

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES: REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES BY GROWING LOCAL FOOD ECONOMIES

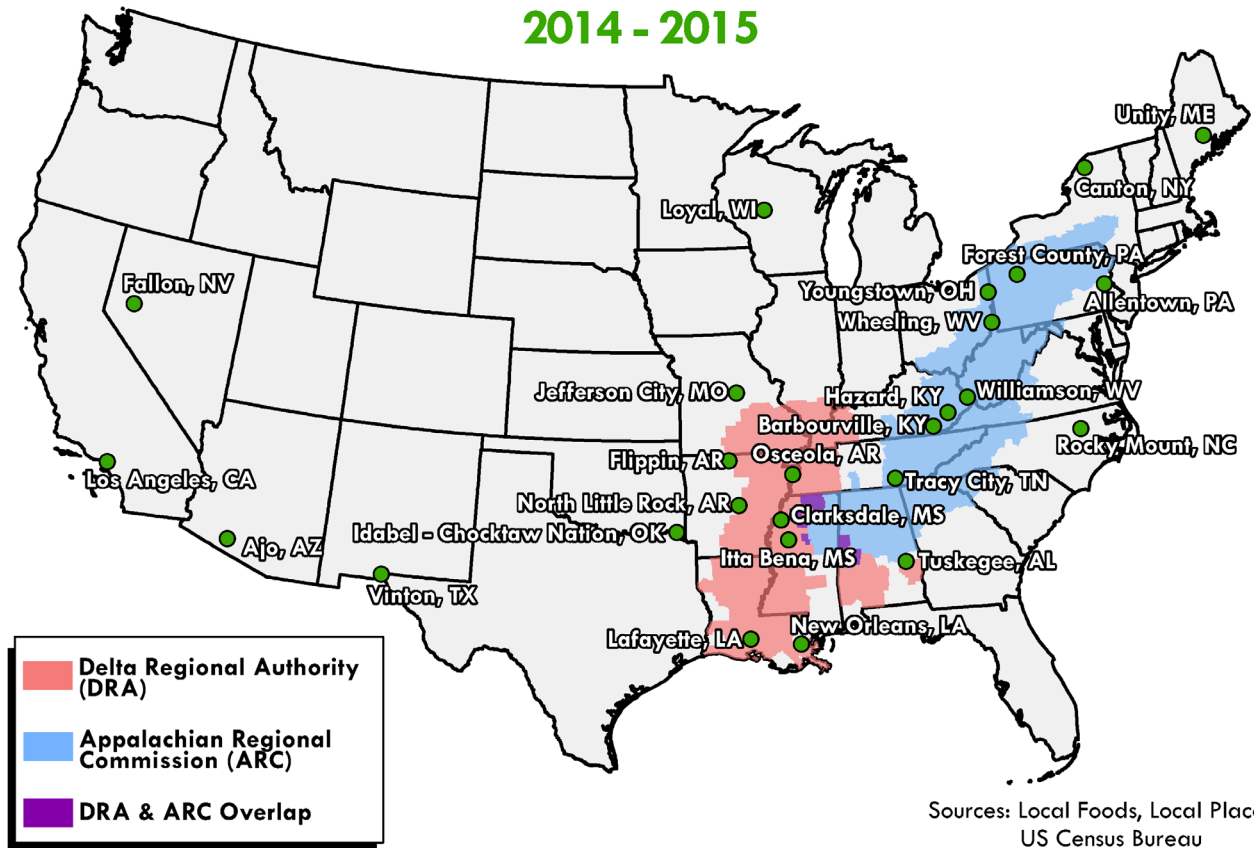
SUMMARY REPORT

JUNE 2015

In December 2014, the White House Rural Council and six federal agencies (U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Transportation, Delta Regional Authority, Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) selected 26 small-town, urban, and rural partner communities to participate in **Local Foods, Local Places**, a federal initiative that provides technical support and expertise to help communities interested in integrating local food systems into their economic development plans. During community workshops, a team of experts helps community members set goals and plan projects, such as community gardens, farmers markets and other food-related enterprises that can help grow local food economies and drive downtown and neighborhood revitalization. The program's initial investment of \$800,000 has had a dramatic impact on these communities.

