The Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program is designed to strengthen Rhode Island’s food system by helping small and beginning producers start profitable new projects to grow their businesses.

**LASA impact: Planting the seeds for economic growth**

$1.13 MILLION
Awarded in 101 LASA grants over 6 years; average grant size $11,000

$2.5 million
Additional funding secured by grantees

$5.05 million
Increased sales for grantees

84
Full- and part-time jobs created in addition to more hours for current employees

From surveys of 65 grantees from 2014-2018 cohorts

“Having the right equipment for the job makes such a huge difference in efficiency. We have quadrupled our egg production and the time spent washing eggs has stayed the same, so our efficiency in washing is four times what it used to be. Our cost of production of eggs has gone from $5.47/dozen to $4.38/dozen.”

**BEN COERPER**
Wild Harmony Farm, Exeter

“I’ve grown a lot as a farmer, improving my knowledge of soil fertility and plant health, as well as pest, weed, and disease management. I’m learning how to adapt and problem-solve to many issues that are outside of my control (like the climate). I run a 15-week, 62-member Community Supported Agriculture program. I installed solar panels that power my irrigation system. Last season I began selling vegetables and cut flowers at the Charlestown Land Trust Farmers Market.”

**KATHAN TEEPE**
Sweet Pea Farm, Providence; Amos Greene Farm, Charlestown
We work with women in Section 8 housing on a grow-your-own food initiative. Our LASA funding allowed us to think of new possibilities, which we have leveraged into opportunities and grown our know-how and product development capacity. One example: African garden eggs (also known as bitter balls melons). We grow this crop in our urban gardens in Providence, and sell them in large quantities at the Armory farmer’s market. We have made seven types of value-added products from these crops at Farm Fresh’s Harvest Kitchen, including relishes, spreads, and pickles.”

JULIUS KOLAWOLE
African Alliance of Rhode Island, Providence

For the first five years of LASA, state funding was set at $80,000 and private foundations contributed an additional $130,000. Now the program has been proven successful but private funding is gone. To encourage continued growth in our agriculture and seafood sectors, state funding should increase to fully cover the private funding gap.