# Transportation and Marketing
Regional Food System Partnerships Program

# Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 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 FY 21 funded projects that included Farm to Institution components in their project descriptions. This document may not be inclusive of all FY21 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 |
|---|---|---|---|
| CA | The Regents of the University of California – College of Agriculture & Environmental Science | Creating High Value Market Opportunities for California's Small- and Mid-Scale Meat Producers | Implementation & Expansion |
| | San Diego Food System Alliance | San Diego County Food Vision 2030 Implementation - Local Food Economy Lab | Implementation & Expansion |
| | San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association | San Francisco Bay Area Local Food Purchasing Collaborative | Planning & Design |
| FL | Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council | SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh | Implementation & Expansion |
| HI | Hawaii Food Hub Hui: A Statewide Partnership for Supply Chain Integration | Hawaii Food Hub Hui: A Statewide Partnership for Supply Chain Integration | Implementation & Expansion |
| KY | University of Kentucky Research Foundation | Growing Healthy Appalachia Partnership | Planning & Design |
| ME | Harvesting Good | Creating a Mid-tier New England based Value Chain to support Farmers, Processors, and Food to Insecure Populations | Implementation & Expansion |
| MT | Lake County Community Development Corporation | Scaling the Northwest Food Hub Network: Leveraging institutional demand to build strong, resilient, regional agri-food value chains | Implementation & Expansion |
| NC | North Carolina State University | Strengthening Food & Agriculture Value Chains in NC Through Farm to Child Care Collaborations | Implementation & Expansion |

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.

## California

**Recipient:** The Regents of the University of California – College of Agriculture & Environmental Science, Davis, CA
**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount:** $813,744
**Match Amount:** $85,082
**Total Project Amount:** $898,826

### Creating High Value Market Opportunities for California's Small- and Mid-Scale Meat Producers

Our July 2021 UC Davis Food Systems Lab (FSL) study derived from interviews with over 30 supply chain stakeholders, a literature review and consultation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, revealed challenges and opportunities. The pandemic, drought, and fires intensify the already acute processing challenges linked to California's inspection system, insufficient producer collaboration and NIMBYism often associated with anti-meat sentiments. The study recommends how producers can improve processing access and market opportunities. This proposal builds from that study and seeks to facilitate development of effective collaboration among links in supply chains and to optimize processing, inspection and marketing systems that convey the value propositions of the small and mid-scale producers. The FSL team, its collaborator from the Niche Meat Processing Assistance Network, and our strategic advisors will work with two cohorts of producers, processors and buyers over three years in two regions to implement synergistic actions that will optimize processing and marketing of high value meat from small and mid-scale producers. Our primary goal is to create two new regional supply chains that highlight product attributes conveying quality and value. We aim to supply institutional systems such as UC Davis Health and sports venues with ground meat and restaurants and other retailers with the more expensive cuts. The work will ultimately result in more economic opportunity for producers and increased system resilience.

**Recipient:** San Diego Food System Alliance, San Diego, CA
**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount:** $711,624
**Match Amount:** $237,706
**Total Project Amount:** $949,330

### San Diego County Food Vision 2030 Implementation - Local Food Economy Lab

The San Diego Food System Alliance (Alliance), is a diverse and inclusive multi-sector network that works across the region to promote collaboration, influence policy, and catalyze transformation in the food system. After a 2 year planning process engaging with over 250 cross-sector organizations and nearly 3,000 individuals—primarily low-income residents, tribal communities, food producers, businesses, and workers—the Alliance is launching San Diego County Food Vision 2030 in July 2021. Food Vision 2030, visualized through a report and a website including an indicator dashboard (sdfoodvision2030.org), outlines 10 objectives positioned to transform our regional food system to accomplish 3 goals: 1) cultivate racial justice, 2) fight climate change, and 3) build resilience.

To advance several Food Vision 2030 Objectives, the project goal is to launch a "Local Food Economy Lab" that centers equity and community ownership and works to improve the viability of local farms, fisheries, and food businesses. The Lab will engage with a diverse set of public and private partners within the Food Vision 2030 network, including local farms, fisheries, food hubs, food businesses, institutions, mid-tier value chain businesses, technical assistance providers, government, philanthropic, financing, and economic development partners to coordinate customized business and technical assistance, mobilize funding, influence policy, and scale up local, equitable, and sustainable value chains. The Lab will also facilitate the economic case-making for investing in the regional food system. Through deep collaboration with partners, the project will involve two phases: 1) co-design the Lab and reimagine value chains, 2) implement the Lab services.

**Recipient**: San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, San Francisco, CA
**Project Type**: Planning & Design
**Award Amount**: $163,133
**Match Amount**: $63,407
**Total Project Amount**: $226,540

### San Francisco Bay Area Local Food Purchasing Collaborative

The San Francisco Bay Area Local Food Purchasing Collaborative is a transformational collaboration that will leverage the power of institutional purchasing to build a more resilient, sustainable and equitable regional food system in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Collaborative brings together all the stakeholders necessary to create this much-needed change. It includes: some of the largest public institutions in the region – school districts, hospital systems, corrections facilities – collectively serving 100,000+ people per day and spending more than $40 million annually on food; communities spanning the geography of the region, including the three largest cities; local and regional food policy advocates working to align food purchasing with community values; City and County governments from across the region; and three leading organizations with expertise providing technical assistance to schools, hospitals and corrections institutions.

