SC Community Loan Fund is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) headquartered in Charleston. Its mission is to advance equitable access to capital by providing loans, technical assistance, and advocacy for affordable housing, healthy food enterprises, community facilities and community businesses.

With offices in 46 counties of the state, Clemson Extension works to improve the quality of life of all South Carolinians by providing unbiased research-based information through an array of public outreach programs in youth development; agribusiness; agriculture; food, nutrition and health; and natural resources.
Feeding Innovation is a comprehensive technical assistance program designed to support entrepreneurs interested in developing or expanding healthy food businesses in food deserts or underserved areas of the state. The goal of the program is to increase access to healthy food while supporting the development of strong, local entrepreneurs and community-based businesses.

How It Works

Feeding Innovation participants engage in an 8 week entrepreneurial training program featuring NxLevel Courses facilitated by Clemson Extension. The courses cover everything needed to develop a basic healthy food business plans from marketing to financial planning to negotiations and deal-making. With help from the course instructor and industry experts, participants refine their ideas and develop their business plans over the eight week period before presenting them to a panel of judges during a final pitch event. The entrepreneur with the strongest business plan is awarded $12,500 in seed capital.

Beyond the financial opportunity the program offers, all participants should know what steps to take to grow their business and how they need to execute those steps by the end of the program. There is no cost to participate in the program but a deposit is required to hold each participant’s space and will be returned following successful completion of the course.

Why It Works

The Feeding Innovation program offers a unique, accessible opportunity for healthy food entrepreneurs to gain the skills and knowledge needed to develop a comprehensive business plan for their healthy food enterprise. Through a combination of classroom instruction and mentorship the program provides participants with:

• The skills and knowledge needed to successfully operate a healthy food business
• An unparalleled networking opportunity with other aspiring entrepreneurs
• The support needed to develop and solidify a business plan
• A chance to win a seed capital award to support their growing business
• An actionable plan and next steps for starting or expanding their healthy food business
PARTICIPANTS

Feeding Innovation is designed to support entrepreneurs interested in developing and expanding healthy food businesses. A typical Feeding Innovation round consists of 10-12 participants. Participants range in experience from new entrepreneurs seeking to further develop their ideas for a healthy food start-up to seasoned business owners, looking to refine their business plan and expand their healthy food enterprise.

Who Can Participate

Any entrepreneur or team of entrepreneurs interested in developing or expanding a healthy food business in South Carolina can apply to participate in Feeding Innovation. Examples of healthy food businesses include farmers’ markets, mobile markets, corner stores, and CSAs. However, to be eligible to complete the program, all participant business plans must: 1) propose an innovative, market-based, business-oriented solution to the issue of local, healthy food access; 2) target a community with limited access to healthy food; and 3) incorporate community engagement to ensure local needs are met.

Past Participants Include:

- Banana Box Market
- Catawba Farm and Food
- Cumbee Place
- Elijah Craig, LLC
- Ferses Fresh Market
- Fresh Future Farm
- Fresh to You
- Food Share
- Greening the South
- Hicks
- Hub City Farmers Market
- In Hot Water Farms
- Liberated Landscapes
- Limestone Farms
- Lowcountry Street Grocery
- Mill Village Mobile Market
- Pee Dee Mobile Farmers Market
- Pot Plant Plate
- Shambala Gardens
- Simple Times Farm
- Spartanburg District 6
- Swamp Rabbit Grocery
- The Farm Cart
- Truluck Farms
- Village Market
PAST PROGRAMS

SC Community Loan Fund, in partnership with Clemson Agricultural Extension, has hosted six Feeding Innovation rounds since the program was established in 2014. These programs have brought in a total of 54 participants, resulting in the completion of 28 healthy food business plans. A total of $87,500 in seed capital funding has been awarded through the program to help increase access to healthy food across the state.

Program Winners

- **Fresh Future Farm**
  - Charleston, SC

- **Banana Box Market**
  - Packlett, SC

- **Mill Village**

- **Mobile Market**
  - Greenville, SC

- **Ferse’s Fresh Market**
  - Orangeburg, SC

- **Truluck Farms**
  - Florence, SC

- **Elijah Craig, LLC**
  - Save-a-Lot
  - Florence, SC

**Spotlight:**

**FRESH FUTURE FARM**

*Feeding Innovation Winner*

Germaine Jenkins at Fresh Future Farm in North Charleston was the inaugural Feeding Innovation winner in spring 2014. When asked about the Feeding Innovation program, she told SCCLF that the technical assistance was essential in solidifying her business plan and attracting additional capital. Fresh Future Farm is now a thriving urban farm offering locally grown produce to a disadvantaged neighborhood.

Have you recognized a demand for a technical assistance program like this in your community? Contact us today at 843.973.7285 to request a Feeding Innovation program round in your area!
PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We want to work with you! We are in need of **Community Partners** and **Program Partners** to help support and promote Feeding Innovation across the state. Together, we can ensure South Carolina business owners and entrepreneurs have the resources and information needed to increase access to healthy food in your region.

**Become a Community Partner**

The Feeding Innovation program structure is based on an understanding of the power of collaboration. Recognizing that those who work in a community every day are the ones who know that community the best, we partner with community groups to host Feeding Innovation rounds in communities across the state. Community partners work with SC Community Loan Fund and Clemson Exchange to organize and promote the Feeding Innovation program in their local community and help identify entrepreneurs who would benefit from participation. Community partners are provided with all of the materials and information needed to promote the program to their networks.

**Become a Program Partner**

Program Partners provide financial support for the Feeding Innovation program as a whole. These partners understand the need to increase access to healthy food in underserved areas across South Carolina and to keep the programs like Feeding Innovation accessible to all. Because there is no fee to participate in the program, funding is needed to cover all expenses including the cost of instruction, course materials, and classroom space as well as the seed capital award for each program round.

**Partnership Benefits:**

- Logo included on all program materials and advertising.
- Organization website link and logo featured on program webpage.
- Opportunity to include promotional materials in participant welcome packets.
- Acknowledged in SCCLF Annual Report.*
- Invitation to watch entreprenuers present their business plans on final pitch night.
- Stay in touch with participants through the Alumni Facebook Group.
- Make a difference by supporting local entrepreneurs who are working to increase access to healthy food in your community.

* Specific to Program Partners
Past Community Partners:

Program Partners:

Ready to Partner?
Sign up to become a Feeding Innovation partner by submitting an online partnership form at sccommunityloanfund.org or by calling us at 843.973.7285.