Fiscal Year 2026 Description of Funded Projects

Number of Grants Awarded: 8
Amount of Funds Awarded: $ 4,578,404.60

For more information, please visit the grant program's website:
https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp

California

Recipient: Leprendo
District: CA-046
Project Type: Implementation and Expansion
Award Amount: $400,000
Cost Share Amount: $100,000
Total Project Amount: $500,000

Field to Network: A Digital Platform for Producer-Buyer Connections and Small Farm Business Development in Southern California

Leprendo and its partners, Modo Farms, Paradise Polycultural Farms, and Quoc Viet Foods will develop a coordinated producer-buyer network serving specialty crop producers across five Southern California counties. The project will address fragmented market connections between producers, chefs, distributors, and specialty buyers while strengthening farm recordkeeping and business readiness. The project plans to enroll at least 24 producers in a digitization and market-readiness program; provide farm record management and grant preparation training; facilitate engagement between chefs, buyers, and producers through sourcing cohorts and product showcases; and develop a sustainable coordination model funded through producer and buyer subscriptions. Modo Farms will serve in the capacity of Trail Blazer Farmer, testing tools, mentoring participants, and guiding buyer engagement strategies, with technical assistance from Leprendo.

Hawaii

Recipient: Hawaii Ulu Producers Cooperative
District: HI-02
Project Type: Implementation and Expansion
Award Amount: $999,404
Cost Share Amount: $339,411
Total Project Amount: $1,338,815

Strengthening Hawaii's Regional Food Value Chain for Minimally Processed Staple Crops

This project will expand opportunities for Hawaii farmers to better access large-scale markets and strengthen aggregation and processing infrastructure statewide. The project will improve the value

chain for minimally processed staple crops through coordinated producer training, institutional buyer engagement, and infrastructure improvements. The Hawaii ‘Ulu Producers Cooperative and its partners will provide training, technical assistance, cooperative development, and crop supply planning to help producers meet demand from schools and other large-scale markets. The project will also support demand for locally produced minimally processed foods through procurement outreach and the Ho‘opili ‘Ai education program. Infrastructure investments will expand aggregation and minimal processing capacity, improve logistics systems, and support planning for future regional facilities. Other activities include producer training cohorts, individualized assistance, cooperative crop pooling, institutional purchasing partnerships, educational outreach, and development of a roadmap for scaling processing capacity statewide. Overall, the project is intended to strengthen Hawaii’s regional food system by expanding market opportunities and support long-term commercial viability and regional economic sustainability for locally produced staple crops.

Illinois

Recipient: County of Kane
District: IL-011
Project Type: Planning and Design
Award Amount: $250,000
Cost Share Amount: $133,862
Total Project Amount: $383,862

Activating Local Food Procurement in Kane County Community Colleges

This regional food system planning initiative aims to strengthen procurement connections among Kane County local farmers and institutional purchasers, such as colleges and schools. The project intends to improve producer access to reliable wholesale and institutional markets and to support institutional supply chain coordination and procurement processes needed to source locally for many of the county’s more than 500 farms covering 146,000 acres. The County will conduct producer and institutional outreach; host planning sessions and producer-buyer networking events; assess procurement readiness; evaluate infrastructure and market needs; and identify opportunities to fortify regional supply chains. A regional food system assessment, procurement feasibility analysis, infrastructure gap assessment, and a Kane County institutional food procurement roadmap will provide the framework to expand institutional market opportunities for farmers, increase local food access, strengthen regional resilience, and provide a replicable model for other communities.

Kentucky

Recipient: Caldwell County Fiscal Court
District: KY-01
Project Type: Implementation and Expansion
Award Amount: $932,300
Cost Share Amount: $744,700
Total Project Amount: $1,677,000

KY C.A.R.E.S.: Kentucky Critical Access Rural Enrichment System

KY C.A.R.E.S. is a regional collaboration in western Kentucky that will connect livestock producers, healthcare institutions, and food-sector infrastructure to convert an underutilized agricultural byproduct

into a clinically validated, value-added product and a new revenue stream for farmers. Specifically, the project will evaluate the market viability of nutrient-dense broth for healthcare and other institutional buyers; engage 6 to 8 Kentucky producers in a coordinated regional supply network; establish scalable value-chain systems; and develop digital market infrastructure linking producers to institutional buyers, program partners, and direct-to-consumer markets. The project is intended to create a self-sustaining regional system for this Kentucky-produced agricultural product that will generate economic benefits for producers, support clinical nutrition research, and demonstrate a replicable rural value-chain model for Kentucky. Key partners include the Caldwell County Fiscal Court, Rittenberry Farms, Better for Butchery's USDA-inspected processing facilities, Livingston County Hospital's clinical program, and the Kentucky Food is Medicine Initiative.

