

FARMERS MARKET AND LOCAL FOOD PROMOTION PROGRAM

2021 PROJECT NARRATIVE FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS

This form is mandatory. Thoroughly review the applicable Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) or Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Request for Applications (RFA) before completing this form. This form must be converted to PDF and attached to the application package within Grants.gov.

1. Applicant Organization

Must match box 8 of the SF-424.

Name: Kalamazoo Valley Community College
 Email: tlabadie@kvcc.edu
 Phone: (269) 488-4223
 Fax: (269) 488-4220
 Mailing Address: PO Box 4070, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49003

2. Authorized Organization Representative (AOR)

This person is responsible for signing any documentation should the grant be awarded. Must match box 21 of the SF-424.

Name: Tracy Labadie, Associate Vice President for Collaboration, Compliance, and Analytics
 Email: tlabadie@kvcc.edu
 Phone: (269) 488-4223
 Fax: (269) 488-4220
 Mailing Address: Check if same as above

3. Applicant Entity Type

Select each applicable entity type as defined in Section 3.1 of the RFA. If your organization is a State Agency Regional Farmers Market Authority, you must provide the regulatory statute(s) that identify your agency as that entity type.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Business or Cooperatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Farmers Market Authority |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Network or Association | <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency Regional Farmers Market Authority (Indicate Regulation Below):
_____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development Corporation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Council | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify Below):
_____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Corporation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Producer Network or Association | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Benefit Corporation | |

4. Project Activity Category

Identify all the activity categories that fit your project.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggregation | <input type="checkbox"/> Production Diversification /Expansion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agritourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm to Institution | <input type="checkbox"/> On-Farm Food Waste |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmer Recruitment and Retention | <input type="checkbox"/> Season Extension |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Food Safety | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training and Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation and Distribution |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marketing and Promotion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Value-added Production |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Processing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below): |
-

5. Project Title (Provide a descriptive title. *Must match box 15 of the SF-424.*):

Operationalizing Best Practices for Local and Regional Value Chains.

6. Grant Application Project Type (Described in Section 1.3 of the RFA)

FMPP:

- Capacity Building (CB)
- Community Development Training and Technical Assistance (CTA)

LFPP:

- Planning
- Implementation

7. Requested FMLFPP Funds

Insert the total amount (\$) of Federal funds requested. This must match the total amount requested on Line 18a. Estimated Federal Funding of the SF-424.

\$609,800

8. Matching Funds

Applicant must provide a 10% or a 25% match on the total Federal portion of the grant. This must match the total amount requested on Line 18b Applicant Funding of the SF-424. See Section 3.4 of the RFA for more information.

\$161,860

9. Does the proposal address a Priority Area as described in Section 1.4 of the RFA?

See instructions on how to determine priority eligibility at Qualifying for Priority Consideration at the end of this form.

- Yes No

10. Project Implementation Physical Address

Enter up to three addresses where this project will be implemented. If you are requesting consideration as a priority area, enter the [Food Access Research Atlas](#) Low Income/Low Access (LI/LA) Census Tract number. For detailed instructions, see [Qualifying for Priority Consideration](#) at the end of this form.

#	Address	LI/LA	LI/LA Census Tract # (if applicable)
1	224 E Crosstown Parkway, Kalamazoo, MI 49001	LI/LA	26077000900

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 250 words or less, describe the project's need, purpose, goals, and expected outcomes. This summary will be made available to the public.

Program partners throughout the US, and many in Michigan, have spent decades developing initiatives to support local and regional food producers access steady, high-volume markets of institutional food service providers (IFSP), via food safety certification assistance, value chain coordination, and promotion. ValleyHUB at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), a social enterprise farm and food hub, an active partner in this work, has experienced firsthand the challenges both growers and IFSPs have in increasing capacity. KVCC requests funding to continue ValleyHUB's work to support farm-to-institution supply chains in Southwest Michigan, and to fill gaps that have been identified from our work. We propose continuing our outreach and marketing work with institutional and retail buyers, but shifting the focus of our farm food safety work to a flexible, responsive approach that provides the appropriate level of food safety assurance for the farm size and customer type. We will add an additional focus on workforce development, training, and capacity building for IFSP staff to increase the demand for local and regionally produced agricultural products. This project will grow KVCC ValleyHUB's throughput of locally and regionally produced food products from \$330k to at least \$750k annually and establish a sustainable level of operations to continue to provide ongoing educational opportunities.

ALIGNMENT AND INTENT

Describe the specific issue, problem, or need that the project will address in relation to the Statutory Language found in the RFA in Section 1. Answering this question should clearly justify the project's objectives and approach, and not just provide the associated statistics. You must articulate the reason behind the selected local or regional food system development effort.

About us: ValleyHUB at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) is an urban farm, food hub, and education center that supports local and regional food producers in Southwest Michigan (SW Mich.) through direct supply chain support and complementary education and training programs. Since we launched in January 2017, we have worked toward the dual community goals of increasing financial viability for small and mid-size farms and food producers, and improving diets and health outcomes in our community by promoting seasonal, local, plant-forward menus in healthcare, educational, and corporate cafeterias. Our social enterprise operations align with degree programs in Culinary Arts (existing) and Sustainable Horticulture, Agriculture, and Urban Landscapes (in development), and a broad portfolio of open enrollment, skills-based and general interest community classes.

Currently, our business model is as a farm-to-business food hub; we offer just-in-time distribution logistics services that connect small and mid-size farms and value-added producers with retail, restaurant, and institutional food service provider (IFSP) customers. About 25% of our total sales

are of fresh-cut or frozen-in-season local produce items, produced by our staff in our licensed food processing facility. Gross revenues have been about \$330,000 the last three fiscal years; COVID-19 significantly slowed our planned growth trajectory but our staffing has scaled to maintain financial sustainability. We are aiming, by 2024, to reach a steady state of gross revenue between \$750K – 1M, which would support key staff roles with a manageable administrative load. Meanwhile, we like to say that “education is our #1 product” at ValleyHUB, and this level of activity will provide a solid platform for hands-on multi-modal learning. The work outlined in this proposal moves us closer to this vision.

A note on language: We refer all organizations that we work with as our “partners”; farms and other value-added producers are our “supplier partners”, and institutions, retail grocers, and restaurants are our “buyer partners”. Groups like other food hubs, statewide networks, and workforce organizations are “program partners.” IFSPs = Institutional Food Service Providers; LRFPs = local/regional food producers.

We are proposing a project that builds on and amplifies the work of the community of practice that supports local and regional food systems, and develops the unique assets in Southwest Michigan, to support the viability of small and mid-size farms that sell into local/regional supply chains.

The Local Food Promotion Program, a subset of the Local Agriculture Market Program, exists because small and mid-size farms face barriers to getting their products into local and regional supply chains. Work that supports local and regional value chains will be key to the Biden Administration’s strategy to shore up our food system, per its recent announcement of \$4 billion in investment to increase safety, security, and resilience of the food system and help farmers capture more of each consumer food dollar.

While LFPP has funded many innovative efforts in recent years, the trends are still dismal:

Farm non-viability: Across the state of MI, the average farm had just under \$30,000 in net profit in 2012, and over half of farms reported net losses¹.

Farm closure: In Southwest (SW) Michigan, between 2012 and 2017, 2% of farmland and 12% of farms were lost. This is the same rate of loss as between 2007 and 2012.

Product mix favoring national/global supply chains: Despite our unique environment well suited for tree fruits, berries and tender vegetables, the top crops in the region are corn and soy, together accounting for \$448 million – over one-third of SW Mich. region’s total \$1.27 billion in total agricultural sales in 2012. Specialty crops including vegetables, fruit, and nuts – more likely to end up in local/regional supply chains – account for less than 12% of our region’s sales.

Supply Chain businesses struggle at the local-regional scale: When ValleyHUB opened, we filled a gap in connecting local and regional food producers with their customers – because it is not the norm for food hubs to be profitable as independent businesses. The Wallace Center’s 2017 Food Hub Benchmarking Report found that 36% of hubs are heavily reliant on grant dollars, and only 67% of food hubs are breaking even or better². (ValleyHUB is sustainable because its overhead and management expenses are supported as part of KVCC’s general fund, because of their use in educational programs.)

These trends are seen across the country, and they are not new; they persist despite decades of investment in local and regional food systems work. *We can see the impacts of that work, and remaining gaps, in the current context* – specifically around helping farmers shift from direct markets into retail and institutional food service markets. In Michigan, we are part of a vibrant network of practitioners that has been addressing these challenges collectively, supported by national funding streams and

¹ USDA-NASS. 2017 Census of Agriculture.

