



Pennsylvania
Department of Agriculture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 15, 2025

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Shapiro Administration Invests \$3.4 Million to Support Farms, Make Fresh, Affordable Food Available to More Pennsylvanians

The Fresh Food Financing Initiative supports family farms, healthier communities, and stronger local food supply chains in 23 counties in every region of Pennsylvania.

The Shapiro Administration is investing in proven, effective solutions benefitting all Pennsylvanians during a time when federal funding cuts are straining budgets of farmers, food businesses, and the Pennsylvanians who rely on them.

Germantown, PA – Today, **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** announced recipients of Pennsylvania’s **Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI)** grants, a **\$3.4 million** investment in businesses across 23 counties that connect low-income communities with fresh, healthy, affordable food produced by local farms.

“Pennsylvania farmers do the noble work of producing fresh, healthy food every day,” **Secretary Redding** said. “But too many families struggle to find affordable, fresh food close to home, and their health suffers, sometimes for generations. The Fresh Food Financing Initiative helps food businesses like **Weavers Way Food Co-op** combine the power of small farmers to reach communities where fresh food has been miles away or unavailable completely. The initiative is part of a full menu of proven solutions the **Shapiro Administration** continues to invest in to create opportunities for both Pennsylvania’s families and the farmers who feed them to thrive.”

Sec. Redding made the grant announcement following a roundtable discussion at Weaver’s Way Food Co-op, exploring challenges farmers face in getting their products to the customers who need them — including availability of cold storage, delivery vehicles, food safety, retail space, and more.

The discussion among grant recipients and local farmers not only raised common challenges, but proven, effective solutions that are benefitting families and farmers in every region of Pennsylvania during a time when federal funding cuts and threatened cuts are magnifying these challenges, straining budgets, and creating uncertainty for

farmers, businesses throughout the food supply chain, as well as food banks, and the Pennsylvanians who rely on them.

The recent, abrupt cancellation of **\$13 million** in contracted funding through the USDA's Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) program has left a significant gap in budgets of the Pennsylvania food banks and 189 Pennsylvania farmers who supplied food through the program. In response, Governor Shapiro directed Secretary Redding [to formally appeal](#) the cancellation. To date, the USDA has not acknowledged or responded to the appeal.

Proposed cuts to core food programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) threaten to shift billions in costs onto states like Pennsylvania and leave more children at risk of going hungry.

According to Feeding America's annual [Map the Meal Gap report](#), in 2022, more than one in nine Pennsylvanians didn't always know where their next meal was coming from. That includes 436,000 children facing hunger. Hunger is often not an issue of food scarcity, but of the quality of food available. Many of those children and families live in communities where there is nowhere nearby to buy fresh, affordable, healthy food.

Governor Josh Shapiro secured **\$2 million** in each of his first two bipartisan state budgets to revive FFFI, a COVID-era initiative to strengthen the capacity of local food supply chains. Legislation giving the **PA Department of Agriculture** authority to spend the money followed in 2024. Grants announced today are the first offered under the renewed program.

[Weavers Way Co-op](#) serves the Philadelphia region from four neighborhood markets and a farm market at W.B. Saul Agricultural High School. Collectively the non-profit provides more than 14,000 member-households and the general community with fresh, healthy, local food. A \$452,372 FFFI grant will help Weavers Way purchase a mobile market and expand cold storage at its Chestnut Hill location.

"Weavers Way is grateful to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for their support through the Fresh Financing Initiative," **General Manager Jon Roesser** said. "This will allow us to further develop valuable infrastructure to support the distribution of local agricultural products from our farm and other Pennsylvania growers and producers to serve customers in communities that lack fresh, healthy food options.

We have seen firsthand how access to local, healthy foods can be life-changing for the communities we serve. Connecting Pennsylvania's remarkable food system to more people is an honor for Weavers Way Co-op, and we appreciate the value that the Commonwealth has placed on growing the local agricultural system and improving people's access to healthy foods."

