

## Transportation and Marketing



### Funding Opportunities

#### USDA Regional Food Business Centers

The USDA Regional Food Business Centers (Regional Food Centers) is authorized and funded by Division N, Title VII, Subtitle B, Section 751 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260). Under this section, the Secretary is directed to provide support for agricultural producers, growers, and processors impacted by coronavirus, including producers and growers of specialty crops, non-specialty crops, dairy, livestock, and poultry, producers that supply local food systems, including farmers markets, restaurants, and schools.

The Regional Food Centers will work to expand and strengthen regional food systems networks and partnerships; increase food and farm business and finance acumen as well as market awareness and access; increase the number of new food and farm businesses and viability of existing businesses; and increase the revenue of food and farm businesses served. The Regional Food Centers will achieve these goals through coordination, technical assistance and capacity-building for small and mid-sized producers, processors, and distributors to create new and rejuvenate current linkages throughout the supply chain.

Applicants must define the geographic region it intends to serve and high-need areas within that region. Geographic regions must reach all, or part, of at least three states or territories or a 400-mile radius. The application must demonstrate the availability and commitment of local government, philanthropy, and industry to support the growth of agricultural opportunities and markets in the region.

#### Important Dates:

- Application Opens: Wednesday, September 7, 2022
- Program Webinar: Monday, September 19, 2022, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time; <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/webinars>
- Application Closes: November 22, 2022, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

#### Who Is Eligible?

All applications to lead a Regional Food Center must come from an eligible entity (“the applicant”) representing a partnership and must be physically based in the region. A partnership is an agreement

among three or more eligible entities representing at least two of the eligible entity types. Eligible entities include producer networks or associations, food councils, tribal governments, state agencies or regional authorities, institutions of higher education, nonprofit corporations, or economic development corporations. The applicant must be the organization in the partnership that is responsible for receiving and managing the award.

All applicants and the eligible entities that make up the partnership must have a physical presence within, and have a history of serving, the region for which they are applying to serve as a Regional Food Center, and must be domestic entities owned and operated within the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or Indian tribal lands in the geographic regions of the United States.

### **What is the Maximum Grant Amount?**

Approximately \$400 million is available to fund USDA Regional Food Business Centers applications under the FY22 solicitation. Applicants may request a minimum of \$15 million and a maximum of \$50 million.

### **Is there a Cost Share or Match required?**

This funding opportunity does not have a Federal cost-sharing or matching requirement and such information should not be included in the submitted application nor subsequent performance reports.

### **What Can I Use the Funding For?**

USDA Regional Food Business Centers can use funding for:

- **Coordination** – acting as regional hubs coordinating across geographic areas with USDA, other federal, state, and tribal agencies with relevant resources, regional commissions, stakeholders, and the other Regional Food Centers.
- **Technical Assistance** – providing direct business technical assistance to small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses (producers, processors, aggregators, distributors, and other businesses within the food supply chain) and food value and supply chain coordination.
- **Capacity Building** – providing financial assistance through business builder subawards up to \$100,000 to support projects focused on regional needs and businesses that are working towards expansion and other investments.

The ultimate goals of the Regional Food Centers are to: strengthen regional food systems networks and partnerships; increase food and farm business and finance acumen, as well as market awareness and access, increase the number of new food and farm businesses and the viability of existing businesses; and increase the revenue of food and farm businesses served.

### **More Information**

Visit the USDA Regional Food Business Centers website for the application and further information: [www.ams.usda.gov/regionalcenters](http://www.ams.usda.gov/regionalcenters)

### **Contact Us**

For questions about the USDA Regional Food Business Centers after closely reviewing the RFA and FAQs, please email: [RegionalFoodCenters@usda.gov](mailto:RegionalFoodCenters@usda.gov).