

HVADC collaborates with GrowNYC to help farmers in underserved communities

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HUDSON — Under grant funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission, The Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is coordinating with GrowNYC to help farmers in underserved communities in five counties identify new opportunities and progress their businesses.

HVADC was recently awarded \$94,525 in grant funding from the Northern Border Regional Commission through the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board's Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program (VF&FVP). The Northern Boarder Regional Commission is a Federal-State partnership for economic and community development within the most distressed counties of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York.

“This new grant allows HVADC to help famers in rural communities not just grow their crops but grow their business,” said Todd Erling, HVADC Executive Director. “The professional services we will be able to connect farmers with through this funding are invaluable. We know that the positive impact of assistance with business planning and asset management can be exponential to a farm’s success.”

To further help farmers identify new opportunities, HVADC is coordinating with GrowNYC, which operates 50 New York City Greenmarkets. The GrowNYC Farmer Assistance team will provide Legal and Strategic Marketing services to program participants.

“Collaborating on this project with GrowNYC has been crucial and provides significant added value to entrepreneurs participating in this programing,” said Erling. Access to high quality legal and marketing assistance from service providers with extensive knowledge of New York City markets is a phenomenal opportunity for participants,” he continued.

The funding, which is approved for use in Rensselaer, Sullivan, Washington, Greene and Saratoga Counties, is specifically geared towards connecting farmers and food producers with the vital professional services needed to keep the business aspects of feeding their communities healthy and vibrant. Existing successful programs such as HVADC’s Incubator Without Walls will be deployed, with an emphasis on recruiting businesses owned by individuals from underserved populations—people of color, immigrants, LGBTQIA and low-income individuals and families.

Through the grant, farms and food businesses will receive help crafting and refining business plans that establish goals and objectives and lay out a strategy to achieve them. HVADC will also use this grant to build on the existing Hudson Valley Farmlink Network program that was developed to work with farmers who are looking for new land as well as retiring

farmers or landowners who wish to keep their land in farming. These resources are especially critical in areas such as Saratoga County, where development pressure on farmland is most severe.



The grant can also be used to assist farmers in the increasingly important area of marketing and sales planning. Farm and food businesses, in particular new businesses, often require assistance in developing these plans. Technical assistance will be provided to help businesses develop branding strategies, advertising, market launches and more. Assistance will also be provided to connect producers and manufacturers with customers seeking local food options, including retailers, restaurants, food distributors, farmers markets, and direct to consumer sales opportunities.

Other professional assistance available through the grant includes cash-flow and enterprise analysis, management coaching, targeted technical assistance and more. Services will be delivered by a combination of HVADC staff, an established network of experienced private contractors, partner organization which can provide access to specialized skillsets.

This grant not only allows HVADC to continue and build on existing programmatic success but also expands the reach of those programs to new clientele. The award is an example of the success agriculturally focused organizations can have in accessing funding when they work together, pooling resources and expertise for the benefit of the industry, region, and every farm community therein.

HVADC's Incubator Without Walls program is not limited to the counties covered by this grant funding, and all farmers and food producers in underserved communities in the Hudson Valley are encouraged to apply. To learn more about the HVADC Incubator Without Walls program, and how to apply, visit <https://www.hvadc.org/iww>.