² Colasanti, K., Hardy, J., Farbman, J., Pirog, R., Fisk, J., & Hamm, M.W. (2018). Findings of the 2017 National Food Hub Survey. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems & The Wallace Center at Winrock International. Retrieved from foodsystems.msu.edu/2017foodhubsurvey

communities of practice. We use a dynamic planning approach to addressing barriers as they emerge. We are, of course, building on work going back decades, but for the purposes of this Michigan-based narrative, we will start in the late 2000s, when the 2010 Michigan Good Food Charter set a goal for 20% local procurement in institutional meals³ in order to support local growers.

Emergent barrier to LRFP success: unstable direct-to-consumer markets. Response: promote farm-to-institution supply chains. Responding to the difficulties that farmers have with vagaries of consumer behavior, farm-to-institution supply chains were envisioned as a lever to shift the market and open up opportunities for local and regional farms. Programs like the Cultivate Michigan project sought to address some initial barriers: information, recipes, branding, and assistance with procuring product through supportive broad-line distributors. Key institution partners – most often hospitals with self-operated food service departments – set new norms by declaring local purchasing targets, and the MFIN emerged to share best practices. *Outcome: increased awareness and intention around local purchasing; discovery of additional barriers.*

Emergent barrier: inconsistent supply of food from local and regional farms. Response: food hubs. Soon, it became apparent that a major barrier was the ability to aggregate sufficient product to meet the demand of large food service customers like hospitals. In response, food hubs began to scale up as aggregators and distributors of product. (ValleyHUB enters the story here, launching based on the findings of a supply-and-demand analysis that identified a need to for fresh-cut processing and distribution of local produce to institutional customers in SW Mich.⁴) The Michigan Food Hub Network formed to facilitate sharing of best practices, as well as practical collaboration to meet the needs of LRFPs across the state. *Outcome: a robust network of food hubs, including ValleyHUB in SW Mich., ready to scale to meet demand.*

Emergent barrier: cost. Response: local purchasing incentive grant program. Through all these efforts, school food purchasing, a huge market opportunity for LRFPs, remained largely unchanged due to the higher cost of local/regional/seasonal products. For K-12 schools in ValleyHUB's service area, this has been the primary barrier to local sourcing. The 10 Cents a Meal program grew to fill in budget gaps, allowing schools (and now Early Childhood Ed sites) to devote a larger chunk of their purchasing to local farms via matching grants. MFIN, Michigan Department of Education, and Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities lead the 10 Cents a Meal grant program, now funded through State budget allocation. *Outcome: increased school purchasing from LRFPs; discovery of skills and capacity barriers.*

Emergent barrier: IFSP staff capacity to handle fresh, local produce. Response (underway): skills-based training; flexible supports. While the financial lever of a 10 Cents grant has huge potential to shift purchasing, partners are also recognizing the need for additional support to schools who want to take advantage of this funding. *A relationship with a food hub that can help manage procurement is a strong indicator of a district's success, but it is not a silver bullet.*

ValleyHUB's current (2018) LFPP project focuses on the work of our Food Hub Outreach and Marketing Coordinator, whose role is to work closely with institution food service directors to identify needs for "easy swap" fresh-cut ingredient options, and then work with the Food Hub Manager and

³ Colasanti, K., Cantrell, P., Cocciarelli, S., Collier, A., Edison, T., Doss, J., George, V., Hamm, M., Lewis, R., Matts, C., McClendon, B., Rabaut, C., Schmidt, S., Satchell, I., Scott, A., Smalley, S. (2010). Michigan Good Food Charter. East Lansing, MI: C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University, Food Bank Council of Michigan, Michigan Food Policy Council. Available from: www.michiganfood.org.

⁴ New Growth Associates. Farm to Institution: A supply & demand planning process. 2016. Available from: <http://newgrowthassociates.com/portfolioASupplyAndDemandPlanningProcess.html>

Operations Coordinator to develop those products. This basic approach has worked well with several customers, and our catalog now includes over 30 fresh-cut products available fresh seasonally and/or frozen. But we see other needs, especially in schools that need processed items that come individually packaged for snack or cafeteria use, as well as products that can quickly pivot from use in a cafeteria to distribution in a food box in case of long-term school closure. For example, Kalamazoo Public Schools was beginning to purchase ValleyHUB processed products for salad bars and sampling stations using its 10 Cents a Meal grant funds in 2019, but during school closures pivoted to purchasing 2-lb frozen local vegetable packs from a higher-volume supplier. We are also learning that distribution logistics and fresh-cut products are not universally needed by IFSPs. Some school districts, for example, would find it easier to have a direct purchasing relationship with local growers and pay their own staff in-house to chop fresh fruits and vegetables, but still need help with identifying growers, ensuring safe growing practices at the farm level, and/or training staff on efficient processing tools and skills. Statewide, MFIN finds that IFSP managers cite lack of fresh food handling skills on the part of their staff as a major reason to not build up a local food purchasing program; or, even more simply, a lack of appropriate equipment⁵. The COVID-19 school closures in the 2020-21 school year exposed how truly capacity-strapped school food service managers are: schools that had been making progress toward local/regional purchasing pulled back entirely from any new initiatives as soon as uncertainty took hold, leaving potential local/regional farm suppliers without a key market outlet.

Based on this experience, MFIN and partners at Michigan State University (MSU) Extension and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) are now working to address these skills barriers, through a Specialty Crop Block Grant that will support training for 10 Cents school district food service staff. We think that ValleyHUB can amplify the impact of this work in our service area by directly pairing this training with procurement and farm food safety assurance support.

Emergent barrier: food safety certifications for farms. Response: education and certification networks. Meanwhile, on-farm food safety initiatives, including Michigan GroupGAP Network and the Michigan On-farm Food Safety Readiness Review program, rolled out to support small and mid-size farmers getting certifications needed to sell to large customers. MFIN also began engaging in work to educate IFSPs about the various food safety certification frameworks. MSU Extension educators working with MFIN found in a 2020 survey that farmers are frustrated and confused by being asked for different certifications (e.g. USDA GAP or Primus) by different customers, or even by the same customers year by year. ValleyHUB partner farmers are required to have a written farm food safety plan and allow us to visit their operation. We have encouraged them (and had funding, through our 2018 LFPP award) to gain USDA GAP certification through the Michigan GroupGAP Network, but we, and our supplier partners, respond to what their end customers demand. We only had three of our partner farms complete their USDA GAP certification, and only then because major customers have required them to comply. *Outcome: partners need help navigating and using the many resources available.*

To move this farm food safety work forward, we are pivoting to use the remaining 2018 LFPP funds and time to work with our supplier partners to identify their food safety goals, based on their customers' demands. Meanwhile, our program partners at Michigan Food and Farming Systems are working with farms and farmers, focusing on socially disadvantaged farmers such as current/former migrant farm workers, to improve on-farm food safety, and also to access training opportunities and

⁵ Mariel Borgman, MSU Extension, personal communication 23 May 2021.

find new markets – like ValleyHUB. Working together and with the Michigan Produce Safety Working Group, we can help growers individually, according to their needs.

MFIN also found in a 2020 survey of IFSPs that the food safety assurance requirements vary widely (54% require certification; 33% don't; the rest aren't sure). Often the decision about whether to require farm food safety certifications and what to require is being made by risk managers (38%) or food service directors (24%) who are not familiar with the range of food safety assurance programs⁶.

Outcome: many resources available; partners need help navigating them.

Emergent barrier: farm scale. Response (underway): scale-appropriate food hubs. Scaling from direct-to-consumer sales into institutional markets is a big leap, and may not even be the right long-term goal for some farms. A food hub like ValleyHUB can help growers access retail and restaurant markets, either as a stepping stone or a destination. This work exists well alongside efforts to facilitate sales to institutions, because all growers can benefit from on-farm food safety support. And a thriving retail/restaurant customer base is a beneficial balance for the viability of ValleyHUB and its continued ability to serve all of our partners.

Other initiatives in the ecosystem offer complementary supports. *Food businesses in general (not just farms) need business support.* The Center for Regional Food Systems at MSU is coordinating a USDA-funded Regional Food System Partnership project in SW Mich. that aims to provide business and financial support to small businesses in the food system, particularly those owned by people of color. We plan to provide space for the local Navigator's programming and mutually refer potential participants. *As much as IFSPs need skills-based training for their staff, workers need pathways to see food service as a viable career.* Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, partnering with MSU, is working under a USDA AFRI Education and Workforce Program grant to address training barriers in the local/regional food system, statewide. Locally, ValleyHUB is also partnering with two workforce training partners to develop a career pathway for IFSP workers who can themselves become change agents pushing for ongoing local/regional sourcing on healthy, scratch-cooked IFSP menus (see Letters of Support – YWCA and Kalamazoo Literacy Council).

