

**Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) Stakeholder Work Group –
Grants Subcommittee**

Electronic meeting held during state of emergency due to novel coronavirus (COVID-19)

Thursday, August 27, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

AGENDA

- 10:00 a.m. Approval of the Draft Minutes from 8/12/20**
- 10:05 a.m. Draft Grant Guideline Review**
Jennifer Perkins & Jewel Bronaugh
- Presentation of Draft Guidelines
 - Discussion and Revisions
- 11:00 a.m. Discussion of Grant Approval Rubric**
Jennifer Perkins & Jewel Bronaugh
- Considerations for the Grantees
 - Considerations for VFAIF program success
- 12:00 am Public Comment Period**
- 12:30 p.m. Adjourn**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public may listen to the meeting via the Cisco WebEx platform using the link, access code, and password below.

Event address for attendee:

<https://covaconf.webex.com/covaconf/onstage/g.php?MTID=eccf4cd4365966e09f626dfc136c8a3fa>

Event number (access code): 171 152 4274

Event password: UWuptMdi433

To join the audio conference only:

Call the number below and enter the access code.

US Toll (517) 466-2023

US Toll Free (866) 692-4530

If you would like to comment during the public comment portion of the meeting, please sign up to do so using the WebEx Q&A feature. Via the Q&A feature, send the Meeting Host your first and last name as well as the name of the organization, if any, on whose behalf you will be commenting (e.g., Joe Smith with ABC Organization). If you join the meeting using the audio conference only or are unable to locate the WebEx Q&A feature to sign up for the public comment portion of the meeting, please email your first and last name and the phone number that you used to dial in to the meeting as well as the name of the organization, if any, on whose behalf you will be commenting to Roz Stein at Roz.Stein@vdacs.virginia.gov. During the public comment portion of the meeting, the Meeting Host will unmute your microphone and announce that it is your turn to comment. Please minimize the background noise at your location.

Should any interruption of the broadcast of this meeting occur, please call (804) 786-3938 or email Roz.Stein@vdacs.virginia.gov to notify the agency. Any interruption in the broadcast of the meeting shall result in the suspension of action at the meeting until repairs are made and public access is restored.

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

The meeting of the Equitable Food Oriented Development Work Group Subcommittee convened at approximately 10:00 a.m. on August 12, 2020. The meeting was held by electronic communication means due to the state of emergency issued by Governor Northam as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The meeting was held using Cisco Webex Events. Commissioner Jewel Bronaugh called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Amy Rose Foll

Chad Martin

Chelsi Bennett

Del. Delores McQuinn

Dr. Patricia Gould-Champ

Elizabeth Borst

Jeanette Abi-Nader

Michael Carter

Norm Gold

Shantell Bingham

ABSENT WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Del. Delores McQuinn

STAFF PRESENT

Heidi Hertz, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Jewel Bronaugh, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Kendra Shifflett, Director, Office of Administration and Finance, VDACS

Anna Seymour, Administrative Coordinator, Commissioner's Office, VDACS

Katherine Coates, Administrative Coordinator, OPPR, VDACS

Jennifer Perkins, Program Manager, Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development, VDACS

JEWEL BRONAUGH

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Commissioner Bronaugh welcomed the attendees and began her presentation. She went through the meeting agenda. She began with a discussion about the legislation's available funding (\$1.2 million). Approximately \$200,000 was set aside for an outreach and technical assistance position. Up to 10% will be paid over the course of 2 years to the CDFI that is selected to assist the Work Group. This leaves approximately \$900,000 to fund selected projects over a maximum of two years.

EQUITABLE FOOD-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (EFOD) SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA

Commissioner Bronaugh discussed the definition of EFOD and key considerations the subcommittee must take into account when developing selection criteria: targeting underserved communities; BIPOC businesses as a priority; and the importance of community engagement.

Commissioner Bronaugh also went through the EFOD Criteria document, as provided by DAISA enterprises. The document details considerations when selecting viable projects which must be characterized as: equity and justice-first; place and people based; use market-based/business

Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services

August 19, 2020

Page 2

strategies; community leadership development/community organizing; and community ownership. Subcommittee members discussed their thoughts on the criteria and how it should be implemented.

JENNIFER PERKINS

Jennifer Perkins went into more detail about the EFOD Organization Assessment. She described an assessment structure that allows for organizations to self-identify how they meet the EFOD criteria on a scale. Subcommittee members voiced their approval of this criteria and how the model will aid in selecting projects.

JEWEL BRONAUGH

Commissioner Bronaugh then went into the grant considerations, specifically program development, eligibility of applicants, and grant administration. Subcommittee members shared what they saw as the goal of the funding and what success looks like.

Commissioner Bronaugh then ask how to identify “underserved” and “marginalized” audiences” and took notes based on subcommittee feedback to include food desert areas, income levels, health outcomes, SNAP accepting retailers, and other incentive programs, among others. Members suggested looking at maps on the Virginia Federation of Foodbanks website as a guide to identifying these audiences. This will help to nail down prioritized locations and communities, and to make sure tribal, indigenous, and Hispanic populations are included. Concerns voiced included financial literacy, transportation, and SNAP accessibility.

