

MSU CENTER FOR REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

# NEW FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOOD-RELATED BUSINESSES

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**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Center for  
Regional Food Systems

# NEW FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOOD-RELATED BUSINESSES

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## Photo Credits

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Page 5: Farm with rainbow near MSU Student Organic Farm—MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

Page 7: A woman packaging bags at Kansas City CSA Distribution—MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

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# NEW FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOOD-RELATED BUSINESSES

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of This Directory

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This directory provides an overview of various sources of financing that may be available to food hubs and other food-related businesses. This directory is a partial listing of what may be available across the United States; some examples may not be a good match with your particular circumstances. The format for this directory was initially informed by a listing of funding resources for food-related businesses found on the Food+Tech Connect website, a media and research company building a network for food innovators and entrepreneurs ([foodtechconnect.com](http://foodtechconnect.com)). Many of the funding sources listed in this directory are available for local food-related businesses across the United States, but several additional funding websites are specifically for Michigan. All the information for each funding entity has been researched through its own website.



### How the Directory Works

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The directory is divided into several category sources: crowd funding, accelerator, miscellaneous (non-Federal), and additional Federal resources. Each entity listed under these four categories will have the title of an entity, a URL of its website, a description of how it works, funding focus, funding limit, qualifications, and the entity's financial geographic area.

## ► BEFORE YOU BEGIN, DO YOU HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN?

At any stage of your business's growth and development, an essential component of continuing success is having an updated three- to five-year plan that outlines how a company will grow its business and generate revenue. A good plan will outline a business's current state, resources, and abilities as well as a vision of where, when and how the business is to grow. The business plan serves as a guiding document, allowing all employees and shareholders to have a unified vision of the business goals, a trajectory for goal achievements, and a framework for assessment and evaluation.

Having a well-thought-out business plan is especially important when seeking new lenders and investors. A plan should show the company's long-term ability to generate profit in order to meet debt obligations and become self-sufficient. Potential investors, whether large or small, will want reassurance that your business has a plan for financial stability in the future. It will also help you better assess what type and size of funding is necessary.

While this directory is not intended to serve as a business-planning guide, below please find several resources for creating a business plan:

- *Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois*  
[familyfarmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/IllinoisFoodHubGuide-final.pdf](http://familyfarmed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/IllinoisFoodHubGuide-final.pdf)
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture, *Starting a Food Business in Minnesota*  
[mda.state.mn.us/~media/Files/food/business/startingfoodbiz.ashx](http://mda.state.mn.us/~media/Files/food/business/startingfoodbiz.ashx)

Many governmental resources provide access to business planning guides and templates:

- The United States Small Business Administration  
[sba.gov/writing-business-plan](http://sba.gov/writing-business-plan)
- Michigan.gov  
[michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29943---,00.html](http://michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29943---,00.html)
- Missouri Business Development Program  
[missouribusiness.net/article/guide-to-writing-business-plan/](http://missouribusiness.net/article/guide-to-writing-business-plan/)

In addition, the Michigan Small Business Development Center offers workshops around the state regarding business planning:

- Michigan Small Business Development Center  
[sbdcmichigan.org/get-started/](http://sbdcmichigan.org/get-started/)

## » WHAT TYPE OF FINANCING DO YOU NEED?

New Hampshire Community Loan Fund designed Capital Compass, an online educational tool to help food businesses understand the factors that affect the type of capital owners may consider. The tool is not designed to make decisions for the business or a financier. Please check out the link below to see what type of capital fund may be most appropriate to consider for your business. Tutorial and directions are available in the link. [communityloanfund.org/capital-compass](http://communityloanfund.org/capital-compass)

### Useful Definitions for Capital Compass:

---

**Debt:** Traditional method of a lender offering a certain dollar value of credit (loans)

**Royalty:** Growth financing structured as a revenue-sharing agreement

**Equity:** Selling shares of your company



## SECTION 2: CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the internet.<sup>1</sup> Crowdfunding has the added benefit of reaching a large pool of investors who typically morally support a business's agenda. The platform expands accessibility to investors with varying levels of financial resources, as it allows funders to make both large and small contributions. In addition, it increases the support base of parties with a vested interest in the success of your business.

There are several models of crowdfunding: donation, debt, equity, and reward-based. Donation-based models depend on a shared belief in the cause by investors. Debt-based models promise a return of investment to funders. Equity crowdfunding guarantees a share of the business for investors. Many business start-ups employ reward crowdfunding as well, which offers investors services or goods from their business. Most crowdfunding resources are best suited for small to medium-sized investments.

Crowdfunding is a fundraising platform that is changing rapidly, so it is recommended that those interested in using it to develop or grow their business do their own research first to make sure they have the most up-to-date information, particularly pertaining to terms of use, laws, and regulations. For further information and additional resources on crowdfunding, the Michigan Community Resources website has multiple guides on how entrepreneurs can use crowdfunding to start or grow their business.

Visit [mi-community.org/tools-and-resources/economic-development-entrepreneurship/](https://mi-community.org/tools-and-resources/economic-development-entrepreneurship/)

<sup>1</sup> Crowdfunding. (2014). In Oxford Dictionaries online. Retrieved from [oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american\\_english/crowdfunding](https://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/crowdfunding)

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### *Barnraiser*

[barnraiser.us/](https://barnraiser.us/)

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#### How It Works

Barnraiser is a social and funding community that allows its members to influence and scale the food movement by connecting to innovators of sustainable food and farming, celebrating their stories, and collectively backing projects that shape how we farm and eat, locally and globally.

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#### Funding Focuses On

Farms; Food Hubs; Artisan, Local, Farm-to-Table, and Healthy Foods; Food and Farming Education; Food Media

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#### Funding Limit

Set by project creator but must be higher than \$2,000

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#### Qualifications

Not specified. Anyone who has a passion for the food movement, a U.S. bank account and credit card, is over 18 and is a U.S. citizen

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#### Financing Geographic Area

Mostly United States (international under certain conditions)



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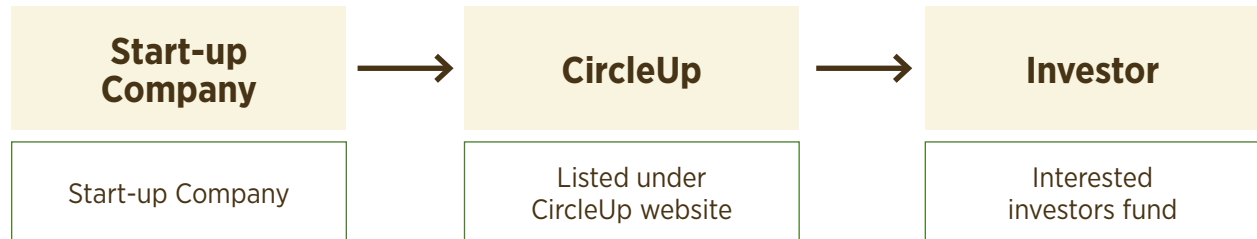
# CircleUp

[circleup.com/](http://circleup.com/)

## How It Works

---

CircleUp is a crowdfunding platform connecting accredited investors with innovative consumer and retail companies.



### Funding Focuses On

---

Branded, tangible consumer products and retail companies; typically, but not limited to, food and health related products.

### Qualifications

---

Must have at least \$500,000/year revenue; CircleUp Seed Program accepts companies with less than \$500,000 revenue

### Funding Limit

---

\$500,000–\$4.5 million (This range is based on previously funded companies)

### Financing Geographic Area

---

United States

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# Credibles

[credibles.org/](https://credibles.org/)

## How It Works

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Businesses receive crowdfunding in exchange for store credits to their funders (one credit = \$1).



---

### Funding Focuses On

Small, sustainable food-related businesses.

---

### Qualifications

Not specified

---

### Funding Limit

Business campaign average: \$2,500-\$50,000. Upper funding limit: \$422,500.

