2017 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 $10,000 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—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.

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

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) 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.

4) Provide and document local match--either direct cash match or in-kind contributions--that leverage this grant with other sources of support. No exact match percentage is required but provision of match will be strongly considered in grant evaluation.

The grantors reserve the right to award grants based upon geographic diversity. (The grantors seek to support transportation infrastructure across the targeted geography.)
ABOUT THE FUND

The Conservation Fund is a national non-profit 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.

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.

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.
GRANT APPLICATION

In a separate document, the applicant should answer the following questions in five pages or less:

1. Applicant Organization Name:
2. Applicant Contact Information:
   Name:
   Title:
   Organization:
   Mailing Address:
   City, State, Zip:
   Phone:
   Email:

3. Contact Information for Organization Serving as Fiscal Agent (if other than applicant organization):

4. Contact Information for Media Contact (if other than applicant):

5. General Information
   a. Eligible Entity Type (check one of the following): Note: all non-governmental entities must be tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
      □ Non-profit organization
      □ Federal ID (EIN):
      □ Governmental Agency (local, tribal, other)
      □ Other:
   b. Annual Organizational Budget: $
   c. Annual Food Programming Budget: $
   d. Is your organization a prior applicant and/or awardee of this grant program?

6. Grant Request: Grants are available in the following amounts: $2,500, $5,000, $7,500, or $10,000.
   Amount Requested: $
   Amount of matching funds (see cell H17 of budget worksheet): $

7. Baseline Information: *use prior year’s data for below questions
   a. Number of Counties within Distribution Area:
   b. Current Number of People Served Annually (*duplicated):
      * the number of times individuals are reached through food distributions (or number of times customers patronize a food bank) during the year
   c. Current Number of Pounds of Food Distributed Annually:
   d. Current Number of Meals Served Annually:
      Note: The following assumptions should be used for data conversion
      • 1 family = 2.5 people
      • 1.2 lbs = 1 meal

8. Intended Use: Should not exceed 400 words and must include the following:
   a) Provide a brief (one sentence) description of the intended use of the grant funds e.g., purchase a refrigerated van.
   b) Describe the specific needs the equipment will address and why it’s important to the community.
   c) Describe why this is the best approach to improve service to underserved populations.
   d) Summarize expected outcomes.
   e) Describe how the equipment will complement or support any ongoing efforts to distribute fresh food.
8. Geographic and Demographic Reach of Distribution: Briefly describe the geography and demographics of your organization's service area.
   a) Provide a map of the current customer base and location of your farm or organization. If applicable, also indicate new areas to be served if grant is awarded. Note: Maps do not count towards the five-page limit.
   b) Indicate the approximate proximity to CSX rail line(s). *see map of CSX system at http://www.csx.com/index.cfm/customers/maps/csx-system-map/
   c) Describe the economic conditions, demographics, and socioeconomic conditions of the population you currently serve (or the target population, if different).
   d) Identify the poverty rate, percent of households receiving public assistance (food stamps, EBT recipients, free or reduced lunch), unemployment rate, and median household income for each county in your distribution area. *see http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
   e) Identify whether the census tract(s) for each county is a USDA designated food desert. *see http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.U39t7vldXT8

9. Projected Outcomes: Consider how this action will make a difference in the communities that are served. Indicate projected outcomes resulting from the equipment purchase as compared to current annual statistics (see section 4).
   a) Additional number of people served annually (*duplicated): 
   *the number of times individuals are reached through food distributions (or number of times customers patronize a food bank) during the year
   b) Additional number of counties within distribution area:
   c) Additional number of pounds of food distributed annually:
   d) Additional number of meals served annually:

Note: The following assumptions should be used for data conversion.
   • 1 family = 2.5 people
   • 1.2 lbs = 1 meal

10. Work plan and Timeline: Provide a brief statement outlining the scope of work including the following:
   a) Timeline for acquiring, installing, using, maintaining the equipment, and evaluating the project
   b) Who will complete each activity
   c) Resources required to complete each activity
   d) List of partner organizations or users that will be involved in the equipment acquisition, installation, use, and maintenance

11. Applicant's Experience: Describe the applicant's experience developing local and/or regional distribution networks to deliver healthy food products to underserved areas. Also indicate ability to track impacts of this grant.

12. Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative: Please use the attached budget form to provide a detailed budget that includes the CSX grant funds as well as matching and/or in-kind funds. In-kind contributions can include donations of labor or services. Note: The budget spreadsheet includes a sample budget on the second tab.

   A budget narrative that describes all expenditures is also required. Please also answer the following questions in the narrative:
   a) If partial funding is awarded, can the effort still be carried out or is it dependent upon full funding?
   b) If leveraged (match) funds are not able to be obtained, please indicate if/how you would be able to proceed with the grant.

13. Other Supporting Materials: Enclose pertinent supporting materials that provide a better understanding of the use and impact of the proposed equipment purchase. Applicants are encouraged to illustrate local demand for the equipment (e.g., letters of support) and sources citing the kind or amount of support committed and leveraged. Note: Supporting materials do not count toward five-page limit.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted via email to mcarey@conservationfund.org by midnight on Friday, September 29, 2017. Notifications will be sent within 90 days of the application deadline.

Note: Notifications will be made by the end of December 2017. The grant period will be from January 2018 to April 2019. Grants funds will be disbursed upon receipt of fully executed award agreement. Grant funds must be spent by April 30, 2018.