



Transportation and Marketing Local Food Promotion Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Description of Funded Projects with a Farm to Institution Component

Farm to Institution broadly refers to connecting local or regional producers, including farmers and ranchers, processors, and intermediaries selling local and regional foods to establishments where people routinely eat meals outside of home, such as schools and early childcare centers, colleges and universities, hospitals, corporate cafeterias, and government agencies and to vendors that sell to these establishments.

This document identifies FY20 funded projects that included Farm to Institution components in their project descriptions. This document may not be inclusive of all FY20 awarded projects that carried out Farm to Institution activities as part of their project. Click on a state abbreviation in the chart below to jump to Farm to Institution projects in the respective state.

State	Recipient	Project Name	Project Type
AR	Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development	Forging Value Chains (FVC) - A National Program to Increase Quality, Capacity and Effective Market Coordination Among Local and Regional Food Enterprises	Implementation
CO	Mountain Roots Food Project	Mountain Roots - Southwest Colorado Local Food Hub-to-Node Connectivity Project	Planning
FL	The Natural Resources, LLC	Building a Sustainable Food Hub: Farm2Fork Connection	Implementation
HI	Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative	Scale-up and Expansion of Hawaii Ulu Cooperative	Implementation
LA	Twin Parish Port District (Port of Delcambre)	Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub Planning Study	Planning
MA	Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts	Adding Value to Massachusetts Farmer and Fisher Wholesale Viability	Implementation
	Tufts University Boston	Promoting year-round Distribution of Local Produce Grown by Small, Beginning, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers through Development of New product Lines and Distribution Strategies	Implementation
NM	La Semilla Food Center	Strengthening the Value Chain in the Paso del Norte Foodshed	Implementation
NY	Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship	Emerging Markets Training Program	Implementation
	Cornell Cooperative Extension Essex	Expansion of Local Wholesale Revenues in the North Country through Farm to Institution Coordination, Food Business Trainings, Increasing Hub Capacity, and Marketing	Implementation
	Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Inc.	Cortland Food Project: Growing Local Food Demand, Capacity and Food Security	Implementation
NC	North Carolina State University	Expanding Markets for Local Food Intermediary Businesses and Farmers	Implementation
SD	Rosebud Economic Development Corporation	Sicangu Local Foods Initiative	Planning
VA	Health Care Without Harm	The New England Food Processors Collective	Implementation
WA	Grow Food	Creating a Regional Food System for All: Forging Innovative Community Partnerships to Strengthen Small-scale Farms and Increase Food Access in the Puget Sound Region	Implementation
WI	The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System	Building Financial Resilience in Pivoting Food Hubs Through Digital and In-person Financial Management Training and National Consultant Interventions	Implementation

For more information, including a comprehensive list of funded projects, many of which include development and expansion of wholesale markets that my serve institutions, please visit the grant program's website:

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



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

Arkansas

Recipient: Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, Little Rock, AR

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$499,956.00

Match Amount: \$125,468.00

Total Project Amount: \$625,424.00

Forging Value Chains (FVC) - A National Program to Increase Quality, Capacity and Effective Market Coordination Among Local and Regional Food Enterprises

There is a widespread need for accessible training, technical assistance, and research to support the expansion and resilience of equitable regional value chains and to increase the competitiveness and viability of the businesses that comprise them. The Forging Value Chains project aims to increase the capacity of small/mid-size farms and food businesses to 1) create collaborative value chain relationships for greater, more stable market opportunities; 2) navigate wholesale marketing channels for improved financial viability, and 3) adopt and implement a culture of quality and food safety for increased market access. To achieve these goals, we will develop and deliver skill-building resources, technical training, peer learning opportunities, and knowledge products focused on building capacity in three critical areas: value chain coordination, quality management, and food safety. We will develop and deliver comprehensive technical training curricula, launch two national Communities of Practice, facilitate a peer mentorship program, conduct research on best practices and innovations, develop and pilot a Value Chain Coordination Impact Framework, and create a national resource library for regional value chain development. The project will increase the capacity of over 4,500 individuals who work in and support producers and regional food businesses engaged in intermediated markets, resulting in more profitable and competitive regional value chains, increased adoption of Quality Management Systems, and increased utilization of the USDA GroupGAP program.

