2019 Grant Program
For Transporting Healthy Food

Many communities and neighborhoods have limited or no access to fresh produce, dairy, meats, and seafood. One of the contributing factors to these “food deserts” is the lack of infrastructure to distribute fresh food to markets, be it a farmer or fisherman delivering food to a weekly market, distributor, or grocery store; mobile market trucks (“veggie vans”) that meet people in their own community; or organizations able to store fresh food overnight for market morning. CSX, along with its partner, The Conservation Fund, announces availability of grant funding focused on supporting the distribution infrastructure of perishable fresh food to and within these communities.

This grant program will provide grants ranging from $2,500 to $7,500 to help alleviate the transportation and related operation gaps (i.e., distribution, packaging, and short-term storage) that support organizations face in distributing fresh food to markets and to vulnerable and underserved populations in particular. A total of $90,000 in funding is available. Grants may support the range of activities and equipment related to transportation such as refrigerated vehicles for direct delivery to markets, “veggie vans” to bring fresh food to isolated communities, access to food hubs or other sites where produce, dairy, seafood, and meats can be stored safely for distribution, or produce boxes or cold storage bins to keep unsold food fresh for the next day’s farmers market or wholesale purchase.

DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE

CSX is one of the nation’s largest transporters of commodities including agricultural, food and food-service products. Its rail network provides incredibly efficient transportation for moving freight and intermodal containers long distances. The immediate need is to promote food transportation options at the local level. Local distribution is the critical counterpart to bringing fresh food to people and people to food. Following harvest, food needs to travel from farm to market or distribution center to end user. Our local and regional food organizations require the means to retain food quality and safety as they sell, store, package, and distribute produce and other goods to the communities they serve.
CRITERIA

To qualify for these grants, eligible applicants must:

1) Be located in the following states that CSX rail serves (Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, DC—see http://www.csx.com/index.cfm/customers/maps/csx-system-map/ for the CSX system map).

2) Be a “local foods distributor” (i.e., an entity that distributes fresh produce/perishable foods such as meat dairy, seafood) Eligible entities may be: any agency of local, state, or federal government, OR an organization that is exempt from taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Note: Previous grant awardees are not eligible to apply for this round of funding.

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds include:

1) The purchase of equipment to broaden distribution to individuals and families in need of fresh food. For example, types of equipment may include, but not be limited to:
   - Refrigerated trucks or trailers to deliver perishable foods to farmers’ markets, food hubs, or distribution centers
   - Mobile market trucks (“veggie vans” or “mobile food stands”) that bring fresh produce and other fresh food to populations in need
   - Mobile processing facility for small livestock or on-site value-added processing needed for transportation (i.e. flash freezing, drying, or refrigeration of seafood)
   - Cold Storage bins/produce boxes

Note: Funds may not be used for maintenance of existing equipment or vehicles.

Preference will be given to grant applications that demonstrate through purchase of equipment, they will be able to:

1) Serve a greater number of people with the equipment’s use.

2) Serve vulnerable or underserved populations/distressed communities according to U.S. census tract information and/or USDA food desert designation.

3) Provide and document local match (minimum 10% required)—either direct cash match or in-kind contributions—that leverage this grant with other sources of support.

4) Demonstrate ability to reliably track over a two-year period of time impacts such as expanded organizational capacity, increased distribution reach, numbers of people and/or communities served, improved socio-economic profile of end users, etc.

The grantors reserve the right to award grants based upon geographic diversity. (The grantors seek to support transportation infrastructure across the targeted geography.)
MONITORING/REPORTING
Upon receiving a grant, successful applicants will be required to provide brief six-month and 12-month evaluations for up to two years as a condition of the grant. These reports will track outcomes resulting from the grant such as the number of people served, who benefitted from distribution, the socio-economic background of end users, how much local food was moved (and how far), stored, and sold or donated, and long-term or secondary impacts. Grantees will also share any other measures of success. Details on reporting and monitoring will be provided with grant award notifications.

ABOUT CSX
CSX, based in Jacksonville, Florida, is a premier transportation company. It provides rail, intermodal and rail-to-truck transload services and solutions to customers across a broad array of markets, including energy, industrial, construction, agricultural, and consumer products. For more than 185 years, CSX has played a critical role in the nation’s economic expansion and industrial development. Its network connects every major metropolitan area in the eastern United States, where nearly two-thirds of the nation’s population resides. It also links more than 240 short-line railroads and more than 70 ocean, river and lake ports with major population centers and small farming towns alike.

CSX recognizes that there are communities across its service network lack fresh food—fruits, vegetables, dairy products, seafood and meats that are essential for human health. It wants to help citizens in these communities gain regular access to locally grown, nutrient-rich, fresh food. That’s why the company is supporting these grants to enable farmers, churches, towns, cities, neighborhoods, and community groups to transport fresh food to people to enjoy as part of a healthier lifestyle.

ABOUT THE FUND
The Conservation Fund is a national nonprofit conservation organization established in 1985 for the express purpose of protecting our nation’s land and water resources and for promoting sustainable economic development. Since its inception, The Fund has been committed to “the importance of conservation to the health and well-being of the United States, its citizens, and the world”. We seek to sustain the natural resources that are essential for healthy food and people. Supporting agricultural land, production, and better storage, transportation, and distribution enhances food security and protects the natural resource assets required to produce food and feed people.