local governments via in person and web meetings and reports. Success will be determined by an inclusive partnership and an in-depth food system assessment.

Recipient: Pie Ranch, Pescadero, CA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,494

Match Amount: \$95,241

Total Project Amount: \$344,735

Community-Driven Visioning and Planning for a Just and Sustainable Bay Area Regional Food System

Food producers, local governments, food access nonprofits and other food system organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area regularly acknowledge that there is a lack of financial, infrastructural and other resources to realize a just and sustainable food system across the region. Existing academic analyses highlight the need for regional funding mechanisms, and pilot projects on sub-regional scales have experimented with innovative public funding approaches. Yet, our regional food system remains highly inequitable, with high food insecurity, supply chain fractures and a lack of sufficient resources for farmland protection and environmental conservation.

COVID-19 has also revealed that many parts and stakeholders of our food system are fragmented, especially across urban and rural divides. Our proposed project will build on previous sub-regional efforts to plan and design an approach for a more integrated, equitable and resilient regional food system. Project partners include public, private, and nonprofit organizations that span urban/rural and multi-sector divides. We will use an inclusive and collaborative planning process to form a diverse multi-stakeholder coalition for a Bay Area food system, including tribal communities and communities of color.

In the first year, we will engage with food system enterprises and community stakeholders to merge academic analyses with tacit knowledge and insight to envision how a just and sustainable food system can be achieved. In the second year, the growing partnership will work to create an action plan for the coalition that will bring about a transformational public funding mechanism for this integrated and resilient regional food system.

Colorado

Recipient: First Nations Development Institute, Longmont, CO

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion (Project region is on North/South Dakota border)

Award Amount: \$301,544

Match Amount: \$77,068

Total Project Amount: \$378,612

Building Sioux Community Food Systems

First Nations Development Institute, a national, Native American nonprofit organization, will work with Spirit Lake Nation and Standing Rock Tribe, federally recognized Indian tribes in North/South Dakota. Collectively, these entities will collaborate to build the organizational and programmatic capacity of Spirit Lake and Standing Rock, enhancing their abilities to reclaim control of their local food systems through building partnerships and community relationships.

Spirit Lake and Standing Rock will work with Native food producers, individual and institutional food consumers, and food market outlets to: increase local production of fresh, traditional, and value-added foods; create and meet the demand for locally-produced affordable, healthy, fresh, and traditional foods; and capture economic opportunities for social enterprise development and recirculation of food dollars in the community.

These models will be documented and publicized in a final, nationally disseminated report and workshop to promote their adaptation in other Native communities interested in food sovereignty.

This project is significant because it serves historically underserved Native communities whose food systems have been disrupted by colonization yet have significant agricultural assets to leverage.

Recipient: Western Colorado Food and Agriculture Council, Montrose, CO

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$108,000

Match Amount: \$27,000

Total Project Amount: \$135,000

Western Slope Food System Partnership

Demand for local food has grown throughout the Western Slope and the eastern “Front Range” of Colorado. However, farmers, food hubs and distributors servicing our region lack the logistics capacity to aggregate and scale up their operations to sell to institutional and retail outlets. Coordination of relationships across the regional food supply chain (RFSC) is needed to cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships that grow sales into these channels.

This project will connect producers, distributors, mid-tier value chain businesses, and buyers to share accurate, reliable, and timely data. We will build the digital logistics capacity and efficiency of the RFSC to coordinate marketing and crop production with demand planning and inventory management, improve transportation coordination and per-unit hauling efficiency, and design optimum processing and warehousing solutions.

The project will create a collaborative regional food system partnership with shared operational values and social mission goals. In year one it will establish an agreement to empower small and mid-scale local food producers to share their production data and engage in omni-channel marketing. In year two the partnership will use data generated in year one to develop baseline metrics and strategic market, mid-tier value chain, and infrastructure expansion plans. Success will be measured in stakeholder data sharing engagement, supply chain operational cost reductions, supply chain efficiency improvements, growth of market channels to producers, and year two investment commitments.

