

Grants as a Financial Resource:

Opportunities, Benefits, Challenges,
and Strategies for Innovation in
Rural Food Access

**KATE FITZGERALD, GRAY HARRIS,
KARA NEWBY & JIMMY WRIGHT**

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OPPORTUNITIES

Across the USDA system there are grant opportunities that may be used to leverage new opportunities in the rural grocery space.

USDA, Rural Development

Examples:

HFFI (Healthy Food Financing Initiative)

REAP (Rural Energy for America Program)

USDA U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE usda.gov

Building a Resilient Food System

The United States has developed a productive agricultural system, but over time consolidation has pushed smaller producers aside, leaving them and their communities struggling. USDA is using today's pivotal moment to support a food system that works better for everyone. Through more than 50 grant, loan, and technical assistance programs, USDA is supporting greater opportunities for farmers, processors, distributors, and consumers — all toward building fair, competitive, local, and resilient U.S. food systems. Learn more at usda.gov/markets.

Create More, New & Better Markets

USDA provides grants, loans, and technical assistance to build, expand, and improve meat, poultry, and other processing and distribution facilities, as well as food retail. These programs will generate new market opportunities for producers, save and create jobs in rural and urban America, and build a more reliable food supply chain. So far, our partners have helped more than 1,000 small meat processors grow.

Build Capacity, Knowledge & Equity

USDA is investing in trusted local and regional partners in all 50 states, territories, and tribal communities to provide technical assistance for producers to diversify revenue streams, access new markets, transition to organic production, and support urban farmers. We are also supporting a new generation of diverse agricultural professionals and providing financial support to new local food and farm businesses.

Increase Competition

USDA is dedicated to promoting competitive markets and establishing a fair playing field. New rules modernize enforcement of livestock and poultry market policies, strengthen national organic standards, and better define what it means for meat to be labeled as a "Product of USA." Farmers and ranchers can now use the Cattle Contract Library and enhanced market data to help them compete effectively and the Farmer Fairness portal to report potentially unfair and uncompetitive practices.

Support Innovative Ways to Purchase Healthy Food

Schools, food pantries, and other emergency assistance agencies nationwide are providing healthy, locally produced food to more people thanks to funding USDA provides to states, tribes, and territories. More than 12,000 producers will sell their products at fair prices through these channels, keeping food dollars in local economies, increasing sales for small and underserved producers, and shortening the supply chain between producers and consumers.

Expand Access to Nutritious Food

We're helping shoppers stretch their food dollars and connecting buyers directly with local producers. More than 67,000 schools now have farm-to-school programs, 2 million low-income seniors and WIC participants receive coupons to use at farmers markets, and more than 5,000 farmstands and farmers markets accept SNAP, with many also participating in incentive and produce prescription programs.

HEALTHY FOOD FINANCING INITIATIVE

Improves Access to healthy food and creates economic opportunity in underserved communities
www.investinginfood.com

- Grants
- Loans
- Technical Assistance
- Partnership Program

OPPORTUNITIES

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USDA, Ag. Marketing Service

Examples:

