

VFAIF: Food System Resources

Additional Funding Opportunities

I. Grants

A. [Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund](#)

1. A small grant program designed to purchase equipment for veterans in the beginning years of their agricultural business
2. Eligibility Requirements:
 - a) Veterans of any branch of the U.S. Military from all service eras—including those currently serving
 - b) Those who received a characterization of service of ‘Honorable’ upon discharge
 - c) Must have an agricultural business in operation and a functional business plan
 - d) Must be willing to fully participate in the Fellowship Program
3. Open yearly with at least four (4) weeks to submit a fully completed application. Awardees are generally notified in the Spring.

II. Loans

A. [Virginia Community Capital- Virginia Fresh Food Loan Fund](#)

1. Launched in 2013, the Virginia Fresh Food Loan Fund (VFFLF) is a \$10 million revolving loan fund to address food access issues in Virginia’s urban and rural communities. The VFFLF aims to increase access to healthy food by attracting food retail projects into underserved communities and supporting local agriculture and food enterprises.
2. [Foodshed Capital](#)
 - a) “We work with borrowers who are disenfranchised from the traditional financial system including low-income/low-asset individuals and families, Black and Brown families, women and non-binary people, immigrants and indigenous communities, as well as others who have been oppressed by an extractive economy and systemic discrimination. Our focus is on farms and food businesses dedicated to using resilient, regenerative, eco-friendly practices that foster soil health and biodiversity and produce healthy, culturally appropriate food for our local communities.”
 - b) Micro-loans
 - c) Equipment and Infrastructure Loans
 - d) Land loans

- e) Operating/Development/Bridge Loans
 - f) Transition/Conservation Finance
3. USDA Farm Service Agency: Socially Disadvantaged Applicant Funding
- a) Direct Operating Loan
 - b) Direct Farm Ownership Loan
 - c) Direct Farm Ownership Down Payment Loan
 - d) Microloan

How to Accept SNAP & VA Fresh Match

III. How to become a SNAP/EBT Retailer

- A. Retail food stores, specialty stores, farm stands, farmers' markets, and CSAs (Consumer Supported Agriculture) are eligible to apply for a SNAP permit with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the agency in charge of SNAP. Application can be found [here](#) and the permit is free.
- B. Requirements for permit:
- 1. Must have a permit for each store you own
 - 2. Permit must be in your name.
 - 3. Permit cannot be taken over from someone else
 - 4. Must sell certain types of food
 - a) A variety of staple foods in each of four food categories is required
 - (1) Dairy products
 - (2) Breads, grains, cereals
 - (3) Fruits and vegetables
 - (4) Meat, fish, and poultry
 - b) Foods can be fresh, frozen, or canned, but you must stock perishable foods in at least two of the categories
 - 5. OR must have more than 50 percent of its total gross retail sales from the sale of staple foods as defined in the above categories. For example, a specialty store like a butcher shop are often authorized to accept SNAP benefits
- C. For farmers' markets: review the Virginia Cooperative Extension's EBT Toolkit found [here](#)

IV. Virginia Fresh Match

- A. [Virginia Fresh Match](#) nutrition incentives double the value of SNAP (food stamps) spent at participating farmers markets and food stores. Virginia Fresh Match helps people bring home more healthy, affordable fruits and vegetables and supports local farmers.

B. Contact your regional lead:

Region	Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Blue Ridge	Mo McGonagle	LEAP	mo@leapforlocalfood.org	540.632.2295
Capital	Erin Lingo	Shalom Farms	erin@shalomfarms.org	804-266-1914
Central	Beth Austin	Virginia Community Food Connections	bethaustin@virginiacfc.org	(443) 244-3720
Coastal	Tracy Herner	Williamsburg Farmers Market	therner@williamsburgva.gov	(757) 259-3768
Northern	Nick Stavely	FreshFarm	nick@freshfarm.org	(202) 697-7768
Piedmont	Laura Brown	Local Food Hub	laura@localfoodhub.org	(434) 430-5548
Shenandoah	Megan Townley	Project GROWS	megan@projectgrow.org	
Southeast	Cheryl Bursch	River Street Market Education	info@riverstreetmarket.com	(804) 720-2532
Southside	Lisa Fultz	Uptown Martinsville Farmers Market	lisa@mhcchamber.com	(276) 632-6401
Southwest	Crystal Stafford	Appalachian Sustainable Development	cstafford@asdevelopment.org	
Statewide	Maureen Best	LEAP	maureen@leapforlocalfood.org	(540) 339-6266
Statewide	Elizabeth Borst	VCFC	elizabeth.borst@gmail.com	(540) 785-7271
Statewide	Sam Hedges	LEAP	hedgesjs@leapforlocalfood.org	(540) 632-2296

Additional Resources

V. Continuing Education

A. Appalachian Sustainable Development: SWVA Summer Field School

1. Includes 8 on-farm sessions on the first and third Thursdays, May through August. During each session, you will explore production methods and farm enterprises that are thriving in SWVA. This will include sessions on beekeeping, forest farming, apple orchards, hemp, and more.
2. [Register here](#)

- B. [Appalachian Sustainable Development](#): Farmer and Rancher Mentoring
 - 1. Established in 2017, the FARM program has trained and hosted 31 local mentor farmers, helped match 33 beginning farmers with local mentors and aided in 25 new farm start ups in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

- C. [Minority and Veteran Farmers of the Piedmont](#) present: How to Start a Business
 - 1. Session 1: June 8, 2021, 9-10:30 am
 - 2. Session 2: July 13th, 2021, 9-10:30 am
 - 3. Session 3: August 10th, 2021, 9-10:30 am

- D. [Small Business Development Center](#)
 - 1. Offers a variety of technical assistance services including sessions on economic recovery following the COVID 19 pandemic, website guidance, cybersecurity guidance, and other general guidance.

- E. [Total Action for Progress](#)
 - 1. Based out of Roanoke, TAP offers technical assistance for the surrounding area (and statewide, depending on service).

- F. [Virginia Cooperative Extension: Women in Agriculture Gathering](#)
 - 1. This event will equip female farmers, landowners, and agriculture enthusiasts with opportunities to network with peers, hone technical skills, and discuss solutions to the unique challenges they face.
 - 2. Postponed to Fall 2021
 - 3. In person at four locations: Central (Buckingham County), Northern (Orange County), Southeast (Suffolk County), Southwest (Wythe County)

- G. Recurring Webinars
 - 1. Annie's Project
 - a) Annie's project is designed to empower women in agriculture, provide information in farm management and build local networks throughout the state. The target audience is women with a passion for business, agriculture and involvement in the farm operation. Topics for sessions include the five areas of Risk management: production, marketing, financial, legal, and human resources.
 - b) [Look here](#) for upcoming classes in Virginia
 - 2. [Food Systems Leadership Network Resource Library](#)

3. [Virginia Fresh Match: SNAP + Incentive Marketing & Outreach: Tools & Tips](#)

VI. Expert Advice

- A. [Virginia Cooperative Extension Local Offices](#)