Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) Stakeholder Work Group

Wednesday, September 10, 2020
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
AGENDA

10:00 a.m. Selection of a CDFI – Jewel Bronaugh
- Special Considerations

10:30 a.m. Grant Guideline Review – Jennifer Perkins & Jewel Bronaugh
- Review grant proposal and funding rubric drafts

11:30 a.m. VFAIF Technical Assistance Position – Jennifer Perkins

12:00 a.m. Next Steps – Jewel Bronaugh
- Remaining Timeline
- Next EFOD Work Group Meeting – November 19

12:15 p.m. Public Comment Period

12:30 p.m. Adjourn

<u>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>

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What are CDFIs?

Selecting the right CDFI partner

CDFIs
Community Development Financial Institution

CDFIs are:

- Financial institutions providing loans, lines of credit and other financial services (like banks)

- Not-for-profits whose primary mission is community development (unlike banks)

- Licensed by US Dept. of Treasury to serve a particular target market (often low-income or marginalized communities is particular geography, can have a broad or specific target)

- Often receiving public sector and foundation grants which they lend out to projects that traditional banks would consider "higher risk" projects such as affordable housing or small business lending to achieve community development goals.

Selecting the right CDFI partner

Key questions for choosing the right CDFI for you:

- Does their target market (mission and geography) overlap with the community and clients you wish to serve?

- Do they have relevant experience serving your target clients?

- Are they the "right size" (capitalization, staff numbers, expertise, etc.) to accomplish your goals?

- Are they willing to work with you to accomplish your goals with an approach you approve?

According to the legislation, the selected CDFI must have the following:

- A statewide presence in Virginia
- Experience in food-based lending
- Proven track record of leveraging private and philanthropic funding
- Capability to dedicate sufficient staff to manage the Program

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund

Criteria for evaluating projects

Some of the criteria for evaluating VFAIF project is straightforward, such as whether there is a retail component. However, some of the criteria touches on less concrete concepts, including integrating community culture or providing positive outcomes to the community. These metrics are necessary for both ranking project applications and in determining the success of the project in meeting the proposed metrics. Please consider ways in which projects can be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Demonstrate a history of community engagement, work in the community, and community support for the project

- Provide customer access, either by providing transportation to the business or by providing a mobile market component

- Integrate community culture and artistic expression in the business model

- Develop new markets and enterprises, creating real and sustainable economic opportunities
    - Offer employment opportunities, job training, or internships

- Provide a path for financial sustainability and positive outcomes to the community, including education and youth development
    - Financial literacy training

- Create partnerships and/or leverage additional funding

Criteria for evaluating the overall VFAIF program:

In addition to being able to evaluate individual projects on their eligibility and success, there are metrics that can allow VDACS to ascertain the overall success of the VFAIF program. Below are some potential considerations:

- Improved access to healthy food
    - Change in food desert status
    - Reduced percentage of population experiencing food insecurity
    - Increase in retailers accepting SNAP
    - Increase in farmers accepting SNAP

- Improved health outcomes in the community
  - Reduced rates of obesity

- Improved economic stability of the community
  - Increase in BIPOC-owned businesses
  - Increase in businesses that show economic strength (banks, restaurants, retail)
  - Decrease in businesses that show community instability (dialysis centers, ABC stores, dollar stores)

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund

DRAFT

Program Overview

The Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (VFAIF) is a statewide program that focuses on equity and justice in local food systems by investing in new or expanding grocery stores or food retailers that address food access issues in rural and suburban communities. VFAIF offers grant and loans to fund the business development, construction, rehabilitation, equipment upgrades, or expansion of grocery stores, small food retailers, or innovative food retail projects in underserved communities.

The VFAIF program has been developed using the Equitable Food-Oriented Development model, a development strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy neighborhoods, and explicitly seeks to build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically marginalized communities. The objectives of this program are to:

- improve access to fresh foods and reduce food deserts around the Commonwealth;
- create wealth in low-income communities;
- improve access to private capital for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) business owners;
- assess, support and transform existing or potential businesses into sustainable community-owned businesses;
- foster innovative solutions that uplift and share successful food business models; and
- reduce food insecurity, strengthen food systems, and improve health outcomes for historically marginalized communities.

VFAIF is administered by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) in partnership with XXXXX, a community development financial institution (CDFI).

Eligibility

The VFAIF program is a unique opportunity that is focused on historically underserved and marginalized communities. Specifically, VFAIF and the focus of EFOD are focused on vulnerable communities, including BIPOC and low-income individuals, whom have been disproportionality affected by unequal investment and growth, including a lack of access to capital. Food acts as a common thread between history and culture, neighborhood empowerment and economic sustainability, and healthier lifestyles.