In sum, small and mid-size local and regional food producers need support accessing institutional and retail markets and instating scale-appropriate food safety practices. Institutional food service providers need training for staff in order to become a steady market for local and regional farms and producers. Michigan's food system networks have developed programs and training materials to fill myriad gaps, but finding and navigating these resources takes more time than these busy partners have. *ValleyHUB is a food hub that is running smoothly to link LRFPs with compatible customers; we are also in a position to link them with the training resources they need so we can all scale up together.* This project will directly support growers in our region, and amplify our impact by training workers and leaders in the institutional food service arena with skills that they can use to further grow demand for LRFPs.

Moving beyond one-size-fits-all. After six years of planning and practice, we know our partners need different kinds of support: from simple logistics, to custom processed products, to tailored trainings. From our position within Kalamazoo Valley Community College, ValleyHUB can uniquely help them thrive. ***We are requesting funding at this time to build out the responsive, demand-driven portfolio of tools, services, and programs that grow demand for locally and regionally produced food products through institutional and retail markets.*** This is what we propose to do over the next three years:

⁶ Results of National Institutional Buyers and On-Farm Food Safety Survey. Presented to MFIN, 25 May 2021.

We will continue to run a social enterprise food hub: connect small and mid-size local/regional food producers with scale-appropriate customers, host a web-based ordering platform, and actively aggregate/distribute products. For some partners, these logistical services are the only service needed; for others, they are the base of a strong relationship, opening doors for us to provide further support. We will continue to support farms achieving food safety milestones, and broaden our focus to highlight a spectrum of scale-appropriate food safety options. We will still offer help with USDA GAP certification through the Michigan Group GAP Network, and also develop and offer a portfolio of training options: individual consulting with farm owners, group training for farm staff, and open workshops. We will use resources and curricula developed by program partners when possible, and publish ValleyHUB's Standard Operating Procedures and other documents as a tool for other practitioners. We will develop a Food Safety Assurance Program for our hub, modeled after the New Mexico Grown approved supplier program⁷, which can serve as a pilot for other hubs or a Michigan-wide effort. We will increase demand for local and regional purchasing by IFSPs through training that builds staff capacity for handling fresh, local and regional foods in their own kitchens – whether they procure product through ValleyHUB or directly from local farms. If needed, grant funds will also support their purchase of small food processing equipment to address their particular barriers. ValleyHUB will continue to produce the fresh-cut and/or frozen local produce items they demand and develop new products as needed. We will also continue to match smaller growers with right-size retail customers, building a pathway for sustainable growth for smaller growers.

How we will do it: Briefly, we will add a full-time staff position, the Food Systems Educator (FSE). The FSE will gather ValleyHUB operational documents, SOPs, best practices, and training tools and publish these as a Toolkit, which will form the backbone of all education/training curricula. It will also include an annotated Roadmap of resources and trainings available through other partners in Michigan and nationally. The FSE will work with the Food Hub Outreach & Marketing Coordinator (FHOMC) (a continuing position, also funded through this request) to identify the training needs of IFSPs, and with the Food Hub Manager (FHM) to identify training needs of LRFPs. The FSE will act as a case manager, coordinating referrals to partners' programs, 1:1 consulting, on-demand trainings, and open workshops. Workshop events will include a Harmonized GAP+ auditor training and 2 annual "ValleyHUB Summit" events that gather all of our partners. Any new programs will draw on existing curricula and other experts in the field as much as possible – relying in particular on 3 contractors (Britton/Ziegler/Borgman) from the Michigan Produce Safety Working Group and MFIN, as well as program partners mentioned above. All curricula, notes and evaluations from programs will be compiled and added to the living Toolkit publication as it is updated annually and shared widely via web and social media channels. By Year 3, working with Britton, the Toolkit will also include a pilot framework for an Approved Supplier program, outlining benchmarks for growers based on size and customer base.

This new scope of work will enhance the current work of the FHOMC to develop fresh-cut products and work with buyer partners to market local/regional products to consumers primarily in school and healthcare settings, and the work of the Food Hub Manager to link local/regional food producers with appropriate customers. The FSE's work will draw on best practices to build capacity all along the local/regional value chain, so all partners can scale and thrive together.

⁷ New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association. New Mexico Grown Approved Supplier Program. newmexicofma.org/nm_grown_approved_supplier_pro.php

List objectives for this project.

The objectives must be related to addressing the issue(s), problem(s), or need(s) mentioned above and related to the project's approach and work plan. Add objectives as necessary.

- Objective 1: At least 60 SW Mich. farms will make significant progress toward formalizing their on-farm food safety practices to a level that is appropriate for their customers and size.

“Significant progress” relative to their current practices; food safety goals based on the farms’ individual sales and marketing goals. (For example, a farm that has no written food safety plan will write one in order to be able to sell through ValleyHUB; a farm that is already USDA GAP certified through the Michigan Group GAP Network will recertify through Harmonized standards in order to sell a large volume to a school district.) By Year 3, the Approved Supplier Program will provide benchmarks.

- Objective 2: At least half (50) of buyer partners will participate in customized training support, including at least ten IFSP (school, healthcare, or corporate cafeteria) who participate in training and/or procure necessary equipment to set and reach self-identified stretch goals for increasing their local/regional foodservice purchasing.

Stretch goals and resources (equipment/training) needed to reach them will be identified in first year of grant work; unique measurable benchmarks for each will be defined at that time.

- Objective 3: ValleyHUB will continue to expand sales of Local/Regional Food Products from current annual gross revenue of \$330,000 to at least \$750,000 in FY2024, with seasonal fresh-cut/frozen products to IFSPs accounting for at least 30% of sales.

Who are the intended beneficiaries of this project and how many are there? How does the project specifically benefit farm and ranch operations serving local markets?

Local and regional farms and food producers will be the primary beneficiaries of this project. This project will specifically benefit these producers by expanding current and opening up new markets for increased sales. ValleyHUB currently works actively with 31 producers (20 farms and 11 value-added), and has non-financial supportive relationships with another 10 farm businesses. We estimate there are 800 additional farms in the 7-county region of SW Mich. that are potential ValleyHUB partners (according to USDA-NASS, in 2017 there were 616 vegetable farms; 500 orchards, and 743 farms doing direct-to-consumer sales). We aim to work with at least 20% (approximately 160) of these growers, directly with supply chain and/or education support, and have at least 60 active supplier partners. An active supplier partner is one who either lists and sells a regular quantity of product throughout the growing season for at least 10 weeks; or who lists and sells a significant volume of a single produce item on one or more occasions in season (eg., blueberries).

Meanwhile, producers nationally will benefit from resources developed through this project around transitioning certification from USDA GAP to Harmonized standards; and other food hubs and agencies will benefit from a second model of an Approved Supplier program tailored to LRFPs.

What are the expected short-and long-term impacts to the beneficiaries of this project?

Specifically, the project should focus on the benefits to farm and ranch operations serving local markets.

Increasing institutional sales provide a steady, reliable outlet for farm products with lower marketing expenses relative to direct sales; steady sales to a right-sized retail outlet have similar impacts. Farms will increase their efficiency, and therefore their financial viability, as they tailor their food safety practices and production plans to the needs of these customers.

Furthermore, the improvements in on-farm food safety practices will ensure safer food throughout local and regional value chains in SW Mich. And, while not specifically within the statutory language that authorizes the Local Food Promotion Program, it is a priority for ValleyHUB and Kalamazoo Valley that we are working to improve nutrition and food security in our community. There is potential for increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables for the thousands of individuals who eat in institutional foodservice settings (1.5 million meals/year at Bronson Hospital; 14,000 meals daily at Kalamazoo Public Schools, an urban school system where roughly 70% students who qualify for free and reduced breakfasts and lunch).

We intend to amplify the work of partners who are engaging meaningfully with socially disadvantaged farmers as we do this work, to further KVCC’s commitment to equity. A 2020 study examined the ways that food hubs operationalize racial equity⁸, and described both a deep history of hubs and co-ops as tools for building power among disenfranchised growers, and a recent shift away from these roots. The researchers identified five facilitators that helped hubs advance racial equity work: organizational history, leadership by people of color, financial structure that supports racial equity work, “inter-organizational dynamics” including trust between organizations and staff personal commitment to mission work, and meaningful engagement with partners. ValleyHUB’s place within a government corporation in the U.S. means we must especially focus on inter-organizational dynamics and meaningful engagement; thus our relationship-driven approach.