Colorado

Recipient: Mountain Roots Food Project, Gunnison, CO

Project Type: Planning

Award Amount: \$99,963.00

Match Amount: \$25,014.00

Total Project Amount: \$124,977.00

Mountain Roots - Southwest Colorado Local Food Hub-to-Node Connectivity Project (Planning)

Southwest Colorado is a sparsely populated 26,000-square-mile region of rural open space, high mountains, desert sage, and lush river valleys, where more than 10 census tracts in our service area are low-income/low-access. As demand for local food increases, the region has seen an emergence of more than one hundred small-scale producers and at least six start-up enterprises functioning as intermediaries. Producers are interested in scaling up farm businesses; buyers in four key markets



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(wholesale, retail/individual, institution, and SNAP recipients) expressed increased interest in local products. Our areas of abundant supply are not connected to the areas with the highest market demand. Mountain Roots' Hub-to-Node-Connectivity planning project will engage the region's producers, buyers, and intermediaries in roundtables to map assets and to study the specific barriers to accessing local foods, make matches between producers and buyers to field test top strategies identified in a season-long pilot, then collaboratively design a regional business development plan that will expand up to six intermediary enterprises, expand producer capacity, and link these enterprises in more efficient and effective hub- to-node network. The expected outcomes are that producers gain increased access to wider regional markets and increased sales; buyers have access to consistent sources of local products in larger volumes over a longer period; regional food economies are connected and cultivated through strengthened partnerships collaborative network design. This useful model can be adapted by other rural communities wishing to expand mid-tier value chains, producer capacity, and market opportunities using a hub-to-node design that is better suited to rural regions.

Florida

Recipient: The Natural Resources, LLC, Hilliard, FL

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$490,577.81

Match Amount: \$164,121.00

Total Project Amount: \$654,698.81

Building a Sustainable Food Hub: Farm2Fork Connection

This project is a collaborative and comprehensive response to critical food system infrastructure, health and employment need facing residents of North Florida and South Georgia ("the Region"). We will focus on the development, coordination, and expansion of a community food hub, improving food marketing, distribution, access, and education by partnering with, promoting, and expanding the distribution channels of food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in producer to consumer marketing and producer to wholesale marketing - to address root causes to health issues and support a diverse community with self-reliant small farmers and food distributors, and sustainable employment opportunities for years to come. At its core, Farm2Fork Connection will increase access to and availability of locally and regionally-produced agricultural products and, in doing so, will meet the food needs of low-income residents, educational institutions, and select other foodservice channels while increasing our community farmers' and food distributors' resilience and expertise for years to come. We will provide a long-term solution to the critical food system infrastructure, health, and employment needs of the Region. We will be a catalyst for community transformation, easily scalable and replicable - - and a major step forward in a collaborative effort to establish a sustainable food hub. With this enhanced infrastructure and our strong history of operating success already in place, this one-time infusion of federal dollars will immediately elevate our current efforts, getting sustainably produced and nutritious local food on to the plates of those that need it most.

Hawaii

Recipient: Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative, Kailua-Kona, HI

Project Type: Implementation



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Award Amount: \$499,995.15

Match Amount: \$128,946.00

Total Project Amount: \$628,941.15

Scale-up and Expansion of Hawaii Ulu Cooperative

The proposed project builds upon the pioneering efforts of the Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative (HUC) over the past 3.5 years to revitalize breadfruit as a viable crop and dietary staple in the State of Hawaii. From a severely underutilized and largely forgotten indigenous starch only a decade or two ago, breadfruit is now emerging as one of the islands' best hopes for increased food security, climate change resilience, economic diversification, and cultural preservation. However, with 96% of Hawaii farmers being small-scale, highly diversified, and generally lacking in a professional capacity, and with major gaps remaining in consumers' familiarity with breadfruit, tremendous work is still needed to fully realize the crop's potential. The proposed project provides the resources and community collaborations needed to deliver this growing movement from a state of "demonstration" to successful "deployment" as a commercially viable anchor of the islands' local food system. Specific activities include: 1) targeted promotion and education of breadfruit as well as other local and indigenous starches ("co-crops") in partnership with the State Department of Education (HIDOE), restaurants, retailers, hospitals, prominent chefs, and Hawaiian cultural practitioners; 2) supply chain development through farmer capacity building and key infrastructure upgrades; and 3) market diversification focused on online, CSA, and retail-oriented channels in order to address COVID-19-related market trends and to stabilize and increase local grower returns.

