

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 9, 2020

Sankofa CDC Receives Grant to Improve Healthy Food Access in Local Community

NEW ORLEANS – The Sankofa Fresh Stop Market was one of only 20 grantees this year to receive financial assistance awards through [America's Healthy Food Financing Initiative's \(HFFI\) Targeted Small Grants Program](#). Twenty projects received a total of \$3 million in financial assistance awards.

Of the 20 awardees, 40% serve rural communities and 65% are owned or led by people of color, low income people, women, and/or native people.

Sankofa Fresh Stop Market's Impact on the Lower Ninth Ward Food Desert

The Lower Ninth Ward is one of several food deserts with limited access to affordable and nutritious food throughout New Orleans. The Sankofa Fresh Stop Market aims to change that. The Fresh Stop Market will be one of the first mini-grocery stores in the area to offer a significant amount of fresh produce. The Fresh Stop Market will provide affordable fresh food access for the local community, decrease health disparities, and ultimately create a cultural norm of having fresh foods in the neighborhood.

All-In-One Community Center & Grocery Store

The Fresh Stop Market will be located in a two-story 3,500 square foot building at 5029 St. Claude Ave. This commercial development will be a green, mixed-use development that will include a mini-grocery store, retail coffee shop and a teaching kitchen with cardiovascular health education and testing spaces in partnership with Xavier University Health and Wellness Center.

The Fresh Stop Market will serve as a hub for foods from local farmers, fishers, and wholesale food distributors operating 6 days a week from morning to evening to reach 500 customers per week.

"With the Fresh Stop Market at the intersection of St Claude and Forstall, residents are going to have easy access to fresh, affordable foods instead of traveling across the canal or to St Bernard Parish. I am especially excited for the nutrition and cooking classes. Food and community go hand in hand in New Orleans. Teaching kids about food – where it comes from, how to cook it, bringing families together to cook, learning about cultural cooking traditions...it's going to be beautiful"

– Helen Woo, Community Health Programs Manager, MS, RDN, LDN

Grant Selection Process

Awardees were selected through a competitive process that was open to eligible fresh food retail projects seeking financial and technical assistance to overcome the higher costs and initial barriers to entry in underserved areas. Submissions to the program's Request for Applications came from 48 states and the District and US territories, and had a total request of over \$68 million in financing.

As the National Fund Manager, [Reinvestment Fund](#) administers the HFFI program on behalf of USDA. The public-private partnership aims to provide capacity building and financing resources to stimulate food business development at scale and build a more equitable food system that supports the health and economic vibrancy of all Americans.

“The pandemic has underscored the necessity of having a robust and just food system, where all Americans, regardless of where they live or how much they earn, can easily get nutritious, affordable food,” said Don Hinkle-Brown, President and CEO of Reinvestment Fund. “HFFI resources are a critical part of the solution set to strengthen local economies, grow entrepreneurship and quality jobs, and further develop essential and sustainable infrastructure, particularly in underinvested rural and urban communities.”

About the HFFI Program

The 2020 HFFI program offered financial assistance in the form of one-time grants to food retailers and food enterprises that aimed to strengthen, expand, and innovate within the food retail supply chain. Funding for the HFFI grants program is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. A variety of organizations, business models, and capital needs were ventures that process, distribute, aggregate, market, and sell healthy, fresh, and affordable foods to underserved communities and markets were eligible for the program. A full list of awardees is available at www.investinginfood.com.

About Reinvestment Fund

Reinvestment Fund is a mission-driven financial institution committed to making communities work for all people. We bring financial and analytical tools to partnerships that work to ensure that people in communities across the country have the opportunities they strive for: affordable places to live, access to nutritious food and health care, schools where their children can flourish, and strong, local businesses that support jobs. We use data to understand markets and how transactions can have the most powerful impact, which has consistently earned us the top Aeris rating of AAA for financial strength and four stars for impact management. Our asset and risk management systems have also earned us an A+ rating from S&P. Since our inception in 1985, Reinvestment Fund has provided over \$2.4 billion in financing to strengthen neighborhoods, scale social enterprises, and build resilient communities. Learn more at reinvestment.com.

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