---

### Financing Geographic Area

United States

---

## Crowdfunder

[crowdfunder.com](http://crowdfunder.com)

---

### How It Works

Crowdfunder is an equity crowdfunding platform that allows businesses to fundraise online from accredited investors and venture capitalists. Crowdfunder is designed for early-stage start-ups and more mature businesses rather than inception (beginning) stage companies.

---

### Funding Focuses On

A variety of categories including small businesses. Crowdfunder is not designed for nonprofit companies at this time

---

### Funding Limit

Not specified

---

### Qualifications

Must be an early start-up or mature business. Launching your campaign requires completion of documentation including term sheet, executive summary, and investor pitch deck. Getting started with Crowdfunder is free, but there is a one-time fee for advertising your project to the Crowdfunding investor network. Various fundraising packages are available, and services vary by package. For example, the self-starter package starts at \$499/month and includes services such as analytics, investor browsing and support.

---

### Financing Geographic Area

United States and global

---

## CrowdMole

[crowdmole.com](http://crowdmole.com)

---

### How It Works

Crowdmole is a crowdfunding platform that helps build online, social communities that empower entrepreneurs and small businesses. It only allows 20 live projects at a time. The concept of CrowdMole is to help businesses and entrepreneurs grow and succeed online.

---

### Funding Focuses On

Entrepreneurs and small businesses

---

### Funding Limit

\$50,000

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### Qualifications

Must align with CrowdMole's social good core values

---

### Financing Geographic Area

United States and international under certain conditions

---

# EquityEats

[equityeats.com](http://equityeats.com)

---

## How It Works

EquityEats is an online platform providing a vehicle through which restaurateurs can raise capital from members of their local community using a site specifically tailored to the food and beverage service industry. The restaurateurs have complete control and responsibility over their concept. Each concept has a projected funding goal and deadline. If the community likes the concept, they can invest money to help meet the goal in exchange for food and beverage credit. Once a restaurateur has shown demand for their concept by raising food and beverage credit (Phase One), they are able to take larger investments in exchange for equity, as well as continuing to sell investments for food and beverage credit (Phase Two). Funding on EquityEats is all-or-nothing, so if the concept does not meet its funding goal by the deadline, investors will not be charged. Only when the funding goal has been met does any payment occur, so investors can feel comfortable investing in a project.

---

## Funding Focuses On

Brick and mortar, food and beverage businesses

---

## Funding Limit

**Phase One:** Individual investments of \$100-\$2,500 with minimum \$10,000 total

**Phase Two:** Individual investments of \$5,000-\$100,000

---

## Qualifications

U.S. resident; 18 or older; not been disqualified by being a "Bad Actor," as defined under Rule 506(d) of Regulation D of the Securities Act of 1933; typically have previous experience in food and beverage industry, but not required

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## Financing Geographic Area

United States

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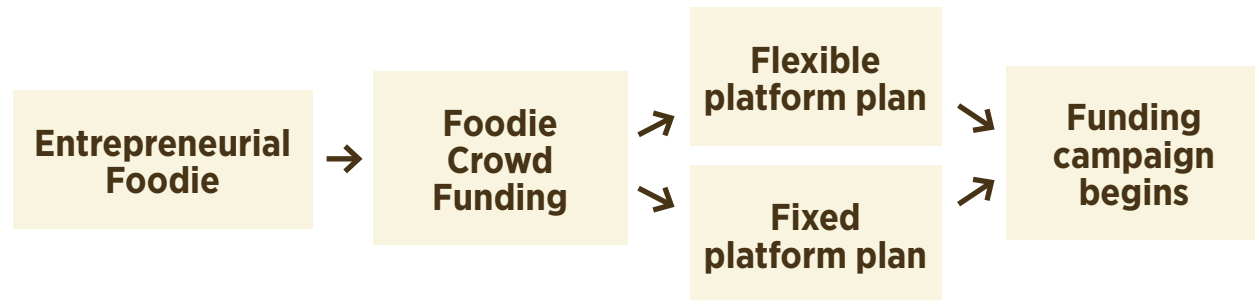
# Foodie Crowd Funding

[foodiecrowdfunding.com](http://foodiecrowdfunding.com)

## How It Works

---

Foodie Crowd Funding is a crowdfunding platform where people who want to raise money for food-related businesses can create fundraising campaigns focused around a project idea.



## Funding Focuses On

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Entrepreneurial foodies (examples: farm-to-table; restaurants & breweries; cookbooks & apps; nonprofit; pet goodies; etc.)

## Funding Limit

---

Average funding campaigns: \$7,000-\$30,000

## Qualifications

---

1. Initial \$99 charged
2. Be a U.S. resident with valid Social Security Card or EIN
3. Be 18 or older
4. Have a U.S. bank account and U.S. address
5. Have U.S. state-issued driver license or passport
6. Have a major U.S. credit card or debit card
7. Must be able to satisfy the payment processing companies requirements

### Qualifications for nonprofits:

- Programs for kids related to food
- The organization must be registered as a 501(c)(3)
- Accept only U.S.-based projects and U.S.-based contributions

## Financing Geographic Area

---

United States

---

# Foodstart

[foodstart.com](http://foodstart.com)

## How It Works

---

Foodstart is a crowdfunding website that connects small restaurants and food trucks to opportunities to raise capital online instead of relying on a small group of investors. Like Kickstarter, start-up businesses post their funding campaigns on the Foodstart website and wait until the funding deadline is over to receive the funds.

### Funding Focuses On

---

Restaurants and food trucks

### Qualifications

---

Not specified

### Funding Limit

---

Previous awards range from \$1,000-\$12,500.

### Financing Geographic Area

---

United States

Image from [crowdsunite.com/platforms/foodstart](http://crowdsunite.com/platforms/foodstart)

---

## FundRazr

[fundrazr.com/](http://fundrazr.com/)

---

### How It Works

FundRazr is a crowdfunding platform for a variety of campaigns, including small businesses and entrepreneurs. Applicants create a campaign, choose a funding model and share their story to collect funds.

---

### Funding Focuses On

Multiple causes including businesses

---

### Funding Limit

Not specified

---

### Qualifications

Recipient must have a PayPal and/or a WePay account. Must also have a personal Facebook, Google+ or LinkedIn account or a valid email address. Recipient pays service fee ranging from 5-7% (depending on the version of service offered) plus a payment provider fee of 2.9% plus 30 cents per transaction

---

### Financing Geographic Area

Fundrazr can be used in any country with the ability to send and received payments through PayPal

---

## Indiegogo

[indiegogo.com](http://indiegogo.com)

---

### How It Works

Indiegogo is a crowdfunding portal for creative, entrepreneurial projects. Entrepreneurs have the option of choosing flexible funding or fixed funding for their project.

---

### Funding Focuses On

Creative projects including those related to food and beverages

---

### Funding Limit

Not specified

---

### Qualifications

Ability to film a short video (1-3 minutes) for your project's campaign

---

### Financing Geographic Area

Mainly United States. Credit card payments are available to campaigns raising funds in U.S. dollars, Canadian dollars, euros, and British pounds. Fixed-funding campaigns can raise funds via PayPal or credit card, depending on the campaign's currency. Fixed-funding campaigns raising funds in U.S. dollars and euros can raise funds via direct credit card only. Fixed-funding campaigns raising funds in Australian dollars can raise funds via PayPal only. For further payment details, visit website.

---

## Kickstarter

[kickstarter.com](http://kickstarter.com)

### How It Works

---

Kickstarter is a fundraising platform for creative projects, including those related to food, with clear goals and deadlines. If the project succeeds in reaching its funding goal, backers' credit cards are charged at the end of the deadline; if the project does not reach its funding goal, backers are not charged.

### Funding Focuses On

---

Creative projects, including those related to food, farming, and food retail.

### Funding Limit

---

No limit. Project creator must meet funding goal by deadline in order to receive funding.

### Qualifications

---

Not specified.

### Financing Geographic Area

---

Worldwide

---

## Lendio

[lendio.com](http://lendio.com)

### How It Works

---

Business submits a free application and is provided with a list of lender options. Lendio funding managers work with applicant, explaining each loan option and advising which one is best for the business.

