



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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SCDA to Hold Listening Call about Infrastructure Needs

Feedback Will Inform Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) Cooperative Agreement

COLUMBIA – The South Carolina Department of Agriculture will host a listening call regarding the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) cooperative agreement on June 28.

The purpose of the program is to build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain; to provide more and better markets to small farms and food businesses; and to support the development of value-added products for consumers, fair prices, fair wages, and new and safe job opportunities. The listening call is an opportunity to hear from people across all areas of the South Carolina agricultural industry, what are believed to be the greatest challenges and needs facing the middle-of-the-food-supply-chain, including infrastructure needs, food access barriers, and supply-chain needs. The information gained from this call will assist in developing the state plan for the South Carolina RFSI Program.

Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, small and underserved business owners, historically underserved farmers or ranchers, and other businesses that qualify under the Small Business Administration (SBA) categories of small disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, and veteran-owned small businesses.

Later this year our agency will be announcing a competitive infrastructure grant program. Funds will support expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

The call will be held Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 2 p.m. EST. To join the call, dial 1-800-285-6670. Please note that you will be muted upon entry. After the listening session, callers will be able to provide comments and questions, but please note that SCDA will not engage in a question-and-answer portion. Instructions for the call will be given during the introduction of the call.

We will also be soliciting public comment about the RFSI program until July 28, 2023. To submit a comment to SCDA about the RFSI program, email rfsi@scda.sc.gov. Please write "RFSI Comment" in the subject line of the email. Public comments will be accepted only at the above email address until 7/28/23 at noon EST.

No applications for South Carolina's RFSI funds will be accepted until a later date; the open application period will be announced and posted on SCDA's website as well as through its social media channels.

More information will be posted as it becomes available at agriculture.sc.gov/rfsi. Additional USDA information on RFSI can be found at ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsi.

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