Georgia

Recipient: Food Well Alliance Inc., Atlanta, GA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$228,586

Total Project Amount: \$478,586

East Point City Agriculture Planning Implementation

In 2019, Food Well Alliance (FWA), in partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), embarked on a collaborative project to build capacity for, and engage local governments in, city urban agriculture planning. While ARC has been an expert regional planner for decades, the intergovernmental agency had yet to help cities plan for food or urban agriculture. At this time, FWA and ARC partnered with the City of East Point to launch its first ever planning process with a goal of illustrating how cities can prioritize urban agriculture in metro Atlanta. The planning phase, led by FWA, included a comprehensive community engagement process ensuring community strengths and local grower priorities were included.

Following this phase, ARC completed a six-month planning process guided by a Steering Committee composed of a diverse set of community-selected and city-appointed delegates who represent a variety of entities from the local food system. In May 2020, the draft urban agriculture plan was presented to stakeholders; the partners are now ready to begin implementation.

The goal of this project is to strengthen East Point's local food system by implementing recommendations from the ARC plan. Additionally, by demonstrating success and evaluating activities during the grant period, the partnership seeks to expand this work to 52 cities in the five-counties in our service area - Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Fulton. The goals will be achieved by dedicating resources to improve access and awareness of local food, boost the role of government, and increase funds to support further implementation work.

Hawaii

Recipient: Hawaii Public Health Institute, Honolulu, HI

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$249,466

Match Amount: \$62,567

Total Project Amount: \$312,033

Transforming Hawai'i Food Systems Together

The 'Ike 'Ai Consortium on Sustainable Food Systems ('Ike 'Ai) is a cross-sector, multi-institutional planning, policy, applied research, education, and community engagement initiative designed to collaboratively advance food security, public health, climate resilience and indigenous values. The name 'Ike 'Ai refers to the Hawaiian words for "knowledge" and "food," respectively. 'Ike 'Ai is a nexus for community, government, educational institutions and private entities who work to integrate sustainable food production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and waste management.

Through the convening of key regional food system actors, this project will strengthen Hawai'i's food system by developing a State Food Policy Framework and Strategy, informed by data products, to prioritize policies and actions required to increase access and consumption of locally produced food. Fundamentally, new investment opportunities and expanded workforce pathways will shape the path to food system sustainability, resilience and equity.

Spotlighting indigenous food producers, local food distributors, university researchers, educators, state officials and recent efforts by community leaders to restore disrupted market chains, the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic has magnified our inability to deliver locally sourced food in times of disaster. As a driver of economic recovery and resilience building, 'Ike 'Ai will be a catalytic vehicle to help restore Hawai'i's vibrant community-based food systems.

Illinois

Recipient: Inner City Muslim Action Network, Chicago, IL

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$525,000

Match Amount: \$166,750

Total Project Amount: \$691,750

Go Green on Racine: Local Food System Integration

The Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), in partnership with the UIC Nutrition, Obesity, and Health Equity Research Group (UIC), seeks funds to build and expand the local and regional food systems work on Chicago's south and west sides. The project, Go Green on Racine: Local Food System Integration, builds on an initiative that has been informed and driven by the partners, as well as a local stakeholder committee comprised of neighborhood leaders, nutrition experts, community developers, food retailers, educators, and farmers.

This partnership will deepen and expand the work by integrating regional rural and urban farmers who have been disenfranchised and negatively impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, into the partnership and connecting them to local food retailers through a food distribution channel to be created and facilitated by the stakeholders, and informed by their experiences.

The intended goals of the project are to: 1) develop a producer to consumer and producer to retailer distribution network; 2) increase consumption of fresh produce; and 3) document and evaluate the process of the new initiative. The goals will be accomplished through regular meetings, project planning and coordination, and community education between the project partnership and the broader stakeholder committee.