Louisiana

Recipient: Twin Parish Port District (Port of Delcambre), Delcambre, LA

Project Type: Planning

Award Amount: \$73,480.00

Match Amount: \$18,370.00

Total Project Amount: \$91,850.00

Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub Planning Study

Demand for seafood in south Louisiana has increased in recent years. As more fishermen are looking to direct sales and to processing their own catch, a need has arisen for more outlets for them. This proposal seeks to establish a regional seafood hub in a multi-use facility in southwest coastal Louisiana that will act as an intermediary for indirect producer to consumer marketing and sales for fishers who work the coastal waters. Fishermen along the coast need a central location to be able to make their product more accessible to the public. This project will fund a feasibility study, a business development plan, and coordinated outreach efforts to producers, food business entrepreneurs, and institutions. The seafood hub facility will have a commercial shared kitchen designed to allow producers to create and test value added products and to conduct food demonstrations. It will provide an area for packing, storing and preparing shipments of frozen seafood and value-added products for retail and online sales. The project will include outreach to a limited number of regional specialty markets to expand distribution outlets for producers participating in the seafood hub. Informational and educational materials and outreach to producers will focus on the benefits of participating in the seafood hub and



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the benefits of agritourism activities. Expected outcomes establish a location for a food business enterprise that aggregates seafood products, creates value added products, and packs/stores/ships products. An additional outcome identifies and educates interested seafood producers and informs institutional demand for regional products.

Massachusetts

Recipient: Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts (SBN), Cambridge, MA

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$100,000.00

Match Amount: \$25,001.13

Total Project Amount: \$125,001.13

Adding Value to Massachusetts Farmer and Fisher Wholesale Viability

As weaknesses in the global food supply chain are exposed with each passing year, the importance of building and sustaining local food systems year-round has become more and more clear. In order to increase consumer access to locally-sourced food and increase food producer profits and viability, SBN seeks to conduct a market assessment to identify 3 consumer- demanded and underproduced value-added local food products. A pilot launch will assist 2 local farmers or fishermen in creating 2 of the market assessment identified products, taste-testing the products among consumers, and connecting the food producers to 20 interested food buyers. The expected outcomes of the market assessment and pilot launch are, to determine demand across income levels for 3 underproduced value-added local food products, including culturally connected foods that serve lower-income communities; identify technical assistance resources that local farmers and fishermen need to produce demanded value-added products; and to facilitate farmer and fishermen connections to wholesale and institutional channels willing to sell demanded value-added food products. This planning project will assess the feasibility of creating a new Value-Added Training & Matching Program within SBN's annual Local Food & Specialty Crop Trade Show programming. The Value-Added Training & Matching Program would pair value-added food producers to food buyers, provide year-long value- added technical assistance to farmers and fishermen, and educate farmers, fishermen, and wholesale & institutional buyers on consumer demand for value-added local food products.

Recipient: Tufts University Boston, Boston, MA

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$499,999.00

Match Amount: \$126,233.00

Total Project Amount: \$626,232.00

Promoting year-round Distribution of Local Produce Grown by Small, Beginning, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers through Development of New product Lines and Distribution Strategies

New Entry supports 20+ beginning and limited resource and socially disadvantaged farmers to build thriving farm businesses by providing aggregation services and facilitating market connections through a food hub. This project will add value to in-season production to increase distribution of local produce to 8 food access partner sites as well as to an existing and expanded customer base throughout Greater



Boston. Our target market includes: senior citizens served by four community senior centers, low income clients served at several food pantries, and current and future customers of the New Entry CSA. We propose to develop two distinct value-added and minimally processed product lines, one targeted for our food access work (senior centers and emergency feeding programs) and the other as high-value products for our existing and future CSA customer base. New Entry's Food Hub currently distributes for a 20-week period (June-October), this project would expand the Food Hub's local food distribution for an additional 10 weeks to all of its Greater Boston customers and food access partners. We propose to increase sales revenues for local farmers by partnering with Commonwealth Kitchen and Western MA Food Processing Center to capture bulk peak-season produce and facilitate minimal processing. Anticipated project outcomes include \$450,000 in increased purchasing from local farmers; 120 farmers trained on scaling up production, value-added, extending the season, and food safety; reducing food waste; and increasing the accessibility, duration, and quantity of healthy, local produce made available to Greater Boston residents regardless of economic standing.