### Funding Focuses On

---

Small business loans

### Funding Limit

---

Varies by loan plan. Up to \$5 million for some loan programs.

### Qualifications

---

Not specified

### Financing Geographic Area

---

United States



---

# Localstake

[localstake.com](http://localstake.com)

---

## How It Works

Helps small businesses analyze their financing options, connect with investors and raise funds. Localstake is for small, growing businesses that are already, or are close to, generating revenue. It does work with start-ups in some situations; however, they must be able to start generating revenue within 3-6 months of receiving funding.

---

## Funding Focuses On

Food and beverage producers, franchises, retailers, consumer product manufacturers, restaurants, breweries and distilleries are common businesses that successfully raise funds using Localstake. In general, businesses that form connections with consumers and their broader communities are most successful at using Localstake for fundraising.

---

## Funding Limit

Localstake is best for businesses looking to raise between \$50,000-\$500,000 in funding.

---

## Qualifications

- Must be 18 or older
- Your business entity must be formed and have an EIN
- Your business must have been formed in a state the Localstake is currently registered in
- Your business must have a bank account and U.S. address
- You have a U.S. and government-issued ID (driver's license or passport)
- You have a major credit or debit card

---

## Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# Patronicity

[patronicity.com/puremichigan#/](http://patronicity.com/puremichigan#/)

---

## How It Works

Patronicity is a civic crowdfunding platform that supports community improvement projects in Michigan, Massachusetts, and Indiana.

For Michigan residents, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is partnering with Patronicity in 2017 to offer the Public Spaces Community Places grant. For this unique state government crowdgranting initiative, communities, nonprofits and other business entities use Patronicity to raise funds for their community improvement projects. Those that meet their fundraising goals can receive a matching grant from MEDC of up to \$50,000.

---

## Funding Focuses On

Community development and improvement projects, including food-based initiatives such as farmers markets, community kitchens, pop-up retail shops, and “incubator spaces”

---

## Funding Limit

Not specified. For Public Spaces Community Places grant, MEDC may provide matching funds of up to \$50,000

---

## Qualifications

Must live in Michigan, Massachusetts or Indiana and be 18 or older

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## Financing Geographic Area

Michigan, Massachusetts, or Indiana

Only Michigan residents can apply for Public Spaces Community Places grant

## SECTION 3: START-UP ACCELERATOR RESOURCES

Start-up, or seed, accelerators provide support through small amounts of seed capital, and offer services like mentoring, training, and events for a finite period—usually 3 to 4 months—in exchange for single-digit chunks of equity.<sup>2</sup> Unlike most funding sources, accelerators have the added benefit of creating mentor partnerships with business experts willing to share their knowledge. Funding is not necessarily guaranteed, though businesses are exposed to already established networks of investors. Accelerators thus often give businesses access to larger potential funders.

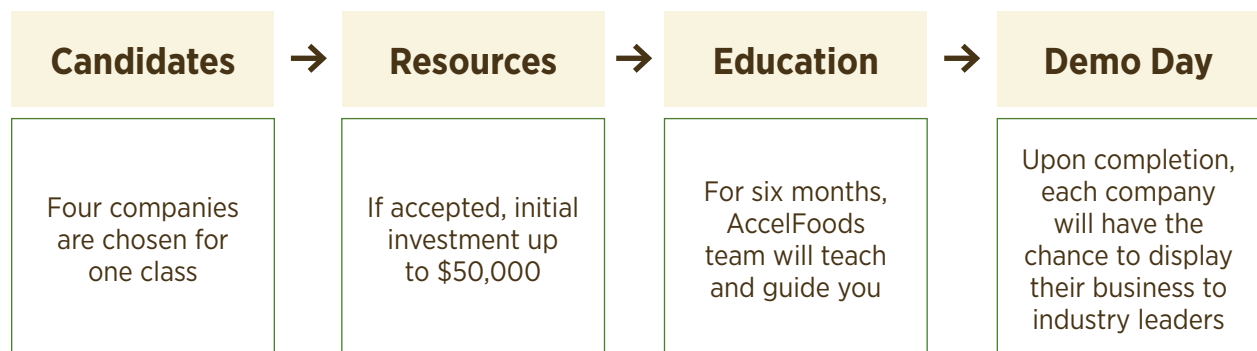
<sup>2</sup> Get2Growth. (2013, October 12). *Defining Startup Accelerator, Business Incubator...* Retrieved from [get2growth.com/startup-program-definitions](http://get2growth.com/startup-program-definitions)

### AccelFoods

[accelfoods.com](http://accelfoods.com)

#### How It Works

AccelFoods is an accelerator for packaged food & beverage start-ups. They provide functional and financial support to help you accelerate your growth.



#### Funding Focuses On

Packaged food & beverage entrepreneurs

#### Funding Limit

If accepted, initial investment of \$18,000–\$50,000 depending on annual revenue upon entry. Upon completion of the program, most companies will be eligible to receive additional investment of \$100,000–\$200,000.

#### Qualifications

Must be positioned to sell your product through retail or foodservice channels and have an annual income of \$100,000–\$500,000. Generally, the investment and technical assistance provided is in return for equity in a prospective entrepreneur's business.

#### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# Food Hatch

[foodhatch.co](http://foodhatch.co)

---

## How It Works

Food Hatch is a food-focused accelerator, which provides seed and early stage funding to food-related businesses. Companies apply through their website and, if accepted, a Food Hatch team will guide and mentor the company to become a successful business (five companies will be accepted at any given time within the program).

Food hatch offers:

- Funding
- Guidance & execution
- Marketing
- Branding strategy
- Product design & development
- Sales strategy
- Operational efficiencies
- Corporate law & legal
- Technology
- Corporate finance

---

## Funding Focuses On

Food-related businesses

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## Funding Limit

\$18,000–\$35,000

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## Qualifications

Must be food-related businesses

---

## Financing Geographic Area

United States and outside of U.S.

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# food-x

[food-x.com/](http://food-x.com/)

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## How It Works

Food-x is an accelerator program that helps new businesses get off the ground and scale up quickly. Accelerators are ideal models for specialty food start-ups because demand for such businesses in the U.S. is growing.

---

## Funding Focuses On

All food-related businesses, but specifically businesses providing and/or selling health food products or practicing sustainable farming and production methods.

---

## Funding Limit

Up to \$50,000

---

## Qualifications

Prefer companies with at least two founders with a spread of capabilities and experience. Company must be incorporated in the United States

---

## Financing Geographic Area

United States

## SECTION 4: MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

### *Ben and Jerry's Foundation, Grassroots Organizing for Social Change Program*

[benandjerrysfoundation.org/the-grassroots-organizing-for-social-change-program](http://benandjerrysfoundation.org/the-grassroots-organizing-for-social-change-program)

#### **How It Works**

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The Grassroots Organizing for Social Change Program offers project support to nonprofit organizations that strive to commit to the broader goals of social and environmental justice, and sustainable and just food systems.

#### **Funding Focuses On**

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The Grassroots Organizing for Social Change Program states that the project priority strategies must include:

- Community & ally outreach
- Leadership development
- Constituent empowerment & decision-making
- Popular education
- Root cause analysis
- Power analysis
- Campaign development
- Mobilizing constituents & allies
- Coalition building
- Direct action

#### **Funding Limit**

---

One-year grants max out at \$20,000 for organization that have a budget under \$500,000.

#### **Qualifications**

---

Organizations must have 501(c)3 status, or have a fiscal agent with this status.

#### **Financing Geographic Area**

---

United States

---

# Farm Aid Grant Program

[farmaid.org/our-work/grants](http://farmaid.org/our-work/grants)

## How It Works

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The Farm Aid Grant Program aims to aid “on-the-ground partners” in the movement to keep farmers producing good food for all.

## Funding Focuses On

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The grant program has three areas:

- Helping farmers thrive
- Taking action to change the system
- Growing the good food movement

A prospective food-related organization or business has the potential to fall under any of these three project areas.