The Collaborative is built around the Good Food Purchasing Program, which provides the structure and tools needed to measure and track institutional food purchasing, determine aggregate demand for food aligned with community values, identify and break down barriers to local food procurement, and enable participation of local suppliers in institutional supply chains.

This planning and design project will result in a Bay Area Good Food Purchasing Roadmap and technical assistance toolkit, including a detailed implementation guide to support institutions in meeting local food purchasing targets. By identifying and addressing roadblocks to good food purchasing, the Collaborative will accelerate institutions' local food procurement and create a model for scaling local food purchasing in other regions.

## Florida

**Recipient**: Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, Fort Myers, FL
**Project Type**: Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount**: $643,500
**Match Amount**: $108,926
**Total Project Amount**: $752,426

### SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh

In 2017, following Hurricane Irma, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) worked with small to mid-sized growers in Southwest Florida (SWFL) to identify negative impacts on their production capacity and how to make them more resilient. An Agricultural Sustainability Study funded by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) resulted in an analysis that identified numerous threats and opportunities these growers face. The research confirmed consumers, producers, and retailers all find value in marketing a "local" brand for agricultural products. The Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) then funded the development of a SWFL brand: "SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh."

Our project will implement the trademarked regional brand to showcase SWFL food producers and their products through multiple marketing platforms. The brand will support the development of new markets for farmers, increase public knowledge of healthy, local food sources, and connect food producers to consumers. Our marketing campaign will expand markets, increase farmer profitability, and promote the local economy in our six-county region while exposing consumers to higher quality and healthier food. This includes expanding access to farmers' markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture, and farm-to-school initiatives. By supporting the creation of markets for locally produced foods with government subsidies and the adoption of tools that encourage healthy food choices among socially disadvantaged populations, we will improve food security for low-income individuals.

## Hawaii

**Recipient**: Hawaii Good Food Alliance, Honolulu, HI
**Project Type**: Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount**: $829,510
**Match Amount**: $211,914
**Total Project Amount**: $1,041,424

### Hawaii Food Hub Hui: A Statewide Partnership for Supply Chain Integration

The Hawaii Good Food Alliance (HGFA) and Hawaii Food Hub Hui (HFHH) will increase the success and collaboration of twelve food hubs across five Hawaiian Islands, thereby fostering a growth in local food enterprises and sales, while developing resources and sharing best practices to strengthen Hawaii's local food system and supply chain integration. Key partnerships include 12 Hawaii food hubs, the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture, Hawaii Investment Ready, City & County of Honolulu, Hawaii Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program, Hawaii Pacific Health system, other food systems

stakeholders.

This project aims to increase food hubs' sales and profitability by:

- Increasing collaboration amongst food hubs, including assessment of individual hub market areas and development needs within the statewide landscape. PDs will share best practices, deliver technical assistance, provide coordination and leadership to the food hubs, and facilitate the development of a resource database for shared information and capacity building.
- Leveraging public-private partnerships to further food hub development to address the processing, storage, and transportation gaps in the food system supply chain through public-private partnership investments. This will include investing in equipment upgrades to meet expansion needs, advocating for institutional buying statewide, and identifying public and private sector funding sources to provide capital to food hubs.
- Growing the number of local farmers/producers benefiting from Hawaii food hubs by supporting the hubs with staff time for producer outreach and on-boarding, along with marketing funds to build the demand for local food in their regions.

# Kentucky

**Recipient**: University of Kentucky Research Foundation, Lexington, KY
**Project Type**: Planning & Design
**Award Amount**: $244,801
**Match Amount**: $25,695
**Total Project Amount**: $270,496

### Growing Healthy Appalachia Partnership

The Growing Healthy Appalachia Partnership (GHAP) cultivates regional food economies of Central Appalachia through public-private partnerships that combine institutional procurement, cooperative economic models, culinary confidence building, and value chain coordination for small and mid-sized farms. Through community-informed design and evaluation, our planning project sets the stage for future implementation across the Appalachian Regional Healthcare system and beyond.

GHAP combines the powers of a regional healthcare system (Appalachian Regional Healthcare) as both a major employer and mid-tier purchaser of food, the expertise of community-based food and agriculture organizations (Community Farm Alliance, Grow Appalachia), and the research strengths of a land grant and medical research Institution (University of Kentucky). We seek support from the RFSP program to grant us the time and resources necessary to identify how we can best leverage our respective strengths and resources to serve the communities of Central Appalachia and grow a regional food economy that fosters a culture of health.

