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USDA Awards \$13.4 Million to Farmers Market Promotion Program Grantees

Funding supports projects promoting local food sales and consumption

October 3, 2017 - Last week, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) [awarded](#) funds to the 2017 [Farmers Market Promotion Program \(FMPP\)](#) grantees. The grants, totaling \$13.4 million and funding 52 projects in 33 states, are intended to increase consumption of, and access to, locally produced agriculture products and develop new market opportunities for farms selling direct to the public through farmers markets and other similar outlets.

"Farmers Market Promotion Program grants are critical to ongoing innovation and development in the farmers market industry." said the Farmers Market Coalition's Executive Director, Jen Cheek. "These grants have shown to be successful at increasing customer traffic and farmer sales at individual markets, while also supporting the professionalization and maturation of the sector as a whole."

Since its creation in 2002, FMPP funding has assisted local producers to grow their businesses by helping them connect directly with the shoppers at farmers markets, roadside stands and through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. During that time, the number of farmers markets in America has more than doubled from 3,137 to over 8,684 today, and total sales now exceed \$700 million. [According to a Farmers Market Coalition report](#), FMPP grantees report an average 27% increase in vendor sales after receiving their grant, and 94% report an increase in first time market customers.

This year's FMPP grantees represent the diverse and dynamic work being done across America to connect local producers with directly with consumers. In Alabama, Birmingham's Lee Branch Farmers Market hopes to double in size in the coming years and will use its FMPP funding to provide technical assistance to veteran farmers hoping to sell at the market. In Ohio, the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks will use its FMPP to build capacity at the Athens Farmers Market to better serve the needs of the farms and ranches in the state's southeast region.

2017's FMPP grants support projects in 33 states, including projects to expand nutrition assistance programs in Mississippi, Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, and California. One such project, spearheaded by the Mississippi Delta Council, will begin work on an ambitious plan to connect 20,000 of their food insecure neighbors with fresh produce at Crossroads Farmers Markets in Clarksdale, Mississippi, as well as the Council's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), mobile market, and farm-to-school programs.

USDA also awarded an equivalent \$13.4 million for the affiliated Local Food Promotion Program, which is designed to support the development and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products, and to develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

A full list of awardees can be found at:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2017FMPPDescriptionOfFundedProjects.pdf>

and

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2017LFPPDescriptionOfFundedProjects.pdf>