

Healthy and Equitable Food Systems Capital Initiative

Mission

Self-Help's overarching mission is to create and protect ownership and economic opportunity for all. While our work benefits communities of all kinds, our focus is on those often underserved by conventional lenders, including people of color, women, rural residents and low-wealth families and communities. Our food systems work flows from our mission by addressing health and economic disparities across the country, guided by principles of sustainability and social justice.

Initiative Goals

Self-Help aims to increase capital access for food enterprises, ranging from farmers, to food processors, distributors and hubs, and to grocers serving low-income communities. We aim to leverage our healthy food system lending experience and organizational connections to create partnerships that can increase capital delivery to the innovative borrowers most in need, helping food entrepreneurs find economic security for their own families while greatly expanding the delivery of healthy food and its impact.

Approach

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Self-Help is organizing regional convenings, facilitating knowledge sharing and analyzing and supporting policies to better support local, sustainably and equitably grown healthy foods. The project is building on the growing network of foundations, financial institutions, nonprofits, government agencies, and healthy foods and sustainable agriculture organizations working to get more capital into the hands of entrepreneurs, especially entrepreneurs of color, seeking to improve community social and health outcomes.

Our strategy is to complement our own financing learnings with a national web of lenders and organizations that will improve capital access for underserved food entrepreneurs. For Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), we seek to expand HFFI's success by delivering capital to the broader value chain-- aggregators, processors, distributors, schools, and other key anchor institutions. We also aim to add value in sustainable food policy discussions by helping further amplify the voice of CDFIs nationally and leveraging our connections to help longstanding food systems policy organizations, such as National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), maintain existing components of the Farm Bill that support an equitable sustainable, economically diverse and healthy food system.

In addition, with support from the Kresge Foundation and in partnership with Duke's World Food Policy Center, we are directly addressing capital access for food entrepreneurs by expanding the technical assistance (TA) that we offer to community-based enterprises and leveraging Self-Help's existing capital in order to deliver \$15 million of loans to food entrepreneurs with a clear focus on loans to food entrepreneurs of color.

Get Involved

Contact us if you:

- Are interested in collaborating on a regional event
- Are seeking business planning technical assistance and/or financing
- Would like to learn more about our food systems policy and capital work

For more information, please contact:

David Beck
Policy Director
david.beck@self-help.org

Steve Saltzman
Director of Food System Finance
steve.saltzman@self-help.org

Hannah Quigley
Food System Program Fellow
hannah.quigley@self-help.org