



What is Food LINC?

Food LINC, which stands for Leveraging Investment for Network Coordination, is a three-year initiative spearheaded by USDA and its philanthropic partners to enhance local and regional food systems. Ten organizations have been initially selected to support a full time “value chain coordinator” who will provide local food sector coordination services – linking producers and buyers in a regional geography. \$850K has been committed by USDA and its federal partner agencies and each organization is expected to raise matching funds on a 2:1 basis.

Philanthropic Role

Philanthropy has committed over \$2 million in matching funds to support this initiative. Philanthropy is also funding a national nonprofit organization to provide a learning network among the value chain organizations. This support will enable the initiative to cover an array of metro regions and enable the work to continue in sufficient duration to generate and evaluate impact.

What do Value Chain Coordinators Do?

Food value chains differ from typical food supply chains in that they are *intentionally structured to produce both business success and social benefit*. Given this intentionality, it often takes a particular person or team of people to build the initial relationships with supply chain actors and to find a shared set of mission and operational values. These value chain coordinators may play multiple roles in the development of food value chains, including:

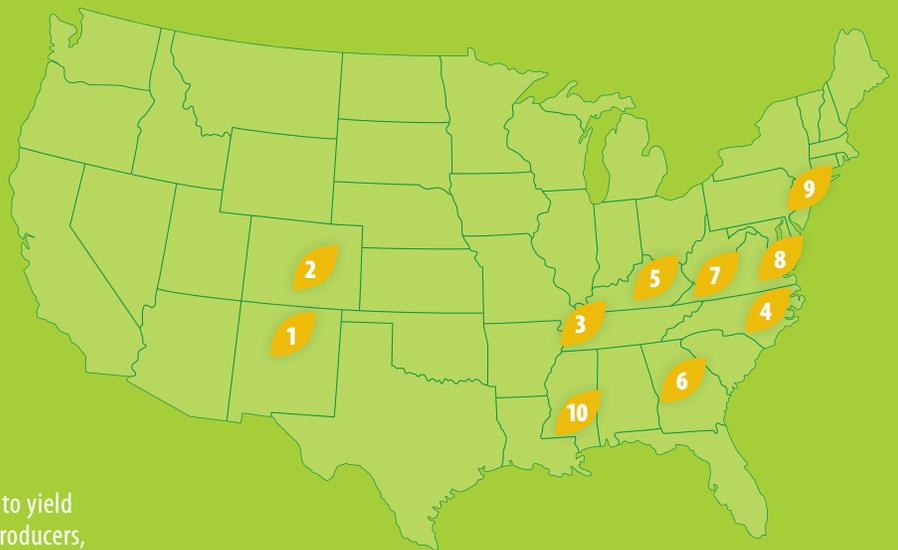
- Market Matchmaker** - Identify and connect key stakeholders through short-term engagement.
- Convener/Relationship builder** - Build the necessary relationships across the food value chain by engaging key stakeholders, maintaining communication channels and fostering a trusting environment.



- Resource prospector** - Identify and pursue resources, such as grants, loans, and services to support value-chain collaborators as they develop their enterprise.
- Policy thought leadership** - Raise policy issues and partner with others to address policies and procurement requirements.
- Technical assistance provider** - Work with food chain members to build capacity through education and training programs in such areas as sustainable production practices, food safety, marketing/branding, etc.
- Catalyst/Innovator** - Utilize grants and other external resources to test new business models and thus lower the financial risk of the business engaged in the value chain.

Organizations and Locations

- 1 La Montanita Co-op
- 2 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
- 3 Communities Unlimited
- 4 The Conservation Fund
- 5 Louisville Farm to Table
- 6 Common Market Georgia
- 7 Appalachian Sustainable Development
- 8 Metro Washington Council of Governments
- 9 Fair Food
- 10 Soul City Hospitality



Impact Outcomes

Through this public-private partnership, the initiative can expect to yield a high return on investment through increased revenue to local producers, discernible job creation along the value chain, and increased access to healthy, affordable food.



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