



Board Minutes

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Central Time

Via Zoom

11:31 Call to Order

Board Members Present: Debby Warren, Deb Markley, Dominique Gomez, Salomon Torres, Donna Kay Yeagan.

Staff Present: Kim Griffey and Ines Polonius

The CEO requested this board call to provide strategic guidance on whether to pursue an offer made by the Louisiana Central to take over their Farm and Food Program. The CEO shared the financial position of the program:

Farm and Food Grants Overview

As of 2/28/2025

	Delta Regional Food Business Center (DRFBC) USDA	Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) USDA	Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) USDA	Novo Nordisk Operations Grant-Sprout	Novo Nordisk Program Grants-Sprout	Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program (SE TOPP) USDA via Florida Organic Growers (FOG)	NRCS Outreach Agreement (USDA)	Total
Programs Funded	Statewide Value Chain Coordination	Farmer Training Program	Farmer Training Program	Farmer Training, Market Benefits	Farmer Training, Market Benefits	Farmer Training	Farmers Market	
Grant End Date	May 2028	2026	2026	2026	2026	2028	2025	
Total Grants Awarded	5 \$1,375,000	6 \$491,212	\$491,212 1	\$195,000	\$40,000	\$225,000	\$555,000 2	\$ 3,372,424
Reimbursable or Upfront	Reimbursable (monthly)	Reimbursable (monthly)	Reimbursable (monthly)	Upfront (annual)	Upfront (annual)	Reimbursable (quarterly)	Reimbursable (quarterly)	
Amount Left to Spend	\$1,300,000 3	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$100,000	\$20,000	\$150,000 4	\$60,000	\$ 2,010,000
Annual Personnel/Benefits (Direct)	\$ 118,040.00	\$ 87,360.00	\$ 76,440.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,304.00	\$ 32,916.00	\$ 313,144.00

1. Expect to extend 3-9 months

2. Carry-over, expect to spend by end of 2025.

3. Includes \$100K in indirect funding for host organization spread across 3 years

4. Includes \$20,250 in indirect funding for host organization spread across 3 years.

5. BFRDP and FMPP grants call for an average of 22 percent match of in-kind from host, typically in the form of space or management.

6. Does not include the \$1.8M to be distributed to food business enterprises

Opportunities Discussed:

- Expand CU's existing healthy foods program
- Strengthen presence of Community Sustainability team in Louisiana
- Program Director Bahia Nightengale has a strong reputation in the industry

Risks Discussed:

- Heavy reliance of this program on USDA funds during a time when these programs are no longer a priority for the current administration
- Amount of time required by CU leadership to work on this transition that could be utilized elsewhere during this critical time of change

- Bringing on new staff when we do not know how to keep existing staff given the drastic shifts in funding.

By the end of the call the board was not ready to commit to this transition but agreed to have:

- CU staff continue to explore and negotiate.
- Louisiana Central team explore the philanthropic opportunities to support this work long term.
- Ines/Kim come back to the board with a 2-page document of what this transition looks like.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Deb Markley
Secretary/Treasurer

Date