



PROJECT IMPACT

The Foothills Food Hub will significantly address food insecurity, support a local food economy, and transform the food system and public health infrastructure of McDowell County, North Carolina. The Hub will support the local food economy and provide support to farmers by offering services related to produce packing and storage. It will serve as an aggregation site for farmers who are working to diversify their market opportunities. It will be a central hub where donated food for food pantries, including healthy fresh and frozen foods, can be delivered in bulk and stored for pickup by partner agencies and food pantries of all sizes, making it easier to get fresh, healthy food to those in need. It will bring the community together and offer services to help improve health outcomes and increase community connectivity, through programs such as cooking classes, culinary training, a commercial kitchen, and a center for community agencies to do outreach.

FACILITY COMPONENTS

The Foothills Food Hub is designed to integrate several food network components. The facilities will include:

- Food pantry storage and packing;
- Farm fresh produce wash line, cold storage and distribution;
- Teaching kitchen for cooking and other classes; and
- Commercial kitchen for meal preparation, value added processing and food entrepreneur development.

CONSENSUS AROUND NEED

A coalition of not-for-profits, government agencies, faith-based organizations, and community leaders in McDowell County have come together to create this project. The Hub concept is the result of over four years of deep community engagement, analysis, and capacity building by a wide variety of partners both internal and external to McDowell County. These include a multi-year Local Food System Assessment and a series of community meetings designed to learn, analyze, and develop goals for strengthening the County's local food system.

PLAN FOR ACTION

In early 2017, a feasibility study was completed for the Hub. The feasibility study provides a clear roadmap for project, including information about demand, costs, equipment choices, and operating methodologies. Startup and operating cost projections, and a detailed budget, including earned income, round out the study's findings.

LOCATION AND NEBO CROSSING PARTNERSHIP

The Hub will be located in the Nebo Crossing center at Barnes Road. The building will house the Nebo Crossing church facilities, a preschool, a community center and athletic facilities. Our partnership with Nebo Crossing is essential to the success of the project. In addition to Nebo Crossing providing donated space and operating support, we will collaborate on programs and services that will impact the health and wellness of the community.

PROJECT STATUS

A team of project developers is currently working to raise funds for the construction of the Hub and initiate the construction of the project. The initial activities of the Hub include temporary storage for emergency food supply.

BROAD-BASED SUPPORT

Work to date and current project development activities have benefited from the generous support of the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. Strong local and regional partnerships exist with the McDowell County Cooperative Extension Service, McDowell County Health Coalition and the Isothermal Planning and Development Commission. We are actively developing program partnerships with numerous community organizations and institutions, including TRACTOR Food and Farms, West Marion Community Forum, McDowell County Emergency Services, McDowell Technical Community College, MANNA Food Bank, Mission Health, Nebo Crossing Academy and Nebo Crossing Junior Academy.

PARENT ORGANIZATION

The Foothills Food Hub is a project of the McDowell Local Food Advisory Committee (LFAC). McDowell LFAC is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to connect, coordinate, and strengthen the local food system in McDowell County, North Carolina. The organization's goal is to improve the health, income, and livelihoods of all community members through building a complete food network of producers, businesses, agencies, and not-for-profit organizations. LFAC does this through developing and implementing programs, special projects and supportive food system infrastructure in McDowell.

CONTACT

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