Louisiana

Recipient: Sprout Nola Farm
District: LA-002
Project Type: Implementation and Expansion
Award Amount: $999,631.60
Cost Share Amount: $600,619.32
Total Project Amount: $1,600,250.92

Expanding Connectivity and Producer Resources to Support Louisiana's Local Food System (ECPR)

The Louisiana Small Scale Agriculture Coalition (LSSAC), a partnership of seven food-system support organizations, will expand statewide initiatives to strengthen farm business viability and improve market connections for Louisiana producers. The project will enhance producer access to wholesale and institutional markets by expanding the Farmers Market Manager Network, growing the statewide LA CRAFT peer-learning network, coordinating with the Louisiana Food Policy Action Council, and strengthening value chain connections. Further, the project will develop producer support resources by providing technical assistance and business coaching; maintaining the Statewide Grants and Loans Index and Small Farm Micro-Loan Program; annually updating the Agricultural Product Price Index and Regulation Navigation Guide; and developing a comprehensive statewide risk management plan based on regional disaster-response systems. In leveraging non-Federal resources and statewide partnerships, LSSAC will strengthen producer support, market connections, business resources, and risk management capacity across Louisiana.

Michigan

Recipient: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (Inc.)
District: MI-03
Project Type: Planning and Design
Award Amount: $247,102
Cost Share Amount: $226,360
Total Project Amount: $473,462

From Analysis to Action: Advancing West Michigan's Regional Food and Agriculture Economy

The West Michigan Agri-Cluster Coalition will strengthen the region's agricultural economy by addressing regulatory, workforce, market, and capacity challenges identified through the Economic Development Administration-funded Agriculture Cluster Economic Impact Analysis. In working across 13

counties, the Coalition will pursue four coordinated objectives to (1) conduct a regional waste-generation assessment to inform development of a Food Reclamation Center for on-farm and processing waste; (2) convene sector-specific working groups and subject-matter experts to develop practical resources addressing regulatory, workforce, and market challenges; (3) combine priority recommendations into a unified West Michigan Food and Agriculture Plan; and (4) maintain and expand regional coordination among agriculture and food-sector partners. The project will provide data, planning tools, and coordinated strategies to help move identified priorities into implementation and strengthen West Michigan's regional food and agriculture system.

Mississippi

Recipient: Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
District: MS-004
Project Type: Implementation and Expansion
Award Amount: $505,587.00
Cost Share Amount: $143,000.00
Total Project Amount: $648,587.00

Mississippi Gulf Coast Oyster Alliance

This project will strengthen Mississippi's Gulf Coast oyster industry by supporting both off-bottom aquaculture and on-bottom wild harvest. For the aquaculture sector, the Alliance under the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR)anchored by Eagle Point Oyster Company, Holy Ground Oyster Company, and 2 Cracker Oyster Company will establish shared quality standards, branding, a coordinated marketing strategy, and centralized equipment infrastructure. These producers currently produce approximately 10,000 to 12,000 oysters per week, and this project aims to double to triple that capacity while developing markets in three regional areas. For the wild harvest sector, the project will develop up to a dozen new buyer relationships across southeastern states to expand market access and support improved commercial opportunities for harvesters. MDMR will provide regulatory oversight and food safety infrastructure, while the University of Southern Mississippi and the Mississippi Oyster Task Force will support technical training, industry coordination, and contribute market development resources.

Pennsylvania

Recipient: Adagio Health Inc.
District: PA-12
Project Type: Planning and Design
Award Amount: $244,380
Cost Share Amount: $70,092
Total Project Amount: $314,472

Growing Regional Opportunities through WIC Integration and Coordination (GROW-WIC)

GROW-WIC is a statewide planning initiative designed to strengthen Pennsylvania's local food economy and improve connections between local producers and WIC-related markets. Led by Adagio Health in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania WIC Program, the project will support direct producer-to-consumer marketing and improve regional food system coordination. Through statewide assessments, stakeholder consultations, feasibility studies, and market-

readiness analyses, GROW-WIC will identify infrastructure, technology, and administrative needs. The project will develop a Farmers Market Readiness Framework and implementation strategy to support vendor onboarding, technical assistance, interagency coordination, and expanded WIC benefit redemption at local food outlets. These improved connections among participating consumers and local producers will enable more consumer access to fruits and vegetables and more producer access to WIC and other nutrition assistance markets.