



RFSI

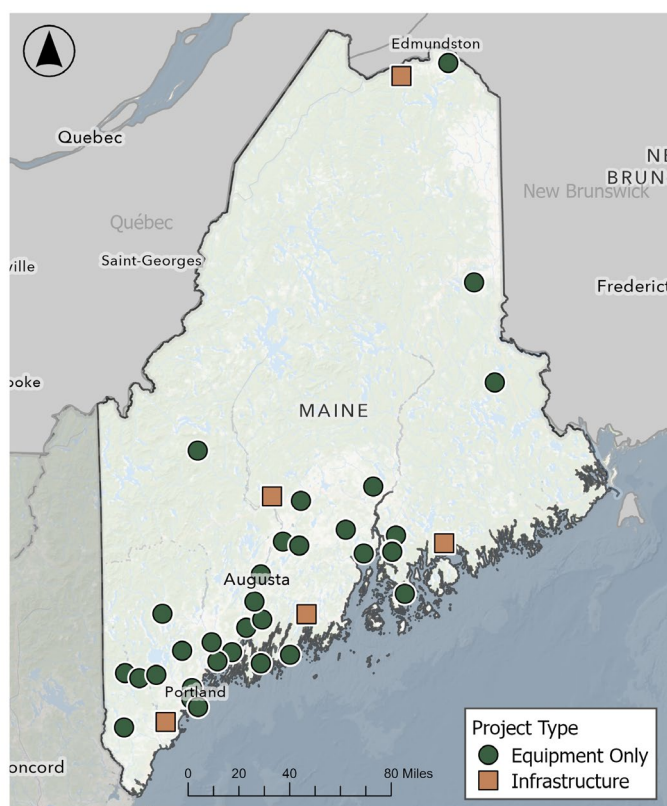
Resilient Food Systems
Infrastructure Program

Maine



State Overview

USDA awarded the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry **\$3.9 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 40 Maine infrastructure and equipment projects increasing access to new market opportunities, benefiting local and regional producers and processors.



Project Highlights

- **Invest in on-site cold storage and processing equipment** to manufacture veggie spreads and fruit snacks made from fruit and vegetable seconds and byproducts, such as fruit pomace from juice processors.
- **Purchase and install specialized milling equipment** to expand processing capacity for powdered Maine seaweed products.
- **Upgrade weighing and packaging equipment** for Maine wild blueberries, supporting 15 local growers expand into new retail and institutional markets.

Anticipated Outcomes*

388

Local/Regional
Producers Benefited

258

New Market Outlets
Established

118

New Value-Added
Products Developed

1

New
Facilities
Constructed

42

Storage/Aggregation
Units Purchased

11

Distribution
Vehicles Purchased

97

Processing Equipment
Purchased

11

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.

Maine invested almost **\$1 million** across 5 Infrastructure projects benefiting 137 local and regional producers. These projects include:

- Expanding a processing facility to increase milling, packaging, and storage capacity of gluten-free buckwheat flour;
- Installing specialized extrusion equipment to produce new value-added products, such as cereals, bars, crackers, and snacks from Maine-grown grains and milling byproducts from bran and other grains;
- Upgrading equipment and infrastructure in a kelp processing facility to increase output of dried kelp and other value-added products; and
- Constructing a new facility to expand production of value-added products, such as flour mixes, condiments, infused syrups, and ice cream, benefiting more than 30 farms.

Equipment Only Projects: Snapshot

Equipment Only projects are intended to purchase special purpose equipment such as cold/dry storage, distribution vehicles, and processing and packaging equipment.

Maine invested more than **\$2.7 million** across 35 Equipment Only projects purchasing more than 117 pieces of aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution equipment— including refrigerated delivery vehicles, cold storage, fermentation tanks, and cheese vats. The state expects 251 local and regional producers will benefit from reduced harvest loss, improved product quality and shelf life, and access to 258 new markets.

Statewide Standouts



Maine is investing \$650,000 into seven projects to improve the aggregation, processing, and distribution of aquaculture products, including oysters, clams, scallops, and kelp.



Nearly 25 percent of Maine's RFSI funding supports grain projects, adding value to buckwheat, oats, and wheat through enhanced milling, packaging, fermentation, and baking equipment.



Maine is investing \$500,000 into six wild blueberry projects to streamline processing, develop value-added products, and expand new markets.



More than \$800,000 of Maine's RFSI funding supports improved infrastructure and equipment for fresh produce to aggregate, clean, process, and distribute vegetables, including herbs, greens, roots crops, tomatoes, and peppers.