

How I Reported The Story

United States Department of Agriculture Regional Food
Business Centers

AALLYAH WRIGHT
RURAL ISSUES REPORTER

CAPITAL 

What is the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)?

- 29 agencies
- 100,000 employees*
- 4,500 locations*

**This number is no longer accurate as a result of the Trump administration's plan to relocate agency headquarters and probationary firings, resignations, and retirement offers*

to me

Sharing this memo with you, which I just shared internally with [redacted].

[redacted] with similar end [redacted] that [redacted]

[redacted] Delta

Best,

----- Forwarded message

From: [redacted]

Date: Thu, Jul 17, 2025 at 9:57 AM

Subject: Update: USDA Terminates Delta Regional Food Business Center Program and Other RFBC

To: [redacted]

CC: [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]

I wanted to keep you and the team informed about this development. On **July 15, 2025**, [USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins announced the termination of the Regional Food Business Centers \(RFBC\) program](#). This Biden-era initiative was launched during the pandemic to support small farms and food businesses with grants of up to \$100,000 and technical assistance focused on building a more resilient, locally rooted food system. The program prioritized food processing, packaging, and market expansion for small and mid-sized producers navigating supply chain disruptions.

Key Details:



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- **12 Regional Centers** were originally funded to carry out the program, including the **Delta Regional Food Business Center**, based in **Clarksdale, MS**, and [REDACTED].
 - **Four centers, including the Delta RFBC**, are being shut down immediately—these had not yet disbursed any Business Builder grants.
 - The **remaining eight centers** may continue administering **existing grant commitments** through **May 2026**.
 - **Over 450 Business Builder grants**, ranging from **\$1,000 to \$100,000**, will be honored. These were intended to support purchases like cold storage, processing equipment, marketing services, and business planning. However, funds could not be used for the acquisition of land or buildings.
- [REDACTED]

Centers Closing Immediately

- [Delta RFBC](#) – Mississippi Delta Council for Farmworker Opportunities (MS). [REDACTED]
- [Great Lakes Midwest RFBC](#) – Michigan State University (MI)
- [Southeast RFBC](#) – Georgia Minority Outreach Network (GA)
- [Islands and Remote Areas RFBC](#) – Hawai'i Good Food Alliance (HI)

What the data told me

- \$400 million commitment over 5 years
- July 2023-Dec. 2024
 - \$607K distributed in grants
 - 5,527 organizations/businesses
 - 7,874 individuals received TA
 - 325 new businesses created

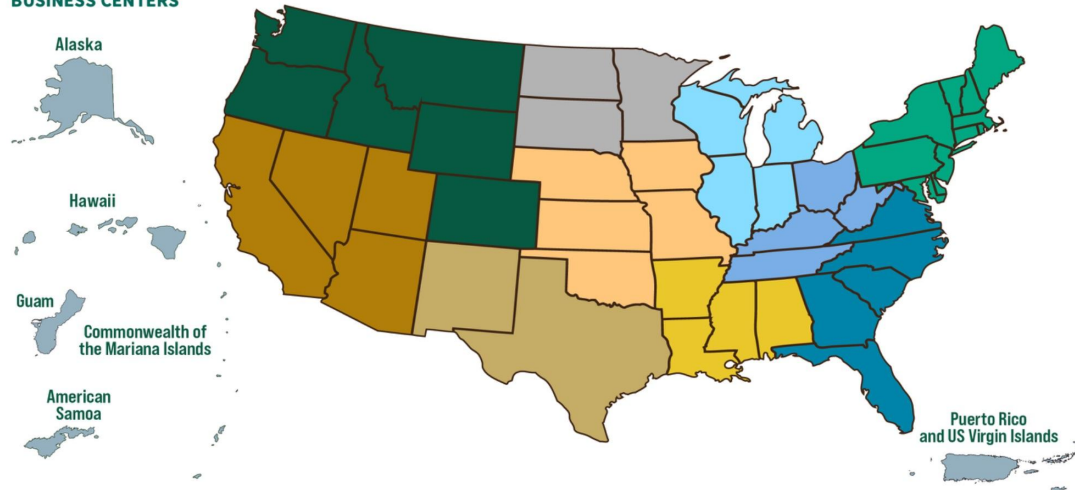
What real people told me














<https://capitalbnews.org/black-farmers-usda-funding-cuts/>

*How can you localize the
impacts?*

USDA Regional Food Business Centers Geographic Regions



★ National Intertribal Food Business Center - Intertribal Agriculture Council will serve tribes nationwide. ★

 Northwest and Rocky Mountain Colorado State University	 Great Lakes Midwest Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems
 Southwest University of California (This Center will serve the Colonias counties in California and Arizona.)	 Delta Mississippi Delta Council for Farmworker Opportunities
 North Central Region Five Development Commission	 Appalachia Rural Action, Inc.
 Heartland University of Nebraska - Lincoln	 Northeast National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Foundation
 Rio Grande Colonias Texas AGM AgriLife (This Center will serve the Colonias counties in New Mexico and Texas.)	 Southeast Locus/Georgia Minority Outreach Network
	 Islands and Remote Areas Hawaii Good Food Alliance

*These boundaries are not rigid but for visualization purposes only. USDA anticipates collaboration with communities across state and county lines.

1. Find the center in your coverage area.
2. Reach out to the university, nonprofit, or organization who leads the efforts of the RFBC
3. Check list of Business Builder Grant recipients. (Example of Southwest RFBC here)

Farmer data: Census of Agriculture

Link to websites for reach center, along with email address

How to reach me

Bluesky:

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