



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Transportation and Marketing
Regional Food System Partnerships Program

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.