

REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative)

Preliminary Administration/Operation Proposal

REDI -- Statewide economic opportunity in a Local Food Movement!

The core of this initiative is to provide a venue for Louisiana to more effectively and sustainably utilize its natural resources, optimize its wealth of human resources, improve the health of the population and environment, and to improve the quality of life, while having a substantial positive effect on Louisiana's economy.

The REDI program is patterned off of successful programs in Kentucky and Tennessee which invested 50 million and 26 million into their programs respectively in 2008. Request for funding investment in Louisiana is for 1 million dollars annually for each parish, or a total of 64 million dollars. Funding for a 10 year term is needed to establish a sustainable system. The funds would be disbursed in the form of grants that require matching funds from participants. The multiplier effect from funds invested in REDI is estimated to be in the range of 17:1 to 3:1.

REDI will be efficiently administered through the Louisiana Association of Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Councils, an existing organizational infrastructure comprised of seven regionally based RC&D councils. The RC&D areas and councils have been established with the Governor's endorsement by authorization of the Secretary of USDA. The RC&D program was established to implement regional initiatives such as REDI. As the name implies, the mission of RC&Ds is to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in designated RC&D areas.

The Louisiana Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils and the seven RC&Ds would retain an administrative fee with a maximum of 15%, for implementation and management of REDI. In order to establish and maintain a meaningful sustainable local food system, funds will be distributed and utilized in the following four categories:

- Minimum of 50% for production to consumption processes of locally produced Louisiana food related projects
- Maximum of 50% for other sustainable and natural resource conservation related projects (including rural based energy production related enterprises)
- Maximum of 10% for the three additional subcomponents which are the Rural Business and Ag Loan Fund Section, the Rural and Agriculture Land Preservation Section, and the Sustainable Agriculture Research Section
- Maximum of 5% for participant education, training, and participant support related functions