TECHNICAL MERIT

Work Plan

Describe the activities and timeline associated with each project objective mentioned in the Alignment and Intent section. Include the following information:

A timeline for each planned activity and major output including the anticipated date of completion; how and where the activities will take place; required resources; milestone(s) for assessing progress and success; who is responsible for completing the activity, including collaborative arrangements or subcontractors; if conducting training and technical assistance, how participants will be recruited and how you will help guide program development and delivery.

Objective: <i>Include the objective this activity will be tied to</i>	List and describe each planned activity: <i>Include the scope of work and how it relates to the project objectives</i>	Anticipated completion date:	Required resources: <i>For completion of each activity</i>	Milestones: <i>For assessing progress and success of each activity</i>	Who will do the work? <i>Include collaborative arrangements or subcontractors</i>
Objective 1.	Activity 1: Create capacity for responsive	August 2022 (or sooner, depending	Funds for salary for Food Safety Education Manager (FSEM).	Milestone 1: Hire FSEM. January 2022. Milestone 2: Contracts with Fresh Systems, LLC, and	Food Hub Manager, Dir. for Sustainable Food Systems,

⁸ Rodman-Alvarez, S., Rodriguez, R., Pirog, R., Fisk, J., Carr, K., Warsaw, P., Bielaczyc, N., & Barker, T. (2020). Delivering More Than Food: Understanding and Operationalizing Racial Equity in Food Hubs. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Retrieved from foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/delivering-more-than-food-understanding-and-operationalizing-racial-equity-in-food-hubs

	and individualized food safety support.	on availability of Harmonized GAP+ training)	Funds for contracts with MSU Ext. and Fresh Systems LLC, other instructors.	MSU Ext. established. March 2022. Contracts with other instructors established as needed, ongoing. Milestone 3: Internal auditors trained to Harmonized GAP+ standard. August 2022 or sooner.	KVCC Human Resources and Contracts depts. Contractors Britton, Borgman, others as needed.
Objective 1.	Activity 2: Develop and Implement Responsive Farm Food Safety Training Portfolio, including individual farm food safety progress support.	Ongoing through September 2024; progress assessed annually.	Funds for salary for Food System Educator (FSE). Funds for contracts with MSUE and Fresh Systems LLC, other instructors. Farm goal intake/assessment tool. Funds for farmer training, GAP audits. Internal auditors (3; to be trained to Harmonized GAP+ standards)	Milestone 1: Apr 2022. Publish ValleyHUB Toolkit – including our SOPs, best practices, and annotated listing of other food safety educational resources available in MI and USA. Milestone 2: Winters 22-23. Plan and host ValleyHUB Summit with farm food safety training content (also meets IFSP needs, see Objective 2 Activity 2 below) Milestone 3: Define individual farm food safety goals with ValleyHUB partner farms/producers as part of annual compliance or new partner intake. Track progress toward goals annually. Milestone 4: Farms/staff receive custom training/support, and/or participate in workshop-setting trainings (above). Customized support may include internal audits for group USDA GAP-type certifications.	<u>Food Systems Educator</u> (FSE) (to be hired by January 2022) Food Systems Educator Food Hub Manager. Farm managers and staff. Internal auditors.
Objective 1.	Activity 3: Develop framework for pilot Approved Supplier program.	Draft by Sept 2023. Framework in use by Sept 2024.	Contract with Fresh Systems, LLC.	Milestone 1: Fall 2023, draft framework created with input from growers; workshopped at ValleyHUB Summit in Winter 2024. Milestone 2: Framework included in Toolkit update.	Britton/Fresh Systems, LLC. Food Hub Manager. Food Systems Educator.

Objective 2.	Activity 1: Develop and implement responsive local fresh food handling program with ValleyHUB partner IFSPs.	Ongoing through September 2024; progress assessed annually.	Funds for salary for Food System Educator (FSE).	Milestone 1: Identify food handling resources and training materials; compile and publish annotated list in Toolkit (above). Milestone 2: Develop goal-setting tool and framework for education/equipment sub-awards. Milestone 3 (annual cycle, years 2-3): goal-setting meetings with individual IFSPs (current/prospective ValleyHUB partners), followed by customized trainings and capacity sub-award process.	FSE
			Funds for contracts with MSUE and Fresh Systems LLC, other instructors.		FSE
			IFSP goal intake/assessment tool.		Food Hub Manager.
			Funds for IFSP staff training and small critical equipment.		MSUE and Fresh Systems LLC. IFSP managers and staff.
Objective 3	Activity 1: Maintain and grow ValleyHUB operation by providing distribution, logistics, fresh-cut processing, and producer-customer matchmaking services.	Sept 2024 (and ongoing) Key indicators tracked weekly and recorded quarterly. (customer counts, product counts, financials)	Licensed food processing facility.	Milestone 1: Continuing outreach to IFSP and other customers. Milestone 2: Developing and producing fresh-cut produce products. Milestone 3: Cultivating rightsized retail partners for farms not ready for IFSP sales. Milestone 4: annual gross sales growth of at least 50% over prior year, assessed at conclusion of each fiscal year (June).	Outreach/Marketing Coordinator. Food Hub Operations Coordinator, Logistics Technician, and Manager.
			Refrigerated delivery trucks (2, already owned).		
			Food hub staff (logistics, operations, hourly support)		
			Specialized equipment (already owned).		

Have you received a past FMPP or LFPP grant award?

Yes No

Have you submitted this project to another Federal grant program?

Yes No

Are you a current Regional Food System Partnership (RFSP) recipient?

Yes No

If yes to the above questions, please provide the information below. Provide AMS agreement number for grants received in the past 5 years. Describe how the project is/was different from previous grants or how it supplements the proposed activities; and the results of the current project (if applicable). Include lessons learned, what can be improved, and how these lessons and improvements will be incorporated into this application to effectively and successfully meet program goals.

Year	Grant award Program Name, Type of Grant (if applicable) and/or AMS Grant Agreement (if applicable)	Description
2018	Local Food Promotion Program Implementation Grant: Grant # AM180100XXXXG140	<i>Leveraging Institutional Customers to Support Local Food Supply Chains:</i> Project supports GroupGAP farm food safety certification and expansion of fresh-cut local products to meet IFSP demand. Includes salary of Food Hub Outreach/Marketing Coordinator from 2018-2021. Lessons learned described above; briefly, we learned that IFSPs have diverse needs for training and other support alongside their demand for fresh-cut local/regional food products, and we are adapting our approach to provide education support alongside supply chain support. Meanwhile, farms want to improve food safety but respond to what certifications their customers are requesting; we have re-set our goal around their goals rather than one-size-fits-all USDA Group GAP.

ACHIEVABILITY

This section includes the outcome indicator evaluation plan.

Outcome Indicators

Complete all applicable project Outcomes and Indicators with baseline and/or estimated realistic target numbers. If an outcome indicator does not apply, check N/A (Not Applicable) and briefly explain below the table why it is not applicable.

Outcome 1: To Increase Consumption of and Access to Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.

Indicator	Description	Estimated number	N/A
1.a.	Total <u>number</u> of project beneficiaries/stakeholders reached	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.b.	Of the total number that were reached, the <u>number</u> that reported buying, selling, aggregating, storing, producing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced agriculture products	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.c.	Of the total number that were reached, the <u>number</u> that gained knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products	50	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 2: To Increase Customers and Sales of Local and Regional Agricultural Products.

For projects that do not already have a baseline of sales in dollars or an initial customer count, one of the objectives of the project must be to determine such a baseline to meet the requirement and to document the value of sales increases or percent change in customer count by the end of the project.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
2.a.	Sales increased as a result of marketing and/or promotion activities during the project performance period.		
	Initial (Original) Sales Amount (in dollars)	\$330,000	<input type="checkbox"/>

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number	N/A
	Estimated Final (Resulted) Sales Amount (in dollars)	\$750,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Percent Change $((n \text{ final} - n \text{ initial}) / (n \text{ initial}) * 100 = \% \text{ change})$	127%	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.b.	Customer counts increased during the project performance period.		
	Initial (Original) Customer Count	45	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Estimated Final (Resulted) Customer Count	100	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Percent Change $((n \text{ final} - n \text{ initial}) / (n \text{ initial}) * 100 = \% \text{ change})$	%	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 3: To Develop New Market Opportunities for Farm and Ranch Operations Serving Local Markets. *Please provide estimated target numbers.*

Indicator	Description	Estimated number	N/A
Number of new and/or existing delivery systems/access points reached that expanded and/or improved locally or regionally produced product or service offerings			
3.a.	Number of Farmers Markets		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.b.	Number of Roadside Stands		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.c.	Number of Community Supported Agriculture Programs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.d.	Number of Agritourism activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.e.	Number of other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.f.	Number of local and regional Food Business Enterprises that process, aggregate, distribute, or store locally and regionally produced agricultural products	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

N/A: This project does not support direct-to-consumer activities.