Other Philadelphia-area grant recipients commented on how the funding will help them feed neighbors and support healthier communities:

KFish Comestible, a Kensington-area neighborhood grocer, received \$85,000 to transform underused space to better serve their clients. “With new equipment, KFish Comestible can offer better food choices while providing job training to **First Stop Recovery**’s diversion clients,” said **First Stop Founder Bonnie Ibsi**. “It’s a win-win for Kensington: better food access for our community, meaningful second chances for people getting back on track, and when individuals recover, Kensington recovers.”

“Receiving \$100,000 from the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative is a transformative moment for **The Community Grocer** as we work to ensure nutrition access for all,” **President Elie Moraru** commented. “With this critical support, we are now poised to open our first location in the coming months and welcome our community into a new era of accessible, dignified nutrition.”

Grocery stores, neighborhood co-ops, mobile markets, farm markets and other businesses that provide fresh food directly to consumers were eligible to apply for FFFI grants. Businesses [located in food deserts](#) — areas designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as having limited access to fresh food — were given priority consideration, as well as women-, minority-, and veteran-owned businesses.

The Fresh Food Financing Initiative works alongside other Shapiro Administration investments that are increasing access to healthy food for vulnerable Pennsylvanians, including:

- **\$46.5 million** secured to provide universal free breakfast to all of Pennsylvania’s 1.7 million public school students and free lunch to all 22,000 Pennsylvania students who are eligible for reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program.
- **\$2 million** increase to the **State Food Purchase Program** in 2024-25 to provide state funds for emergency food assistance for low-income Pennsylvanians, connect surplus food donated by farmers through **the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System** (PASS) food banks and food pantries statewide, and connect low-income seniors to Senior Food Boxes with nutritious dietary staples.
- Convening and staffing the [Pennsylvania Food Policy Council](#) to examine the complex issues contributing to food insecurity and food waste, and implement strategies to improve nutrition and support healthy, equitable food systems for all Pennsylvanians.

In addition to proposing a third year of funding at **\$2 million** for the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, Governor Shapiro's **2025-26 budget proposes increasing PASS funding by \$4 million** as well as a **\$4 million increase to the SFPP**, crucial programs that connect low-income Pennsylvanians with healthy, local food. These increases would bring the total funding for PASS and SFPP to \$34.6 million. The Governor is also championing initiatives that reduce food insecurity by tackling its root causes, including raising the minimum wage and cutting costs for Pennsylvanians.

2025 Fresh Food Financing Initiative grant recipients are listed below by county, along with grant amounts, and project descriptions:

Allegheny County

Native Nosh Market & Kitchen – \$29,043

The woman-owned, mission-driven food market and community kitchen in Pittsburgh's Carrick neighborhood plans to open a market featuring a butcher shop, meat-cutter apprentice program, and low-cost community kitchen for preparing fresh meals, supporting local food producers, and offering job training prioritizing minority and women-owned businesses.

Mayfly Market – \$99,563

Funds will help the women-owned market on Pittsburgh's Central Northside, relocate to a more accessible 3,000 square foot space in the historic Garden Theater building, allowing for expanded retail freezer and refrigeration space. This move will enable the market to offer a wider variety of high-quality, affordable fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, meat, and dairy products, with a significant increase in Pennsylvania-grown produce, dairy, and meat.

Grow Pittsburgh's Community Agriculture Hub at Garden Dreams - \$100,000

Funds will support the final phase of development of Garden Dreams, expanding access to fresh, healthy food in distressed communities. The project will include a new wash and pack workspace, cold storage, educational facilities, and community gathering spaces, serving as a resource for urban growers, youth workforce development, and food distribution.

Community Kitchen Pittsburgh – \$100,000

Funds will support a relocation to a 20,000-square-foot facility in Pittsburgh's Hill District to house a healthy food market offering fresh, locally sourced produce, meats, and dairy, alongside a catering business, food truck, and expanded kitchen, while providing job training and transitional employment.

Hillside Farm & Flower – \$20,708

Funds support expansion of a farm stand and improve food access for underserved, low-income rural communities with limited access to fresh groceries. A new building with

coolers and freezers to extend the shelf life of fresh produce will enable the farm to increase its inventory, partner with local farms and businesses for fresh milk and eggs and create affordable food subscription boxes for local families.

