



The Northeast Regional Food Business Center is one of 12 USDA Regional Food Business Centers. RFBCs will support a more diverse and competitive food system, with a strong emphasis on building equity and community resiliency through focus on underserved farmers, ranchers, and food businesses. The NERFBC will target its operations in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

These Centers will leverage \$30 million in funding to support producers by providing localized assistance to local and regional supply chains, including linking producers to wholesalers and distributors. They will also provide technical assistance needed to access federal, state, and local new markets and resources, along with assisting small- and mid-sized producers in overcoming barriers to market access.

Lead Partners and Roles

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) Foundation: Grant administrator; project facilitator; fiduciary liaison with USDA staff.

Buffalo Go-Green: Lead and coordinate stakeholder outreach efforts to BIPOC-led organizations serving producers and food businesses in the Northeast.

Center for Regional Economic Advancement (CREA) at Cornell University: Develop virtual “home” of the Northeast Center; lead and coordinate technical assistance and business development resources.

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets: Facilitate communication and outreach, and assist NASDA Foundation with coordination among State Departments of Agriculture.

Supporting Partners and Roles

The **Community Advisory Council** are experts in local food systems, supply chains, and community needs within the region. Planning, outreach, and grant administration decisions will filter through the council for the Core Team to execute.

The **DEI Advisory Council acts** as the NERFBC project foundation to ensure networks of underinvested communities are reached. The council, led and facilitated by Buffalo Go Green, will provide a diverse, equitable, and inclusive perspective that will be integrated into every layer of the collaborative structure.

Funding Opportunities

Technical Assistance Sub-Awards will be available for technical assistance providers to offer guidance and training to local producers and food and farm businesses, with an emphasis on tailoring support to individual needs and to the unique Northeast regional food systems.

Business Builder Awards will be targeted financial assistance to individual food businesses that are seeking support in access to capital, supply chain coordination, and other barriers to expansion.

5-Year Timeline Overview

Dates	Activity/Task
Year 1	<p>Onboarding, Administration & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized the USDA administrative review and award agreement with NASDA Foundation. Expanded NASDA Foundation team with Communications and Grant Coordinators. Drafted a 5-year work plan and led partner participation in USDA onboarding's process. <p>Communications & Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed public-facing website. Established DEI Advisory Council, led by Buffalo Go Green. Received points of contact from State Departments of Agriculture. <p>Action Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting a full communication plan and a strategic plan for soliciting input from stakeholders on grant programs and NERFBC business development resource hub. Inviting and "standing up" the collaborative structure. Planning face-to-face summit with strategic partners.
Year 2	<p>Technical Assistance Sub-Award Programming (July 2024 – January 2025) Business Builder Sub-Award Programming (January 2025 – June 2025)</p>
Years 3-4	<p>Continuing to disburse sub-award funds, establishing sustainable and long-term supply chain information hubs, and coordinating with other Regional Food Business Centers.</p>
Year 5	<p>Emphasizing project sustainability through network-building, resource-sharing, and open channels of communication.</p>

Long-Term Impact and Legacy

One of the central objectives of the Regional Food Business Centers is to establish trust between producers, communities, and regional-based organizations through direct support, outreach, and acting as a hub of resources and information-sharing. To that end, our team is committed to maintaining strong relationships with the supporting partners following the end of project funding by connecting stakeholders together, releasing successful case studies, and highlighting future areas of growth.

Communication Structure with the Core Team

Inflow

- Identify where community need and potential for impact is greatest in the region.
- Amplify NERFBC website, newsletter, and social media content.
- Consider how NERFBC's work can complement alternate sources of existing regional funding.

Outflow

- Visit our website to learn more about the work of the Northeast Regional Food Business Center: <https://nasda.org/foundation/nerfbc>.
- Contact NortheastRFBC@nasda.org with any questions, comments, or feedback.