## Funding Limit

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Typically, grants range between \$500-\$20,000.

## Qualifications

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Only IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations may apply. An applicant must submit a full proposal by May 1 of each year.

## Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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# Greenstone Farm Credit Services

[greenstonefcs.com/Pages/default.aspx](http://greenstonefcs.com/Pages/default.aspx)

## How It Works

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Greenstone Farm Credit Services, located in East Lansing, Michigan, provides loan programs and financial services to the agricultural industry.

### LOANS AND FINANCIAL SERVICES GREENSTONE OFFERS

Loan Programs	Financial Services
<p>Operating Real Estate Equipment AgDirect (agricultural equipment) AgriBusiness Leasing Young, Beginning and Small Farmer</p>	<p>Crop Insurance Life Insurance Disability Insurance Tax Services Accounting Services &amp; Software Commercial Credit Card Farm Cash Management Funds Held Customer IT Services</p>

## Funding Focuses On

---

Agriculture industry for rural communities.  
Greenstone has a new program  
for loans for small farmers

## Funding Limit

---

Varies by programs and eligibility

## Qualifications

---

Varies by programs and services

## Financing Geographic Area

---

Michigan and Northeast Wisconsin

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# Kiva

[kiva.org](http://kiva.org)

---

## How It Works

The Kiva community provides access to 0% interest loans and a community passionate about helping entrepreneurs in the United States and the world. Kiva is a nonprofit organization that allows people to finance loans individually or in teams. The loans are offered at affordable interest rates to low-income or underserved populations in the United States and over 80 other countries around the world.

---

## Funding Focuses On

A variety of categories including food and food-related businesses

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## Funding Limit

\$25-\$10,000

---

## Qualifications

Varies by programs and services.

For Kiva U.S. loans, you must

- Live in the U.S
- Be older than 18
- Use the loan for business purposes
- Not currently in foreclosure, bankruptcy or under any liens
- Be willing to demonstrate social capital by making a loan to another fundraising entrepreneur and by having a number of your friends and family make a loan to you

---

## Financing Geographic Area

Worldwide



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# Lending Club

[lendingclub.com](http://lendingclub.com)

## How It Works

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Lending Club is a large online marketplace connecting borrowers and investors, where consumers and small business owners lower the cost of their credit and have a better experience than with traditional banking.

**Borrowers** apply for loans.  
**Investors** open an account.

**Borrowers** get funded.  
**Investors** build a portfolio.

**Borrowers** repay automatically.  
**Investors** earn interest and reinvest.

## Funding Focuses On

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Business loans can be used for a variety of purposes including purchasing equipment or expanding your location

## Funding Limit

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Up to \$300,000

## Qualifications

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- 24 months in business
- At least \$75,000 in annual sales
- No recent bankruptcies or tax liens
- You own at least 20% of the business and have a least fair or better personal credit

## Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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## Metro Community Development (Flint Area)

[metro-community.org](http://metro-community.org)

### How It Works

---

Metro Community Development helps create partnerships for businesses in Flint and Genesee County to help underserved people in their communities. MCD has two over-arching goals: maintaining community stability and stimulating community economic development.

### Funding Focuses On

---

Market niches that are underserved by traditional lenders. They have partnered with Michigan Corps to do Kiva loans.

### Funding Limit

---

Loans in the range of \$5,000-\$250,000

### Qualifications

---

Must be a small business in the Flint or Saginaw areas of Michigan. Business should focus on community development.

### Financing Geographic Area

---

Flint or Saginaw, Michigan

# Michigan Good Food Fund

[migoodfoodfund.org](http://migoodfoodfund.org)

## How It Works

The Michigan Good Food Fund (MGFF) is a \$30 million public-private partnership loan fund that provides financing and business assistance to good food enterprises that benefit underserved communities across Michigan. MGFF supports projects that advance healthy food access, job creation, racial and social equity, local sourcing, and environmental sustainability. Core partners include Capital Impact Partners,\* Fair Food Network, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation with intermediary lending support from Northern Initiatives.

## Funding Focuses On

MGFF supports the range of Michigan-based businesses that grow, process, distribute, and sell healthy food that reaches those who need it most. The fund is for single or multi-site grocery operators, cooperative grocers, corner stores, mobile markets, processing facilities, food incubators, food hub or aggregators, producers/processors, food distributors, and farmers markets. You can use a MGFF loan for:

- Permanent working capital
- Inventory
- Equipment purchase
- Construction and property upgrades
- Facility expansion or upgrades
- Business process upgrades

## Business Assistance Focuses On

MGFF also provides a range of business assistance including one-on-one consulting and workshops aimed at growing the business acumen of good food enterprises. MGFF also connects entrepreneurs with external resources through its statewide referral network.

## Funding Limit

MGFF offers flexible, patient capital structured to meet the needs of the enterprises it serves.

### Sample Terms

LOAN AMOUNT	\$5,000 TO \$250,000	\$250,000 TO \$6,000,000
Interest Rate	6.75–8%	5–6.5%
Fees	2% origination fee	1.25% origination fee
Term	Up to 10 years	
Payments	Terms and payment schedules based on project needs and loan type	
Collateral	Collateral in the form of business and/or personal assets, corporate and/or personal guarantees	
Financing Partner	Northern Initiatives or other select Intermediary Lending Partners	Capital Impact Partners

## Qualifications

Vary by financing option. See [migoodfoodfund.org/eligibility](http://migoodfoodfund.org/eligibility) for further qualifications.

## Financing Geographic Area

Michigan

\* Capital Impact Partners provides other food-related loans outside of the Michigan Good Food Fund. For more information, visit [capitalimpact.org](http://capitalimpact.org)

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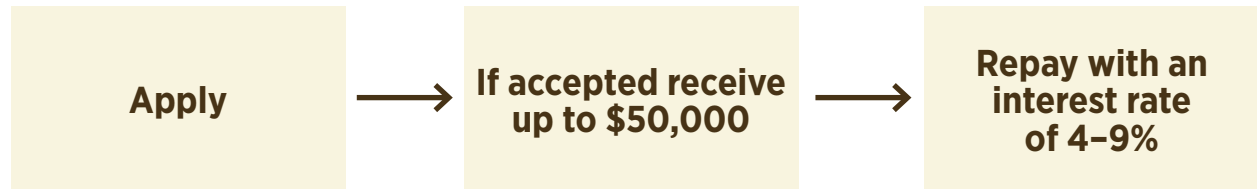
# Natural Capital Investment Fund

[conservationfund.org/what-we-do/natural-capital-investment-fund](https://conservationfund.org/what-we-do/natural-capital-investment-fund)

## How It Works

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Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF) provides loans across America to small businesses that conserve land and water resources. In particular, NCIF works with underserved communities.



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### Funding Focuses On

Entrepreneurs who work in sustainable forestry and forest products, small-scale agriculture, ecotourism, natural food and medicines, biomass, renewable energy and energy efficiency, value-added and sustainable agriculture, water conservation and treatment, recycling and composting, and essential community services.

---

### Funding Limit

\$5,000-\$50,000

---

### Qualifications

- Both the applicant and the business must be located in the United States
- Access to internet
- Registered in a commercial or credit union account to process payments
- There is an origination fee of \$200 for loans up to \$20,000, then 1% of the loan amount above that

---

### Financing Geographic Area

United States with a focus on Natural Capital Investment Fund's core geography (WV, NC, VA, KY, OH, TN, GA, and SC)

**Note:** Outside of this service area, NCIF works to leverage capital support from banks and community-based lenders prior to exclusively moving forward with a project. In Michigan, NCIF works with W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Michigan Farmers Market Association, and MSU Product Center.

