



2021

Regional Food System Program

Request for Proposals and Instructions

King Conservation District (KCD) is pleased to announce a competitive solicitation process to award Regional Food System Program Grant funds for projects that support the economic and environmental sustainability of working agricultural lands in King County.

Release Date: July 16, 2021

Proposals Due: August 17, 2021 by 4pm PST

No late submissions will be accepted.

All grant documents are available on the [Regional Food System Grant](#) web page.

King Conservation District
Regional Food System Program
800 SW 39th St, Suite 150
Renton, WA 98057
425-282-1958 (O)
425-529-4801 (C)
mary.embleton@kingcd.org

Table of Contents

Key Information.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Schedule	4
Funding and Duration	4
Eligibility Requirements.....	4
General Requirements.....	6
Proposal Selection Process	6
Proposal Scoring Criteria	6
Funding Priorities and Categories.....	8
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice Principles.....	10
Questions and Assistance.....	10

Key Information

Proposals are due on August 17, 2021 by 4pm PST to mary.embleton@kingcd.org. Late submissions will not be accepted. Submit your application as a Microsoft Word document on the form provided. The maximum award will be \$20,000. There is a 25% limit for overhead expenses. Match is required. Recipients will be announced October 12, 2021. The period of performance for the 2021 awards is for one year from the date of award.

Purpose

As part of KCD's Regional Food System Program, King Conservation District initiated a grant fund in 2015 to support projects that strengthen our local food economy. Our goals are to bridge the gap between producers and consumers, and to serve as a catalyst in making local food production both environmentally and economically sustainable.

KCD's Regional Food System Grant Program is based on goals and strategies of the King County Local Food Initiative and outreach with a diversity of regional food system participants. The program funds food system-related projects with demonstrated public benefit and a link to improving working agricultural lands in King County. The program is designed to support projects that contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourage new farmers, expand acreage in food production, improve food access, and increase demand for and sales of King County farm products. Proposed projects must align with the strategies of the [Local Food Initiative](#).

Past Grant Recipients

Year	Number of Grant Awards	Total Grant Funding
2015	9	\$663,878
2016	11	\$751,298
2017	9	\$607,406
2018	11	\$755,630
2019	9	\$600,000
2020	13	\$256,784

Project information can be found [here](#).

2021 Regional Food System Grants

This year the grant program will place greater emphasis on projects that meet identified funding priorities found on page 9, and can demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes that will strengthen our region's food economy and resiliency.

Schedule

(subject to change)

Step 1	Request for Proposals Released	July 16, 2021
	Proposals Due	August 17, 2021
	Review by Advisory Committee Working Group	August 19 – September 15, 2021
Step 2	Grant Subcommittee	September 27
	Board of Supervisors	October 11, 2021
Step 3	Announce Awards	October 12, 2021

Funding and Duration

The 2021 ILA Work Plan funding for KCD's Regional Food System Program includes \$300,000 for competitive grants. Competitive grant requests cannot exceed \$20,000. KCD's Board of Supervisors reserves the right to adjust the amount of the award. The maximum grant period for each award is one (1) year. Projects can start once final awards have been announced, but awardees cannot seek reimbursement for expenses until agreements have been finalized and signed by all parties. Typically, projects will start January 1, 2022 and end no later than January 31, 2023.

Eligibility Requirements

Individual farmers, producer networks, marketing cooperatives, farmers markets, businesses, schools, special districts, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and jurisdictions within KCD's service area are eligible to apply. Applicants do not have to be located in the service area in order to be eligible. However, the project must be located in the service area.

Public benefit: Projects **must** benefit more than one producer or organization. The Regional Food System Program will not award grant funds for projects that provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual.

Service area: KCD's service area includes 34 cities and all of unincorporated King County. The cities of Enumclaw, Federal Way, Skykomish, Milton, and Pacific are not part of the Service area.

Overhead: Indirect overhead expenses are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Examples include rent, internet, IT services, telephone, general office supplies, and insurance. Overhead expenses are allowed as the lower of two options: an itemization of office expenses directly related to the grant-funded portion of the project, or 25% of salaries plus benefits associated with the grant-funded

portion of the project. Costs associated with lobbying and fundraising activities are not allowed.

Match: Matching funds are required (cash, in-kind, or both). Cash match is not required. There is no minimum matching amount. Documentation of matching funds is required.

Ongoing Projects/Sustainable Funding: If the project is a continuation of a previously funded project and is of an ongoing nature, a plan for sustainable funding will be required. Regional Food System Program grant funds are not intended to support projects indefinitely.

Partners: Partnerships are strongly encouraged. In the absence of partnerships, applicants must demonstrate the project's relationship to existing producer or consumer networks such as food hubs. Applicants are encouraged to actively network prior to submitting their proposal.

Evaluation: Applicants must clearly identify outputs and outcomes for each activity identified, and how those outputs and outcomes will be measured. In particular, what methods will be used to evaluate specific outcomes/impacts from the project (e.g. surveys, data collection and analysis)?