Regional Food Business Centers

Local Food Promotion Program

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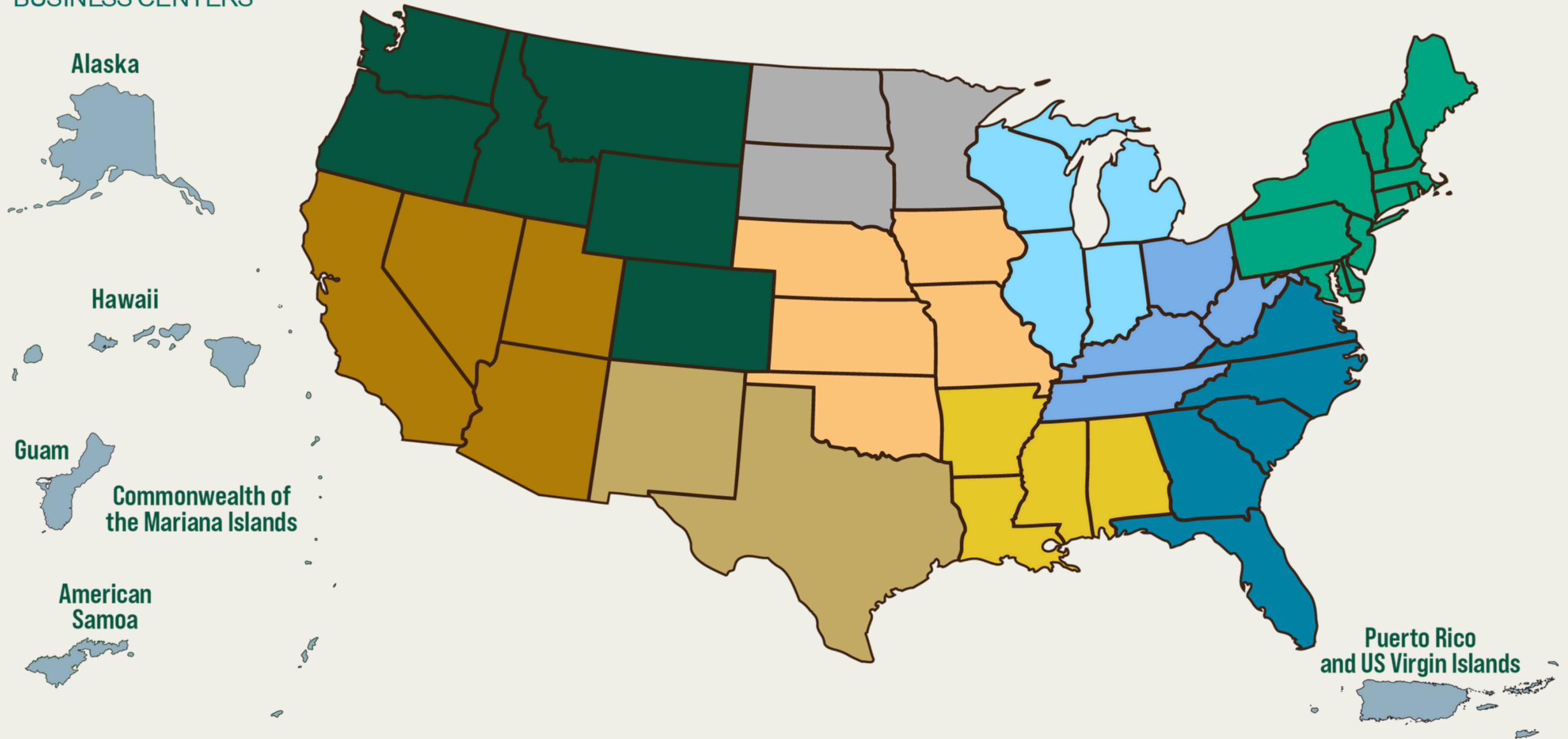
LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM

- \$10.5M
- Develop and expand local and regional food businesses
- NGOs, ag associations, coops, businesses, local & tribal government
- Grants:
 - Planning -- \$25K - \$100K
 - Implementation -- \$100K \$500K
- 25% match required





USDA Regional Food Business Centers Geographic Regions



CONSIDERING GRANTS

- Eligibility
- Conditions of the grant
- Allowable Costs
- Program Purpose
- Funding Amount



WRITING THE GRANT

- READ THE REQUEST CAREFULLY
- Ensure that you include all requested parts, answering all questions (Checklists are helpful)
- Have outside readers read your grant to ensure you are clear on your plan and purpose
- Read other/past grants, or research what they have funded in the past if possible to get a sense of what the funder is looking for (or serve as a peer reviewer)
- Ensure that you balance the broad and the specific

Wrights Market

EXAMPLE IN PRACTICE