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# Northern Initiatives

[northerninitiatives.org](http://northerninitiatives.org)

## How It Works

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Northern Initiatives is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), a private financial institution that provides loans and business services to small business owners, entrepreneurs, and community organizations that might not qualify for loans from traditional banks for a variety of reasons. Many times, lending is focused on low-income, disadvantaged, and undeserved communities. CDFIs are certified by the Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI Fund) and the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which provides funds to CDFIs through a variety of programs. There is at least one CDFI in each state.<sup>3</sup>

3 Community Development Financial Institution Fund. (2011, October 11). *Overview of What We Do*. Retrieved from [cdfifund.gov/Pages/default.aspx](http://cdfifund.gov/Pages/default.aspx)

BUSINESS SERVICES	LOAN PROGRAMS
Capital to expand and launch businesses	Microloans: \$50,000 or less
Market expansion guidance	
Counseling for financial and operational aspects of businesses	Small Business Loans (SBA): Less than \$250,000
Online marketing services	Other Small Business Loans: \$50,000–\$500,000
eCommerce solutions	USDA Business and Industry Loans
Training	CDC/504 Loan: Equipment and real estate
Process support for manufacturers	

## Funding Focuses On

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Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and community organizations that enable the people and communities to thrive. Northern Initiatives is an intermediary lender for loans less than \$250,000 for the Michigan Good Food Fund.

## Funding Limit

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Loans range from \$1,000–\$1 million with varying terms

## Qualifications

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Varies by programs and services

## Financing Geographic Area

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Northern Michigan and Northeast Wisconsin

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# Northwest Michigan Farm and Food 20/20 Fund

[nwm.org/business/skills-alliances/agriculture-and-food-system-sector-alliance/farm-and-food-20-20-fund.html](http://nwm.org/business/skills-alliances/agriculture-and-food-system-sector-alliance/farm-and-food-20-20-fund.html)

## How It Works

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The Northwest Michigan Farm and Food 20/20 Fund is a regional financing collaborative offering a continuum of investment and loan products tailored to small and mid-scale farms and food businesses.

FINANCING OPTIONS	DESCRIPTION
Agriculture Individual Development Accounts	Matched savings program for capital-building assets that results in farm and food business assets
TC Area Chamber Micro-Loan Fund	Gap financing
Northern Initiatives	Community-based economic development financing
Honor Bank	Community bank
American Farmland Trust Fund	Capital access available for purchase of farmland through easement agreements

## Funding Focuses On

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Beginning small and mid-scale farm/producer businesses; triple-bottom-line agriculture and food entrepreneurs; innovative production practices and diversified operations; land transfer options; typically annual sales under \$500,000.

## Funding Limit

---

Varies by lender and social investment options

## Qualifications

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Varies by lender; Agriculture Individual Development Account, a matched savings program, requires eligible business proprietor to be loan eligible when meeting savings goal

## Financing Geographic Area

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Northwest Michigan

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# Opportunity Resource Fund (OppFund)

[oppfund.org/small-business-loans](http://oppfund.org/small-business-loans)

## How It Works

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OppFund provides loans for the start-up or expansion of small businesses, including food businesses. This will include pre-development costs, acquisition of land and renovation of buildings, inventory and working capital.

## Funding Focuses On

---

Market niches that are underserved by traditional lenders. They have partnered with Michigan Corps to do Kiva loans.

## Funding Limit

---

Loans from \$10,000-\$250,000 require 10% equity investment

## Qualifications

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- Exhibit community control or local self-determination
- Demonstrate alternative business practices
- Loans available for nonprofit 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organizations, for-profit entities, individuals, and current OppFunds borrowers

## Financing Geographic Area

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Michigan

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# Patagonia

[patagonia.ca/environmental-grants.html](http://patagonia.ca/environmental-grants.html)

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## How It Works

Patagonia supports small, grassroots, activist organizations with provocative direct-action agendas (similar to grant funding).

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## Funding Focuses On

Environmental-related work in Alternative Energy, Biodiversity, Forests, Media/Publications, Resource Extractions, Social Activism, Sustainable Agriculture, Toxics/Nuclear, Water/Marine.

More information on each focus: [patagonia.com/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2954](http://patagonia.com/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2954)

---

## Funding Limit

\$2,500-\$15,000

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## Qualifications

Must be a 501(c)(3) organization. Patagonia funds work that is action-oriented, builds public involvement and support, is strategic, focuses on root causes and accomplishes specific goals and objectives. There are two annual deadlines for proposals: April 30 and August 31.

---

## Financing Geographic Area

United States, Canada, Japan, Chile, Argentina, UK, The Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Norway, Luxembourg, Italy, Ireland, Germany, France, Denmark, Belgium, Australia, and the Czech Republics



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# Prosper

[prosper.com](http://prosper.com)

## How It Works

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Prosper is a peer-to-peer lending entity—an alternative to traditional loans and investing options.



### Funding Focuses On

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Loan types: debt consolidation, home improvement, personal for business use, auto & vehicle, short term & bridge, energy efficiency initiative loans, and more.

### Funding Limit

---

\$2,000–\$35,000

### Qualifications

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Not specified

### Financing Geographic Area

---

United States

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# Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Culture of Health Prize

[countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/prize](http://countyhealthrankings.org/roadmaps/prize)

## How It Works

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The Culture of Health Prize awards programs that raise awareness and advocate for locally driven change across the nation. A food-health related business or organization involving a large component of its work toward community health would be a good candidate for this position.

## Funding Focuses On

---

Projects that:

- Define health in the broadest possible terms
- Commit to sustainable system changes and policy oriented long-term solutions
- Cultivate the importance of equal opportunity for health
- Harness the collective power of leaders, partners, and community members
- Secure and make the most of available resources
- Measure and share progress and results

## Funding Limit

---

\$25,000 grants will be awarded to 10 separate projects.

## Qualifications

---

Must be a community such as a town, city, county, tribe or tribal community, or a region (such as contiguous towns, cities, or counties). Additionally, the community must have a local U.S. government or tax-exempt public charity accept the grant on the community's behalf.

## Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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# RSF Social Finance

[rsfsocialfinance.org](http://rsfsocialfinance.org)

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## How It Works

The [Social Enterprise Lending](#) program provides mortgage loans, construction loans, equipment loans, and working capital lines of credit to qualified for-profits and nonprofits. Loans range from \$200,000 to \$5 million.

### Grants

The [Seed Fund](#) provides small grants to seed new initiatives that further the field of social finance or address issues in the areas of food and agriculture, education and the arts, or ecological stewardship.

---

## Funding Focuses On

Food and agriculture, education and the arts, ecological stewardship

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## Funding Limit

Loans range from \$200,000-\$5 million

Seed grants are between \$500-\$3,500

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## Qualifications

- Alignment with RSF mission and focus area
- 501(c)(3) status for grants
- Three or more years of operating history
- Strong collateral
- Profitable, or can demonstrate a path to profitability in 12 months
- Excellent history of repayment on debt

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## Financing Geographic Area

United States and Canada

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## SPARK (Ann Arbor)

[annarborusa.org](http://annarborusa.org)

### How It Works

---

Ann Arbor SPARK is an economic development organization committed to growing Ann Arbor area businesses.

### Funding Focuses On

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Scaling product manufacturing, marketing and sales, customer attraction

### Funding Limit

---

Microloans up to \$25,000. Two-year loan, repaid at end of term, with 12% interest.

### Qualifications

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For companies in the city of Ann Arbor

### Financing Geographic Area

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Ann Arbor, Michigan

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# Whole Foods Market, Local Producer Loan Program

[wholefoodsmarket.com/mission-values/caring-communities/local-producer-loan-program](http://wholefoodsmarket.com/mission-values/caring-communities/local-producer-loan-program)

## How It Works

---

Whole Foods Market lends money through the Local Producer Loan Program to small, local, independent producers to help them expand their businesses. Applications are accepted online and at any time.