Kentucky

Recipient: Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Elizabethtown, KY

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$937,409

Match Amount: \$244,898

Total Project Amount: \$1,182,307

Kentucky Food System Collaboration

Kentucky is fortunate to have multiple nonprofit organizations, institutes of higher education, government agencies, and lenders engaged in cultivating a stronger regional food system for the state. These entities have long collaborated in ways that benefit the regional food economy. However, many of these entities struggle to devote concentrated attention and effort toward collaborations that could improve the system for producers and consumers alike simply because the work of directly assisting agricultural producers and businesses in the food value chain is so all-encompassing.

Through a Regional Food System Partnership grant from USDA, the Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (KCARD) proposes to bring together these partners to collaborate on new initiatives with the ultimate objective of improving the sustainability and resilience of the regional food value chain in Kentucky. Partners include the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the University of Kentucky, Kentucky Beef Network, Kentucky Dairy Development Council, and many others.

By bringing these partners together, cultivating their work in this space, providing grant facilitation support for their efforts and the efforts of their producers, and providing coordinated feedback to all partners, this project will result in new activities that will increase Kentucky farmer net income, improve access to local product in Kentucky, and ultimately increase the resiliency of the Kentucky food system. At no time has this been more critical than now, when sales of local food have increased dramatically given the interest consumers have in shortening the supply chain due to COVID-19.

Michigan

Recipient: Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$746,480

Match Amount: \$189,560

Total Project Amount: \$936,040

Strengthening Public and Private Partnerships for a More Resilient and Just Food System in Rural & Urban Communities Across Michigan

Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) advances regionally rooted food systems through applied research, education, and outreach uniting the knowledge and experience of diverse stakeholders. Partnerships are the core of CRFS' work. Since 2009, the Michigan Good Food Charter has been building strong collaboration infrastructure to support local and regional food systems.

A recent partnership with the MSU Product Center spurred innovation to support food and farm entrepreneurs and link enterprises to statewide resources. Covid-19 has highlighted the essential nature of resilient, and equitable local food supply chains. In this project, we will build upon our existing partnerships and past successes, applying key lessons from COVID-19 to improve coordination, resiliency, and racial equity in targeted local food systems across Michigan.

We have chosen low-resource, rural and urban, communities within SW Michigan and the Upper Peninsula as our food system partnership laboratories for this project. By leveraging existing partnerships and an ecosystem of food system business and policy networks, we will expand our collaborative efforts to connect food and farm enterprises, food hubs, incubator kitchens, and institutional and retail markets. The partnerships will carry forward the work of 21 public and private organizations with over 17 years' experience in developing local and regional food systems. Together we will further integrate local food system expertise to address the needs of low-resource partners, respond to COVID-19, and support economic growth to build a stronger, more resilient, and just local economies.

New Mexico

Recipient: New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, Santa Fe, NM

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$999,042

Match Amount: \$260,461

Total Project Amount: \$1,259,503

Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Network

"Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination (NM-VCC) Network" will strengthen successful public and private collaborations of New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Entities (VCCs) in order to develop the long-term economic viability of the state's agriculture producers, while providing increased consumer access to healthy, local food, especially for lower-income populations. Building upon excellent current statewide VCC partnerships that span a breadth of entity types, technical skills, and

specializations, the project will strengthen producer resilience and catalyze New Mexico's local food economies by improving shared resources and reducing administrative and technical barriers for participating Value Chain Coordination Professionals (VCCPs).

Occasionally, the food hubs/Transactional Partners (TPs), and the relational specialists/Support Partners (SPs) will engage in a dual track of complementary activities that allow for targeted strategies to meet each group's unique needs. By project's end, the NM-VCC Network will have mutually supportive, shared resources including databases/dashboards for monitoring and reporting on local produce purchase data, Quality Management Systems for institutional and other wholesale procurement, and producer training resources for wholesale production and marketing.

