



REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM GRANT PROGRAM

2017 Regional Food System Grant Program Request for Pre-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: March 24, 2017

Pre-Proposals Due: April 24, 2017 by 4pm PST

No late submissions will be accepted.

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

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KEY INFORMATION

Pre-Proposals will be due on April 24, 2017 by 4pm PST to regionalfoodgrant@kingcd.org. No late submissions will be accepted. Submit your application as an MS Word document. The maximum award will be \$100,000. There is a 25% limit for overhead expenses. Match is required. Requests for Full-Proposals will be due June 22, 2017. Recipients will be announced October 10, 2017. The period of performance for the 2017 awards is for one or two years starting January 1, 2018.

PURPOSE

As part of the KCD Regional Food System Program, the 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.

The KCD Regional Food System Grant Program is based on goals and strategies of the King County Local Food Initiative and outreach with 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

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

2017 Regional Food System Grants

This year the grant program will place greater emphasis on projects that meet identified funding priorities found on page 10, and can demonstrate clear, measurable outcomes that will strengthen our region's food economy and resiliency.

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Step 1 Pre-Proposal	Request for Pre-Proposals Released	March 24, 2017
	Pre-Proposals Due	April 24, 2017
Step 2 Full Proposal	Full Proposals Invited	May 23, 2017
	Full Proposals Due	June 22, 2017
	Review by External Panels, Advisory Committee Working Group, Advisory Committee	June 26 – September 13, 2017
	Board of Supervisors	October 9, 2017
Step 3 Grant Award	Announce Awards	October 10, 2017

FUNDING AND DURATION

2017 funding for the Regional Food System Program includes \$900,000 for competitive grants and strategic initiatives. Funding for strategic initiatives will be announced later. Grant requests cannot exceed \$100,000. The KCD Board of Supervisors reserves the right to adjust the amount of the award. The maximum grant period for each award is two (2) years. 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, 2018 and end no later than December 31, 2019.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Individual farmers, producer networks, marketing cooperatives, farmers markets, businesses, schools, special districts, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and jurisdictions within the KCD 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: The KCD 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 project, or 25% of salaries plus benefits associated with the project. Costs associated with lobbying and fundraising activities are not allowed. They will be deducted as a factor of this percentage based on information in the most recent federal tax filing.

Match: Matching funds are required (cash, in-kind, or both). Cash match is not required. There is no minimum matching amount. Documentation of any matching funds will be required if invited to submit a full proposal.

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 but not required. 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.

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](#). Additional points will be given to projects that address KCD 2017 Funding Priorities.

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

- Land and easement purchases
- 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 Grant Program)
- Lobbying
- Fundraising activities
- Work that KCD could perform directly or contractually as part of its scheduled work

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

- Late submittal
- Nonconforming Pre-Proposal format or combined answers exceed six (6) pages (3 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 2018-2019.

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, annually, 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.

Pre-Proposal Selection Process

At least two levels of review will be conducted during the Pre-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 – Pre-Proposal Scoring Criteria. Individuals with expertise in food systems and priority funding areas will perform the external review. Depending on the nature of the proposal, KCD may also seek additional technical reviewers. As a pre-proposal applicant, you will choose which Funding Priority your project best fits.
- Pre-proposal scores and comments will be incorporated into a final ranking of projects. The funding cutoff for inviting full proposals is 1.5 times the available funding for the 2017 competitive grants. Applicants will have the opportunity to receive evaluation feedback about their proposal.

Proposal Scoring Criteria

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

1. PROJECT PURPOSE (20 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 no more than 3 strategies).
- 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. PRELIMINARY WORK PLAN (20 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, as appropriate. For examples, see [Additional Guidance](#).
- Identify the timeline for each task (by month and year).

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 (10 Points)

- What are the measures of success of your project and how will you measure them? For examples, see [Additional Guidance](#).
- Outcomes must be specific and measurable. Specifically, new acres in production, dollars of new farm product sales, number of new farmers or new farm businesses. Others are allowed.
- 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. BUDGET (10 Points)

The budget includes two parts, the budget spreadsheet and the 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.

5. WHAT RESOURCES ARE YOU AND YOUR PARTNERS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS PROJECT? ALTERNATIVELY, DESCRIBE HOW YOUR PROJECT IS PART OF A PRODUCER OR CONSUMER NETWORK THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO EXPANDING ITS OUTREACH AND SUCCESS (10 points)

- What investments are you and/or your partners contributing to the project?
- Are they in-kind (e.g. the value of volunteer time, donated use of equipment or facilities) or cash contributions (e.g. other grants or donations)?
- Estimate their dollar value and identify what has been secured and what is pending.
- Identify the network, as appropriate, that is essential to the project and outline those elements.

Scoring Criteria: The match as described is consequential or assured, or the producer or consumer network identified by the applicant is demonstrably consequential to the project's ability to meet its stated outcomes.

6. PROJECT EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY (10 Points)

- Identify your experience and capacity to carry out this project, include yourself and your partners.
- Identify who will manage the completion of project activities and what are their qualifications.

- If contracts will be used or industry stakeholders will be involved, be sure to specify those roles and responsibilities.
- Identify who will manage other grant responsibilities, including budgetary, contractual, and reporting requirements, and their qualifications.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on how well the applicant demonstrates that it has the means and experience to carry out all phases of the project as detailed in the Scope of Work and/or will attain these capabilities with the help of partners, contractors, and/or a producer or consumer network.

7. HOW WILL YOU SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROJECTS? (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.

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.

8. SUSTAINABILITY (5 Points)

- If you plan to continue the project after the grant funding period, identify how you will make it sustainable over time, including provisions for continued funding.
- If you are planning on developing a strategic or business plan, outline its key elements and benchmarks.
- If you don't plan to continue the project after the grant funding period, identify what provisions you are making to ensure that its legacy lives on in the work of others.
- Describe how you envision your project as part of larger endeavors to strengthen our region's food economy and resiliency, and describe the ways in which the project will contribute to this broader goal.

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the applicant has described the steps it will take to ensure the project's long-term sustainability (or its long-term impact) either through a fundraising plan or by making the project self-sustaining through the applicant's organization or through other entities.

9. FUNDING PRIORITIES (10 Points)

- Does this project address a funding priority (identified below)?
- Is addressing that priority a primary focus of the project?
- How will the project address the issue?

Scoring Criteria: Scoring will be based on the extent to which the project demonstrates a link to the program funding priorities identified in this RFP

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. The Regional Food System Grant Program places a high value on peer-to-peer learning, and how innovations in resources conservation and the regional food economy can have a broader impact both locally and in the Puget Sound region.

In preparing for the 2017 Grant Program, KCD staff met with and received input from over 50 local food system participants to identify issues that help us evaluate our program, better understand stakeholder participation in the regional food system, and inform our future direction. With the help of the Regional Food System Grant Program Working Group, the feedback we received was distilled into key priority areas for funding that address multiple stakeholder needs.

Listed below are the 2017 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.

2017 Funding Priorities (in no ranking order)

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

Please select the 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.

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, or email regionalfoodgrant@kingcd.org.