Local Food Initiative strategies and Funding Priorities: Projects must address the strategies, but not necessarily the recommended action items, of the King County Local Food Initiative described in Appendix A and B of the [King County Local Food Initiative](#). (See **2021 Additional Guidance** for a list of LFI strategies eligible for funding under KCD's Regional Food System Grant).

Ineligible activities: No grant funds may be used to support the following activities:

- Land and easement purchases, property leases
- Easing barriers that the applicant can remove or modify as a matter of changing its own policies
- Ongoing program activities (There should be no expectation of continued funding support for projects previously awarded funding from the Regional Food System Program)
- Lobbying
- Fundraising activities
- Work that KCD could perform directly or contractually as part of its scheduled work

Disqualification: King Conservation District reserves the right to reject any Proposal for the following reasons:

- Late submittal
- Nonconforming Proposal format or combined answers exceed four (4) pages (2 double-sided pages)
- Missing answers or information
- Non-qualifying applicant or project
- Misrepresentation of facts
- Significant flaws such as unpermitted activity or that the project cannot be carried out in 2022.

General Requirements

Grant Management: Award Recipients will sign a Grant Agreement with KCD and must follow all applicable state rules and regulations, including those for insurance coverage, and accounting procedures. In addition, recipients will submit detailed performance reports quarterly, and at project completion; must keep thorough records; and closely monitor the project against expected outcomes.

Reimbursement of Grant Funds: Grant funds will be paid to recipients for approved expenditures on a reimbursement basis. Grant recipients must have the ability to pay project costs up-front, and may not request reimbursement more frequently than monthly.

Proposal Selection Process

At least two levels of review will be conducted during the Proposal evaluation process:

- An **administrative eligibility review** by KCD staff to determine if the applicant was responsive to the requirements of the Request for Proposals, and to assess risk factors such as poor grant performance, unclear scope of work or outcomes, budget questions, and/or other technical issues raised in the initial review. Please note: applicants with an existing Regional Food System Program grant project who are not consistently meeting the requirements of their current grant may be excluded from review.
- An **external review** to evaluate the merits of each proposal using the criteria set forth in the section below – Proposal Scoring Criteria. Individuals with expertise in food systems and priority funding areas will perform the external review. As a proposal applicant, you will choose which Funding Priority your project best fits.
- Proposal scores and comments will be incorporated into a final ranking of projects by the Advisory Committee Working Group. Rankings will be presented to the Grant Subcommittee for review and comment. The Grant Subcommittee will forward its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for final determination and awards. Applicants will have the opportunity to receive evaluation feedback about their proposals.

Proposal Scoring Criteria

The following are the guidelines and criteria that will be used when scoring all applications.

1. Project purpose (25 Points)

- Describe the specific issue, challenge or need that the project will address.
- Include the Local Food Initiative (LFI) strategy or strategies that the project addresses (limit to **at least one but no more than 3** strategies). Note that not all strategies are eligible for funding. Please see the **2021 Additional Guidance** section on The Local Food Initiative.
- Describe how the project is important and timely.
- Include overall goals and objectives.

Scoring Criteria: The problem or challenge is clearly defined and directly relates to an identified Local Food Initiative Strategy; the project is demonstrated to be important and timely; and the solution logically and demonstrably addresses the problem as well as helps fulfill the project's stated goals and objectives.

2. Work plan (25 Points)

- Identify the major tasks of the project.
- Include the activities necessary to accomplish each task of your project and who will do the work. If contractors will be used or food system stakeholders will be involved (e.g. producer or consumer networks), be sure to specify those roles and responsibilities.
- Describe the outputs and outcomes of each task and be sure to include outreach and performance measurement activities. For examples, see **2021 Additional Guidance**.
- Identify the timeline for each task.

*Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the clarity of the work plan, the relevance of the specific project activities to the project purpose, and how well the plan demonstrates and describes external support for the project. The timeline, resources, and activities appear adequate to obtain the expected outcomes and deliverables. **Include in the scope of work how you plan to acknowledge King Conservation District as a funding source for your project.** This acknowledgement can be described further in the outreach and education activities you identify in the Information Sharing section below.*

3. Expected outcomes and measurable results (10 Points)

- What are the impacts/measures of success of your project and how will you measure them? For examples, see **2021 Additional Guidance**.
- **Outcomes must be specific and measurable.** Specifically, outcomes are changes in a population or system resulting from the implementation of activities. This includes changes in behavior, knowledge, skills, etc.
- Describe the beneficiaries of the project and how many will be impacted.

Scoring Criteria: The proposal identifies and quantifies the potential impacts; demonstrates that the method used to evaluate project performance is the right tool; describes how the project will impact beneficiaries and how many it will impact; and the outcomes appear achievable.

