

## **NCDA&CS COVID-19 Emergency Aid for Farmers Market Operators and Local Food Hubs**

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in serious and substantial impacts on the food supply chain, including farmer's markets and food hubs across North Carolina. Farmers markets were not able to open due to state or local orders and others had to reduce number of vendors to ensure proper social distancing. Food hubs lost sales opportunities due to mandated school and food service closures.

Via [S.L. 2020-97](#), the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated \$750,000 of the state's federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to provide financial aid to provide emergency aid for farmers market operators and local food enterprises:

“The aid will allow those operations to adapt to new market conditions and further support communities experiencing food insecurity. Eligible categories for emergency aid include, but are not limited to, labor, technology or software upgrades, infrastructure enhancements, COVID-19 education materials, PPE, and test kits.”

### **Application Period:**

- The application period for farmers markets and food hubs will be from October 1, 2020 through close of business (COB) on October 22, 2020.

### **Eligibility and Definitions:**

- For the purposes of this program, farmers market operators are defined as “markets that feature two or more farm vendors selling agricultural products directly to customers at a common, recurrent physical location.” (USDA)
- For the purposes of this program, a food hub is defined as “businesses or organizations that actively manage the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products to multiple buyers from multiple producers, primary local and regional producers, to strengthen the ability of these producers to satisfy local and regional wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.” (USDA)

### **Eligible Categories for Aid:**

- Additional labor or increased hours worked due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Technology or software upgrades for contactless transactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Infrastructure enhancements to assist with social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- COVID-19 Education materials.
- PPE purchases due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Other purchases needed to follow procedures and guidelines and/or adapt to new market conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Program Details:**

- Only farmers market operators and food hubs located in North Carolina are eligible for this aid.
- Applicants must have an Employer Identification Number (EIN) specific to the farmers market or local food hub applying for funds. No aid will be provided to individuals.
- There is a limited amount of funding available for the NCDA&CS Emergency Aid for Farmers Market Operations and Local Food Hubs Program. Amount of aid awarded will be based on number of applicants. We anticipate strong interest in this program.
- Only completed online applications will be considered for aid.
- Federal guidelines state that funds must be used on costs that were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.
- Federal guidelines state all program funds must be expended prior to December 30, 2020.
- Please note that it is undetermined at this time, however there may be additional state reporting requirements of this funding as per S.L. 2020-4 for auditing purposes.
- A Form 1099 will be issued at the end of the year for each aid entity and may be subject to state/federal tax.

**Questions?** Please contact [LocalFoodAid2020@ncagr.gov](mailto:LocalFoodAid2020@ncagr.gov)