

USDA REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTERS

SEMIANNUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

A Semiannual Performance Progress Report must be received within 30 days after the end of the first six months of the date of the signed agreement and 30 days after the end of each six-month period until the expiration date of the cooperative agreement. These performance reports illustrate the progress made toward the completion of each project within the agreement.

The report must cover the most recent six-month project reporting period. Provide answers to each question below, or answer “not applicable” or “no results available yet” where necessary.

Cooperative Agreement Number:

Recipient Organization Name:

Representative Name:

Representative Email and Phone:

Report Date Range (e.g., January 2023 – June 2023):

Date Report Submitted:

Project Period:

Unless otherwise noted, only report on activities occurring and metrics collected in the reporting period (the last six months). Do not report cumulative data unless specifically requested. Cumulative data is requested in questions 11 and 12.

Executive Summary

Provide a brief, high level summary of your Center’s priorities and key accomplishments in the most recent reporting period. This summary may be shared within USDA and with the public to communicate the impact of the Regional Food Business Center program.

Character count limit: 3000

Narrative

Describe accomplishments and challenges at the Center and network level.

1. Describe key accomplishments related to Center goals. When possible, describe the impacts of these accomplishments on the Center’s beneficiaries. Character count limit: 8000

2. Describe project developments or challenges faced by the Center. Character count limit: 3000
 - a. Describe the steps or project changes taken (or that will be taken) to address those challenges. Character count limit: 3000
 - b. Describe how the USDA might assist with any challenges, to the extent it is able. Character count limit: 1500
3. Describe any significant changes, external to this project, to the region's food system and how they have or may impact Center activities (weather-related challenges, new distributors or retail outlets, new organization playing a significant role, etc.). Character count limit: 3000

Describe activities and accomplishments anticipated in the next reporting period.

4. What activities do you plan to accomplish in the next reporting period? Include information about anticipated outreach strategies, new technical assistance offerings, and any other information you'd like to share. Refer to your Center Workplan as needed and attach an updated workplan if the activities or timeline in your workplan have changed significantly. Character count limit: 8000

Activities

Coordination Activities

Describe activities related to the Center's role as a coordinating entity across the region.

5. How many new partnerships and/or collaborations were established through Regional Food Business Center activities (including USDA; federal, state, and tribal agencies; regional commissions; stakeholders; other Regional Food Business Centers; etc.)?
 - a. How many have been formalized with written agreements (i.e., MOU's, signed contracts, etc.)?

Is there any additional information you would like to provide about the partnerships reported above (e.g. nature of partnerships, entities involved)? (Optional) Character count limit: 3000

Technical Assistance

Describe technical assistance needs and offerings in your region, including changes in needs over this reporting period.

6. What technical assistance needs have been identified for food businesses in your region? Character count limit: 3000
7. Briefly describe how you have responded to those needs. Character count limit: 3000
8. What, if any, technical assistance needs have you not been able to address? Character count limit: 3000

9. What assistance or support can USDA provide to help address the unmet needs?
Character count limit: 3000
10. How many new (not previously reported) technical assistance providers has the Center funded?
11. How many **total** unique food businesses/organizations were served by Center-funded technical assistance providers **over all reporting periods? Note: Question 11 is asking for cumulative total number.**
12. How many **total** unique individuals were served by Center-funded technical assistance providers **over all reporting periods? Note: Questions 12 and 12a-i are asking for cumulative total numbers.**

Of those, how many individuals received technical assistance related to the following topics (recipients can be counted in multiple categories):

- a) How to develop or maintain a direct-to-consumer enterprise
- b) Accessing institutional consumers
- c) Using new strategies to improve local/regional food processing, distribution, aggregation, or storage
- d) Value chain coordination
- e) Market development
- f) Navigating and managing financial resources from third parties
- g) Minor business development
- h) Food safety
- i) Other, please specify

Is there any additional information you would like to provide about the technical assistance information reported above? (optional) Character count limit: 3000

Capacity Building/Business Builder Award Program

Describe progress and outcomes related to Business Builder award program investment in your region.

For the following questions (13 and 14), report on the Business Builder awards executed during the reporting period (i.e. new subaward agreements between the Center and award recipients).

13. How many Business Builder awards were executed during this reporting period? (May not be applicable during some reporting cycles)
 - a. How many applications were submitted?
 - b. How much total funding was requested?
14. What is the total dollar amount obligated for new Business Builder awards executed during the reporting period?

