



Food LINC: Leveraging Investment for Network Coordination

Food LINC: Background

- **Purpose:** Fund Value Chain Coordinators (VCCs) to link primarily rural producers to urban markets where demand is high for local food.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** \$1M initial USDA investment unlocking \$1.7M in other Federal funds and \$2.8M from private funders to date
- **Expected Outcomes:** Increased revenue to local producers, job creation along the value chain, and increased access to healthy, affordable food.
- **“Higher” Purpose:** Elevate the value of this work, leading to longer-term support from public & private funders.

**Federal Partners include Rural Development, Agricultural Marketing Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Appalachian Regional Commission, and Delta Regional Authority*





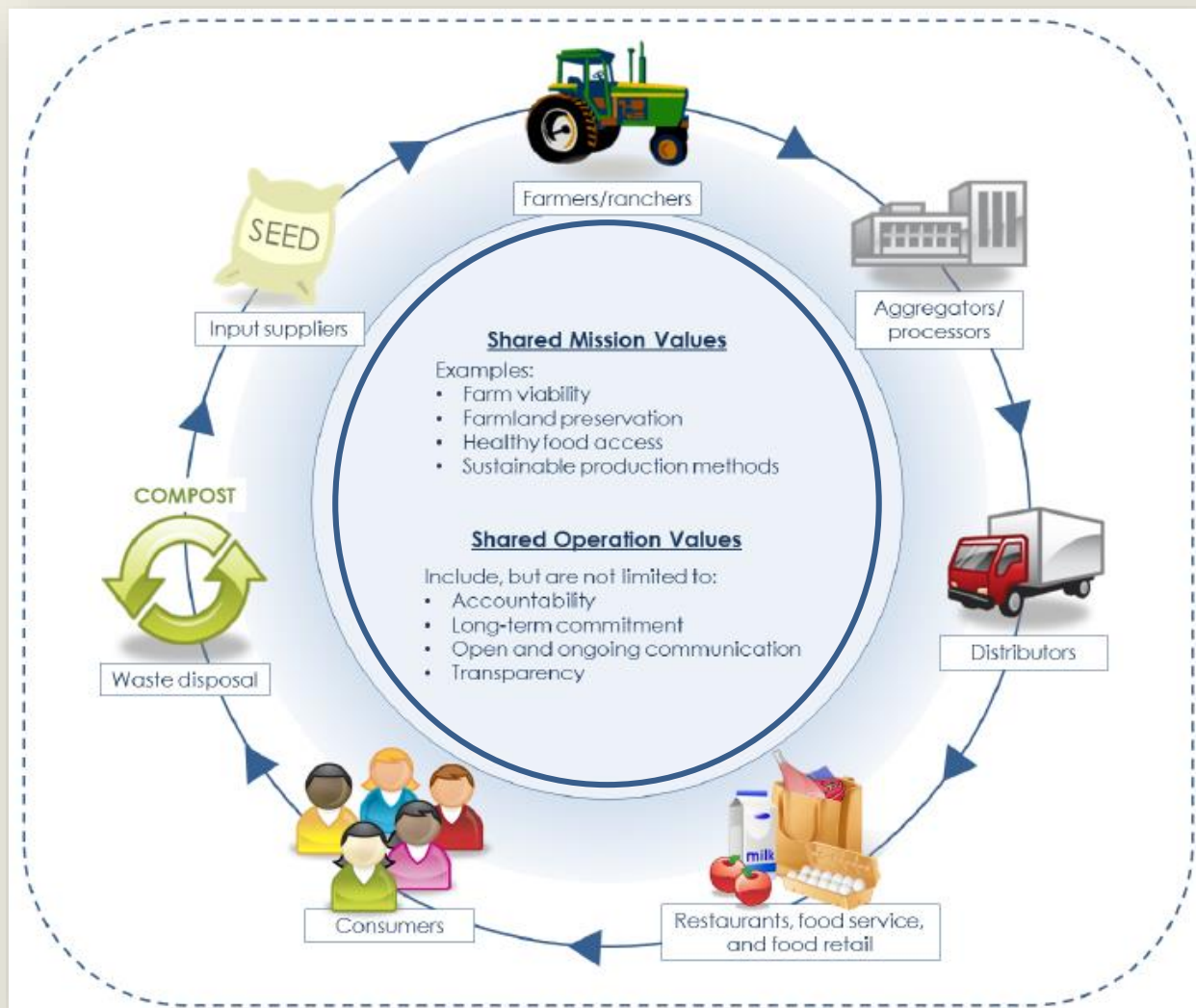
Defining Food Value Chains



What is a Food Value Chain?

