REGIONAL FOOD PROCUREMENT & DISTRIBUTION



NASDA supports an immediate increase in federal policies and investments that strengthen regional food systems through resilient infrastructure, flexible state-led food purchasing programs, and expanded institutional procurement of local and regional foods. Federal partnership with states is also essential to the success of any newly established programs as state agriculture departments serve at the nexus of all elements of the supply chain, from the farm to food processors to organizations that purchase food to serve local communities.

Scan to learn more about NASDA's regional food procurement and distribution Policy.

NASDA

ISSUE:

Small- and medium-sized farmers, especially specialty crop producers, are eager to supply a variety of nutrient-dense foods to local and regional markets. However, gaps in federal support for food system infrastructure and supply chain resilience continue to limit their ability to reach dependable markets. At the same time, schools, hospitals, food banks and other institutions want to procure more local foods but lack reliable regional supply chains to do so at scale.

Strategic federal investments—paired with state-led implementation—can convert appropriated dollars directly into food purchases from American farmers while building the infrastructure needed to sustain those markets long term. Without targeted action, the nation risks declining farm viability, lost rural economic opportunity and weaker public health outcomes.

NASDA RECOMMENDATIONS:

Expand and Codify Funding for the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

- The federal Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program expanded domestic market opportunities for small- and medium-sized farms and agri-businesses by strengthening the middle of the supply chain.
- This one-time investment provided competitive subawards for critical equipment and food systems infrastructure, helping farmers access new markets and supporting the stability and resilience of regional food systems.
- Future federal funding should prioritize investments in transportation, aggregation, cold storage and processing to close gaps between farm production and distribution, ensuring farmers can reliably reach regional markets.

Establish and Codify Funding for Cooperative Agreements with State Departments of Agriculture for Local & Regional Food Purchases

- NASDA supports permanent funding for flexible, state-led food purchasing programs to bridge local and regional farmers with new market access, address regional nutritional insecurity and hunger, and advance national public health outcomes.

REGIONAL FOOD PROCUREMENT & DISTRIBUTION



- NASDA supports cooperative agreements, in partnership with state departments of agriculture, as a flexible and proven tool to link regional supply with regional demand.
- State agriculture departments are well-positioned to coordinate with federal, state and local partners to meet regional needs for farmers, producers, hunger relief, school meals, emergency feeding and Food is Medicine initiatives.
- These programs create new market opportunities, help keep farmers on the land, strengthen supply chains, diversify market access, reinforce economic links, and reduce food waste and crop loss. Previous models have shown direct, meaningful new opportunities for small- and medium-sized farms and specialty crop producers to meet regional institutional demand.
- NASDA supports re-establishing these programs, increasing funding and expanding avenues and innovation for regional procurement and distribution opportunities including institutions, emergency feeding and new healthcare initiatives. NASDA supports including administrative funding in federal agreements to ensure effective state implementation.
- NASDA supports H.R. 4782, the Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Act and S. 2338, the Strengthening Local Food Security Act.

Expand Procurement Opportunities Across Federal Programs

- NASDA urges federal agencies and Congress to use the above policy recommendations as tangible, cost-effective mechanisms to leverage and integrate more local and regional foods into public health initiatives and hunger relief programs including:
  - School meals and child nutrition programs
  - Emergency feeding and hunger relief
  - “Food is Medicine” and healthcare programs
  - Institutional feeding (i.e. military, prisons, Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs)
  - New federal initiatives (i.e. MAHA Boxes for SNAP)

Establish Funding & Strengthen Coordination Between Federal Programs & Regional Food Systems

- A dedicated link between federal programs and regional food systems is needed to improve efficiency and strengthen supply chain resilience, alongside state departments of agriculture.
  - Key functions should include:
    - Streamlining access to federal programs, grants and technical support
    - Aggregating resources for first-mile supply chain needs, including transportation, aggregation, cold storage and processing
    - Training and guidance to regional food enterprises and agri-businesses to enhance capacity and ensure food safety
    - Aligning initiatives across USDA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other federal agencies to reduce duplication and boost impact

February 2026

NASDA

Contact: Brianna Robinson-Verloop | brianna.robinsonverloop@nasda.org
4350 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 810, Arlington, VA 22203 | www.nasda.org