Is there any additional information you would like to provide about the capacity building/Business Builder information reported above? (optional) Character count limit: 3000

Outcomes

For the following questions (Business Builder Outcomes, Q15 -16), report on outcomes that have occurred in the reporting period from ALL Business Builder awards (not just Business Builder awards executed in the reporting period):

Business Builder Outcomes

15. How many Business Builder awardees were able to access new market channels?
 - a. Of those, how many new market channels are:
 - i. Farmers markets
 - ii. Roadside stands
 - iii. Food hubs
 - iv. Retailers
 - v. Wholesale markets/buyers
 - vi. Institutions
 - vii. Restaurants
 - viii. Other, please list
16. How many jobs (in Full Time Equivalent – FTE) were created or retained due to the activities or investments funded through Business Builder awards?

Are there any additional outcome metrics or impact findings related to Business Builder awards that you would like to share? (optional) Character count limit: 3000

For the following Outcomes section (Outcomes 1-3, Q17 - 27), please aggregate and report on outcomes from all RFBC activities, including coordination, technical assistance, and capacity building/Business Builder award program. For example, when reporting on number of business plans developed, include business plans developed through technical assistance services AND business plans developed with Business Builder award funding. Report on outcomes that have occurred in the reporting period from ALL Center activities (not just activities that occurred in the reporting period).

Outcome 1: Expand and strengthen regional food systems networks and partnerships in response to hardships and vulnerabilities exposed by recent national emergencies, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. How many partnerships/collaborations (both new and existing) facilitated through Regional Food Business Center activities reported the following:

- a. Increased sales/purchasing of regional food products
 - b. More efficient and coordinated use of resources
 - c. Additional funding secured as a result of partnership
18. Provide examples of how partnerships (both new and existing) facilitated through Regional Food Business Center activities have achieved the following (provide a minimum of three examples and up to six examples): Character count limit: 1500 per example
- Increased sales/purchasing of regional food products
 - Coordinated communication or marketing campaigns
 - More efficient and coordinated use of resources
 - Additional funding secured as a result of partnership
 - Impact on local and regional supply chain infrastructure
 - Collaborative activities to achieve shared goals
 - Other reported outcomes on local and regional supply chains achieved through collaboration
19. What USDA agencies have the Center and/or stakeholders successfully connected with and what has been the impact of these connections? Character count limit: 3000
20. Would the Center like assistance or support from AMS to connect with other USDA agencies? If yes, please list the specific agencies or programs. Character count limit: 3000
21. What steps have been taken to sustain the work of the current Center developed partnerships beyond the cooperative agreement? Character count limit: 3000

Outcome 2: Create more and better markets and increase market awareness and access, ensuring small and mid-size producers and processors have the opportunity to gain access to distributors, retail outlets, and institutions.

22. How many partnerships and/or collaborations have been established between **producers/processors and market access points (distributors, retail outlets, institutions, etc.)**?
23. Provide examples of how Center efforts have increased or improved processing, distribution, storage, and/or aggregation of regionally produced agricultural products in the following aspects of distribution/supply chains (provide a minimum of three examples and up to six examples): Character count limit: 1500 per example
- Increased efficiency
 - Reduced costs
 - Higher profits
 - Expanded customer reach
 - Increased online presence
 - Increased access to institutional customers

Are there any additional comments you would like to include related to how Center efforts have increased or improved processing, distribution, storage, and/or aggregation of regionally produced agricultural products in the above aspects of distribution/supply chains (optional)? Character count limit: 3000

Outcome 3: Increase food and farm business and financial acumen, increase the number of new food and farm businesses and improve viability of existing businesses.

24. How has the Center supported the development of new food and farm businesses in the region (if not applicable to your regional priorities, write “N/A”)? Character count limit: 3000
25. How many food and farm businesses created new or significantly updated existing business plans for their operation as a result of any type of Center activity?
26. How many of the food and farm businesses served by any type of Center activity throughout the duration of the RFBC program reported the following outcomes during this reporting period:
 - a. Increased revenue
 - b. Increased knowledge about new market opportunities
 - c. Increased production to meet increased demand
27. Were any additional resources (federal, non-federal, professional, and/or technical assistance) secured for the region because of RFBC activities (including coordination, technical assistance and capacity building/Business Builder Award program activities)? If yes, please describe source, purpose, and amount of funding. Character count limit: 3000

Are there any additional outcome metrics or impact findings that are a result of Center activities that you would like to share? (optional) Character count limit: 3000

Additional Question: What else would you like the USDA to know? Character count limit: 3000

Requested Attachments:

- **Business Builder Subaward Information (Required)**
- **Updated Work Plan (Optional)**
- **Additional evaluation and reports developed by the Center (Optional)**
- **Media Stories (Optional)**

Note: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an Agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0335. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 8 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.