**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
Wednesday, January 10, 2024

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## At the PA Farm Show, Governor Shapiro Joins USDA Secretary Vilsack and PA Agriculture Secretary Redding to Announce $26 Million Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant Program

*Thanks to $26 million in federal funding, Pennsylvania will fund projects that strengthen the state's food systems by improving capacity and resilience in the middle of the supply chain for farm and food businesses.*

*The RFSI funding will build on the 2023-24 bipartisan budget that included $47 million in funding for agriculture to support Pennsylvania farmers and agricultural workers, give farms more access to capital, and open up new markets for farmers.*



**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, at the PA Farm Show, **Governor Josh Shapiro** joined **US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack** and **PA Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding** to announce $26 million in USDA funding available to Pennsylvania agriculture through the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program.

"I'm mindful that this year's Farm Show theme is "Connecting our Communities" – a reminder of the connections that exist between ag and our daily lives and of the work we need to do to strengthen those connections, to build on them, and to support those who feed Pennsylvanians and Americans every day," said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. "Today's announced of $26 million in USDA Resiliency Food Systems Infrastructure funding that Pennsylvania will receive will help us do just that and reinforce our food supply chain and help us fund projects that ramp up food processing and distribution across Pennsylvania. These grants will benefit farmers, growers, producers, processors, and shippers from communities too often forgotten or left behind and ensure we're making the connections between our ag sector and our communities even stronger."

Through a cooperative agreement with USDA, Pennsylvania will administer the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant program to fund projects that strengthen the state's food systems by improving capacity and resilience in the middle of the supply chain for farm and food businesses and other eligible entities. Middle-of-the-supply-chain activities include processing, aggregation, and distribution of targeted agricultural products, to create more opportunities for Pennsylvania's robust agriculture and food manufacturing industries.

"At USDA, we recognize food businesses in the middle of the supply chain are essential to ensuring producers can get their product from the field to market and Americans have sustainable access to fresh, quality agricultural products," said **USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack**. "Pennsylvania's investments through USDA's Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program will support these businesses by building stronger infrastructure which will contribute to a thriving agricultural economy within the state."

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has identified multiple funding priorities for projects such as those that benefit historically underserved farmers, projects focused on processing for dairy, fruit, vegetable, and organic commodities, projects that enhance worker safety and training, and projects submitted directly by growers, producers, processors, and shippers.

"This week at PA Farm Show, we are celebrating and recognizing every part of the supply chain from farm to fork. Pennsylvania agriculture leads the nation in many sectors, and we are thrilled to partner with USDA to further the innovation and progress of our farmers and food processors," said **Secretary Russell Redding**. "Building diverse, locally-driven food systems connects our communities to great jobs, critical nourishment, and opportunities that feed our future."

Grant applications will open January 15 and will close March 30, 2024. Applications will be reviewed and scored by an independent panel. Selected applications will be notified by the end of February.

Infrastructure Grant applicants may apply for a minimum award of $100,000 and a maximum award of $3 million. Projects may start on July 1, 2024, and must be

completed by May 2027. Grant applicants are required to contribute 50% of the total proposed project cost as a match to federal funding. For historically underserved farmers and ranchers and small businesses that qualify under the Small Business Administration (SBA) including small, disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, and veteran-owned small businesses, the required match is reduced to 25% of the total proposed project cost.

Through the program and in addition to the Infrastructure Grant funding, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture will support supply chain coordination and technical assistance to farmers and food businesses operating in processing, aggregation and distribution – all critical activities to support access to more and better markets for farmers.

The RFSI funding will build onto the [commonsense, bipartisan 2023-24 budget](#) that included $47 million in funding for agriculture to continue supporting our farmers and agricultural workers, give Pennsylvania's farms more access to capital, and open up new markets for farmers by funding a new Organic Center of Excellence to continue the Commonwealth's long tradition of agricultural leadership.

The bipartisan 2023-24 budget makes critical investments in Pennsylvania agriculture, including:

- **$31 million** to help poultry farmers impacted by the avian flu crisis pay for testing and get reimbursed.

- **$13.8 million** to fully fund the Pennsylvania Farm Bill for the fifth year.

- A **$2 million** investment in the Fresh Food Financing Initiative that will contribute to better health outcomes by improving access to PA-grown, processed, and produced foods.

- **$1 million** to create a new Organic Center of Excellence, which will grow the state's ability to support this sector of the industry.

Learn more about funding and resources for farmers and the ag industry at [agriculture.pa.gov/funding](#)

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