Additional project outcomes will include stakeholder meetings to foster new institutional and buyer relationships, reliable reporting metrics for VCCE work, and shared advocacy efforts to support legislation that promotes market development and/or reduces regulatory barriers. The project will use a collective impact model with backbone leadership, consultant technical assistance, and outside evaluation support so that partners can create a common agenda, develop shared measurement systems, decide upon mutually reinforcing activities, and participate in continuous communication to achieve project objectives.

New York

Recipient: Syracuse Grows, Inc., Syracuse, NY

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$170,328

Match Amount: \$72,083

Total Project Amount: \$242,411

Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance: Collaborating to build a more resilient food system in Upstate New York

Established in 2019, the Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA) is a newly formed independent food council in Upstate New York serving the city of Syracuse and surrounding Onondaga County. The overarching goal of the SOFSA partnership is to serve as both a network of food system stakeholders as well as a catalyst for collaboration among diverse partners. SOFSA engages across sectors to advance projects, build linkages, and foster relationships that enhance the livelihoods of all partners. The partnership aims to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of the region's agricultural sector while simultaneously increasing access to healthy food and reducing the prevalence of food insecurity within the county. Together, these activities will ensure equitable access to a healthy and resilient food system for the region.

The proposed planning project builds on a yearlong visioning process recently completed by the council and seeks to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the collaboration. As the SOFSA partnership enters its next phase of development, the group will collaboratively design its operational structures, invest in expanding its recruitment and engagement efforts, deepen its governmental partnerships, and fundraise to support joint projects as well as to sustain the partnership as a whole.

Recipient: Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York Inc., Syracuse, NY

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$140,935

Match Amount: \$35,234

Total Project Amount: \$176,169

Feasibility Study to Assess the Capacity for Growing New York's Mid-tier Value Chain

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)'s Feasibility Study to Assess the Capacity for Growing New York's Mid-tier Value Chain will provide insight into improved production and processing infrastructure for New York State agricultural products. This collaboration brings together strategic partners across the northeast agricultural industry to assess key areas of investment to improve aggregation, processing, and distribution, enhancing access to markets for sustainable and organic small and mid-size producers. Public, private, and nonprofit organizations from across our region will identify areas of opportunity and growth in vegetable, dairy, and grain production. NOFA-NY will partner with Amy's Kitchen, Northeast Grainshed, the Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship, Regional Access, Food Bank of Central New York, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, GrowNYC, and Syracuse University.

This broad collective will work to improve marketing opportunities across the value chain, prioritize strategic investments, and create a network to support producers, aggregators, processors, and distributors as they work collaboratively to grow and source food from New York State and the surrounding region, working towards the broader goal of a more equitable and sustainable food system.

Study results will be distributed through presentations across the region, web-based learning, and print publications, reaching over 12,000 producers, processors, distributors, and industry professionals with results focused on opportunities to propel New York State agriculture forward.

Ohio

Recipient: Green Umbrella, Cincinnati, OH

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$609,951

Match Amount: \$174,758

Total Project Amount: \$784,709

GCRFPC Partnerships for a Healthy Regional Food System

GCRFPC Partnerships to Build a Healthy Regional Food System leverages local, state and national partnerships to advance collaboration on key projects for building a regional food system that serves ALL residents of greater Cincinnati. The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council (GCRFPC) convenes stakeholders from across ten counties in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana to advocate for policy, systems, and environment change. We work through policy advocacy, convening community forums, and publishing research on the state of the regional food system.