Local Foods, Local Places

2014 - 2015





Alabama

Community leaders and city officials in **Tuskegee, Alabama**, came together to create “Made in Macon,” a vision for the community’s food network. With its new action plan, the community will establish an organization to carry out the Made in Macon vision. A major part of this vision includes working with the Macon County Food Pantry to grow the facility into a sustainable local food hub with education and entrepreneurial training opportunities for the community. Another aspect of the plan focuses on upgrading local streets and paths to improve and expand the transportation options available for accessing local foods.

Arizona

The Ajo Regional Food Partnership and other community members in **Ajo, Arizona**, used their new action plan to strategize methods of increasing interest in purchasing local foods and expanding their markets. These strategies tie into the community’s main goal: leveraging its local food economy to foster entrepreneurship and job creation.

Arkansas

In **Flippin, Arkansas**, community members came together to create a new school garden, launch a farmers market, and plan a new sidewalk connecting the town’s school complex, downtown, and park. With its new action plan, the community is working toward forming a local growers’ co-op and establishing a Whole Farm Conference to better connect farmers with one another.

The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub and the community of **North Little Rock, Arkansas**, developed an action plan focused on creating a new food hub, enhancing the services of regional food bank efforts, and linking emerging food-related activities to boosting walkability, livability, and economic vibrancy in the Argenta neighborhood.

Osceola, Arkansas, the University of Arkansas, and the local school district used their new action plan to coordinate and enhance healthy foods education, including development of a new healthy foods cooking curriculum in the school district. The community is also creating a farmers market in the downtown, where it is working on infrastructure improvements, cleanup efforts, and establishing policies to attract investment in the area.



A community garden in Flippin, AR



North Little Rock, AR residents discuss options for local food projects



California

The Youth Policy Institute in **Los Angeles, California**, received technical assistance to create a community-supported agriculture program that can improve the health of low-income residents by increasing access to local foods, boost economic opportunities for farmers and producers in the region, and help revitalize distressed neighborhoods.

Kentucky

Barbourville, Kentucky, received technical assistance to expand its current farmers market into a permanent facility where local farmers, gardeners, crafters, entrepreneurs, and consumers can interact and local community organizations can meet.

With their new action plan, community partners in **Hazard, Kentucky**, are developing a non-profit organization to launch community-identified local food system projects. One of these projects is creating the North Fork Market, a local food retail store. Other projects laid out in the plan focus on farmer recruitment and development to increase the supply of local food. In the long run, the community hopes to leverage the success of these projects to transform the North Fork Market into a regional food hub.

Louisiana

Community groups in **Lafayette, Louisiana**, came together to launch the Acadiana Food Alliance. With its new action plan, the Alliance plans initiatives focusing on educating the public on local farmers, local foods, and locations to buy or dine; developing food literacy programs and beginner farm internships in schools; and providing for a more efficient local food system.

The Friends of Lafitte Corridor in **New Orleans, Louisiana**, developed an action plan to create community gardens and a permanent farmers market structure where farmers and gardeners growing food along the Lafitte Greenway can sell their harvest several times a week.

Maine

Unity, Maine, received technical assistance to create a more connected, walkable community; better market the community's agricultural character; and create a local food system that serves all residents.

"The sessions were well attended, bringing together a very diverse audience from our local food economy... This work is so important to the future of our communities."

—**Brett Mellington**

Manager of Business Development with the Lafayette Economic Development Authority on behalf of the Acadiana Food Alliance



New Orleans, LA resident in a local community garden



Mississippi

Griot Arts Inc., a local non-profit organization in **Clarksdale, Mississippi**, received technical assistance to develop a vegetable farming-based job training program and a series of community gardens that will supply food for a new farmers market and a café. The community gardens will be placed throughout Clarksdale’s neighborhoods, ensuring they are accessible to all community members.

Itta Bena, Mississippi, worked on an action plan to create a permanent cooperatively-owned grocery store in its downtown and develop a lasting local food network.

Missouri

In its action plan, **Jefferson City, Missouri**, focused on creating a farmers market and new local food restaurants downtown. The community also explored strategies for revitalizing its downtown into a vibrant, livable neighborhood capable of supporting local farmers and businesses.

Nevada

The Churchill Economic Development Authority in **Fallon, Nevada**, organized stakeholders to start a community-owned grocery store in an abandoned building downtown. The community also used the technical assistance to strategize ways to link its new grocery store with local food-oriented programs and activities.



