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Curbside Market awarded \$481K grant from USDA

Foodlink's mobile farmers market continues to grow

ROCHESTER – A significant grant from the United States Department of Agriculture will allow for the continued growth and expansion of the Curbside Market – Foodlink's mobile farmers market that visits underserved communities throughout the Rochester region.

The USDA's Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) announced funding in late September for 44 projects totaling more than \$13.4 million. Foodlink's project, titled "Farms to Families: Promoting local foods and healthy futures through mobile markets," was awarded \$481,090 for a three-year period – one of the largest programmatic grants received in Foodlink's 40-year history. Foodlink applied for an LFPP grant with the goal of becoming the nation's first mobile vendor for the USDA's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program, which supports low-income mothers and young children who are found to be at nutritional risk.

"We're grateful that the USDA recognized our Curbside Market as an upstream solution to not only building healthier communities, but as a means to support our local agricultural economy, as well," said Foodlink President & CEO Julia Tedesco. "Foodlink strives to make the healthy choice the easy choice for those whom we serve, and through this generous grant, we'll be able to strengthen Curbside's impact and open up new markets for local farmers."

Currently, the Curbside Market predominantly sells fresh produce at affordable prices in low-income communities where access to healthy food is limited. As a WIC vendor, the Curbside Market eventually would be able to sell more types of products, and reach more young families in need of healthy, local foods.

"Since we launched five years ago, the Curbside Market has effectively attracted and incentivized customers who use SNAP benefits," said Mitch Gruber, Foodlink's Chief Programs Officer. "With WIC, we see a vital opportunity for growth, and through the USDA's support,

Foodlink can begin to offer more healthy food retail options for young mothers and children in our communities.”

The Curbside Market operates year-round, stopping at sites such as federally qualified health centers, low-income housing facilities, and senior and rec centers throughout Rochester and six surrounding counties. The market made more than 32,000 transactions in 2017, with total sales exceeding \$216,000, and is on pace to surpass both marks this year.

"We are proud that we are able to offer a wide variety of healthy -- and local -- products and produce to our customers, said Florence Clemmons, Foodlink's Curbside Market Manager. "This grant will be a blessing to our loyal Shoppers and we are thrilled to now have the opportunity to diversify our product offering."

Foodlink will direct funds toward staffing costs associated with the planned expansion, as well as a new vehicle capable of handling and displaying more products. For more information about the Curbside Market, and to view its current schedule, visit www.foodlinkny.org.

For a full list of project winners, visit: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/lfpp>

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About Foodlink

Foodlink is a community food resource center and the Feeding America food bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. For 40 years, we have leveraged the power of food to transform lives, end hunger and build healthier communities. Through good stewardship, innovation and collaboration, Foodlink mobilizes a diverse network of partners and stakeholders to eradicate both the symptoms and root causes of hunger.

Our suite of food access programs provides new access points to nutritious and affordable food in underserved communities. Our team of nutrition educators empowers people at risk of diet-related illness with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices. Our food banking operations distribute millions of pounds of food to a network of hundreds of human service agencies throughout our service area. The Foodlink Community Kitchen prepares and delivers thousands of meals daily for Rochester children, supports our regional agricultural economy by slicing locally grown apples, and hosts a one-of-a-kind career empowerment program to train individuals with barriers to employment for careers in the regional food industry. Learn more about how we are creating healthy futures for every community we serve at www.foodlinkny.org, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram at @foodlinkny.

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