Beaver County

Big Table Farm – \$48,025

With grant funds, the farm will build a larger walk-in cooler, enhance processing facilities, purchase a delivery vehicle, and enable electronic benefit transfer (EBT) purchases. This project will improve food access for low income families, support local farmers, and create economic opportunities through increased sales, community partnerships, and infrastructure-sharing among small businesses.

Bedford County

PA Beef to PA Schools Program – \$75,000

The program expands access to high-quality, locally sourced beef for Pennsylvania students, offering a 50% cost-sharing option to schools to procure local beef. This expansion will help serve more students, especially in low-income areas, providing fresh, nutritious meals that are essential for children's health, learning, and success. The program will offer a recipe toolkit to support scratch cooking, and educational programming to connect students with local agriculture.

Berks County

Zaviah Farms – \$82,059

A Mohnton, PA, women-owned business will construct an upgraded chicken coop, installing automated egg-handling systems, and acquiring a refrigerated van for direct home delivery in an area of the county with little access to grocery stores.

Butler County

Community Partnership, Inc. – \$11,922

Funding will support a new Artisan Hub location with planned demonstration gardens, a micro-storefront, and an outdoor farmstand to support their mobile farmers' market, The Produce Cart. By increasing in-house production and retail offerings, CPI aims to reduce food insecurity and provide more locally sourced, affordable food to underserved communities.

Centre County

Centre Markets Food Hub – \$59,330

Funds will support expansion serving over 40 local farms and food producers, primarily from Centre County and surrounding areas. The project will enhance cold storage capacity and delivery, allowing small and diverse family farms to expand their market

reach and increase the volume of locally grown produce, dairy, and meats available to the community. Project will also support SNAP and EBT purchases.

Chester County

Down to Earth Harvest – \$80,750

An innovative, scalable, and collaborative farm-to-family model that connects customers with local farms in Pennsylvania through a modern online farmstand platform will expand its capacity, increasing local access to affordable, high-quality produce. The project aligns with goals of the Chester County Agricultural Economic Development Strategic Plan, including educating the public about agriculture, creating engagement opportunities, and raising awareness of local foods.

Columbia County

OHF Orchards – \$99,536

Funding will help build cold storage infrastructure, enabling the orchard to store up to 13,500 bushels of apples on-site. This investment will allow the farm to meet local demand, improving storage and packing capabilities, enabling the business to reduce costs and increase profits, while providing cold storage solutions to other local growers and strengthening the local economy.

Crawford County

Meadville Market House – \$36,811

Funding will allow the marketplace for 50+ local farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs to modernize refrigeration systems. Replacing outdated coolers with energy-efficient models will ensure the freshness and quality of perishable produce, meats, and dairy, while reducing energy costs and food waste. The project will also lay the foundation for future initiatives like mobile farmers' markets and improved payment systems.

Dauphin County

Broad Street Market – \$500,000

The oldest continuously operated market house in the U.S., seeks to improve the Stone Building's facilities, including upgrading heating, insulation, and air conditioning, as part of a broader restoration project of the market's historic Brick Building. This investment will help ensure long-term sustainability of the market and support its mission to provide healthy, affordable food in a designated food desert.

Merry Chase Farm – \$24,905

A family-run Harrisburg operation established in 2023, dedicated to providing high-quality, pasture-raised meats, eggs, and products from local artisans. Funds will help the farm develop a safe, functional, and accessible farm stand that will allow for increased sales of their pasture-raised products and a broader selection of goods from

local collaborators, including produce, honey, and artisan bread. This project will not only improve access to fresh, local food in food desert areas, but also raise awareness of sustainable farming practices and support the growth of Pennsylvania agriculture by highlighting the contributions of diverse, woman- and minority-owned farms. By enhancing infrastructure and increasing product availability, the project will strengthen the local agricultural economy and provide valuable outlets for small producers.

Erie County

Erie Food Co-Op – \$200,000

Erie Food Co-op, a community-owned grocery store dedicated to providing affordable, healthy food and supporting a thriving local food system, will replace its roof with solar-friendly materials. This will enhance the market's sustainability, allowing it to continue offering fresh, locally sourced, organic products to its diverse community, while also supporting local farmers and producers.