New Mexico

Recipient: La Semilla Food Center, Anthony, NM

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$493,764.50

Match Amount: \$129,750.00

Total Project Amount: \$623,514.50

Strengthening the Value Chain in the Paso del Norte Foodshed

The Paso del Norte Foodshed includes Southern New Mexico and West Texas, with a population of over one million people, many of whom live in low-income and low-food access communities. In the last ten years the region has seen an increased number of farmers growing food for local consumption as well as the establishment of local food hubs. Now, technical challenges are evident in the regional value-chain, impeding increasing sales of local products into markets with high demand. Stronger distribution networks are needed to support greater market share by food hubs and local growers in the regional wholesale and retail market. La Semilla Food Center, in collaboration with key regional partners, will address these challenges, strengthening the local value chain through purchasing, supply, and infrastructure improvements and efficiencies. This project will increase market access and supply, build food hub viability, and increase institution purchases through a coordinated strategy leveraging existing assets and infrastructure. Through improved systems for infrastructure use, logistics, transportation, and supply chain management platforms, we will increase regional food economy participation by local and regional growers and expand access to produce to people of all ages in low-income and low-access areas of the Paso del Norte region, including those served by currently untapped institutions. Our primary markers of success will be increased food chain resource access and utilization by local food producers and food hubs, as well as increased sales at the institution and food hub level.



New York

Recipient: Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship, Stamford, NY

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$500,000.00

Match Amount: \$125,000.00

Total Project Amount: \$625,000.00

Emerging Markets Training Program

The Center for Agricultural Development & Entrepreneurship (CADE) will establish new markets and facilitate economic growth in sustainable agriculture in 12 counties of Central NY. In NY, state and local governments are increasing institutional purchasing to serve house-bound, vulnerable populations. Many consumers have transitioned to ordering food online for pick-up or home delivery to minimize social interaction and reduce the number of hands that touch their food. These crisis-driven emerging markets were increasing before the pandemic with mixed successes and barriers to entry for Central NY farmers. The Emerging Markets Training Program will leverage CADE's market research, successes, and learnings from the Value Chain Acceleration program, Farm to School program, and Farm and Food Business Incubator to build the capacity of local institutions to purchase Central NY farm products, as well as assist farmers and local distributors to increase and retain online sales and meet institutional purchasing requirements. These activities will reduce marketing costs, increase farm sales and profitability, improve farmer readiness for emerging markets and, as a result, foster greater collaboration between farmers and local food processors and distributors. The Emerging Markets Training Program will provide support for up to 1,500 agribusinesses, resulting in a dynamic and transformational impact - a potential \$28.8M-\$36M in new sales for Central NY farmers - in a region long suffering from underemployment and underutilized farm inputs.

Recipient: Cornell Cooperative Extension Essex, Lewis, NY

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$385,921.37

Match Amount: \$179,765.97

Total Project Amount: \$565,687.34

Expansion of Local Wholesale Revenues in the North Country through Farm to Institution Coordination, Food Business Trainings, Increasing Hub Capacity, and Marketing

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County, in collaboration with regional partners, will increase wholesale production and purchasing in the North Country by: helping institutional buyers navigate purchasing; supporting farms to reach wholesale production levels and obtain certifications; increasing hub capacity; and by developing solid marketing avenues. We will hire a Farm to Institution Educator and a Marketing Specialist to implement the above projects, which will lead to 1) increased institutional purchasing and a stronger regional economy 2) increased overall production by and revenues for NorthCountry farms 3) increased sustainability and output of hub services 4) and increased food access for thousands of consumers. This project set addresses several identified needs. While agriculture is the only growing economic sector in the North Country region, many farms need support in reaching wholesale production levels. Institutional buyers have the potential to source large quantities of local food, but we currently lack a Farm to Institution Educator or a solid



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marketing avenue to facilitate connections. While the Hub on the Hill has established delivery routes linking products from various farms to buyers across the region, the volume of the deliveries is consistently insufficient to allow for sustainable operation. Increased production and purchasing will allow for more profitable delivery routes and greater affordability for both buyers and sellers. Finally, supporting school purchasing, specifically, is a key goal with the recent 30% initiative offered by NYS, which would provide a substantial boost to school district food budgets in order to facilitate more local purchasing.