Of the local and regional farmers and ranchers, processors, aggregators, and/or distributors reached, the:			
3.g.	Number that reported an increase in revenue expressed in dollars	60	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.h.	Number that gained knowledge about new market opportunities through technical assistance and education programs	160	<input type="checkbox"/>

Number of careers, jobs, farmers that went into production			
3.i	Number of New careers created (Difference between "jobs" and "careers": jobs are net gain of paid employment; new businesses created or adopted can indicate new careers)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.j.	Number of Jobs maintained/created		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.k.	Number of New beginning farmers who went into local/regional food production		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3.l.	Number of Socially disadvantaged ⁹ famers who went into local/regional food production		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

N/A: this project does not support new career pathways or farm ownership; it focuses on skills, capacity, and support for individuals already engaged in food industry work.

⁹ **Socially Disadvantaged Farmer** is a farmer who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Outcome 4: To Improve the Food Safety of Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.

Indicator	Description	Estimated number	N/A
4.a.	Number of individuals who learned about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices	260	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.b.	Number of those individuals who reported increasing their food safety skills and knowledge	130	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.c.	Number of growers or producers who obtained on-farm food safety certifications (such as Good Agricultural Practices or Good Handling Practices)	60	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome 5: To Establish or Expand a Local and Regional Food Business Enterprise.

Applicable to projects conducting a needs assessment (i.e. planning projects).

Indicator	Description	Estimated number	N/A
5.a.	For projects developing a plan to establish or expand a local and regional food business enterprise and conducting a needs assessment: Number of unmet consumer needs, barriers to local foods, unserved populations, etc. identified through the use of a comprehensive need's assessment.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.b.	Number of plans (business, economic, feasibility) developed based on a comprehensive needs assessment.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.c.	Amount of non-Federal financial, professional, and technical assistance measured in dollars secured as a result of the developed plan(s).	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

N/A: This project will not include a needs assessment, develop a business plan. Some additional technical assistance may be secured through program partners who are also funded by USDA grant dollars.

Outcome 6: (REQUIRED)

All applicants must identify at least one additional outcome and indicator based on relevant project activities not covered above.

Project Specific Outcome Indicator(s)

Indicator	Description	Estimated number
6.a	Roadmap/Toolkit published including training program curriculum frameworks, actively used in training curricula at ValleyHUB and available for use by partners and other practitioners.	1
6.b.	Program partners whose programs/materials/research are amplified by the toolkit.	20
6.c.	Program partners, including other food hubs, who access and use the toolkit.	380

Outcome Indicator Measurement

For each completed outcome indicator, describe how you derived the numbers, how you intend to measure and achieve each relevant outcome and indicator, and any potential challenges to achieving the estimated targets and action steps for addressing them.

Outcome and indicator # <i>I.e., 3.i., 6.a., 6.b.</i>	How did you derive the estimated numbers? <i>I.e., documented background or baseline information, recent research and data, etc.</i>	How and when do you intend to evaluate? <i>I.e., surveys, 3rd party assessment</i>	Anticipated key factors predicted to contribute to and restrict outcome <i>Including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors</i>
1.a.b.	<p>This is the number of buyer partners we intent to serve by the end of the project period. We currently serve 45 unique retail, restaurant, and IFSP customers.</p> <p>The number of individual staff impacted per buyer is between 1 and 30.</p>	<p>Buyer partner activity tracked through online ordering platform (Local Line).</p>	<p>As we emerge from COVID-19 closures, the food industry is shifting. If restaurants and corporate/hospital cafeterias, in particular, do not return to pre-pandemic levels of activity, we may fail to gain access to these customers. In response, we could devote more energy to retail and school/healthcare IFSPS.</p> <p>If COVID-19 intermittent closures continue, the uncertainty may limit school food service participation in any training programs. We will focus the FSE’s work on high-touch individual consulting and outreach.</p>
1.c.	<p>Half of our buyer partners will have at least one employee participate in some sort of training or consulting to build knowledge and capacity.</p> <p>100% of participants will report gaining knowledge.</p>	<p>Training/consulting participation tracked in real time, compiled quarterly.</p> <p>Pre/post training surveys (standard practice for KVCC non-credit instruction) following each program, compiled quarterly.</p>	<p>This number may be higher due to informative, regular communication with all partners. We will also evaluate impact of email/social media messages on buyer partner staff knowledge.</p>
2.a.b.	<p>Increase in sales and customers estimated from a list we maintain of potential new buyer partners (customer = a restaurant, retail outlet, or IFSP) and their potential purchase volume based on similar current partners.</p>	<p>Sales are tracked weekly. Customers are counted quarterly for reporting.</p> <p>All numbers are tracked within online ordering software platform.</p>	<p>See 1.a.b., above.</p>

3.f.	This is ValleyHUB.	We will evaluate whether ValleyHUB is still a viable social enterprise at the end of the project period.	Changes to program priorities could lead to changes in ValleyHUB's operation. We make significant effort to keep College leadership informed of our activities and impacts in order to maintain a presence for ValleyHUB in the College's strategic plans; discontinuing the food hub is a highly unlikely outcome.
3.g.h.	160 farms is 20% of estimated 800 total farms in SW Mich. that are potential ValleyHUB partners that we will reach directly with supply chain and/or education support. At least 60 will be active supplier partners and show sales increases over the program period. (see "beneficiaries")	Education/outreach participation numbers will be tracked as programs are offered, compiled quarterly. Active supplier partners and their individual sales will be tracked quarterly. *Sales data for individual businesses will never be shared unless aggregated for more than 5 businesses and with permission of partner.	As noted above, we continue to lose farm businesses in SW MI, but we intend that our work and that of our program partners will sustain businesses so they can continue working with us to achieve these shared goals. In prior experience, we have had low turnout for farmer training programs due to scheduling and/or ineffective outreach. The FSE will devote effort to ensuring programs are convenient and widely publicized via media channels and personal invitations.
4.a.	This is the total number of supplier and buyer partners we engage; 1.a.b. and 3.g.h. above.	See 1.a.b. and 3.g.h. above.	See 1.a.b. and 3.g.h. above.
4.b.	At least 50% of participants in training programs will report increase in food safety knowledge or skills (all trainings will include food safety content)	Pre/post surveys from training programs as they occur, compiled and reported quarterly.	We will closely monitor outcomes of our first year of training programs; low numbers on self-reported increase in knowledge will indicate a change in practices, and the FSE will gather qualitative feedback from program participants to determine course corrections. Our skilled training partners, with strong track record for delivery of this content, make this outcome unlikely.
4.c.	All active supplier partners will obtain certification or approval through the pilot Food	By year 3, all partners will participate in the pilot Food Safety Assurance program. We will count	Development of a more flexible framework for food safety assurance, based around USDA GAP and the Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety Readiness Review, will ensure

	Safety Assurance Program.	participating farms during the growing season of 2024.	that all supplier partners can achieve a type of approval that is appropriate for their scale and customer base. We expect and will require 100% participation. We anticipate farm resistance due to staffing/time constraints and general lack of information; FSE will proactively address this.
6.a.b.c.	6.a This is the Toolkit/Roadmap 6.b. This is the number of partners whose programs are included in the Roadmap. 6.c. Every program participant (above), at least twenty other partners from Michigan and average of two per state outside of Michigan will download the toolkit.	This tool will be published by Summer 2022 and updated annually. Partners' work cited will be tracked annually with publication. Clicks and downloads will be tracked and compiled annually via website analytics. Optional contact capture will generate email list for a feedback survey, administered annually.	The Toolkit/Roadmap will include content that is used in every training/education program offered through this grant program. Other awareness and use of the Toolkit/Roadmap will depend on outreach via a robust social media strategy coupled with high-touch networking with partners. This is planned as part of the work of the FHOMC and FSE together.

Potential Adaptation of Project by Others

Discuss if and how this project can be adapted to other regions, communities, and/or agricultural systems.

