

Project Proposal:

AZ Rural Development Council |
Verde Grown



Healthy Food: Verde Grown

Introduction

Founded in 2009, Local First Arizona Foundation (LFAF) is a statewide organization focused on building a more diverse, inclusive and self-reliant economy for communities of all sizes. LFAF is the sister organization to Local First Arizona, which is the largest coalition of locally owned businesses in the country. Combined, these two nonprofits develop innovative programs that are improving Arizona's economic future by driving resources into under-served communities in rural and urban settings. In 2014, LFAF merged with the Arizona Rural Development Council (AZRDC) and has quickly emerged as a leader in rural community, workforce and economic development.

Project

The AZRDC Healthy Food System program builds capacity for local food producers while enhancing community access to healthy, locally grown foods; helping to build self-reliance for rural towns across Arizona.

How it Works

Building a healthy, local food system is a comprehensive endeavor that requires a variety of strategic partners and a plan for sustainability and expansion well beyond the initiation of the project.

Through AZRDC programming, community food partners will be engaged in conversations and activities that help build the capacity of local producers, build awareness for the value of locally grown foods, and enhance ability for residents to engage in a local marketplace that will improve community health and wellness while simultaneously connecting them to their place.



Phase 1 | Asset Inventory

The Verde Valley boasts an impressive variety of agriculture and local food producers across the region. Connecting these producers to a larger marketplace will be critical to the sustainability and overall success of their businesses.

In this phase, Kate Radosevic - Food & Farms Initiative Manager - will work with community partners to compile a comprehensive list of businesses working in the food and agriculture sector within the Verde Valley. These businesses will be added to the Local First AZ Good Food Finder website, with full business profiles added to a searchable directory. By doing so, a comprehensive database of food producers in the Verde Valley will be created for future reference and easier access by statewide consumers and locals alike.

Phase 2 | Coalition and Capacity Building

Understanding the challenges, opportunities, and goals of the Verde Valley agricultural sector will be key to the success of the *Verde Grown* initiative. In partnership with the Verde Valley Ag Coalition (VVAC), AZRDC will work to develop a strong coalition of stakeholders where input is welcomed and action is encouraged.

In this phase, Liza Noland - Director of Rural Programs, and Sarah Porter with the Kyl Center will convene food/agriculture stakeholders from across the Verde Valley in focus groups to discuss their interests and goals for the *Verde Grown* initiative. This information will then be utilized to guide the mission of the VVAC, outline a framework for research through Kyl Center, and initiate the next stages of planning for the *Verde Grown* initiative.

Phase 3 | Feasibility of Cooperation

Based on the outcomes of the initial focus group, more information may need to be gathered to help address any areas of opportunities identified. Assuming that access to locally produced food may arise, different models can be evaluated for programmatic fit, preparation, and funding requirements.

In this phase, Kimber Lanning - Executive Director of Local First AZ will work with VVAC to conduct a feasibility study addressing the appetite of the community for the development of a CSA or Marketplace Cooperative. Surveys and interviews will be conducted across the Verde Valley region with data collected and reported in a way that future decisions can be made about opportunities to enhance access to healthy, locally-grown foods.

Phase 4 | Branding & Marketing

In order to ensure success, marketing a local food initiative requires a strategic, consistent, and collaborative effort. More than a decade has passed since the first discussion of the development of a *Verde Grown* local food campaign, but with a growing interest in sustainability; localism; and community development, now appears to be the perfect time to reassess the campaign.

In this phase, Liza Noland will convene a series of community meetings (up to 3) targeted at a diverse array of attendees which could include youth, new residents, food producers, and/or community leaders/stakeholders to delve into the potential design and overall identity of the *Verde Grown* brand. Logos and taglines will be generated and circulated to each group for buy-in and feedback. A creative brief of the initiative will be developed for use in marketing collateral as a universal message to help convey the rich food culture of the Verde Valley.

To launch, Local First AZ will coordinate media outreach, a 3-month digital advertising campaign, and a series of (3) community events that will engage consumers, schools, Chambers, and community leaders in the *Verde Grown* movement.

Deliverables

- Food Producer Asset Inventory & Profiles
- Focus Group Summary & Outcome Reports
- Feasibility Study
- Verde Grown Logo & Tagline
- Brand Standards Guidebook
- Creative Brief
- Press Releases (2-3)
- Digital Ad Set
- Event Planning & Promotion

Cost

Cost	\$35,000
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Organization Contact Details

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Proposal prepared by:



**LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA
FOUNDATION**
Rural Development Council