



RFSI

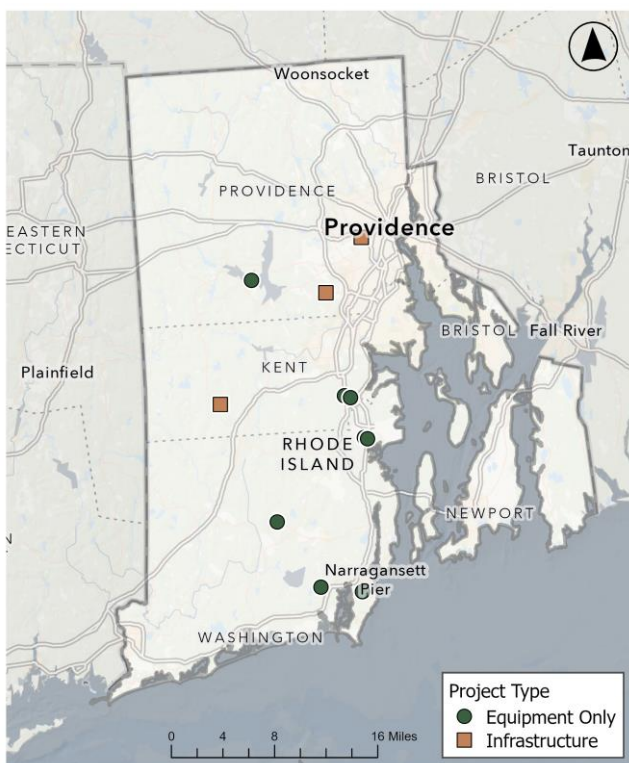
Resilient Food Systems
Infrastructure Program

Rhode Island



State Overview

USDA awarded the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management: Division of Agriculture (RIDEM) over **\$2.1 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 11 Rhode Island infrastructure and equipment projects increasing access to new market opportunities, benefiting local and regional producers and processors.



Project Highlights

- **Acquire upgraded equipment for an apple cider mill** including a bin-dumping system, cider-press components, cooling tanks, press cloths, and press racks to produce more fresh cider, hard cider, and other apple-based products, benefiting seven local and regional orchards.
- **Improve a facility with new climate-controlled grain storage and packaging equipment** to increase storage capacity 300 percent and enable the milling of additional grain varieties.
- **Purchase a customized barge, electric outboard engine, and batteries** to process and transport farm-raised oysters and help from five local producers to wholesalers and markets on the Sakonnet River.

Anticipated Outcomes*

217

Local/Regional
Producers Benefited

128

New Market Outlets
Established

44

New Value-Added
Products Developed

2

New
Facilities
Constructed

2

Storage/Aggregation
Units Purchased

3

Distribution
Vehicles Purchased

25

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.

Rhode Island invested **\$1.1 million** across 4 Infrastructure projects benefiting more than 117 local and regional agricultural producers. These projects include:

- Constructing a new produce aggregation and distribution hub, supported by a new refrigerated delivery van, to store and transport fresh vegetables, herbs, and lightly processed produce from 50 local and regional producers;
- Upgrading equipment, expanding processing capabilities, and modernizing IT systems to support a local food hub that procures fruits, vegetables, and value-added products from over 60 local and regional farmers; and
- Upgrading a farm building with additional cold storage capacity and loading dock to increase aggregation and distribution capacity to over 75 tons of fruits and vegetables from at least 8 Rhode Island farms to wholesale markets.

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.

Rhode Island invested more than **\$400,000** across 7 Equipment Only projects purchasing more than 21 pieces of aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution equipment—including a blast chiller, tea bag making machine, label production printer, and a refrigerated cargo van. The state expects 100 local and regional producers will benefit from reduced harvest loss, improved product quality and shelf life, and access to 82 new markets.

Statewide Standouts



More than 35 percent of Rhode Island projects focus on farm-raised shellfish and kelp products.



Rhode Island is investing over \$1.2 million in cold storage, aggregation and processing of local produce such as apples, blueberries, herbs, tomatoes, and carrots.



Rhode Island's projects create 44 new value-added products including vegetable soups, grilled oysters, pesto, teas, and hard cider.