ValleyHUB is ideal demonstration site for a project that can be adapted to other regions and communities. Our home within a community college has two advantages: first, our backbone operations (facility, management positions) are supported by the College, which gives us the opportunity to experiment, take our time collecting community and partner input, build support, test different approaches, fail occasionally, and spend time in deep learning. Second, because we are simultaneously delivering educational programs, everything we learn can be immediately shared – and our students and program participants are valuable sources of additional insight to improve our operations. What results is a rich trove of formative evaluation data that can inform other food hubs, whether they be independent businesses/organizations, or public assets. Our partners in this work, particularly those in the Michigan Produce Safety Working Group, value this unique contribution – we have the capacity to develop best practice recommendations and then immediately pilot-test them. We would argue that the best equipped regions to replicate our project would be ones that have a publicly-supported food hub with strong educational mission, and we aim to prove the value of such an operation. The learnings we document in this project will support independent food hubs more efficiently refining their operations. Our Toolkit/Roadmap documents will be available in both published and editable form for others to use in their own operations.

Dissemination of Project Results

Describe how you will disseminate project’s results (positive and negative) to similar organizations, stakeholders, and others that may be interested in the project’s results or implementing a similar project.

ValleyHUB is embedded in a robust practitioner network in Michigan and nationally, and we have often shared our experiences and learnings through these channels. In November 2019, we presented at an incredibly informative “Failure Panel” at the quarterly meeting of the MFIN. We presented at the National Good Food Network Conference in March 2020, and in regular meetings of the Michigan Food Hub Working Group. In May 2021 ValleyHUB staff presented on our farm-to-institution food safety practices at the quarterly meeting of the MFIN. We also regularly consult with other community colleges and four-year institutions of higher education that are considering launching similar projects, including Northern Michigan College, the College of Lake County and McHenry County College in Illinois, and San Juan College in New Mexico. However, we still need to raise more awareness about ValleyHUB locally. Part of the project proposed here will involve expanding our own media platforms, including a YouTube channel and social media streams, as a way to promote sales of local and regional food products in SW Mich., and to increase general awareness of our programs within and beyond our region.

During the project period, we will aim to 1) participate in regular meetings of all statewide networks pertaining to local/regional food systems, and make a formal presentation at one of these at least once annually; 2) collect and maintain all formative and summative evaluation information in an accessible place and format that is shareable for other practitioners and partners; 3) build and maintain a user-friendly website to host our Toolkit/Roadmap, current program information, easy contact information, and links to social media channels; and 4) maintain a steady social media presence on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube that includes both promotional and educational content and amplifies the work of other practitioners in the field.

EXPERTISE AND PARTNERS

Key Staff (Applicant Personnel and External Partner/Collaborators)

List key staff, including applicant personnel and external project partners and collaborators (see section 3.2 in the RFA for definitions) that comprise the Project Team, their role, their relevant experience, and past successes in developing and operating projects similar to those to be conducted under this project. Applicant must include Letters of Commitment from Partner and Collaborator Organizations to support the information (see section 4.2.4 in the RFA).

Key staff <i>Name and Title</i>	Role	Relevant experience and past successes
<p>Rachel Bair, KVCC <i>Director for Sustainable Food Systems (DSFS)</i></p>	<p>DSFS will serve as project director / PI and oversee all reporting and evaluation, and provide strategic direction to Food Hub Manager and Food Systems Educator.</p>	<p>Rachel Bair, MS, MPH, has led the team at the Food Innovation Center at KVCC since its construction in 2015, building and implementing plans for farm operations, food hub business planning, curriculum, and community events. Previously, Bair led the scale-up of the Double Up Food Bucks produce incentive program in Michigan from 2010 until 2015. Bair holds MPH and MS (Natural Resources) degrees from the University of Michigan, and a professional</p>

Key staff <i>Name and Title</i>	Role	Relevant experience and past successes
Rosie Florian, KVCC <i>Food Hub Manager (FHM)</i>	FHM will ensure coordination between operations of food hub, including farm, logistics, and fresh-cut processing, and business/training needs of farm and IFSP/retail/restaurant customers.	certificate in Food Hub Management from the University of Vermont’s School of Continuing and Distance Education. Rosie Florian shares over 20 years of food systems experience with ValleyHUB. Her background includes restaurant and food service operations, retail grocery management, and organic vegetable farming. These experiences reinforce Florian’s strong connections and ability to serve the unique needs of small to medium SWMI farms and food producers. In 2018 she joined ValleyHUB as the Marketing & Outreach Coordinator and became ValleyHUB Food Hub Manager in 2020. She is trained as an internal auditor for USDA GroupGAP.
Lauren Barnhardt, KVCC <i>Food Hub Outreach & Marketing Coordinator (FHOMC)</i> <i>*Continuing salary requested</i>	FHOMC will be primary point of contact with ISFPs, working closely with them to determine and meet their product needs, and working with them and FSE to determine training needs and customize programming.	Lauren Barnhardt joined KVCC in October 2020. She has a degree in Nutrition & Dietetics from Western Michigan University and has worked closely with local businesses in the Kalamazoo area since 2016, including local restaurants, food producers, a nutrition education company, and a Michigan local food marketing agency, gaining valuable insight into the needs of businesses acting within the food system.
To be hired, KVCC <i>Food Systems Educator (FSE)</i> <i>*New salary requested</i>	FSE will work with all ValleyHUB partners to determine needs for training/education support, then work with statewide partners to develop and implement on-demand training. Will also create and publish Toolkit/Roadmap, with support from Fresh Systems, LLC.	Ideal candidate will have Bachelor’s degree, Masters’ degree preferred, in relevant field; at least 3 years work experience in farming and/or food processing and at least 3 years’ experience with teaching or program development. Search will follow KVCC standard processes and take 3 months.
Crystal VanPelt, KVCC <i>Food Hub Operations Coord. (FHOC)</i> <i>*Partial salary as match</i>	FHOC will ensure timely, safe production of fresh-cut produce items, and be responsible for maintenance of all food safety documentation for use in operations and as teaching tool.	Crystal VanPelt is joining the KVCC team in Summer 2021, coming from seven years as an Educator with Purdue University Extension, where she worked on farm food safety, urban agriculture, and farm to institution linkages.

Key staff <i>Name and Title</i>	Role	Relevant experience and past successes
Austin Wertheimer, KVCC <i>Food Hub Logistics Technician (FHLT)</i> <i>*Partial salary as match</i>	FHLT will ensure timely and safe receipt and delivery of local and regional food products between farm/producer partners, ValleyHUB, and IFSP/retail/restaurant customers.	Austin Wertheimer has provided logistical services for ValleyHUB supplier and buyer partners since 2019, managing receiving, route planning and deliveries/pickups, and maintenance on the ValleyHUB refrigerated truck. He formerly owned a small diversified produce farm.
Mariel Borgman and Garrett Ziegler, MSU Ext. <i>Community Food Systems Educators (CFSE)</i> <i>*Contract funds requested.</i>	CFSEs will deliver training programs for IFSPs and farms related to preparing fresh local/regional ingredients on institutional menus using established curricula like <i>Making Michigan Recipes Work</i> and modifying existing tools as needed. They will also consult with farms and ValleyHUB and provide training on on-farm-food safety, and serve as internal auditors when USDA GAP or Harmonized GAP certifications are desired through the Michigan GroupGAP Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Garrett Ziegler: *5 years of experience in on-farm food safety education across the local supply chain, focused on ensuring small to medium sized farms have access to food safety education and new markets through expanded access to on-farm food safety certification. Mariel Borgman: *6 years of experience in farm food safety technical assistance, supporting farm to institution value chains. *Developed educational materials for farmers and IFSPs, including the Making Michigan Recipes Work curriculum on skills for using fresh Michigan produce. *Management team member of MFIN and a member of the Michigan On Farm Produce Safety team. Ziegler and Borgman are internal auditors for the Michigan Group GAP Network and FSMA Produce Safety Alliance trainers.
Phil Britton, Fresh Systems LLC Principal <i>*Contract funds requested</i>	Fresh Systems, LLC, will lead development of the pilot Approved Buyer Program framework, contribute significantly to the Toolkit/Roadmap publications, working closely with FSE, and will deliver customized 1-on-1 and group trainings on on-farm food safety.	Phil Britton has 7 years of food systems experience, and 10+ of systems development. He assisted the development and pilot of USDA's GroupGAP program, and currently oversees the certification of 40+ producers across 5 states. He has helped develop approved supplier programs for state agencies, helped food hubs implement quality management systems (QMS), and has co-written guides on marketing GAP certification and QMS development. Britton sits on the steering committee for the UP Food Exchange and the Marquette Food Co-op BOD.