The project goals are to increase institutional and consumer purchasing of local foods. The key objectives and activities of this partnership are to:

- Increase institutional local food purchasing by advocating for more institutions to adopt formal local food purchasing policies and for policy change to create financial flexibility for schools to purchase locally;
- Increase consumer demand for local foods by implementing a comprehensive regional local food marketing strategy in partnership with key institutions and working with anchor institutions and corporate partners to create employee incentives for purchasing local food;
- Improve household access to local food by convening market managers and farmers to implement strategies for improving the efficiency and convenience of farmers' markets, and expanding neighborhood-scale distribution of local foods to corner stores in low-income neighborhoods;
- Expand organizational capacity for local food systems change advocacy by facilitating ongoing meetings of the GCRFRPC and investing in evaluation and analysis of the impacts of our collective work.

Oregon

Recipient: Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, St. Helens, OR

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$450,000

Match Amount: \$343,742

Total Project Amount: \$793,742

Oregon North Coast Regional Food System Resiliency

This third phase of Oregon North Coast Regional Food System work implements and expands on the planning and development of a multi-partner network of economic development, small agriculture and seafood producer development organizations, tourism food trail and farmers market organizations, small business development centers, local ports, and food value chain technical advisors. Over the last five years, since 2015, this network of strategic food system partners has worked to increase the capacity and market reach of our small agriculture and seafood producers.

Our work has been through a planned three phase approach to supporting our local food system. In the first two phases, value chain assessments, food hub feasibility studies, and other research and planning activities have contributed to the development of producers/harvester training opportunities, supported market development and education programs, and supported the need for development of some necessary infrastructure. This application focuses on supporting activities for "Phase III" — Implementation and Expansion: Regional Coordination, Procurement Coordination and Marketing/Resource Acquisition.

The goal is to institutionalize the long-term resiliency and sustainability of the North Coast's locally-produced food system. To achieve true sustainability and resiliency, Phase 3 of our Oregon North Coast Food System development efforts plans to accomplish the following three measurable objectives:

- Increase access to locally produced food by all populations and sectors of the region
- Decrease dependency on food sources outside the North Coast region
- Improve the livelihoods of the region's small agriculture and seafood producers

Recipient: Portland Development Commission, Portland, OR

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$74,581

Total Project Amount: \$324,581

Building Capacity and Collaboration to Catalyze the Development of an Equitable Regional Food Economy in the Portland Metropolitan region

This is a partnership between regional nonprofits, producers, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Prosper Portland, the economic and urban development agency for the city of Portland, convenes the partnership, and a steering committee comprised of community-based organizations and food system stakeholders provides direction and oversight to guide our food system development work. The purpose of this partnership is to work together to achieve shared goals that catalyze the development of an equitable and resilient regional food economy.

The goal of this two-year project is to implement a regional food system planning process that engages a diverse set of stakeholders, with a focus on communities that have been historically marginalized. In year one, the partnership will conduct an assessment and community engagement process focused on barriers to entrepreneurship, community development, and living wage job creation. This process will identify the key drivers affecting the development of an equitable and resilient food economy in the Portland Metropolitan region.

In year two, the partnership will develop a regional food system action plan that provides a framework for collaboration among diverse food system stakeholders, inspires philanthropic and private investments in inclusive food systems infrastructure, and offers specific enterprise or programmatic solutions for implementation. This work will be accompanied by deliberate capacity building and formalization of the partnership throughout the grant period in order to leverage the partnership's collective expertise, technical capabilities, and access to non-federal financial resources in service of building a stronger, more inclusive, and resilient regional food system.

Vermont

Recipient: Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Inc., Montpelier, VT

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$250,000

Match Amount: \$73,850

Total Project Amount: \$323,850

Mitigating Risk to Food Security in New England: A Planning Project to Set Targets for Increased Regional Food Production and Develop Strategies for Distribution

The New England State Food System Planners Partnership (The Partnership) has been in existence for seven years and comprises the six leading NGOs responsible for supporting development and implementation of their state's food system plan. The Partnership is well-connected with key stakeholders in our respective states and we are highly skilled at facilitating and convening stakeholders, building networks of organizations, and tracking progress.

