

2023 USDA Local Food Promotion Program Proposal Summary

Working with its key food system partners, the RRRRC seeks to expand the capacity of local food aggregators in the region, and producers’ ability to meet the needs of aggregators, institutions and other intermediated market channels. The proposed project would build on RRRRC’s past food system efforts and assist in addressing needs identified in the region’s Farm and Food Plan.

Specifically, the project would provide capacity building funding to two nonprofit food aggregators in the region. The George Washington Carver Agriculture Research Center (GWCARC) would hire a Program Coordinator and purchase food processing equipment. The Mid-Atlantic Food Resilience and Access Coalition (MAFRAC), a food rescue organization that pays farmers market price for excess food, would also hire a Program Coordinator to expand their operations in the region.

To assist producers in meeting the needs of intermediated market channels, RRRRC would begin with assessments of 1) public schools’ farm to school procurement needs, and 2) the Purely Piedmont local food marketing program. This effort includes coordination between local food producers and school nutrition programs to develop a contact list of producers interested in farm to school sales, as well as focused outreach to socially disadvantaged producers to increase program diversity. RRRRC would implement the assessment results to better serve a diverse range of producers in promoting the region’s locally-grown food through its Purely Piedmont program.

Additionally, GWCARC and MAFRAC would conduct producer trainings on business management, value-added products, and scaling up. Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and Virginia State University (VSU) have also committed in-kind staff time to assist GWCARC with training, including a new VSU Extension Agent to be located at the Carver Center. The assessment results would be used to inform the training content.

Grant Program Information

The USDA’s Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grant supports projects that develop, coordinate, and expand local/regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally/regionally produced agricultural products. The program focuses on intermediary supply chain activities such as processing, aggregation, distribution, and storage.

The maximum award is \$750,000, with a required 25% match that can be in-kind. The application deadline is May 2. The grant term is three years, with projects scheduled to begin in October 2023.

Budget

Partner Organization	Cost	Match	Grant Funds
RRRC	\$107,298	\$18,640	\$88,658
GWCARC/VCE/VSU	\$1,035,125	\$623,334	\$411,791
MAFRAC	\$249,491	\$50,000	\$199,491
TOTAL	\$1,391,914	\$691,974	\$699,940

Note: RRRRC match is in-kind.