



### **An Invitation!**

**Your voice is essential to create a vision and plan for resilient food system infrastructure that will serve small and mid-size farmers and food producers and historically disadvantaged communities.**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) seeks to enhance the resilience of the state's food supply. It has launched a project to support small and mid-size farms and food businesses through the creation of a statewide vision and plan for infrastructure development. This vision and plan will aid local communities in strengthening food security, promoting fair economic opportunity, and ecological and climate-smart practices. This effort builds off CDFA's recent Resilient Food System Infrastructure (RFSI) grants and will be synergistic with California Jobs First, the USDA's Southwest Regional Food Business Center, and other state, local, federal grants and private investment in agricultural infrastructure, excluding dairy, protein and other animal products.

If your agricultural or community-based organization or collaborative, tribal entity, food business or farm, or statewide nonprofit has built or is building infrastructure, or has developed visions or plans for food system infrastructure, your input is essential. Your projects will help create a statewide infrastructure map, gap analysis, and plan. A minimum of sixteen face-to-face or online listening sessions throughout California will provide opportunities to provide input. These sessions will contain opportunities for technical assistance and information helpful for implementing infrastructure projects. Participants representing regional or tribal activities may be eligible for stipends up to \$2000.

Roots of Change will be coordinating and facilitating the vision and planning process with mapping and research assistance from the University of CA, Davis's Institute of the Environment, and the Council of Development Finance Agencies. The project is slated to begin in March 2025 and to be completed in 2027.

To receive invitations to online and in person meetings and information sessions and an application for stipend support, please complete [this brief form](#). Other inquiries should be addressed to [Coco@rootsofchange.org](mailto:Coco@rootsofchange.org)

We hope to be working with you soon!

# **A Collaboration of California Communities and The California Department of Food and Agriculture on a Vision and Plan for Resilient Food System Infrastructure Across the State**

## *Overview*

Led by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), this project focuses on enhancing resilience across the middle of the food supply chain by supporting local and regional producers with an emphasis on small and underserved businesses. The initiative seeks to 1) expand capacity for the aggregating, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distributing of locally and regionally produced food products, 2) provide more and better markets for small farms and food businesses, 3) create new and safe job opportunities, 4) support the development of value-added products for consumers, fair prices, and fair wages, and 5) build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain. By improving market opportunities and capturing new revenue streams for small and mid-sized agricultural producers this program will also strengthen food security, promote fair economic opportunities, and contribute to thriving local communities. Together with Roots of Change (ROC), Institute of the Environment (UC Davis), and the Council of Development Finance Agencies, this project will map California infrastructure and create a long-term vision and goal for implementing the identified necessary infrastructure changes to improve supply chain resilience for small and mid-size producers, having a cascading effect for historically underserved communities.

## *Project Goals and Deliverables*

- Outreach with regions throughout California to **identify and map existing, planned, and needed food infrastructure** that serves small and mid-size producers.
- Develop an understanding of and **map opportunities for connections that would strengthen the supply chain** to serve more communities.
- Develop and **publish a report featuring an infrastructure vision for how the California agri-food system could look by 2040 to best address food supply chain needs** to guide public agencies, nonprofits, community-based initiatives, and private companies involved in supply chain resilience efforts.

## *Community Engagement*

This project actively involves community members, organizations, and stakeholders across California to ensure that the outcomes address local needs and priorities. Participants will contribute insights about their food systems and supply chain challenges, engage in collaborative workshops, and provide feedback on draft recommendations. These inputs will inform strategic infrastructure investments and policy directions that support equitable and sustainable food systems. We will be hosting a series of in-person meetings and web-based workshops to receive iterative feedback from stakeholders throughout this process.

## *Participating in Stakeholder Engagement*

The project will collect data through listening sessions, workshops, and feedback events. Stipends of up to \$2000 may be provided for qualifying regional representative participation. Meetings include:

- Six listening sessions (three in-person and three virtual) to understand community perspectives.
- Four web workshops to share resources on grants, technical assistance, and business planning with communities
- Six follow-up feedback sessions (three in-person and three virtual) on the drafted report and analyses.

By fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the project will provide a synthesized long term vision for California's agricultural future and lay the groundwork for future infrastructure funding.

For more information about this project, please contact [Doris@rootsofchange.org](mailto:Doris@rootsofchange.org) or [Coco@rootsofchange.org](mailto:Coco@rootsofchange.org)