The proposed project will leverage The Partnership's shared history and combined Networks to make a significant impact in regional food system planning and development. Across the region, our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed significant weaknesses in global and national food supply chains.

The goal of the proposed project is to strengthen the region's food supply and distribution systems to ensure the availability of adequate, affordable, socially and culturally appropriate food under a variety of environmental, and public health conditions. Meeting this goal will ensure food security for people at all income levels in times of crisis, build economically viable markets for regionally grown food, and contribute to urban and rural economic development.

We will engage New England state agencies and key state/regional stakeholders in a collaborative effort to inventory ongoing projects, policy conversations, and best practices for conducting emergency feeding operations in each state in response to COVID-19. And we will seek agreement around a minimum set of production targets by food category that would lead to New Englanders consuming 35% of the food they eat from New England food producers by 2035.

Recipient: Tiny Seed Project, Inc., East Hardwick, VT

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$246,893

Match Amount: \$171,309

Total Project Amount: \$418,202

Raising Grain: Reviving the Northeast Grainshed

The Northeast Grainshed Partnership consists of a diverse and growing number of key stakeholders in the Northeast (New England, New Jersey, and New York) regional grain system: grain growers, processors, producers, organizations, institutions, researchers, and the public. The Partnership operates as a networking hub and planning initiative, primarily to connect grain-related businesses and organizations. The Partnership's vision is to revive a functional and resilient regional grain system.

The project goals are to:

- Establish a framework for a regional grain system, leveraging the Northeast Grainshed as both a networking hub for partnership stakeholders and a planning initiative that connects businesses and consumers.
- Unite the Northeast region under one staple crop 'brand' through a coordinated consumer awareness and education campaign to bring attention to the Northeast's unique contribution to the local food industry and increase demand for regionally produced and processed grains.

The Partnership will meet both goals through our collective expertise, experience, and enthusiasm among grain growers, private industry partners, non-profits, and land grant universities. For example, GrowNYC, a project partner, has 50 years of experience supporting New Yorkers in accessing local food through their Greenmarkets network.

Over the project period, the Partnership will develop an Action Plan with methods to achieve the following: increased communication and networking between farms and grain-based businesses; a

consumer education campaign to raise the profile of regional grains; identification of stakeholder needs, missing or weak links in the regional grain system, and missing partners; and development of a framework for a Northeast regional grain system.

Virginia

Recipient: Appalachian Sustainable Development, Bristol, VA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$999,968

Match Amount: \$386,265

Total Project Amount: \$1,386,233

Expanding Food and Agriculture Value Chains in Central Appalachia by Creating a Multi-Stakeholder Cooperative

The project, Expanding Food and Agriculture Value Chains in Central Appalachia by Creating a Multi-Stakeholder Cooperative, brings together 5 innovative anchor organizations and established food hubs who will connect with an estimated 15 additional food hubs throughout Central Appalachia to design a scalable and collaborative model to access mid-tier markets.

The project goal will address the needs of underserved farmers, processors and rural communities in low wealth and depopulated counties in six states. Each partner brings unique expertise, shared values, and tested approaches to reframe a regional food system that ensure access to healthy, local food through equitable supply chains that create viable, rural livelihoods for producers and processors.

Over the past five years, project partners have invested in infrastructure, staffing and distribution partnerships in their sub-regions. As a collective marketing and distribution network, partners are prepared to formalize a cooperative model to leverage scarce resources, attract new public and private investment, and better serve all stakeholders in all regions of Central Appalachia.

Recipient: Local Environmental Agriculture Project, Roanoke, VA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$145,515

Match Amount: \$37,960

Total Project Amount: \$183,475

Strong Farm and Food Future: Planning for a Collaborative Regional Economy in the Roanoke Valley

The Strong Farm and Food Future planning project will explore and build capacity for a regional food system in the Roanoke Valley of Southwest Virginia. The project's goal is to collectively learn about and address the needs of sustainable farm development, local food distribution, and equitable food access, and develop a comprehensive approach to create a more resilient, socially just, and economically viable food system in this underserved region. Together, we will use story-sharing, group facilitation, training, and strategic thinking to create an open environment in which our diverse partners can co-create a stronger regional food system.

With Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP) as facilitator, this project will:

- Identify and communicate the community-based assets of the diverse regional food system partners,
- Facilitate idea sharing, community relationships, and value-chain coordination activities to build trust and organizational capacity of the regional food system partners,
- Design and co-create a regional food system development and implementation plan, and
- Develop a regional food system collaborative structure for plan implementation.

Project partners include entities rooted in the Roanoke Valley (Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission, City of Roanoke, Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, United Way Healthy Roanoke Valley, Carilion Clinic, Virginia Cooperative Extension) and entities with a multi-region focus (Virginia Tech and the affiliated Beginning Farmer and Rancher Coalition, Virginia Association for Biological Farming, Eastern Food Hub Collaborative).

Washington

Recipient: Northwest Agriculture Business Center, Mount Vernon, WA

Project Type: Implementation & Expansion

Award Amount: \$994,400

Match Amount: \$248,609

Total Project Amount: \$1,243,009

Puget Sound Regional Food System Partnership

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC) recognizes that the Puget Sound region is fertile ground for the development of a cohesive collaboration of existing agencies and entities with the common goal of developing a vibrant and sustainable food system.

NABC will serve as the project manager, leverage long-standing relationships, and work in partnership with multiple local, state and federal governmental agencies, nonprofits, lending institutions, institutions of higher learning, producer-owned cooperatives, food producers and others. This project starts with a baseline of service to nine established producer-owned processing, marketing, and distribution cooperatives and more than 200 agricultural producers that currently serve more than 300 supermarkets, institutional food service providers, restaurants, and food banks, throughout a 10-county region of the Puget Sound, working to feed over 4.6 million people.

NABC proposes facilitating the formation of a qualified and capable body of collaborators to work together as a forward thinking and responsive agent to:

- Support the development of necessary infrastructure projects for value-added food processing and distribution and provide hands on technical assistance to farms and food businesses to support expansion and gain access to capital.
- Create a network of independent farmer-owned food hub cooperatives, which leverages efficiencies in marketing and production planning, business operations, logistics, financial and risk management, and improves profitability.
- Implement a replicable food access model in which food hubs, farmers, and food banks collaborate to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Recipient: Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, Seattle, WA

Project Type: Planning & Design

Award Amount: \$100,000

Match Amount: \$25,000

Total Project Amount: \$125,000

Washington WealthWorks: Improved Seafood Sector Livelihoods on the Washington Coast

The Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE) is partnering with Rural Development Initiatives (RDI) and two Washington State agencies (Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources) to conduct a grassroots, system wide value chain assessment of the Washington coast seafood sector. The purpose of this work is to stimulate community-led partnerships and actions to address gaps within and opportunities to strengthen the region's seafood system so that it works more effectively for emerging entrepreneurs, owner-on-board fish harvesters, and other small seafood businesses.

This planning project will catalyze community collaboration to strengthen the Washington coast seafood system capacity and help stakeholders identify collaborative strategies to improve incomes, economic opportunities and job creation for the region's seafood entrepreneurs and small businesses.

We will use a WealthWorks approach, which focuses on building multiple forms of community wealth, enhancing local ownership, and expanding equitable access to economic opportunity. The project will include the following activities:

- an asset assessment process to identify and document assets, with a particular focus on underutilized assets;
- a value chain mapping process in which a "picture" of the value chain is developed by stakeholders, and gaps and opportunities are identified and prioritized based on agreed-upon criteria; and
- an action planning process to identify working groups around emerging areas of interest and a concrete set of next steps.

Based on needs emerging from the action planning process, project partners will look for opportunities to connect stakeholders with further resources to support long-term work to improve the region's seafood system.