To meet the goals of EFOD, applicants for the VFAIF program <u>must</u> be either solely owned or led by BIPOC. Applicants may be individuals, farms, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, or for-profit businesses.

Eligible projects include the construction, rehabilitation, equipment upgrades, or expansion of:

- Grocery stores that primarily sell meat, seafood, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, dry groceries, household products, and sundries and healthy food options
- Innovative food retail projects such as mobile markets or delivery models, including food trucks
- Small food retailers, such as small-scale stores, neighborhood stores, small groceries, farmer's markets, or bodegas
- Small farms, small farm co-ops, community gardens, restaurants or cafes with a direct food retail component or in partnership with a qualified food retailer, food hubs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) CSAs, and farm stands

Eligible uses of funding may include, but are not limited to, seed money, the development of business or marketing plans, or funds for implementation, such as site development or the purchase of equipment.

VFAIF will not fund stand-alone cafes or restaurants without a food retail component, traditional food banks/food pantries, or the purchase of land.

Projects must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding:

- Have a retail component where consumers can purchase fresh meats, seafood, dairy, and/or produce
- Be owned or substantially run by BIPOC leadership
- Serve one of the target areas as shown on the attached map. The committee may consider projects outside of the target areas if there is a compelling justification for doing so
- Demonstrate a history of community engagement, work in the community, and community support for the project
- Accept SNAP benefits and offer Virginia Fresh Match benefits
- Purchase a minimum of 25% of fresh products from Virginia's small, beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (as designated by USDA/ERS ers.usda.gov)

Prioritization will be given to projects that meet the following criteria:

- Provide customer access, either by providing transportation to the business or by providing a mobile market component that takes products to the community
- Integrate community culture and artistic expression in the business model
- Develop new markets and enterprises, creating real and sustainable economic opportunities
- Provide a path for financial sustainability and positive outcomes to the community, including education, leadership and youth development
- Create partnerships and/or leverage additional funding

Applications will be evaluated on their overall positive impact to the community, such as showing an increase in SNAP sales, fresh products available, Virginia-grown purchases by the retailer, and/or employment of community residents.

Application Process

The VFAIF application period will be announced annually. Grant award amounts will range from $5,000 to $70,000 per project, per year. Successful projects may apply for additional funding in subsequent grant rounds upon completion of the previous project (for instance, an applicant could receive $10,000 to create a business plan in year one and then apply for $50,000 for the purchase of equipment/implementation in year two).

To apply, applicants must first complete the application and an Equitable Food-Oriented Self-Assessment (to be found at XXXXX) to determine eligibility). The grant review committee will review the application and assessment. Upon determining the project meets VFAIF's criteria, the review committee will schedule an interview to discuss the project. Applicants should identify local community member(s) to speak to the applicant's community engagement, work in the community and community support for the project plan. Successful applications will show a clear vision and plan, including a timeline and deliverables; have a comprehensive budget; and demonstrate a path to financial sustainability or profitability.

VDACS staff is available to provide technical assistance to applicants. If you have any questions about the process or need help completing the application, please contact:

Jennifer Perkins
Office of Agriculture Forestry and Development
Jennifer.perkins@vdacs.virginia.gov

**MAP to be included

Appendix A[1]

Targeted Cities and Counties

Counties[2]		
Accomack	Grayson	Patrick
Alleghany	Greensville	Pittsylvania
Brunswick	Halifax	Prince Edward
Buchanan	Henry	Radford
Buckingham	King and Queen	Richmond
Carroll	Lee	Russell
Charlotte	Lunenburg	Scott
Craig	Madison	Smyth
Cumberland	Mecklenburg	Sussex
Dickensen	Nelson	Tazewell
Dinwiddie	Northampton	Wise
Essex	Nottoway	Wythe
Franklin	Page	

Cities[3]	
Bristol	Martinsville
Buena Vista	Newport News
Charlottesville	Norfolk
Covington	Norton
Danville	Petersburg
Emporia	Portsmouth
Franklin	Richmond
Galax	Roanoke
Hampton	Waynesboro
Hopewell	Williamsburg
Lexington	Winchester

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[1] All localities on this list meet one or more of the following criteria: the locality is a food desert and 10% or greater of the population has low access to a grocery store; 16% or more of the population faces food insecurity; greater than 35% of the locality is 200% below the federal poverty rate. Data collected from: FeedVA, "FeedVA Map Series". Retrieved September 4, 2020. https://cga-wm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d7792f0224c14c6381508c6d9f194b89

[2] This list includes 38 of 95 counties, representing 40% of counties in Virginia.

[3] This list includes 23 of 35 cities, representing 66% of cities in Virginia.

