

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

FORK TO FARMER PARTNERSHIPS

The local food movement is transforming the agriculture and food services sector. Farm to table restaurants play a significant role in this transformation. The model of using locally sourced produce, protein, and dairy is trending in the high-end restaurant sector and has resulted in numerous high-profile chefs receiving notable awards and showing significant business success. But these accolades have not always generated the same recognition for the farms who supply them.

A primary goal of the Fork to Farmer Initiative is to generate greater public awareness of the chef-farmer collaborations and the inputs that each of them brings to the table. By leveraging the high visibility of famous chefs with a record of supporting local small farms, we hope to increase visits to local farms and diversify farm income. This initiative, led by a team of NC State Extension specialists in economic development, local food, and tourism, partners with NC counties and regions to (1) make short videos about well-known farm to table chefs and the small family farmers that supply their restaurants; and (2) deliver agritourism training for these farmers to prepare them for farm visits by restaurant clientele and other local food tourists.

WHAT IS FORK TO FARMER?

The Fork to Farmer initiative leverages the high visibility of celebrated chefs to enhance the viability of small farms through new direct to consumer income from product sales and farm visit sales. We build marketing coalitions that allow small farmers to sell farm experiences and products to the public and offer a train-the-trainer program that enables the recruitment and accompaniment of participating small farmers.

WHY HAVE AN RFA?

This RFA process was created to help the project allocate resources to interested partners most ready to get farmers and chefs on board. Partners selected through this RFA process will receive online and face-to-face training and assistance as needed. Please note: at no point will direct funding from the project be provided to community partners.

EXPECTATIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Fork to Farmer strives to recruit committed partners to implement a project in their communities and works with chefs and farmers that are nominated and accompanied by project partners. Our partners get involved in this project to enhance the effectiveness of their ongoing efforts in community and tourism development with small-scale farmers in their region. Partner involvement with Fork to Farmer includes the following:

- Identifying suitable partnerships between celebrated chefs and nearby small farmers that supply them;
- Providing an expected amount of approximately \$3,500 to cover film production costs (actual amount will depend on location and videographer);

- Forming a network of approximately 10 small scale farmers that supply local restaurants in their county or region and are interested in offering farm experiences and selling directly to consumers;
- Meeting periodically with the network of small farmers to provide support and training;
- Organizing periodic meet-ups with farmers in the network, local chefs, and tourism partners to foster communication and collaboration.

NC State project team involvement includes the following:

- Providing partners with a list of suggested videographers. Partners are free to choose their own videographers, provided that they abide by the project's videography guidelines;
- Providing partners and affiliated videographers with brand assets and videography guidelines;
- Disseminating the films, farm experiences and product sales to the public through dedicated web pages and social media strategy;
- Actively leading public relations efforts to bring awareness to films and the experiences and farm products sold by local small farmer networks;
- Brokering partnerships between chefs and tourism partners to develop and promote Fork to Farmer events and packages;
- Providing technical advice on film production, and co-curating the films' narrative and feel with partners;
- Providing train-the-trainer workshops on how to organize and supports mall farmer networks;
- Contributing as guest presenters to local workshops and meet-ups.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Organizations interested in applying on behalf of their counties may find additional information and examples of previous films in the project portal: forktofarmer.ces.ncsu.edu



GUIDELINES

APPLICANTS

Governmental, non-governmental, non-profit and educational institutions are welcome to apply. Private or public for-profit institutions/individuals will be considered, provided that their involvement in this project will constitute a Social Business venture.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Use the enclosed Application Template to collect information about supporting applicants, the local chef and the network of small farmers,
2. Use the online Application [tinyurl.com/fork2farmerapplication] to officially submit application,
3. Fork to Farmer project team will follow up with every applicant shortly after receiving submission to communicate our decision

TIMELINE

- Fork to Farmer accepts applications on a rolling basis, but we have a limited number of partners we can support each year.
- Aspiring partners are encouraged to contact Fork to Farmer project manager Becky Bowen (blbowen@ncsu.edu) well in advance of application due dates to share their intent to apply.
- Applications should be submitted by March 15th and September 15th each year. Additional applicants will be considered until the target number of yearly partnerships is reached.
- Aspiring partners can expect a response on the status of their application within two weeks after the submission deadline.
- Films must be completed within 6 months after a proposal is accepted.
- Tangible efforts to develop and energize a local network of small farmers interested in offering hands-on farm experiences on a by-reservation basis will be expected.

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

40% ***Alignment of nominated partners, chef, and small farmers with Fork to Farmer goals.***

The proposal should list at least 1 chef/restaurateur, 1 small scale farmer, 10 small farmers interested in the project, and two supporting organizations. Their backgrounds and the nature of their relationship should be outlined. Proposals including farmers with vulnerable livelihoods will be preferred.

30% ***Sustainability of the development plan.*** The proposal should delineate a strategy for the sustained development of the county partnership beyond the scope of the initial joint efforts to produce the film. It should delineate a feasible plan for the continued coaching of small farmers, and their integration in the region's local foods tourism strategy.

30% ***Proposal clarity.*** The proposed role of the aspiring Partner to building and sustaining a county partnership should be explained. The aspiring Partner should specify how the mission of the organization(s) matches the goals of Fork to Farmer.

FORK TO FARMER

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Use this template to collect application information and keep it for your records.
Then submit the information through this Google form
tinyurl.com/fork2farmerapplication

Lead applicant
Name: _____ Position/Title: _____
Organization: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Extension Office <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Dev. Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Other entity
Work address, telephone and e-mail: _____ _____ _____
Indicate the source of your funding (approx. \$3,500)? _____ _____
Why do you think Fork 2 Farmer could bring desired benefits to your county? _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I acknowledge that my organization is required to provide approx. \$3,500 in cash and that there is no cash award or grant to the partners selected through this application process.
Support applicants
Name: _____ Position/Title: _____
Organization: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Extension Office <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Dev. Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Other entity
<input type="checkbox"/> I acknowledge that my organization will support of this application.
Name: _____ Position/Title: _____
Organization: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Extension Office <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism Dev. Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Other entity
<input type="checkbox"/> I acknowledge that my organization will support of this application.