Pay-What-You-Can Farmstand Network – \$19,450

Funds will support expansion of the innovative pay-what-you-can model to ensure equitable food access, and stimulate economic growth by supporting small, local, and historically underserved farmers in Erie and Crawford counties. The initiative increases access to affordable, nutritious food in food-insecure areas, while fostering nutrition education and empowering residents to make healthier choices.

Oberrath Farms – \$50,000

Funds will support a certified private kitchen, expanding market access for local farmers by prioritizing sourcing from Pennsylvania farms, and fostering collaboration to strengthen the local food system.

Edinboro Market – \$86,042

A non-profit, fresh food business incubator supporting 80+ local farmers and food entrepreneurs since 2017, providing access to fresh, locally grown food for a low-income community. This expansion project will double retail space, add a shared-use commercial kitchen, and provide business support to small producers, increasing local food access, expanding product variety, and creating new sales channels for regional farmers.

Fayette County

Maple Bottom Farm – \$97,814

The family-owned farm will expand The Red Shed, a self-serve farm store that provides fresh, locally produced food in a regional food desert adding new retail space and introducing an EBT self-checkout system. This expansion will significantly increase the availability of PA Preferred® products, such as A2 Guernsey dairy, meat, eggs, and

seasonal produce, while creating entrepreneurial opportunities for the next generation of Pennsylvania farmers.

Indiana County

John-Paul's Farm – \$52,512

Investment will fund three high-quality, season-extending high tunnels, expanding the availability of fresh, locally grown produce in a region facing food insecurity and high obesity rates. This project will increase year-round production, diversify crops, and create more opportunities for direct-to-consumer sales, wholesale, and food donations, while supporting local farmers through aggregation efforts.

Kingdom Acres Agroforestry – \$90,000

Project will establish a regenerative agroforestry farm in the Appalachian Mountain Forest, focused on providing high-quality, nutritious food to an underserved community. By implementing sustainable agroforestry practices, including acquisition of livestock breeding pairs, pasture fencing, water infrastructure, and a community farmstand, the farm will increase the availability of fresh, nutrient-dense food while enhancing land biodiversity. The farm's regenerative agriculture methods will improve soil health, support local ecosystems, and create a resilient food system that meets the dietary needs of low-to-middle-income families, fostering long-term community wellness.

Lehigh County

Tin Rooster Farm Fresh Market – \$100,000

Funds will be used to upgrade a pole building to meet local and state codes, enabling the market to operate efficiently with proper storage, retail display, and production equipment for fresh and frozen farm products, including Angus beef, sweet corn, potatoes, and farm-to-table ice cream. Beyond providing a reliable outlet for locally grown goods, the market will foster community engagement through educational programs, workshops, and events that highlight the value of sustainable agriculture.

Luzerne County

Vibrant Roots Farm – \$26,481

Funds will support a new retail storefront that offers its own farm-raised beef alongside other locally grown and produced agricultural products. Committed to responsible farming practices and community engagement, the market will provide a transparent, affordable option for consumers to connect directly with farmers, learn about their food sources, and access fresh, locally produced goods, including SNAP-eligible items.

Lycoming County

The Today Farm & Market - \$100,000

A farm store established in May 2023 providing locally sourced produce, dairy, meats, and shelf-stable products from Pennsylvania farmers and small-batch produce will expand dairy and meat offerings. Project will also support a new community garden, renovation of high tunnel greenhouses, and development of a certified USDA food-grade kitchen and processing facility.

Montgomery County

The Best Route – \$79,050

Funds will support expansion of the businesses' Mobile Produce Market, launching a mobile kitchen trailer equipped with a commercial-grade kitchen to provide fresh, prepared meals and value-added products to underserved communities in Southeastern Pennsylvania. This project will enhance access to nutritious food, support local farmers through local sourcing, create economic opportunities in the food service and agriculture industries, and integrate mobile EBT payment options to ensure that fresh, locally sourced food remains accessible, affordable, and sustainable for all residents.

