



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Transportation and Marketing  
Regional Food System Partnerships Program

## Fiscal Year 2022 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 35  
Amount of Funds Awarded: \$19,153,031.72

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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

## 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.

## 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. Led by Rachel's Table (the food rescue and redistribution program of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts), the partnership, which includes Arbella Insurance Foundation, Smith College, FOCUS Springfield, Association of Gleaning Organizations, and Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts Chapter, operates as a collaboration that provides food recovery and redistribution, educational programs, technical assistance, digital storytelling, funding, networking, youth engagement, and community outreach.

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.

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**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.

## 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 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.