Participants in a farm-based job training program in Clarksdale, MS

“We had our first Farmers Market last week...with over 20 vendors and activities, hundreds of people came and many vendors sold out after two hours, including the Meraki Job Training Program...It was a great success and we look forward to increasing the numbers, awareness, health and fun even more.”

—Katrina Zavalney

Director, Clarksdale Revitalization Inc.,
in partnership with Griot Arts Youth Program
and Meraki Job Training Program



A local farmer discusses the scarcity of healthy food in Itta Bena, MS



Site options being discussed in Jefferson City, MO



New York

Canton, New York, brought together a group of stakeholders to explore how to build a robust, equitable, and environmentally-sound local food system that can help downtown revitalization efforts.

North Carolina

Rocky Mount, North Carolina, received technical assistance to explore opportunities to establish a new farmers market in an economically challenged part of the city, and to develop urban community gardens on former brownfield sites and Federal Emergency Management Agency buyout lots and nearby affordable housing developments.

Oklahoma

The Choctaw Nation in **Idabel, Oklahoma**, explored strategies to expand and strengthen its existing farmers market and local food system. These strategies focused on engaging youths and seniors, increasing producers at the market, and stimulating additional downtown activity. Changing the operating hours of the market to appeal to a larger customer base and building a certified kitchen next to the downtown farmers market capable of producing local value-added products are two specific actions Idabel is pursuing through those strategies.

Ohio

Youngstown, Ohio, plans to develop cooking demonstration programs and mobile markets to increase knowledge and access to local foods among community members of all income levels, races, and ethnicities. The community also plans on repainting commercial buildings, installing wayfinding signs, and improving pedestrian paths between the college, downtown, park, neighborhoods, and the food cluster to increase access.

Pennsylvania

The Rodale Institute in **Allentown, Pennsylvania**, received technical assistance to help identify key vacant or abandoned sites in the 7th Street Corridor that could be repurposed for urban agriculture. The community is identifying additional opportunities to increase demand and improve access to locally grown organic foods. It is also exploring opportunities to use local foods promotion as a place-making initiative to further local development goals along the 7th Street Corridor.

Forest County, Pennsylvania, received technical assistance to develop a plan for renovating the Marienville Depot to make it a regional Trail Hub with a micro-retail business incubator and a rail trail connected to the Marienville Area Library. The County is also working to develop a façade improvement grant program for downtown Tionesta, and developing a community kitchen at the Forest Folk School.

“Your event has reset the bar for relevancy and inspiration. You facilitated the type of discussion I have been begging for for years.”

—Workshop Participant

Local Foods, Local Places Workshop,
Canton, NY



Installation of new canning machine to scale up food production in Youngstown, OH



Tennessee

Tracy City, Tennessee, received technical assistance to develop a comprehensive, cohesive regional plan for economic stability that connects organizations and stakeholders involved in the region's local food economy.

Texas

Vinton, Texas, focused its action plan on creating the Village of Vinton Farmers market and Community Garden. By creating a physical space where Vinton residents can interact and gain access to fresh, locally produced food, the Village of Vinton will take the first steps in a multi-phase plan toward more economic opportunities for residents in the region. This plan includes developing a Small Business Incubator offering residents resources and tools for success in starting their own businesses.

West Virginia

Grow Ohio Valley in **Wheeling, West Virginia**, plans to develop historic Vineyard Hill into a community orchard and educational area for urban agriculture. The organization is working with the city of Wheeling to build recreational trails connecting the area to downtown to help revitalize the city and improve access to local, healthy food.

Williamson, West Virginia, will finish its Health Innovation Hub to support local entrepreneurs and create a community kitchen. Key farmers in the community hope to create demonstration sites to share methods of reclaiming coal mines into viable farmland. In addition to these demonstration sites, the community hopes to develop a food production site on reclaimed land to re-establish the soil for viable use as farmland.



Residents walk through a greenhouse in Wheeling, WV

Wisconsin

Loyal, Wisconsin, focused its action plan on strengthening the Loyal Farmers Market by increasing vendor support, coordination, and training; improving market promotion; and identifying a new site that could attract more vendors and customers while helping to revitalize downtown.

Apply for Local Foods, Local Places Assistance

On June 30, 2015, federal partners announced a new round of assistance from Local Foods, Local Places. Communities interested in applying may visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/smart-growth/local-foods-local-places>.

The application deadline is September 15, 2015.