Recipient: Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Inc., Cortland, NY

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$491,931.19

Match Amount: \$122,982.81

Total Project Amount: \$614,914.00

Cortland Food Project: Growing Local Food Demand, Capacity and Food Security

Agriculture is the largest economic force in Cortland County, NY. As demand for local products has grown, technical challenges in the value chain have also increased. To meet these changing demands and strengthen the local food system, the Cortland Food Project committee (CFP) led by Seven Valleys Health Coalition (SVHC) will increase agritourism and marketing efforts through branding of Cortland County agricultural products and developing a multimedia toolkit for local producers, increase community awareness of how to access locally grown and produced products, and how to utilize them. This will be achieved by leveraging and expanding the Cortland County Local Foods Map and Puzzling Produce videos through promotional events such as interactive cooking classes (which can pivot from in-person to virtual as needed), transform the map into an interactive online experience, and incorporating other digital media to increase awareness and sales of local foods. The project will also capitalize on the broad coalition of food systems advocates, local producers, and consumers built through the CFP to improve access to local agricultural products by both individual consumers and institutions, such as community food pantries, to increase revenue for local farmers and improve community health. This will be achieved by increasing farmer capacity through technical assistance to develop better farm to institution market with a focus on food pantries, and addressing on-farm food waste while improving food security by enhancing value chain links such as needed farm to food pantry cold storage infrastructure.

North Carolina

Recipient: North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$496,642.20

Match Amount: \$126,920.00

Total Project Amount: \$623,562.20

Expanding Markets for Local Food Intermediary Businesses and Farmers

Unlocking institutional markets for local farmers creates profitable market potential, greater resiliency for communities, and opportunities to improve healthy food options. However, institutional local food procurement is often limited by contracts, seasonality, and supply chain logistics. Smaller county-



based institutions, like senior food services, can be more accessible markets and require year-round volumes that match well with small and mid-scale farms. In addition, senior food services are often connected to local government offices motivated to support the viability of local farmers and food businesses. Food councils can inform institutional procurement requirements to catalyze and incentivize efforts to support regional economic development and improved healthy food access. This project will address the procurement challenges of county-based institutions and implement strategies to encourage sustained local food procurement. Our proposed project will (1) create, support, and network county-based teams that include Extension agents, food councils, farmers, intermediary food businesses, and institutional buyers to explore institutional procurement policy; (2) assess farmer readiness and provide needed resources and technical assistance; and (3) provide baseline procurement assessments, supply chain apprentices, and regional marketing strategies to create and expand farm-to-institution pathways through local food intermediaries. A place-based, multi-stakeholder approach will identify and address systemic local food procurement challenges unique to communities, increase availability of local foods for senior populations, expand markets for local food intermediaries and farmers, and build working relationships across sectors for ongoing collaboration. Three county models will be implemented and shared with communities across North Carolina and nationally.

South Dakota

Recipient: Rosebud Economic Development Corporation, Mission, SD

Project Type: Planning

Award Amount: \$87,290.82

Match Amount: \$21,822.71

Total Project Amount: \$109,113.53

Sicangu Local Foods Initiative

The Sicangu Community Development Corporation (SCDC) will launch the Sicangu Local Foods Initiative (SLFI), which seeks to increase access to healthy, local foods through comprehensive strategies that will meet the needs of high-poverty residents and tribal farmers and ranchers living on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The Rosebud Indian Reservation is home to the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (also known as the Sicangu Lakota Oyate) and is a designated food desert with an overall poverty rate of 54 percent. Through SLFI, we intend to complete a detailed Local Foods Market Opportunity Study that explores the viability of aggregating local and regional growers to supply Rosebud institutions with local foods. The study will: (1) help to better understand demand and how to shift consumer preferences to local foods; (2) create market pathways for tribal producers; and (3) create business plan models for different enterprises. The goal of the study will be to identify actionable strategies that the Tribe can implement over 1-3 years to increase access to healthy, local foods on the Rosebud Reservation. The expected outcome of the SLFI is to increase access to locally produced food among our residents and establish new market opportunities for tribal farming operations serving local and regional markets.



