

## Got the “Buy Local” Bug? Here are some Resources for You!

From farmers markets to grocery stores to university cafeterias, more retailers are showcasing food grown and raised by local farmers and ranchers. USDA is committed to helping develop these local food systems – whether it’s by working with producers, engaging with communities, financing local processing and distribution infrastructure, or helping retailers develop local food connections. Below is a list of some of just some of the many USDA resources available to support this work, organized by USDA agency. **This information and much more can be found on the website of USDA’s *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* initiative, [www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer](http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer).**

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### **Tools for Farmers and Ranchers**

**Microloan Program.** FSA loan programs are available to agricultural producers in both rural and urban areas. The microloan program provides loans of up to \$35,000 with streamlined paperwork requirements and more flexible managerial experience requirements to accommodate apprenticeships and other needs of smaller farm operations. Loans are available on a rolling basis. Contact your local FSA office at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov) for more information. Larger loans are also available through FSA.

**Farm Storage Facility Loans.** These loans finance the purchase, construction, or refurbishment of farm storage facilities, including cold storage buildings or permanently affixed cooling, circulating, and monitoring equipment for storing fruits and vegetables. Cold storage can be particularly important to those growing for local fresh markets. Interested producers should contact their local FSA office at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov).

**Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.** SARE makes a variety of grants to advance sustainable innovations in agriculture, including producer grants to conduct research, marketing and demonstration projects and share the results with other farmers and ranchers. Grants are also available to academics, nonprofits and others. Find your regional SARE office at [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).** EQIP provides cost-share support for conservation practices on working lands, including agricultural land in urban areas. Supported practices include the **seasonal high tunnel program**, which helps construct high tunnels (hoop houses), and the EQIP **organic program**, which supports producers who are certified organic, transitioning to organic production, or selling less than \$5,000 of organic products annually. Contact your local NRCS office at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

**Value-Added Producer Grant Program.** This grant is available to producers or producer groups in urban or rural areas. The grants may fund projects that create a business plan to market value-added products; evaluate the feasibility of new marketing opportunities; expand capacity for locally- and regionally-grown products; or expand processing capacity. Contact your local Rural Development office at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

### **Tools for Local Food Infrastructure**

**Community Facilities Program.** This program provides infrastructure support in rural communities under 20,000 people. In the past, grants and loans have been used for commercial kitchens, farmers markets, food banks, cold storage facilities, food hubs and other local food infrastructure. Nonprofits, tribes or local governments are

eligible for this funding, which is available on an ongoing basis. Contact your local RD office for more information at [www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov).

**Rural Business Enterprise Grants.** The RBEG program funds projects that facilitate the development of small and emerging rural businesses. It can fund acquisition or development of land; construction or renovation of buildings; purchase of equipment; training and technical assistance; and project planning. Funding is available for local and state governments, tribes and nonprofits in rural communities of under 50,000 people. Contact your local RD office for more information ([www.rurdev.usda.gov](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov)).

### **Tools for Local Food Marketing and Promotion**

**Specialty Crop Block Grants.** Grants are available for projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, including fruits, vegetables and nuts. Past grants have funded farm to school efforts, community gardens, farmers market and mobile market projects, food safety training for farmers, and more. The grants are available through state departments of agriculture, so applicants should contact their state for more information or search for “USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant” to find a list of coordinators for your state.

**Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program.** Grants are available to help communities support local food systems through direct marketing and other efforts such as food hubs, farm to institution and more. Cooperatives, local governments, nonprofits, for-profit businesses, economic development corporations, regional farmers market authorities and Tribal governments are all eligible for funding. See <http://www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp>.

### **Tools for Schools and Communities**

**Farm to School Grants.** Grants are available to school districts or schools to plan or implement a farm to school program; grants are also available to state and local agencies, nonprofits or agricultural producers working with schools to further develop existing farm to school initiatives and provide support services more broadly. More information and resources are available at [www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school).

**Community Food Projects.** Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create and implement plans that improve the self-reliance of the community over their food needs. Only non-profit organizations are eligible. See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/communityfoodprojects.cfm>.

### **Tools for Local Food Research**

**Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program.** This program makes grants to small businesses to support advanced research related to agriculture. Phase 1 (planning) grants up to \$100,000 and phase 2 (implementation) grants up to \$300,000 are available. In the past, these grants have been used for a variety of local and regional food projects – for example, Good Natured Family Farms in Kansas City, MO used an SBIR to research and develop a quality assurance system for its 150 small and midsized farmer members.

**This is just a selection of available programs. For more, see [www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer](http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer).**