



RFSI

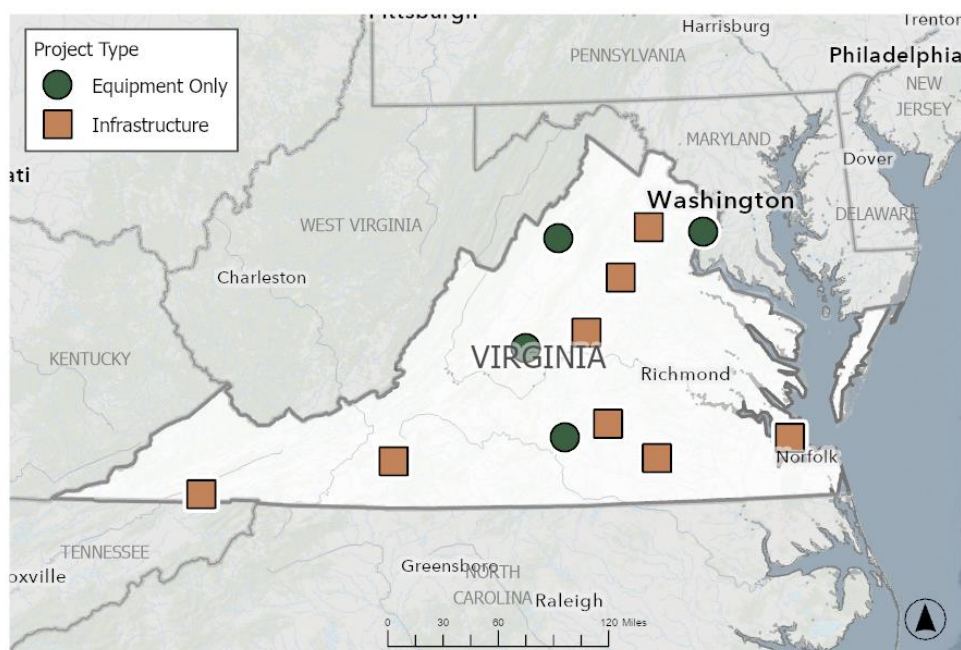
Resilient Food Systems
Infrastructure Program

Virginia



State Overview

USDA awarded the Virginia Department of Agriculture **\$6.6 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 12 Virginia infrastructure and equipment projects increasing access to new market opportunities, benefiting local and regional producers and processors.



Project Highlights

- **Increase operational capacity at 2 milling facilities** through updated conveyance and sifting systems that support 25 small regional grain farmers and help meet growing demand for local flour.
- **Strengthen the cold chain for dairy farmers with advanced refrigeration technology and insulated lines** at a cooperatively owned dairy processing plant, benefiting 163 Virginia dairy farmers.
- **Renovate a multi-use food business incubator and commercial kitchen** for farmers and food entrepreneurs in Culpepper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties to store and process produce into value-added products such as butternut squash soup, freeze-dried ramen toppings, applesauce, and pickled vegetables.

Anticipated Outcomes*

901

Local/Regional
Producers Benefited

186

New Market Outlets
Established

205

Jobs
Created

129

New Value-Added
Products Developed

1

Distribution Vehicle
Purchased

52

Processing
Equipment
Purchased

21

Storage/Aggregation
Units Purchased

2

New Facilities
Constructed

**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.

Virginia invested more than **\$4.6 million** across 8 Infrastructure projects, benefiting 624 local and regional producers. These projects include:

- Increasing refrigerated storage capacity by 40 percent with new cold storage space at a food hub serving 75 Virginia specialty crop growers;
- Supporting 10 produce growers with an improved facility to wash, pack, and store fruits and vegetables for sales to schools, corporate cafeterias, hospitals, distributors, and grocery stores;
- Generating an estimated \$37 million in new sales for cage-free, free-range, and pasture-raised eggs through investments in new storage and distribution infrastructure, benefiting at least 12 farmer-owners of a Central Virginia-based poultry cooperative;
- Constructing an 11,300 sq-ft shared-use commercial kitchen in Charlottesville, VA to process locally grown fruits, vegetables, and honey into value-added products, enabling new revenue opportunities for 125 producers and 70 food entrepreneurs; and
- Renovating an organic farm's existing packing facility to expand year-round availability of salad greens mixes and other produce for 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.

Virginia invested more than **\$242,000** across 4 Equipment Only projects, purchasing more than 39 pieces of aggregation, processing, storage, and distribution equipment—including pneumatic conveyance systems, flour silos, forklifts, and delivery vans. The state expects 297 local and regional producers will benefit from reduced harvest loss, improved product quality and shelf life, and access to 52 new markets.

Statewide Standouts



75 percent of Virginia's projects focus on supply chain solutions for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, increasing capacity for broccoli, corn, tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, and many other varieties of produce to reach new markets.



Virginia is investing more than \$2 million in shared-use commercial kitchen spaces to process raw fruits and vegetables into sauces, soups, jams, pickles, spreads, and other value-added products.



More than 80 percent of Virginia's projects increase aggregation and storage capacity with new warehouse equipment, silos, and walk-in refrigeration units.



Virginia is investing \$1.3 million in projects led by producer cooperatives and farmer associations, benefiting 391 farmer-members.