

RFSI

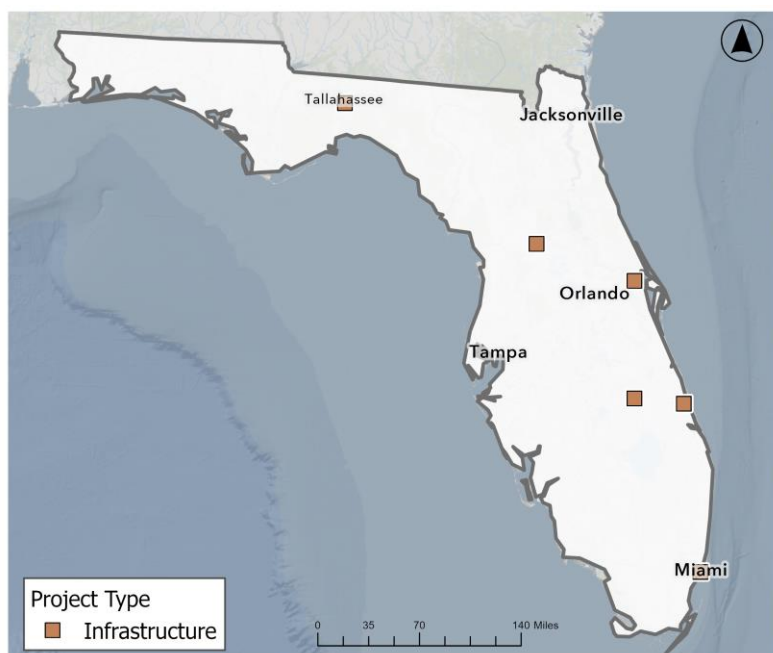
Resilient Food Systems
Infrastructure Program

Florida



State Overview

USDA awarded the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services **\$8.2 million** through the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Program. The objective of RFSI is to expand capacity for aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced agricultural food products. These federal funds will support six Florida infrastructure projects increasing access to new market opportunities, benefiting local and regional producers and processors.



Project Highlights

- **Construct a food production facility** to enable a food bank to source 25 percent more local produce and dairy products for use in prepared meals, sauces, soups, and stews.
- **Expand a farmer-owned dairy cooperative's capacity** with the addition of 18 tanker trucks to haul both conventional and organic milk from 120 local farms.
- **Support the distribution of Florida-grown mushrooms across the Southeast US** with the purchase of a new pickup truck and refrigerated box truck to increase access to restaurants and other wholesale markets for six producers.

Anticipated Outcomes*

524

Local/Regional
Producers Benefited

124

New Market Outlets
Established

27

New Value-Added
Products Developed

3

New
Facilities
Constructed

28

Storage/Aggregation
Units Purchased

22

Distribution
Vehicles Purchased

25

Processing Equipment
Purchased

34

Jobs Created

*These numbers are reported by states and subawardees.

RFSI was awarded to the 56 States and Territories in May 2023. Each state conducted a competitive grant review and selection process. States identified their funding priorities through extensive outreach with key industry stakeholders, which guided their selection process to ensure a robust state and local food system representation. Selected projects fund locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Infrastructure Projects: Snapshot

Infrastructure Grant projects can involve facility and equipment expansion and upgrades, new construction, and modernized information technology systems.

Florida has invested **\$7.4 million** across six projects to support infrastructure needs. The State's awardees are collectively building resilience across the middle of the food supply chain by constructing 3 new facilities, modernizing 2 existing facilities, and purchasing and installing more than 53 pieces of equipment to expand processing, packaging, labeling, and related capacity. The state expects projects will train more than 85 employees on specialized equipment and worker safety, providing workforce development benefits.

Of the six projects:

- All expand cold storage space to preserve product quality, meet food safety standards, increase aggregation capacity for local and regional producers, and enable access to new markets.
- All investments help build new revenue opportunities with a wide variety of market outlets, including farmers markets, grocery chains, food pantries, school cafeterias, and online sales platforms.
- Half acquire specialized processing equipment, including tilt skillets, rapid product chillers, pasteurization systems, and freeze driers, to extend product shelf-life, increase quality, and convert local foods into ready-to-use formats.
- Half of the projects expand the state's local food distribution capacity with new refrigerated box trucks, cargo vans, pickup trucks, and insulated tankers.
- Half of them are also directly led by farmers or a cooperative of farmers.

Statewide Standouts



Florida is investing more than \$6.5 million in the state's dairy industry, expanding storage, processing, and distribution capacity for more than 325 local farmers.



More than \$600,000 of Florida's RFSI funding equips at least 100 citrus farmers with freeze-drying technology to create orange and grapefruit products with a longer shelf life for wholesale and institutional markets.



More than \$2.5 million supports supply chain solutions for a variety of locally grown vegetables with new aggregation, value-added production, and/or transportation solutions.