Project Management Plan

*Describe your management plan for coordination, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the Project Team and stakeholder groups, including both internal applicant personnel **and** external partners and collaborators.*

Organizational structure: the **Food Hub Outreach/Marketing Coordinator (FHOMC)** will report to the **Food Hub Manager (FHM)**, along with the current **Food Hub Operations Coordinator (FHOC)** and **Logistics Technician (FHLT)**. Food Hub Manager and **Food Systems Educator (FSE)** will work closely together and report to the **Director for Sustainable Food Systems (DSFS)**, who oversees the programs and operations at the Food Innovation Center facility, including ValleyHUB food hub and urban farm and related educational programming. The Food Systems Educator will work closely with **Director of Corporate Training** on development and implementation of customized trainings, using robust existing systems for on-demand, non-credit program delivery.

Contracts with consultants **Phil Britton / Fresh Systems LLC** and **Mariel Borgman and Garrett Ziegler/ MSU Ext.**, and cooperative agreements (contract or sub-awards) with farm and IFSP partners will be managed through normal KVCC contract processes, by the DSFS with support from the Food Hub Manager. KVCC's internal grants management office, made up of **Associate VP for Collaboration, Compliance, and Analytics** (Tracy Labadie) and **Financial Services Manager** (Karin Denman), will support financial monitoring and reporting to USDA, working closely with DSFS.

A Project Steering Team, including all the individuals named above (in bold), plus at least one farm partner and one IFSP partner, will meet quarterly to document progress, adjust approach as needed, review plans for external communications, and collaborate on next steps. All team members will have access to a shared Google Drive with active program documents, and communicate primarily via email following current standard processes. Program Partners will coordinate with the appropriate Steering Team member as needed and may join the Steering Team for some or all of the project period.

Data generated during this project will include notes from team and partner meetings (formal/informal); post-meeting evaluation survey results, curriculum documents, participant/student enrollment numbers, grades, and completion (Student data is protected, and is stored on servers and accessed through the Banner platform by authorized KVCC Institutional Research staff. Reports with student identifiers removed can be created on request). All data will be maintained in a generally accessible digital format (eg. .xls, .pdf). Any paper/hard-copy original documents will be digitized by photograph, scan, or transcription for long-term storage. Data will be maintained on KVCC-sponsored Google Drive during active use, and archived on KVCC internal servers, which can be accessed by any College employees who have been granted permission. All key personnel will have access to folders.

Project Sustainability

Describe how the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the project's period of performance (without grant funds).

ValleyHUB launched in 2017, after a two-year intensive planning period, and will continue operations beyond the conclusion of this award. The facility and management of the operation are included in KVCC's general operating budget as lab spaces for educational programming, and embedded in KVCC's operations and strategic plans. Hourly staffing, equipment, and other supplies, are covered by sales through the hub, and the growth trajectory predicted as a result of the proposed project will support the continuation of the Food Hub Outreach and Marketing Coordinator's salary.

The Food System Educator role may or may not continue following the grant period via several avenues to success. If demand among ValleyHUB partners continues to exist for educational

programming, and it can be paid by participants or another grant source, the role will remain in a similar form. If demand shifts to a show a need for credit-bearing programming, the position could shift to a faculty role at the College. If demand is satisfied within the project period, the position could even be eliminated following the award period – however, the work that the FSE establishes will be ongoing because the capacity will have been built to sustain it with other existing staff positions. For example, the Toolkit/Roadmap would continue to be updated by the Food Hub Manager, who will also continue to consult with farms on recommended and required food safety practices/certifications as part of annual compliance checks. On-demand programming using curriculum materials developed during the award period could be coordinated as needed by KVCC Corporate Training division using contracted instructors. In short – this grant will fund necessary capacity-building for ValleyHUB and our farm and IFSP partners, and ample time to evaluate the best model for ongoing education support.

The vision – “Education is our #1 product”: ValleyHUB is a social enterprise housed within a community college, where we benefit from public dollars for backbone support, and therefore have the opportunity and obligation to devote more time to experimentation, evaluation, and sharing our learning. We operate as a business within the local food system to the extent that the logistical support we are providing is needed; and we are increasingly recognizing needs beyond basic logistical support. In the long term, ValleyHUB will become a hub of information, social support, and professional connection for LRFPs and the institution, retail, and restaurant customers they supply. Partners will take advantage of ValleyHUB’s logistics/distribution services, fresh-cut seasonal processed produce catalog, consulting services, workshops, and networking opportunities; we will actively link them with services and other partners so that everyone thrives.

Partners throughout the country will have access to ValleyHUB operational guides through our Toolkit/Roadmap, and we will continue to be an active partner in the thriving Michigan networks that support local and regional food producers. Our impact will be amplified as students in KVCC’s culinary arts, horticulture, and business programs participate in the operations of the food hub and carry lessons learned into their future studies and careers.

Attachments:

Verification of Matching Funds; Evidence of Critical Infrastructure.

Buyer Partner Letters of Support: Berrien Regional Educational Services Agency, Bronson Hospital, Kalamazoo Public Schools, PFC Natural Grocery, Portage Public Schools, South Haven Public Schools.

Contractor Letters of Commitment: Fresh Systems, LLC.; Michigan State University Extension.

Supplier Partner Letters of Support: Molter Organic Orchard, Mitchell’s Patch of Blues.

Program Partner Letters of Support and Commitment: Michigan Food and Farming Systems, Michigan Food Hub Network, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, Kalamazoo Literacy Council, YWCA of Greater Kalamazoo (also a Buyer Partner).

FISCAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

Please complete the Budget and Justification below and ensure that you have included Critical Resources and Infrastructure letters to support the application information (see section 4.2.5 in the RFA)

BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION

The budget must show the total cost for the project and describe how category costs listed in the budget are derived. The budget justification must provide enough detail for reviewers to easily understand how costs were determined and how they relate to the Project Objectives and Expected Outcomes. The budget must show a relationship between work planned and performed to the costs incurred.

Refer to RFA Section 4.6.4 Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities for more information on allowable and unallowable expenses.

Budget Summary

Select the match amount provided (select only one): 25% 10%

Expense category	Federal funds	Cost share or match applicant and 3 rd parties
Personnel	\$276,137	\$117,510
Fringe benefits	\$77,853	\$44,350
Travel	\$11,130	
Equipment	\$0	
Supplies	\$9,000	
Contractual	\$98,044	
Other (specify)	\$82,200	
Direct costs subtotal	\$554,364	\$161,860
Indirect costs	\$55,436	
Total budget (direct + indirect)	\$609,800	\$161,860

Personnel

List each person who has a substantive role in the project and the amount of the request and/ or the value of his or her match. Personnel costs should be reasonable for the services rendered, conform to the established written policy of your organization, and consistently applied to both Federal and non-Federal activities.

#	Name/title and justification for requesting funds	Level of effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Annual salary requested	Total funds requested	Match value	Match type
1	Lauren Barnhardt / Food Hub Outreach and Marketing Coordinator (continuation)	100% FTE				Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
2	TBD / Food Systems Educator (to be hired January 2022)	100% FTE				Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Crystal VanPelt / Food Hub Operations Coordinator	50% FTE				Cash: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Austin Wertheimer / Food Hub Logistics Technician	50% FTE				Cash: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
Personnel subtotals				\$276,137	\$117,510	

Fringe Benefits

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees listed above. The costs of fringe benefits should be reasonable and in line with established policies of your organization.

#	Name/title	Fringe benefit rate	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
1	Lauren Barnhardt / Food Hub Outreach and Marketing Coordinator (continuation)				Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
2	TBD / Food Systems Educator (to be hired January 2022)				Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Crystal VanPelt / Food Hub Operations Coordinator				Cash: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Austin Wertheimer / Food Hub Logistics Technician				Cash: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
Fringe benefits subtotals			\$77,853	\$44,350	

Travel

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulations, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

Trip #	Trip destination, timing, and justification for requesting funds	Type of expense <i>(airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)</i>	Unit of measure <i>(days, nights, miles)</i>	# of units	Cost per unit	Travelers claiming expense (#)	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
1	FSE, FHM, and/or FHOMC travel by car to farms and IFSP partner sites for consulting/training. Average 60 trips per year of 50 miles round trip.	Mileage	Miles	3000	.535	4 (one claim per trip)	\$9630	\$0	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Required travel to grantee conference	Airfare, hotel, transit, meals	Est. total trip cost			1	\$1500	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
Travel subtotals							\$11,130	\$0	

By checking this box, I affirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#), as applicable.

Equipment

Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. "Special purpose equipment" is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities. Rental of "general purpose equipment" must also be described in this section. Purchase of general purpose equipment is not allowable under this grant.