The food value chain may look a lot like a traditional supply chain on the surface, but. . .

- Businesses intentionally structure their core operations to **produce both financial success and social benefit**
- **Shared mission and operational values** support decisions and processes



How Do We Create Successful Value Chains?



Key Takeaway:

It's Not About Infrastructure, It's About Relationships!

- The best investment is often in human capital – i.e., Value Chain Coordinators

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-value-chain>



Role of Value Chain Coordinators

Market Matchmaker

Identify and connect key stakeholders through referral services and other forms of short-term or one-off engagement. This “public interest broker” role is key to development of food value chains because many businesses are stepping outside their normal channels to find new collaborators.

Convener/ Relationship Builder

Build the necessary relationships across the food value chain by engaging key stakeholders, maintaining communication channels, and fostering a trusting environment. Examples include convening stakeholder meetings, forming working groups, and implementing other forms of longer-term engagement.

Technical Assistance

Work with food value chain members to build capacity through education and training programs in such areas as sustainable production practices, food safety, marketing/branding, etc.

Policy Thought Leader

Raise policy issues and partner with others to address policies and procurement requirements, such as bidding procedures and preferred-vendor practices that may interfere with the ability of food value chains to access certain marketing channels.

Resource Prospector

Identify and pursue resources, such as grants, loans, and services to support value-chain collaborators as they develop their enterprise.

Catalyst / Innovator

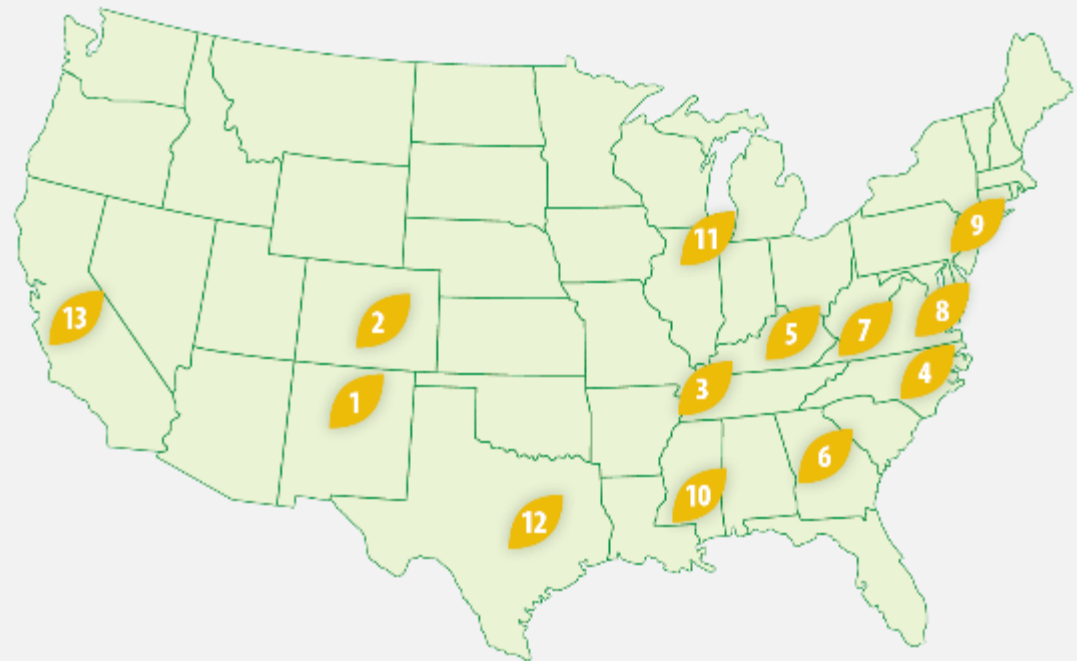
As a resource prospector, value chain coordinators can also utilize grants and other external resources to test new business models and thus lower the financial risk of the businesses engaged in the value chain.



Organizations and Locations

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- 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
- 11 Family Farmed
- 12 Texas Center for Local Food
- 13 Food Commons Fresno





Public-Private Partnership

Federal Partners (\$2.7M)

- USDA Rural Development
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Delta Regional Authority

18 Philanthropic Partners (\$2.8M)

- Agua Fund
- Assisi Foundation
- CoBank
- The Duke Endowment
- Gates Family Foundation
- Hyde Family Foundation
- Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust
- Kentucky Agricultural Development Board
- Oak Foundation
- The One Foundation
- Prince Charitable Trusts
- RSF Social Finance
- 11th Hour Project of the Schmidt Family Foundation
- Surdna Foundation
- Thornburg Foundation
- Town Creek Foundation
- Z Smith Reynolds Foundation



More Info on Food LINC?

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