Northampton County

Greater Easton Development Partnership – \$99,484

Funding supports strategic investment in cold chain infrastructure, including a refrigerated van, walk-in cooler, freezer, and blast freezer. These upgrades will allow increased purchases from local farmers, extend the availability of Pennsylvania-grown products year-round, and create expanded market opportunities for small and mid-sized producers. By improving storage and distribution, the project will not only support local food systems and reduce waste but also bring fresh, nutritious food to more low-income Easton residents.

Perry County

Black Gum Acres – \$50,372

Project will help establish a Limited Food Establishment to expand a growing farm's ability to process and package organic and native products, including specialty mushrooms, fresh eggs, baked goods, and canned goods. By converting an existing structure into a certified processing space, the farm will increase market access for retail and wholesale distribution while advancing its transition to organic certification.

Philadelphia County

Weavers Way Co-Op – \$452,372

Funds will help purchase a mobile market and expand cold storage at Weaver's Way's Chestnut Hill location. The project will enhance the co-op's ability to deliver healthy food options to food deserts while boosting sales and reducing delivery frequency for its urban farms.

Dynamic Roots – \$5,986

The “Harvest to Home” project by Moore to Love Urban Farm will establish an urban farmer’s market to provide affordable, organic produce while promoting education on nutrition, sustainable purchasing, and agricultural skills. Through a holistic approach, the project will incorporate intergenerational agricultural education, hands-on learning, and a payment system inclusive of SNAP and Farmers Market Nutrition Program transactions.

KFish Comestible – \$85,000

The Kensington Community Revival Project will transform an underused space into a dynamic hub for fresh food access, job training, and community support. Anchored by KFish Comestible, a longstanding neighborhood grocery store, the project will provide affordable, high-quality fresh food while creating employment opportunities, particularly for those in recovery.

The Community Grocer – \$100,000

Located in Cobbs Creek, a USDA-designated food desert, TCG will offer affordable, locally sourced groceries, provide paid job training for young people, and partner with a teaching kitchen to allow SNAP recipients to convert staple ingredients into prepared meals at no extra cost.

Schuylkill County

Red Hill Harvest – \$24,763

Funds will support expansion of a seventh-generation farm stand to a 12x24-foot climate-controlled retail space, enhancing access to fresh, locally grown, and pasture-raised products. The new facility will include freezers and refrigerators for grass-fed dairy, eggs, meats, and produce, as well as a self-checkout system for seamless purchasing.

The Farm Store – \$100,000

The Pottsville-based project will create an accessible market for locally produced and grown products, available year-round with consistent hours. By increasing demand for Pennsylvania-grown goods, the project helps farmers expand operations and invest in sustainable practices. The initiative promotes economic development by revitalizing a vacant building and is backed by the City of Pottsville Redevelopment Authority.

Westmoreland County

Logan Family Farm – \$100,000

Expanding the farm’s store, which features their beef and pork as well as other local farm products, will not only enhance accessibility to fresh, local products but also

strengthen the state's agricultural economy by providing a reliable marketplace for Pennsylvania farmers, food artisans, and producers.

York County

York Fresh Food Farms – \$12,071

The funded project includes installing a refrigeration unit in a Mobile Produce Market vehicle to maintain produce freshness, adding a heated portable handwashing station to enhance sanitation, and constructing a scale shed to streamline operations and reduce cross-contamination.

Nine Pines Farm – \$63,750

The project includes transforming a section of the veteran-owned farm's barn, constructed with funds from a prior Fresh Food Financing Initiative Grant, into a retail space featuring locally sourced products, increasing storage capacity with new refrigeration and freezer units, and enhancing accessibility by pursuing SNAP and EBT capabilities and a potential public transportation stop. These improvements will make fresh, locally raised food more convenient and affordable for low-income and underserved communities while supporting small farm sustainability.

Learn more about eligibility for the [Fresh Food Financing Initiative](#) and other funding and support for Pennsylvania's nation-leading agricultural industry at pa.gov/agriculture.

Find more information about Governor Josh Shapiro's [Economic Development Strategy](#) that recognizes agriculture as key to Pennsylvania's future economic success.

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