Item #	Item description and justification for requesting funds	Rental or purchase	Acquire when?	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
1	None requested.			\$	\$	
Equipment subtotals				\$0	\$0	

Supplies

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal.

Item description and justification for requesting funds	Cost Per-unit	# of units/pieces purchased	Acquire when?	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
Durable small kitchen equipment for IFSP trainings (knives, cutting boards, blender, induction burner, pots)	varies		By Sept 2022	\$2000	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
Consumable supplies for IFSP trainings (ingredients, gloves, linens)	\$700 per workshop	10 workshops	Years 2-3	\$7000	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
Supplies subtotal				\$9000	\$0	

Contractual

The Contractual section includes contractual, consultant, and subaward agreements that are part of the completion of the project. A subaward is an award provided by the non-federal entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the non-federal entity. Contractual/consultant costs are expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant or subaward, each must be described separately.

Type	Name/organization and justification for requesting funds	Hourly / flat rate	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Subaward	MSU Cooperative Extension Service. For services of educators Garrett Ziegler and Mariel Borgman for program delivery; GAP audits.	See detail in attached commitment	\$38,544	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Subaward	Fresh Systems, LLC. For services of Phil Britton: Delivering farm food safety education programs as part of responsive training portfolio (Obj 1 Act. 2, Milestone 4). Training schedule will be based on partner need identified in Year 1, est. 10 trainings per year in Years 2-3, with 2-30 participants per training varying rate of \$500-1500 per training. Britton will primarily train farmers, but may also offer training <i>about</i> farm food safety for IFSP trainees. Advising on Toolkit development and creation of pilot Food Safety Assurance Program framework (Obj 1. Act. 3). Est. 200 hours of work per year, drafting content,	Flat rate based on deliverables.	\$45,000	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>

Type	Name/organization and justification for requesting funds	Hourly / flat rate	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
	reviewing drafts, participating in meetings, and leading workshop sessions to gather producer input on Assurance Program framework.				
3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Subaward	Contract for delivery of an auditor training for USDA GAP / Harmonized framework in spring 2022. This will be a two-day training onsite in Kalamazoo, Michigan, for 10-15 participants from the Michigan Produce Safety Working Group, who will then be able to provide auditor services for farms involved in this project. (Obj. 1 Act. 1 Milestone 3) Likely service provider is United Fresh Produce Association.	Flat rate	\$10,000	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>
3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Subaward	Contract for coordination support for Harmonized training and 2 ValleyHUB Summit events. Estimated 50 hours of work per event for 3 events.	Hourly at \$30/hour	\$4,500	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>

Contractual subtotal

\$98,044 \$0

By checking this box, I affirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR §200.317 through §200.327](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) is/are not already selected, I affirm that my organization will follow the same requirements.

Other

Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

Item Description and Justification for Requesting Funds	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested	Match Value	Match Type
Marketing and production expenses, including: *Toolkit formatting for web publication (Year 1) (Obj. 1 Act. 2 Milestone 1). (Toolkit is a compilation of ValleyHUB	Costs will vary based on job		Years 1-3	\$75,000	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>

Item Description and Justification for Requesting Funds	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested	Match Value	Match Type
operational documents and other food safety/handling training resources that forms the backbone of all training programs funded through this award). *Video production for key training concepts (Obj 1.2.4 and Obj 2.1.3): up to 6 videos that can be used for offsite and virtual trainings, content determined during goal-setting process with partners. *web presence hosting and maintenance for outreach about trainings, sharing of toolkit, promoting Approved Supplier Program (all objectives) Activities will go through KVCC Marketing department using a combination of in-house and contracted talent, following standard contract/purchasing practices.	specifications. ESTIMATES: Toolkit \$7000 Training videos, 6 at \$5000 each. Materials for SummitS: 2 at \$2500 each. Web presence 3 years at \$11k annually					
Hosting for ValleyHUB Summit events in Year 2 and 3. Assumes 180 participants, \$20/person for overhead and materials; registration fee to cover food costs.	\$20 per person	180 attendees	Jan, '23, '24	\$7,200	\$	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>

Other subtotal

\$82,200 \$0

Indirect

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative costs”—defined at [2 CFR §200.1](#)) represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, or project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. For the indirect cost formula and additional information, refer to Section 4.6.1 of the RFA.

Indirect cost rate requested (%)	Funds requested	Match value	Match type
10%	\$55,436	\$0	Cash: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Kind: <input type="checkbox"/>

Program Income

Program income is gross income—earned by a recipient or subrecipient under a grant—directly generated by the grant-supported activity or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period of performance. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); registration fees for conferences, etc.

Source/nature of program income	Description of how you will reinvest the program income	Funds expected
Food Hub Revenue	Revenue generated by ValleyHUB is immediately reinvested to cover direct expenses of continuing to operate the food hub. Based on previous years sales/margins: food (“raw goods”) and consumable supplies are 73% of operating budget, hourly labor for food processing is 23%, and the remainder covers small contracts for maintenance and hygiene.	\$330,000 – 750,000 per year
Program income total		\$1,580,000 (est)

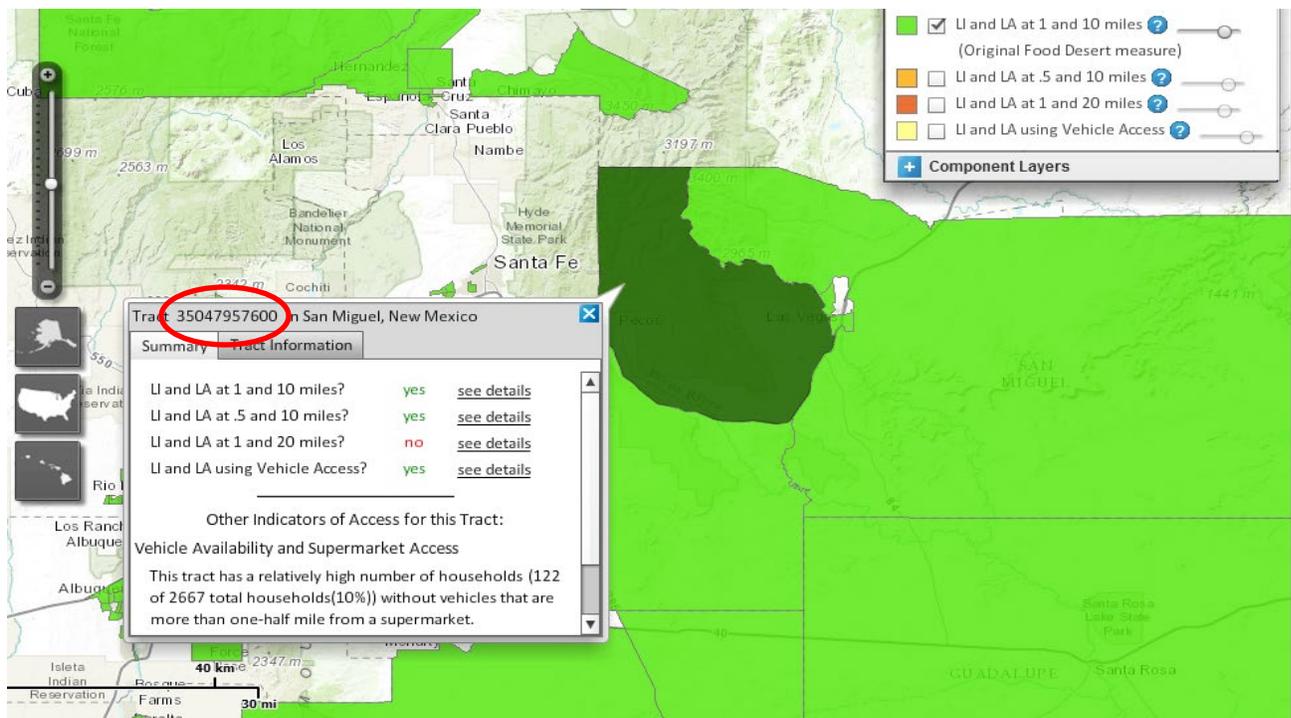
QUALIFYING FOR PRIORITY CONSIDERATION

Food Access Research Atlas (Atlas) <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas.aspx>

Once you enter the Atlas, check one of the four the map layer(s) that applies to the proposal's targeted community.



Zoom in on the map to identify your community. Clicking on your targeted area will produce the census tract and additional information about the locale. In the example below, the dark green area qualifies as low income and low access, and the census tract would be 35047957600.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0240. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 4 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.