## Funding Focuses On

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Capital expansion or expenditures (e.g. buy more animals, expand crops, or invest in new equipment or infrastructure)

## Funding Limit

---

\$1,000–\$100,000 (start-up businesses are up to \$25,000)

## Qualifications

---

- Must meet Whole Foods Market's quality standards and standards for animal welfare
- Have a viable business plan and adequate cash flow to service debt
- Loan amount must not exceed 80% of the total project cost
- Collateral required
- Be a local producer of a high-quality product

## Desired qualifications

- Be expanding or broadening production, as opposed to starting a new venture or simply covering existing operating expenses
- Be located within a few hours drive time of a Whole Foods Market store
- Be an organic or animal compassionate producer
- Have an existing, positive relationship with Whole Foods Market

## Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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## Women's Foundation (Michigan)

[miwf.org/michigan-womens-microloan-fund/](http://miwf.org/michigan-womens-microloan-fund/)

### How It Works

---

The Michigan Women's Microloan Fund is a financing program available to women entrepreneurs and small business owners.

### Funding Focuses On

---

Purchase inventory, working capital, start-up costs, purchase of equipment, loan subordination, business acquisition (with expectation of 50% financing by applicant), contract financing.

### Funding Limit

---

Microloans range from \$2,500-\$50,000

### Qualifications

---

- Some investment of your own funds in the business
- Evidence that you can repay the loan
- Business must be 51% owned or led by a woman in the moderate to low income range
- Locating business in an underserved community

### Financing Geographic Area

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Michigan

## SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF FUNDING INFORMATION

### Beginning Farmers

---

A compilation of information resources on farm financing, finding land, business planning, agricultural production, marketing, and more for farmers, researchers, and policy makers. Farm financing includes the following grants and loans resources:

- USDA loan programs
- Other federal financial options
- Public and private organizations funding
- State loan programs
- Farm Credit Cooperative system
- Commercial lenders

[beginningfarmers.org/funding-resources/](http://beginningfarmers.org/funding-resources/)

### Sustainable Agriculture & Food System Funders

---

Hosts a website with links to several resources intended to help NGOs navigate the philanthropic world, including:

- **Grantsdirect:** Directories profiling foundations that work in various issue areas
- **Guidestar:** A national database of nonprofit organizations
- **Chronicle of Philanthropy:** Highlights nonprofit news and list of grants nationwide
- **Foundation Center:** Its mission is to strengthen the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy
- **SAFSF:** Offers couple of hours a month for grant search assistance to NGOs that complete a form on their website [safsf.org/resources/ngo-grant-resources](http://safsf.org/resources/ngo-grant-resources)

### Food+Tech Connect

---

A resource center for innovators and entrepreneurs in food, agriculture, health, and technology. The website provides information of the latest news, analysis, potential new funding sources, and research as well as listing training and networking events for food entrepreneurs.

[foodtechconnect.com](http://foodtechconnect.com)

### Local Food Lab

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A networking platform for professionals and businesses. Businesses can set up their own portfolio.

[localfoodlab.com](http://localfoodlab.com)

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# Michigan Small Business Development Center, Business Accelerator Fund

[sbdcmichigan.org/](http://sbdcmichigan.org/)

## How It Works

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The Michigan SBDC provides a variety of services including business plan development, market research, raising capital, business workshops, technology commercialization, financial management, export strategy, and strategic planning. A food hub or other food-related business in the early stages of business development using advanced technologies would be a good candidate for this grant.

## Funding Focuses On

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The Michigan SBDC provides counseling, training and research for new ventures, existing small businesses, and advanced technology companies.

## Qualifications

---

Will vary depending on stage of business. See the website above for more information.

## Funding Limit

---

Not specified

## Financing Geographic Area

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Michigan



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# State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND GRANTS**

[michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570\\_51684\\_78392---,00.html](http://michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78392---,00.html)

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### **How It Works**

These MDARD grant funds are available for projects that address expansion and sustainability of land-based industries; worker training related to land-based industries; and energy, transportation, communications, water and wastewater infrastructure to benefit rural communities, and Micropolitan statistical areas. Land-based industries include:

- Food and Agriculture
- Forestry
- Mining, Oil and Gas Production
- Tourism

This grant is a cost reimbursement program, meaning grantees must cover all project costs until MDARD receives and approves all required documentation (reports, invoices, receipts). Grantees are eligible for reimbursement up to three times (at specified dates) during the 24-month grant cycle, with the final reimbursement at the end of the project.

---

### **Funding Focuses On**

- Infrastructure Development
- Rural Capacity Building
- Business Development
- Talent Development and Training

---

### **Qualifications**

- Eligible applicants include individuals, organizations, businesses, local units of government, federally recognized tribes, and educational institutions. Applicants must be located within an eligible county to apply— see eligible counties map [michigan.gov/documents/mdard/Rural\\_Development\\_Grant\\_Facts\\_Sheet\\_546275\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/mdard/Rural_Development_Grant_Facts_Sheet_546275_7.pdf)
- Applicants must provide a minimum of 30% matching funds of the grant amount requested (cash match is required)
- All applicants must be registered as a vendor in the Contracts and Payments system with the State of Michigan prior to submitting an application
- Preference will be given to projects in Marquette, Alger, Delta, Menominee, Dickinson, Iron and Baraga counties

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### **Funding Limit**

No maximum limit but MDARD's total allotment for funding is \$1.5 million

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### **Financing Geographic Area**

Michigan (see above for counties given preference)

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# State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## **SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

[michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570\\_51684\\_78390---,00.html](http://michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78390---,00.html)

### **How It Works**

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This is a grant administered by each state's Department of Agriculture. The State Department of Agriculture will grant funds to competitive specialty crops. Specialty crops are described as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture). Food hubs or food hub related businesses working with a specialty crop may consider applying for this grant program.

### **Funding Focuses On**

---

The program aims to improve the competitiveness of specialty crops pertaining to the issues of:

- Food Safety
- Marketing
- Nutrition
- Plant Health
- Value Added/Industry Development

### **Qualifications**

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Funds will only be awarded to stakeholders who focus on the promotion of specialty crops.

### **Funding Limit**

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Check link for details

### **Financing Geographic Area**

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Michigan (for Michigan's program—each state has its own program)

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# State of Michigan, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

## VALUE-ADDED GRANT PROGRAM (active since 2016)

[michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570\\_51684\\_78393---,00.html](http://michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1570_51684_78393---,00.html)

---

### How It Works

This MDARD grant program is for projects that will establish, retain, expand, attract or develop value added agricultural processing in Michigan, or that will expand or develop regional food systems or access the healthy food. Applicants first submit a project abstract and then, if the abstract is approved, submit a full proposal based on MDARD guidelines. This grant is a cost reimbursement program, meaning grantees must cover all project costs until MDARD receives and approves all required documentation (reports, invoices, receipts). Grantees are eligible for reimbursement up to three times (at specified dates) during the 18-month grant cycle, with the final reimbursement at the end of the project.

---

### Funding Focuses On

- Value-added food processing
  - Innovation and equipment
  - Technical assistance/feasibility studies that lead to jobs and investment
  - Outreach and training
- Food hub development
- Food access, including access to fresh/nutritional foods

---

### Qualifications

- Applicants must provide a minimum of 30% matching funds of the grant amount requested (cash match is required; in-kind contributions will not be counted as part of the required match)
- Salaries may only be included as cash match. Travel costs must be covered by the matching funds
- All applicants must be registered as a vendor in the Contracts and Payments system with the State of Michigan prior to submitting an application

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### Funding Limit

Check link to see funding limit

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### Financing Geographic Area

Michigan

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# USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

## FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM (FMPP)

[ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp](https://ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp)

### How It Works

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This grant program seeks to increase domestic consumption and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products by developing direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. This may include the establishment or improvement of a food hub or a food hub related business.

### Funding Limit

---

\$15,000-\$100,000.

### Financing Geographic Area

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United States

### Funding Focuses On

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The development of new opportunities for farmers and ranchers working with:

- The improvement of domestic farmer's markets
- Roadside stands
- Community-supported agriculture programs
- Agro-tourism activities
- Other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities

### Qualifications

---

Agricultural businesses, agricultural cooperatives, community support agriculture networks and associations, economic development corporations, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, etc.