Lynchburg	

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (VFAIF) Program Coordinator
Draft Position Description

Description

The VDACS Food Access Program Coordinator will primarily focus on the administration of the Virginia Food Access Investment Program and Fund. The purpose of the Food Access Program Coordinator is to increase the access to healthy foods through grant management and partnership development, provide support for nutrition assistance, specifically as it relates to SNAP participants and grant-funded projects, utilize data collection with targeted communities for grants and expansion of the Commonwealth's capacity to produce, distribute, and consume local foods, and serve as the staff lead for the Equitable Food Oriented Development Stakeholder Workgroup.

Grant Management

- Manage the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund.
- Coordinate with a selected CDFI to administer investment funds.
- Evaluate grant applications based on program design and statutory requirements.
- Provide grant application recommendations to the Commissioner on pre-determined criteria.
- Provide technical assistance and outreach to grant applicants to assist with the application process
- Work with VDACS Office of Communications and community partners and organizations to promote the grant opportunity

Partnership Development

- Compile and create a state repository of food access-related initiatives and resources in the Commonwealth
- Develop and strengthen relationships with ongoing partners and stakeholders (schools, community agencies, local farms, and businesses)
- Update social media, support communications with local media outlets, contribute articles, content, photos and information about projects and events
- Work with senior state officials, partners, and other staff to develop and implement food access initiatives.

SNAP & Food Incentive Programs

- Research strategic methods to increase the number of retailers in Virginia that accept SNAP.

- Ensure new and existing SNAP retailers are able to accept at least one food incentive, such as Virginia Fresh Match.

Nutrition Education

- Work with partner food-based organizations to develop one-time and ongoing educational workshops and technical assistance.
  - Leverage opportunities for nutrition and cooking education for clients and community members through the food banks and garden sites.
  - Coordinate with partners members to increase effectiveness and frequency of community cooking classes.

Data Collection

- Work with CDFI to collect and analyze data, as required.
- Prepare data analysis and final reports per requirements of the Virginia General Assembly and share with partners.

Program Management

- Schedule and prepare meeting materials for Grant Review Process.
- Serve as the main point of contact for the workgroup.
- Assist the Commissioner in preparing for follow-up meetings, including preparing meeting slides and agendas, take notes, and follow-up after the meetings.

Requirements

Minimum 3 - 5 years experience with grants management/financial oversight.
Minimum 3 - 5 years experience in project management, development and implementation, and relationship management.
Minimum 3- 5 years experience organizing and building partnerships with diverse community groups.
Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience.
Familiarity with Virginia food deserts.
Strong interest in SNAP, agriculture, public health, and food access.
Must possess a valid driver's license with a good driving record.
Experience with collaborative projects and the design/implementation of programs.
Strong communication and organizational skills.

VIRGINIA **F**REEDOM OF **I**NFORMATION **A**DVISORY **C**OUNCIL
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

ELECTRONIC MEETINGS
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

WE NEED YOUR HELP--Please give us your feedback regarding how meetings using electronic communications technology compare to traditional meetings where everyone is present in the same room at the same time.

1. Name of the public body holding the meeting: _____

2. Date of the meeting: _____

3. What are your overall thoughts or comments about this meeting? _____

_____

4. Where did you attend this meeting -- main meeting location OR from a remote location? (circle one)

5. Technology used for the meeting (audio only or audio/visual, devices and/or software used--please be as specific as possible--for example, speakerphone, iPad, Skype, WebEx, Telepresence, etc.):
_____

6. Were you able to hear everyone who spoke at the meeting (members of the body and members of the public)?

Poor   Excellent
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

7. How easy was it for you to obtain agenda materials for this meeting?

Easy   Difficult
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

8. Could you hear/understand what the speakers said or did static, interruption, or any other technological problems interfere?

Easy   Difficult
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

9. If the meeting used audio/visual technology, were you able to see all of the people who spoke?

Poorly   Clearly
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

10. If there were any presentations (PowerPoint, etc.), were you able to hear and see them?

Poorly   Clearly
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

11. Were the members as attentive and did they participate as much as you would have expected?

Less   More
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

12. Were there differences you noticed in how the members interacted?

With the other members present:
Very Different   No Difference
          1   2   3   4   5
With members participating from other locations:
Very Different   No Difference
          1   2   3   4   5
With the public:
Very Different   No Difference
          1   2   3   4   5
COMMENT_____

13. Did you feel the technology was a help or a hindrance?

Hindered   Helped
          1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

14. How would you rate the overall quality of this meeting?

Poor   Excellent
1   2   3   4   5

COMMENT_____

THANK YOU. Please send your completed form by mail, facsimile or electronic mail to the FOIA Council using the following contact information:

Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council
General Assembly Building, Second Floor
201 North 9th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov/Fax: 804-371-8705/Tele: 866-448-4100