4. How will you share information about your project? (5 points)

- Identify what kind of information you plan to share, and how you plan to share it (this could include, for example, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, print, social media, podcasts, web).
- If you are targeting a specific audience, name the audience and corresponding outreach efforts.
- Be sure to focus on information sharing across your own network as well as to broader, regional stakeholders.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how well the project outlines a plan to disseminate project results through peer-to-peer learning and/or inform a wider audience about it. In either case, the applicant has selected a broad audience or has focused on a smaller audience but with more concentrated impact. Applicant has identified how KCD as a funding source will be acknowledged for the outreach and educational items identified.

5. How does your project address diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice principles? (15 Points)

- How will you address and implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice principles in your project? See diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice definitions below. See **2021 Additional Guidance** for examples.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on applicant's ability to demonstrate an understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice principles; project activities must be clearly connected to these principles; and applicant gives specific examples of what they will do to address the them.

6. Budget (20 Points)

The budget includes two parts, the budget table and budget narrative.

- Provide sufficient detail about budget categories to demonstrate that costs are reasonable and adequate for the proposed work.
- Describe the purpose of expenses paid by this grant (and other cash sources) and how you estimated them (the assumptions on which an expense is based). For example, total travel costs could be the number of miles traveled times the mileage rate for each trip included in the budget.
- Identify the in-kind and cash match contributions by you and your partners (identify each separately), for what purpose, and their estimated values.
- If this project has received other funding, describe how that funding is allocated to the proposed activities of this project and if the funding serves as cash match.

Scoring Criteria: The budget request and match support the proposed project, timeline, and outcomes. The applicant provided enough information to justify cost items in each cost category and provided an understandable basis for each cost.

Funding Priorities and Categories

In carrying out the Regional Food System Grant Program, KCD aims to increase both local farm productivity and strengthen local food market opportunities through investing in projects that meaningfully contribute to economic viability in the local food system. KCD's Regional Food System Grant Program places a high value on peer-to-peer learning, and how innovations in resource conservation and the regional food economy can have a broader impact both locally and in the Puget Sound region.

Listed below are the 2021 funding priorities. Projects that do not address one of the priorities are still eligible for funding, as long as they meet all other program requirements.

The 2021 Funding Priorities (in no ranking order):

- Infrastructure
- Consumer Demand
- Land Access
- Food Safety
- Business Management

Please select the **one** category that best fits your project.

Infrastructure

In this funding category, projects will be considered that remove barriers for farmers in food production and improve local food processing, distribution, and marketing infrastructure in King County to increase aggregated food distribution. This could include, for example, produce processing, commercial kitchens and other value-added processing facilities, cold storage, or equipment sharing/loan programs.

Consumer Demand

In this funding category, projects will be considered that create awareness of King County produced foods via marketing and education to consumers, increase technical assistance for selling and sourcing locally, and support emerging markets for selling locally-produced food. This could include, for example, eat local promotions, farmer-buyer trade meetings, improving access to markets, farmer market promotions, retail readiness and market assistance to schools, restaurants, institutions, and other food retailers, and supporting emerging markets for local farm products.

Land Access

Projects will be considered that address removing barriers for farmers in food production by increasing access to farmland for lease, purchase, or other land tenure models, and farm transition planning as a means of keeping agricultural land in production. This could include models and resources for leasing land, purchasing land, developing/expanding farm incubators, providing services that directly link farmers looking for land with farmland owners, or forums for realtors that focus on agriculturally zoned lands and other rural lands suitable for agriculture.

Food Safety

Projects will be considered that address voluntary and required food safety training, education, and technical assistance for producers and value-added food processors. This could include training, education, technical assistance, and cost share projects for farmers and processors with respect to the requirements of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Good Handling Practices (GHP), Group GAP, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), and the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Business Management

Projects will be considered that provide education, resources, technical assistance, and/or mentoring to farm owners/operators and people interested in farming with the purpose of helping them meet their business and personal goals. This could include business planning,

how to find farmland, finding and managing labor, record keeping, insuring crops and other risk management tools, finding capital, accessing markets, and retirement planning.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice Principles

Regional Food System grant applicants should be prepared to implement their project in line with the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. The following definitions are from the Ford Foundation and USDA:

- Diversity is the representation of all our varied identities and differences (race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, caste, socio-economic status, thinking and communication styles, etc.), collectively and as individuals.
- Equity seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all.
- Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people.
- Social justice is the equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
- Socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.
- Socially disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. *Those groups include African Americans, American Indians or Alaskan natives, Hispanics, and Asians or Pacific Islanders.*

For resources and examples of KCD funded projects, see **2021 Additional Guidance**.

Questions and Assistance

KCD staff are available to provide applicants with an understanding of the grant selection process and requirements; however, to ensure that all applicants receive equal treatment, KCD staff cannot provide assistance with individual proposals. Should you have any questions about the process or requirements, please call Mary Embleton at 425-282-1985 (O) or 425-529-4801 (C) or mary.embleton@kingcd.org. Inquiries about the grant process will be compiled in a “Frequently Asked Questions” document and published to KCD’s RFS grant website.