---

# USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service

## LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM (LFPP)

[ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp](https://ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp)

### How It Works

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LFPP offers grant funds with a 25% match to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises (i.e. food hubs or food hub related businesses) to increase domestic consumption and access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and aids in developing new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

### Funding Focuses On

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The program is divided into two types of grants—a “planning” grant and a “implementation” grant. For more information regarding what category you would fall under, visit the website noted above.

### Qualifications

---

Agricultural businesses, agricultural cooperatives, community support agriculture networks and associations, economic development corporations, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, etc.

### Funding Limit

---

LFPP planning grants are used to implement the planning or expansion of a local and regional food business enterprise. A minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of 25,000 will be granted.

### Financing Geographic Area

---

United States

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# USDA, Farm Service Agency

## FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM

[fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index](https://fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/price-support/facility-loans/farm-storage/index)

### How It Works

---

FSFL is an excellent financing program for on-farm storage and handling for small and mid-sized farms, and for new farmers. Loan terms vary from three to 12 years. The maximum loan amount for storage facilities is \$500,000. The maximum loan amount for storage and handling trucks is \$100,000. In 2016 FSA introduced a new loan category, the microloan, for loans with an aggregate balance up to \$50,000. Microloans offer a 5% down payment requirement, compared to a 15% down payment for a regular FSFL, and waive the regular three-year production history requirement.

### Funding Focuses On

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Eligible commodities include:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats, or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Other grains (triticale, speltz and buckwheat)
- Pulse crops
- Hay
- Honey
- Renewable biomass commodities
- Fruits and vegetables
- Floriculture
- Hops
- Maple sap
- Milk, cheese, butter, yogurt
- Eggs, meat/poultry (unprocessed)
- Rye
- Aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water)

Additionally, the loan will also cover the equipment needed to wash, treat, and pack fruits and vegetables.

### Qualifications

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An extensive and complete eligibility fact sheet may be found at:

[fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_File/fsfl09.pdf](https://fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/fsfl09.pdf)

### Funding Limit

---

Loans range from \$50,000-\$500,000

Interest rates

- 1.875% 7-year loans
- 2.125% 10-year loans
- 2.375% 12-year loans

### Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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# USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

## FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

[fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school-grant-program](https://fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school-grant-program)

### How It Works

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The purpose of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is to assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. On an annual basis, USDA awards up to \$5 million in competitive grants for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs.

### Funding Focuses On

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Bringing local and regional produce into the school's cafeteria; non-formal educational activities such as the implementation of school gardens, visits to local farms, and culinary classes; and the establishment of education related to food in the classroom.

### Funding Limit

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Planning awards range from \$20,000-\$45,000; implementation and support service awards range from \$65,000-\$100,000; training awards range from \$15,000-\$50,000. Matching funds of 25% are required for all four grant types.

### Qualifications

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Eligible school may apply, as well as State and Local agencies, Indian Tribal Organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and nonprofit entities. For more details on qualifications refer to website above.

### Financing Geographic Area

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United States

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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## **AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI): AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

[nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/afri-foundational-agriculture-economics-and-rural-communities](http://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/afri-foundational-agriculture-economics-and-rural-communities)

### **How It Works**

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This grant supports projects related to agricultural and rural economies, specifically in the areas of research, education, extension, entrepreneurship, and markets and trade. Although application targets universities and nonprofits, food businesses can benefit by being collaborators or partners.

### **Funding Focuses On**

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Research focusing on the benefit of small to mid-sized farms and rural communities. Examples include developing farm decision making tools, identifying the effects of input costs, and developing sustainable business strategies.

### **Funding Limit**

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Maximum of \$500,000 over a five-year period.

### **Qualifications**

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Universities may apply as well as other organizations depending on the project, for more information refer to the website above.

### **Financing Geographic Area**

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United States



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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## **AGRICULTURE AND FOOD AND RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI): IMPROVED SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

[nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-afri](http://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-afri)

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### How It Works

This grant funds projects related to research, education, and extension related to sustainable local and regional food systems seeking to improve U.S. food safety and security, support the local economy, combat childhood obesity, improve rural economies, increase food production, and train the next generation of agricultural workforce. A food hub or food hub-related business aiming to research its role as a sustainable actor would be a good candidate for this grant.

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### Funding Focuses On

Community development strategies, local and regional food systems that help foster U.S. food security, conferences and workshops, etc.

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### Funding Limit

Varies by year, in 2014:

- **Total awards:** \$269,975,863
- **Research projects:** \$547,983
- **Integrated projects:** \$1,094,323
- \$680,618 to support 22 conference grants

For more information, refer to the website above.

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### Qualifications

Must be a higher education institution

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## **BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

[nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp](http://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp)

### **How It Works**

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This grant seeks to fund organizations that train, educate, and provide technical assistance to new farmers or ranchers. A food hub or food hub-related business starting up or new to agriculture and farming may apply for this program.

### **Funding Focuses On**

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Helping new farmers and ranchers work on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies, and other critical needs to managing a successful operation.

### **Funding Limit**

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Standard grants may be up to \$250,000 per year for up to three years.

### **Qualifications**

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State, Tribal, local, or regionally based networks or partnerships of public and private entities. This is not a program that can be given directly to agricultural entrepreneurs, but these grants often include agricultural entrepreneurs in the overall programming.

### **Financing Geographic Area**

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United States

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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM (CFPCGP)

[nifa.usda.gov/program/community-food-projects-competitive-grant-program-cfpcgp](http://nifa.usda.gov/program/community-food-projects-competitive-grant-program-cfpcgp)

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### How It Works

This program seeks to fund three types of projects:

- Community Food Projects
- Planning Projects
- Training and Technical Assistance Projects

These three types of projects could all be a food hub or could be a food-related business.

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### Funding Focuses On

Projects that meet the needs of low-income individuals through food distribution and access, and community outreach to assist in participation of Federal nutrition programs. Projects may also focus on the equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project as well as the creation of innovative marketing activities that jointly benefit agricultural producers and underserved communities.

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### Funding Limit

\$10,000–\$400,000 from one to four years

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### Qualifications

Public food program service providers may apply, as well as tribal organizations, or private nonprofit entities.

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## **SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR)**

[nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program-sbir](http://nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program-sbir)

### **How It Works**

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This grant gives small businesses the opportunity to research their technological potential. A food hub or food hub-related business researching technological innovations with the potential for commercializing such research would be a good candidate for this research grant.

### **Funding Focuses On**

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Research should seek to identify technological innovations, implement the commercialization of these innovations, and encourage participation by socially and economically disadvantaged people.

### **Qualifications**

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Small businesses or proprietorships, which could include a food hub or could include a food-related business. There are three project phases; for more information, visit the website above.

### **Funding Limit**

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Each phase of the project has a different funding limit ranging from \$100,000-\$600,000.

### **Financing Geographic Area**

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United States

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# USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (SARE)

[sare.org/Grants](http://sare.org/Grants)

### How It Works

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This competitive grant aims to improve sustainable innovations in American agriculture.

### Funding Focuses On

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Four grants are offered:

- Research and education grants
- Professional development grants
- Producer grants
- Other region-specific grants

### Funding Limit

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Varies by state, although depending on the type of project, funds typically range from \$1,000–\$200,000.

### Qualifications

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Nonprofit organizations, researchers and individual producers.

### Financing Geographic Area

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United States

Michigan-specific (contact Dean Baas, Michigan State University Extension SARE coordinator, [baasdean@anr.msu.edu](mailto:baasdean@anr.msu.edu))

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# USDA, Rural Development

## **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM (B&I)**

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees)

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### How It Works

This loan program bolsters the existing private credit structure through the guaranteeing of loans for rural businesses, allowing private lenders to extend more credit than they would typically be able to.

