



# LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOODS

## NOT JUST USDA

President Obama has placed an emphasis on local food systems because of the role they play in driving economic development, creating jobs, and preserving open space. As a result, agencies across the Federal government are using local food as a strategy to meet diverse goals. Here are just a few examples:

- **Sustainable Communities Planning Grants.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency coordinate with USDA to support **Sustainable Communities Planning grants**, which fund regional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments. This includes **regional planning efforts to develop local food systems**. For example, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission will use a grant to develop local food infrastructure in a low-income neighborhood of Columbus, expanding the space available for community gardening

by an estimated 300% and creating at least 20 new jobs associated with a new food distribution center.

- **Putting Prevention to Work.** The Centers for Disease Control's **Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)** and **Community Transformation Grants (CTG)** are just two programs working to create healthier food systems across the country. Successes of these programs can be found in urban centers like **San Diego, CA**, where local farm-to-consumer connections will increase healthy food access and in rural areas like **Douglas County, Nebraska** where farm-to-school and school gardening programs are helping students learn about and access healthy local food.
- **Healthy Food in Parks.** Recognizing the importance of national parks and outdoor places to our children's health, the Department of the Interior's National Park Service launched its "**Healthy Parks, Healthy People**" initiative and is now partnering with the First Lady's **Let's**



*Bruce Johnson, owner of the Dragonfly Farm in Beaverdam, VA, updates an online inventory on May 6, 2011, just as dozens of other suppliers associated with Lulus Local Food website also do every Friday.*

**Move! initiative** to work with food vendors to expand healthy options in the parks, including sourcing from local producers. The Park Service administers approximately 600 food vendor contracts across 392 parks, grossing about \$1 billion annually—so the potential for local producers that tap into this market is great.

- **Community Economic Development.** The Treasury Department's **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)** Program expands the capacity of CDFIs to provide credit, capital, and financial services to underserved populations and communities in the United States, including investments in local and regional food systems. USDA is helping communities access these Treasury funds through trainings; for example, in August 2011, USDA staff co-facilitated a **training in Wisconsin** to help regional CDFIs understand mid-tier food chains and the value of investing in them.
- **Small Business Support.** The **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** provides support to small businesses through capital, contracts and counseling. USDA and SBA have signed an **agreement** to encourage sustainable growth and development, including support for local and regional food systems—like in **Iowa**, where SBA and USDA partnered in 2010 to run a series of business roundtables with stakeholders interested in getting a foothold in local and regional food systems.
- **Job Corps.** The Department of Labor spearheads **Job Corps**, a network of free local job training centers for young people. USDA's Forest Service oversees many of the centers, preparing young people for work in agriculture and forestry-related fields. Learn more [here](#).