Commissioner Bronaugh also asked the subcommittee to determine the types of projects they would like to consider (commercial kitchens/commissaries, retail markets, etc.) and what types of projects they should not consider (commercial large grocery stores, traditional food pantries, missions that don't align with the EFOD criteria).

Finally, Commissioner Bronaugh asked the group what their role is in communicating these opportunities to these communities. She noted that this is a new area of work for VDACS. Suggestions included targeting House and Senate members to employ their social media outlets to market the grant opportunities; having objective input/assistance from outside relative to grant writing; keeping the application process simple to engage equitable audiences; and providing a narrative about the business.

JENNIFER PERKINS

Jennifer Perkins discussed grant administration in detail. She posed a few questions to the group regarding whether the application should have deadlines or be rolling; exactly how much will be awarded in funding to applicants; how to hold projects (particularly unsuccessful ones) accountable; what the grant period looks like; and how to measure success. Jennifer also described VDACS's Agriculture and Forestry Industry Development (AFID) Fund and how money is granted in various ways. Group members showed their support for rolling applications, though expressed the time consuming nature of that style. Group members discussed starting with smaller grants for 2020 and then seeing what sorts of projects get funded. Discussions continued regarding what the appropriate funding amount would be for projects.

JEWEL BRONAUGH

Commissioner Bronaugh moved to discuss additional considerations: whether a percentage of food needs to be sourced from Virginia; how to identify which risks to take; should there be a

Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services

August 19, 2020

Page 3

portfolio or presentation requirement; should there be a wage requirement for employees; and how to provide a path to sustainability. The group discussed concerns about produce/food availability due to seasonality and type of product to meet a threshold for Virginia goods. They also voiced concerns about the wage requirement for a business that's just starting. Group members also discussed providing a list of additional resources that may assist projects, such as historic tax credits, etc.

Commissioner Bronaugh noted that in advance of the next meeting, she and Jennifer Perkins will draft some guidelines for the group to review.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

The next subcommittee meeting will take place on August 27, 2020, 10:00 – 12:30 pm. This meeting will also be open to public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Work Group adjourned at approximately 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Virginia Food Access Investment Fund

Program Overview

The Virginia Food Access Investment Fund (VFAIF) is a statewide program that invests 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 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; 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 Virginia-based community development financial institution (CDFI).

Eligibility

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
- 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, community gardens, restaurants or cafes, with a direct food retail component or in partnership with a qualified food retailer

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

To meet the funding requirements the projects must do the following:

- Have a retail component where consumers can purchase fresh meats, seafood, dairy, and produce
- Be owned or substantially run by BIPOC leadership
- Serve one of the VFAIF target areas that include 212 identified Opportunity Zones and/or cities and counties identified in Appendix A as being food deserts and/or areas with high food insecurity levels
- Integrate community culture and artistic expression in the business model
- Demonstrate a history of work in the community
- Develop new markets and enterprises, creating real and sustainable economic opportunities
- Accept supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits and Virginia's 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)
- Provide a path for financial sustainability and positive outcomes to the community, including education and youth development
- Demonstrate community engagement and support for the project

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, employment of community residents, and/or an improvement in the long-term health of the community.

Application Process

The VFAIF application period will be announced annually. Award amounts will be capped at \$40,000 per applicant. The grant period for each project will be no more than two years, with the ability to request a 6-month extension at the end of the project.

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. Successful applications will show a clear vision and plan, 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

Appendix A¹

Targeted Cities and Counties

Counties	
Bland	Highland
Brunswick	Lee
Buchanan	Lunenburg
Buckingham	Mecklenburg
Charles City	Northampton
Charlotte	Nottoway
Cumberland	Prince Edward
Dickinson	Rappahannock
Essex	Southampton
Floyd	Surry
Greensville	Sussex
Halifax	Wise

Cities	
Buena Vista	Norfolk
Danville	Norton
Emporia	Petersburg
Franklin	Radford
Hampton	Richmond
Hopewell	Roanoke
Lynchburg	Salem
Martinsville	Virginia Beach
Newport News	Winchester

¹ All localities on this list meet either one of or both of the following criteria: the locality is a food desert and 10% or greater of the population has low access to a grocery store; the 15% or more of the population faces food insecurity. Data collected from: FeedVA, "FeedVA Map Series". Retrieved August 22, 2020. <https://cga-wm.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=d7792f0224c14c6381508c6d9f194b89>

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

Poorly
1 2 3 4 5
Clearly

COMMENT _____

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

Less
1 2 3 4 5
More

COMMENT _____

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

With the other members present:

Very Different
1 2 3 4 5
No Difference

With members participating from other locations:

Very Different
1 2 3 4 5
No Difference

With the public:

Very Different
1 2 3 4 5
No Difference

COMMENT _____

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

Hindered
1 2 3 4 5
Helped

COMMENT _____

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

Poor
1 2 3 4 5
Excellent

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