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### Funding Focuses On

- Business conversion, enlargement, repair, modernization, or development
- Purchase and development of land, easements, rights of way, buildings, or facilities
- Purchase of equipment, leasehold improvements, machinery, supplies, or inventory
- Debt refinancing when new jobs will be created and other conditions are met
- Business and industrial acquisitions when the loan will keep the business from closing and/or save or create jobs

This means that a prospective food hub or food hub-related would be an ideal candidate for this grant.

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### Funding Limit

Loans may be up to \$10 million, some exceptions allow up to \$40 million.

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### Qualifications

Cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, corporations, partnerships, or other legal entities; Indian tribes; public bodies; or individuals. Eligible areas are:

- Any area other than a city or town with a population greater than 50,000 inhabitants in the urbanized area of that city or town
- The borrower's headquarters may be based within a larger city as long as the project is located in an eligible rural area

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# USDA, Rural Development

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANT AND LOAN PROGRAM

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program)

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### How It Works

This program offers either grants or loans to help with the development of community facilities.

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### Funding Focuses On

The construction, enlargement, or improvement of a community facility related to health care, public safety, and community and public services. This may include food hubs and food-related businesses. The funds may cover the cost to acquire land, pay necessary professional fees, purchase equipment, and it targets rural towns with a population of no more than 20,000 people. Usually these funds are used for infrastructure improvements in rural towns.

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### Funding Limit

Grant assistance is available to cover up to 75% of total project costs. Projects will be selected on a priority point system; priority is given to projects that serve small communities and/or low-income communities

Loans follow specific interest rates depending on the median household income of the area being served and the type of project being held.

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### Qualifications

Grants and loans are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as to community-based nonprofit corporations and tribal governments.

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# USDA, Rural Development

## RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT (RBDG)

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants)

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### How It Works

RBDG is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity grant activities.

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### Funding Focuses On

- Regional planning and development focused on food systems
- Market development research
- Business training
- Establishing business incubators

Enterprise type grant funds must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application.

Uses may include, but are not limited to:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities
- Community economic development
- Technology-based economic development
- Feasibility studies and business plans
- Leadership and entrepreneur training
- Rural business incubators

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### Funding Limit

General range is \$10,000-\$500,000. Smaller requests are given higher priority.

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### Qualifications

Towns, communities, state agencies, authorities, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, federally recognized tribes, and rural cooperatives.

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States



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# USDA, Rural Development

## **RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (RCDG)**

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-cooperative-development-grant-program](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-cooperative-development-grant-program)

### **How It Works**

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The RCDG program seeks to aid the economic development of rural communities by establishing cooperative development centers. In other words, this program seeks to fund the creation or improvement of food hubs or food hub-related businesses.

### **Funding Focuses On**

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Additionally, the RCDG program seeks to support other activities such as new farmer training, market research, business development, and outreach.

### **Funding Limit**

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Maximum of \$200,000.

### **Qualifications**

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Nonprofit organizations or a higher education institution. Matching funds requirement of 25% of total project costs (5% for 1994 institutions).

### **Financing Geographic Area**

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United States

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# USDA, Rural Development

## RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOAN AND GRANT (REDLG)

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-economic-development-loan-grant-program](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-economic-development-loan-grant-program)

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### How It Works

The REDLG program provides funding to rural projects that create or retain rural jobs. Food hubs seeking establishment in rural zones would be good candidates for this grant or loan program. Under the REDLG program, USDA provides zero interest loans to local utility companies that administer loans to the recipients of this REDLG program. Ultimately, as a REDLG recipient, you would repay your loan back to the local utility company.

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### Funding Focuses On

- Business incubators
- Community Development Assistance to nonprofits and public bodies (particularly job creation or enhancement, which could include food hubs and food hub-related businesses)
- Facilities and equipment for education and training for rural residents to facilitate economic development

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### Funding Limit

Available to intermediaries: Up to \$300,000 in grants may be requested for establishment of the revolving loan funds (RLF)

- Up to 10% of grant funds may be applied toward operating expenses over the life of the RLF
- Up to \$1 million in loans may be requested

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### Qualifications

- Have borrowed and repaid or pre-paid an insured, direct, or guaranteed loan received under the Rural Electrification Act or be a not-for-profit utility that is eligible to receive assistance from the Rural Development Electric or Telecommunication Program
- Be a current Rural Development Electric or Telecommunication Programs Borrower

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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# USDA, Rural Development

## **RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM: RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEM AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT GUARANTEED LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAM**

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency)

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### How It Works

The Rural Energy for America Program helps assist agricultural producers and rural small businesses purchase, install, and construct renewable energy systems. A food hub business may be interested in this program if it seeks or currently works with renewable energy sources.

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### Funding Focuses On

Funding provides assistance to renewable energy projects dealing with:

- Renewable biomass (for example: biodiesel and ethanol, anaerobic digesters and solid fuels)
- Geothermal for electric generation or direct use
- Hydropower below 30 megawatts
- Hydrogen
- Small and large wind generation
- Small and large solar generation
- Ocean (tidal, current, thermal) generation

Funds may also be used for purchase, installation, or construction of energy efficiency improvement such as:

- High efficiency heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC)
- Insulation
- Lighting
- Cooling or refrigeration units
- Doors and windows
- Electric, solar, or gravity pumps for sprinkler pivots
- Switching from a diesel to electric irrigation motor
- Replacement of energy-inefficient equipment

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### Funding Limit

The minimum loan amount is \$5,000, maximum is up to \$25 million. Renewable energy systems grants: \$2,500 minimum, \$500,000 maximum. Energy efficiency grants: \$1,500 minimum, \$250,000 maximum.

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### Qualifications

Must be an agricultural producer where 50% or greater of gross income comes from working with crops, livestock, forestry products, hydroponics, nursery, and aquaculture as well as small businesses in eligible rural areas. Agricultural producers and small businesses must have no outstanding delinquent federal taxes, debt, judgment, or debarment.

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### Financing Geographic Area

United States

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## USDA, Rural Development

### **SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GRANT (SDGG)**

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/socially-disadvantaged-groups-grant](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/socially-disadvantaged-groups-grant)

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#### **How It Works**

The goal of this grant program is to assist socially disadvantaged agricultural producers with technical assistance through cooperative development centers. A food hub and other food businesses considered a cooperative or a cooperative development center seeking to assist socially disadvantaged agricultural producers would be eligible to apply for this grant.

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#### **Funding Focuses On**

The funds must go to socially disadvantaged producers in rural areas in need of technical assistance.

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#### **Qualifications**

Must be a cooperative or a cooperative development center.

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#### **Funding Limit**

Maximum grant amount is \$175,000

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#### **Financing Geographic Area**

United States

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## USDA, Rural Development

### **VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS (VAPG)**

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants)

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#### **How It Works**

The VAPG grant program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities and process or market value-added products. A food hub or food hub-related business interested in agricultural value-added activities or products should consider taking a closer look at this grant.

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#### **Funding Focuses On**

Projects that implement business plans, identify market feasibility of bottled milk, evaluate benefits of marketing and selling meat as opposed to live animals, and expand that market capacity of local and regional food systems.

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#### **Funding Limit**

Not yet specified

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#### **Qualifications**

Independent producers, farmer or rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups, and majority controlled producer-owned business ventures, including nonprofit organizations.

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#### **Financing Geographic Area**

United States

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Center for  
Regional Food Systems

*CRFS envisions a thriving economy, equity, and sustainability for Michigan, the country, and the planet through food systems rooted in local regions and centered on Good Food: food that is healthy, green, fair, and affordable. Its mission is to engage the people of Michigan, the United States, and the world in applied research, education, and outreach to develop regionally integrated, sustainable food systems. CRFS joins in Michigan State University's pioneering legacy of applied research, education, and outreach by catalyzing collaboration and fostering innovation among the diverse range of people, processes, and places involved in regional food systems. Working in local, state, national, and global spheres, CRFS' projects span from farm to fork, including production, processing, distribution, policy, and access.*

**Center for Regional Food Systems**  
**Michigan State University**

480 Wilson Road  
Natural Resources Building  
East Lansing, MI 48824

**For general inquiries:**

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