Virginia

Recipient: Health Care Without Harm, Reston, VA

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$498,653.00

Match Amount: \$151,001.00

Total Project Amount: \$649,654.00

The New England Food Processors Collective

Using a variety of methods, value-added production allows regionally grown foods to be preserved and made available year-round, addressing an oft-cited barrier to local procurement. New England is home to three nonprofit processing operations that share resources and best practices across a range of services and are primed for growth. The New England Food Processors Collective will support more formal collaboration across these processors to create efficiencies in sourcing, processing, and marketing in order to increase their capacity and help them secure ongoing sales to institutional, retail, and wholesale markets. This will yield greater financial stability for the processors, provide reliable sales channels for a mix of minimally processed and fully prepared produce throughout the year, and increase consumer access to regionally produced foods. The members of the Collective share commitments to regional sourcing and to creating jobs with livable wages. The Collective will partner with regional food distributors to gain efficiencies in transportation, from farm to processor and processor to buyer. This intentional collaboration will increase connections across supply chain entities, strengthening regional food system infrastructure—a goal that has become even more paramount in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the commitment to local sourcing and paying fair prices to farms and livable wages to employees, the Collective supports farm viability and sustainable employment opportunities across New England’s farm and food economy. The Collective’s marketing will highlight these supply chain players and connections, elevating the visibility of the people, places, and producers behind our food system.

Washington

Recipient: Grow Food, Burlington, WA

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$500,000.00

Match Amount: \$125,257.00

Total Project Amount: \$625,257.00

Creating a Regional Food System for All: Forging Innovative Community Partnerships to Strengthen Small-scale Farms and Increase Food Access in the Puget Sound Region

Food systems across the United States are at a critical juncture. Family farms struggle to achieve profitability, and one in every nine Americans grapples with food insecurity, even though about 20 billion pounds of food produced annually never make it off the farm. If we do not innovate to ensure financial viability for small- and mid-scale family farms and support our vulnerable communities, our local and national food economies may not survive the radical shifts that are on the horizon for the agricultural sector. Viva Farms is setting a new standard for innovation in the Puget Sound region. Based in Western Washington, the organization is committed to creating a resilient regional food system by



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forging innovative community partnerships that meet the needs of historically underserved producers and consumers. Rooted in the understanding that resiliency is strengthened by strong partnerships, Viva Farms will work with farmers, food banks, food hubs, public schools, and a land grant university to establish new local supply chains that maximize profitability for small- and mid-scale family farms, while simultaneously presenting data-driven solutions to food insecurity in the Puget Sound region. This project will develop new value-added products and markets, establish a formal market channel for agricultural seconds, and adopt impactful new approaches to responding to the needs of food insecure consumers. The result will be an interconnected local food economy that models farm viability and community food security, setting a new trend for food system collaboration.

Wisconsin

Recipient: The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, Madison, WI

Project Type: Implementation

Award Amount: \$369,809.00

Match Amount: \$92,498.00

Total Project Amount: \$462,307.00

Building Financial Resilience in Pivoting Food Hubs Through Digital and In-person Financial Management Training and National Consultant Interventions

The business landscape for food hubs is shifting dramatically. While early business models emphasized aggregation for farm- to-school and other institutions, many hubs have evolved to focus on higher margin lines of business. Others emphasize community food system needs that are best addressed by non-profits. COVID-19 has accelerated these transformations as food sales and distribution have become inconsistent. Food hubs need to change quickly to reach financial sustainability and they need new benchmarks and high-quality, financially oriented, technical assistance to do this. Our previous work makes us uniquely positioned to lead this effort. The goal of this project is to mobilize a national effort to bring the financial knowledge, skills, and tools that food hub managers and consultants need to quickly pivot and build financially resilient hubs. Our objectives are: (1) enhance the national capacity of technical assistance providers to help hubs pivot successfully through consultant training 2.0 and launching a consultant coaching “mastermind” group; (2) accelerate hub pivots through immersive financial resiliency boot camps for 70 hub managers across the country; and (3) enhance the effectiveness of the feasibility studies and business plans new and pivoting hubs need by creating a digital library of benchmarking reports and training modules. This project will train 170 consultants and hub managers, provide consulting to 238 food hubs (20 of which will end with resilient business model and financial plans), and reach at least 1100 producers, 150 consultants and 120 food hub managers.