

# ESEC RECEIVES USDA GRANT TO CREATE RESILIENT REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM AND INCREASE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

EASTON, MD, USA, November 29, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center](#) (ESEC) has received a \$105,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to plan and develop an implementation strategy for a regional Farm to Freezer value-chain coordination program in partnership with the Chesapeake Culinary Center (CCC).



We value our growing partnership with the CCC and thank the USDA for supporting this project and its contribution to ESEC's mission of solving regional problems through innovation and technology."

*Mike Thielke, Executive Director of ESEC.*

The partnership combines each organization's expertise to develop a more resilient and sustainable food system. ESEC is a leading provider of entrepreneurial technical assistance and programs that enable the commercialization of innovations and technologies in the agriculture sector. CCC is the region's guiding force in operating a community kitchen, processing local produce, and making pre-prepared meals available to populations with limited food access.

The Farm to Freezer program will be designed to:

- Extend the rural region's growing season by preserving fresh fruits and vegetables at a new facility using advanced IQF technology that retains the fresh-grade nutrition levels.
- Increase local market revenues for local rural farmers and growers to scale their production by providing a 12-month guaranteed purchase order for produce.
- Expand access to local, nutritious food throughout the year for residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore by extending the accessible season to local produce through the advanced processing and distribution system.
- Set an example for other regional parts of Maryland to improve their food systems by replicating and adapting their own Farm to Freezer programs.

"We value our growing partnership with the Chesapeake Culinary Center and thank the USDA for supporting this project and its contribution to ESEC's mission of solving regional problems through innovation and technology," said Mike Thielke, executive director of ESEC.

The USDA funding is made possible through a grant program administered by the Agricultural

Marketing Service (AMS) as part of the Local Agriculture Marketing Program (LAMP): the [Regional Food System Partnerships](#) (RFSP). In total, RSFP awarded \$14.8 million to 30 projects across 24 states to support partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems.

“The new Regional Food System Partnerships grants will help build a fairer, more transparent food system rooted in local and regional production where businesses can compete fairly, because a greater share of the profit will go to those growing, harvesting, and preparing our food,” stated Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in a USDA press release.

About ESEC:

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC\_ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization created in 2004 to help advance an entrepreneurship ecosystem on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. ESEC’s initiatives include the Chesapeake Agricultural Innovation Center (CAIC), CyberAg Symposium, [E3 Tech](#), and hotDesks co-working. The programs encourage the organic development of high-growth, innovative, and scalable businesses and the jobs they create, with an emphasis on the region’s traditional industries of agriculture and seafood.

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