



Project Summary: Cultivating Resilient Rural Food Ecosystems

Sierra Commons is embarking on the project "Cultivating Resilient Rural Food Ecosystems" with a vision to enhance local economies through food entrepreneurship. The project aims to strengthen the regional food ecosystem, foster job creation, and promote sustainability, particularly in disinvested communities. The initiative unfolds through several core components:

Regional Research: Sierra Commons will conduct extensive research to understand existing regional dynamics, identify opportunities, and learn from successful models. This research will inform the development of a replicable model supportive of local efforts.

Regional Network Building: Through partnerships and collaboration, Sierra Commons seeks to build a network of organizations and groups aligned with the goal of enhancing the local food ecosystem. This network will facilitate knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and collective problem-solving.

Replicable Model & Curriculum: The project will develop a comprehensive curriculum and guidebook for establishing resilient rural food ecosystems. This model will identify key partners and resources necessary for ecosystem success, empowering communities to replicate and adapt it to their needs.

Initially focusing on Nevada County, particularly Grass Valley and Nevada City, the project aims to expand its impact to other areas within the Sacramento California Jobs First region. Catalyst funding will support capacity building, research, and foundation building for sustainability.

Positive Impact on Disinvested Communities:

Sierra Commons' project prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) by providing resources, scholarships, and targeted support to individuals historically underrepresented in entrepreneurship. By lowering barriers to entry and fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial landscape, the project aims to create economic opportunities for all community members. Furthermore, partnerships with local organizations and agencies ensure that the project addresses the specific needs of disinvested communities, promoting equity and resilience.



Project Partners:

Sierra Commons collaborates with a range of partners spanning agricultural organizations, food waste innovators, economic and workforce development agencies, educational institutions, community-based organizations, financial institutions, and local government entities. These partnerships provide expertise, resources, and networks essential for achieving the project's goals and strengthening the regional food ecosystem.

Project Readiness:

The project is currently in the exploratory stage, with foundational research, ecosystem mapping, and partnership development underway. Sierra Commons aims to progress toward implementation readiness within the next twelve months with the proposed activities and budget.

Anticipated Outcomes:

The project anticipates significant outcomes, including the establishment of new businesses, the creation of jobs, the graduation of food entrepreneur accelerator programs, networking events, and mentorship opportunities. Success will be measured by the project's ability to foster a resilient food ecosystem, create economic opportunities, and promote equity and sustainability.

Estimated Budget:

The estimated budget for the project's exploratory development phase is \$200,000, which will be allocated to training, capacity building, research, ecosystem mapping, synthesis, and planning.

For more detailed information, please reference the