Building on previous research, GHAP works to simultaneously 1) Expand markets for direct-to-consumer markets for local food in ways that directly address barriers for accessing and enjoying seasonal produce (time, money, knowledge, skill) and 2) Establish mid-tier markets for local foods by leveraging the purchasing power and infrastructure of institutional dining. Through the formation of the GHAP and the support of this planning grant, our region will evolve from short-lived and disconnected efforts to support local foods to strategic and sustainable initiatives that foster a vibrant and healthy food system in Central Appalachia.

## Maine

**Recipient:** Harvesting Good, Yarmouth, ME
**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount:** $792,966
**Match Amount:** $198,255
**Total Project Amount:** $991,221

*Creating a Mid-tier New England based Value Chain to support Farmers, Processors, and Food to Insecure Populations*

Harvesting Good (HG), a Maine based public benefit corporation, and its partners including Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB), University of Maine Cooperative Extension, agricultural processors and farmers, Hannaford regional grocery chain and Sodexo an institutional food service corporation, present this RFSP application to support the development of a value added mid-tier, regional food chain to supply fresh processed vegetables throughout the six New England States. Under this proposal, HG will purchase local vegetables (broccoli) grown in Northern Maine from Circle B Farms (CBF), contract with food processors W.R. Allen (WRA) and Wyman's to floret, blanche, freeze, pack and store, and sell it initially through Hannaford's 132 store retail chain and to Sodexo's higher education clients. This application supports the implementation of New England's only regional vegetable processing operation to operate at scale. This grant will support HG's administrative costs, development of a marketing program, training and technical support for farmers and processors, and distribution of frozen vegetables throughout the foodbank network. This public/private partnership will generate over $8.4M in new revenue to the agriculture sector, create 52 full and part time jobs, use underutilized processing facilities, establish a new market for Maine's vegetable growers, and extend the season for crop growth and processing. HG will invest over $2.5M to purchase state of the art processing equipment, renovate processing facilities, and supplement technical support. This project opens the door for Maine's local vegetables to reach New England's regional markets year-round.

## Montana

**Recipient:** Lake County Community Development Corporation, Ronan, MT
**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount:** $999,184
**Match Amount:** $280,363
**Total Project Amount:** $1,279,547

*Scaling the Northwest Food Hub Network: Leveraging institutional demand to build strong, resilient, regional agri-food value chains*

In 2020, the Northwest Food Hub Network launched as a pilot program to support the 3 most established cooperative food hubs in selling regional, sustainable food to institutions across the Northwest. Partners in this pilot include Farm Fare, (provides software to share inventory, logistics, and marketing) Kitchen Sync Strategies (brokers shared sales), Mission West Community Development Partners' Cooperative Development Center (provides project coordination and administrative support)

and Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, (provides value-added processing). This pilot effort has helped the food hubs begin growing their presence in the complicated but largely untapped institutional food market channel

(in healthcare, higher education, and K-12 schools) across WA, ID, and MT. This proposed project builds on this pilot and develops the critical infrastructure of a growing regional food hub network and enhances its capacity, efficiency, and sustainability. NWFHN will support the 3 hubs and their 200+ farms to develop improved food safety protocols, develop strategic regional production plans, leverage a shared sales brokerage model to increase sales to regional institutions, and design and implement interoperability between the existing food hub software and Farm Fare's network technology to scale operations seamlessly. This project will result in integration between Farm Fare and Local Food Marketplace software platforms and a 160% increase in sales (~$610,000) to regional institutions and will create a holistic evaluation of the Network's economic impact and operational model that will be shared with emergent regional food hub networks across the US.

## North Carolina

**Recipient:** North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
**Project Type:** Implementation & Expansion
**Award Amount:** $993,825
**Match Amount:** $234,891
**Total Project Amount:** $1,228,716

### *Strengthening Food & Agriculture Value Chains in NC Through Farm to Child Care Collaborations*

Our goal is to develop, evaluate, and disseminate Farm to Early Care and Education (Farm to ECE) local food procurement models that increase market viability for producers. Farm to ECE is often framed as a win-win for farmers and children under five, increasing healthy food access. Since 2016, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems has partnered with county-based Partnerships for Children to convene a Farm to ECE Community of Practice that provides technical assistance to childcare centers to purchase local food and conduct experiential learning. However, our program evaluation and research indicate that there are challenges to making Farm to ECE a profitable market for producers and food businesses. The principal issues are that childcare facilities purchase low volumes of local food (due to small serving sizes and enrollment), and purchasing and delivery are decentralized. We propose extending our existing partnerships to explore models of local food procurement that aggregate demand to address these challenges. We will work in six geographically, racially, and ethnically diverse rural counties across North Carolina with high child food insecurity rates to pilot four innovative procurement strategies: (1) collaborative purchasing among childcare centers; (2) working with caterers that serve multiple centers; (3) collaborating with K-12 school districts; and (4) selling to the families of enrolled children. Successful strategies will promote regional collaboration, coordinate menu development, and address delivery logistics. We use an inclusive, participatory approach to convene cross-sector teams in a community of practice to identify replicable Farm to ECE procurement models.