



RFSI

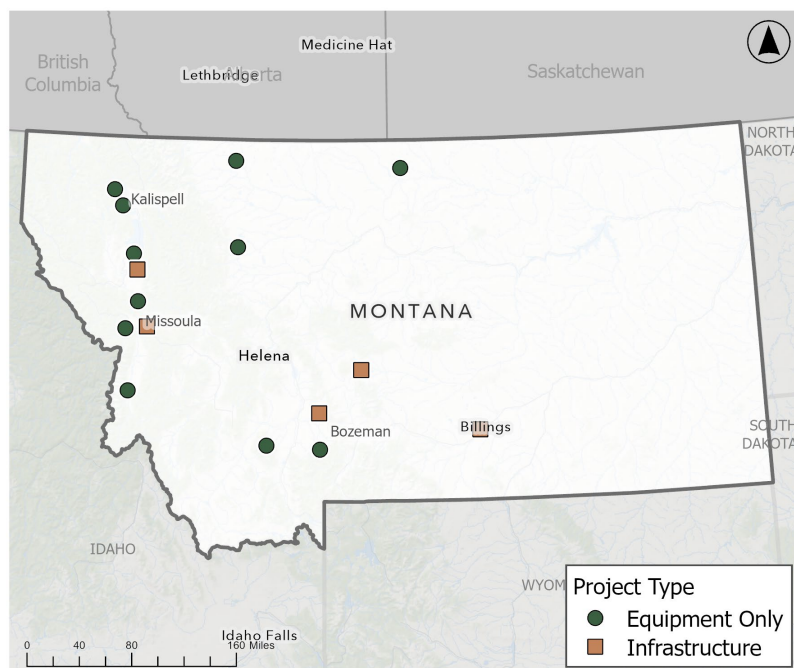
Resilient Food Systems
Infrastructure Program

Montana



State Overview

USDA awarded the Montana Department of Agriculture **\$4.3 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 18 Montana infrastructure and equipment projects increasing access to new market opportunities, benefiting local and regional producers and processors.



Project Highlights

- **Purchase specialized equipment to process, package, label, and ferment vegetables** to increase production from 180 to 880 gallons monthly, increasing ingredient sourcing from local farms and creating market access to retail stores, restaurants, and food service providers.
- **Install cold storage to improve aggregation and distribution** of carrots, berries, leafy greens, and other produce from 80 growers to community partners, schools, and retail outlets.
- **Expand co-packing infrastructure to process local produce** and develop 10 new value-added products using local fruits and vegetables, such as cherries, carrots, and butternut squash from 200 local and regional producers.

Anticipated Outcomes*

662

Local/Regional
Producers Benefited

458

New Market Outlets
Established

132

New Value-Added
Products Developed

1

New
Facilities
Constructed

6

Storage/Aggregation
Units Purchased

7

Distribution
Vehicles Purchased

94

Processing Equipment
Purchased

14

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.

Montana invested more than **\$2 million** across 5 Infrastructure projects benefiting 393 local and regional producers. These projects include:

- Installing a blast freezer, kettles, and convection ovens to develop 30 new value-added products, including soups and frozen blends for wholesale, institutional, and retail market outlets;
- Constructing a processing and distribution center with a commercial kitchen to process products such as carrots, onions, butternut squash, and honey-based items, benefiting 60 producers; and
- Expanding walk-in cooler and freezer space to enhance storage and distribution of fresh produce, dairy, eggs, and grains from 93 producers to schools, hospitals, and food service buyers.

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.

Montana invested more than **\$1 million** across 13 Equipment Only projects purchasing more than 141 pieces of aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution equipment—including cherry pitters, steam boilers, freeze dryers, cold storage, and refrigerated vehicles. The state expects 269 local and regional producers to benefit from reduced harvest loss, improved product quality and shelf life, and access to 353 new markets.

Statewide Standouts



Montana is investing more than 20 percent of funds into projects that expand food hub infrastructure to distribute local products to eastern Montana and the neighboring states of North Dakota and Wyoming.



More than 75 percent of Montana's projects expand value-added production capacity of local products, including juices, jams, sauces, dried fruits, and lentil burgers.



Montana's state-led supply chain coordination supports business development and educational resources for producers and food businesses.