

## **Obama Administration Selects 26 Communities to Develop Local Food Projects, Encourage Economic Expansion/ Local Foods, Local Places Initiative encourages creative economic development in 26 communities in 19 states**

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EPA

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Today, on behalf of the White House Rural Council, six federal agencies joined to announce 26 communities selected to participate in [Local Foods, Local Places](#), a federal initiative providing technical support to integrate local food systems into community economic action plans. Under this effort, a team of agricultural, transportation, environmental, public health and regional economic experts will work directly with the communities to develop specifically identified local food projects. Project proposals include repurposing vacant land into local food production, developing year-round retail markets for local food products, and establishing food hubs to increase local food supply chains.

USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Affairs Doug O'Brien and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Federal Co-Chair Earl Gohl made the announcement in Wheeling, W.Va. Wheeling will receive Local Foods, Local Places support to transition the historic and underused Vineyard Hill, into a productive regional hub for diversified local food production and value added products. The officials will also visit Youngstown, OH, which will receive Local Foods, Local Places support to reclaim vacant property for local food production.

Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman Christopher Masingill announced seven communities in four states that will be receiving Local Foods, Local Places technical support in the Delta region via conference call. Projects in these communities will include efforts to create a local food network, establish a regional food innovation center and develop job training efforts around local food entrepreneurship. A complete list of communities participating in the Local Foods, Local Places Initiative is available on the [White House Rural Council website](#).

"The Local Foods, Local Places initiative illustrates that communities are thinking about creative ways to integrate local food in their community economic development plans," said USDA's Deputy Under Secretary Doug O'Brien. "The projects developed via Local Foods, Local Places will revitalize rural Main Streets and urban downtown areas, and create market opportunities for food producers and entrepreneurs."

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"Our agencies are working together to make a visible difference in communities," said EPA Deputy Administrator Stan Meiburg. "By promoting farmers markets, community kitchens, and other efforts to increase access to healthy food, we are supporting local businesses in struggling downtown neighborhoods and preserving farms and undeveloped land. It's good for people's health, good for the economy, and good for the environment."

"The Local Foods, Local Places Initiative recognizes the relationship between available transportation and the health and well-being of our communities. This collaboration provides local communities an opportunity to transform vacant spaces into vibrant spaces, which will provide better food options and better mobility for their residents," said U.S. DOT Undersecretary Peter Rogoff.

ARC Federal Co-Chair Earl F. Gohl said, "Appalachian communities recognize the role food systems can play in downtown development and revitalization. Local Foods, Local Places will provide the technical resources to take ideas and put them into a plan. ARC is pleased to provide the funding that will support implementation of the plans developed by the eight Appalachian communities."

"As a region historically centered on agriculture, it is important to strengthen and grow the local food systems that have supported the Delta communities and this country for centuries," said DRA Federal Co-Chairman Chris Masingill. "The Delta Regional Authority is proud to support this innovative program which is an investment into community health and economic growth for workers, businesses and families in the Delta region."

Local Foods, Local Places is a partnership among USDA, EPA, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The initiative draws on the Administration's [Partnership for Sustainable Communities](#), USDA's [Seven Strategies for Economic Development](#) and other place-based strategies to address regional challenges. The 26 Local Foods, Local Places communities were chosen from among 316 applicants. The initiative is jointly funded at \$800,000. This amount, and the projects it will support, will make a significant impact in communities involved in the Local Foods, Local Places initiative.

USDA Secretary Vilsack identified strengthening local food systems as one of the four pillars of USDA's commitment to rural economic development, along with production agriculture (including expanding export markets and improving research), promoting conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities, and growing the biobased economy. Local Foods, Local Places is part of USDA's commitment to support local and regional food systems. USDA's [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative](#) coordinates the Department's policy, resources, and outreach efforts related to local and regional food systems.

## **About the White House Rural Council**

To address challenges in Rural America, build on the administration's rural economic strategy, and improve the implementation of that strategy, the president signed an executive order establishing the White House Rural Council. The council coordinates the administration's efforts in rural America by streamlining and improving the effectiveness of federal programs serving rural America; engage stakeholders, including farmers, ranchers, and local citizens, on issues and solutions in rural communities; and promoting and coordinating private-sector partnerships. The work of the White House Rural Council and USDA to bring investment to rural America is an example of how the Administration is creating smart partnerships with the private sector to better support Americans in all parts of the country.

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