



*Commonwealth of Virginia*  
*Office of Governor Terry McAuliffe*

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**Office of the Governor**

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**Governor McAuliffe Announces Agriculture,  
Forestry Planning Grants for Orange  
County, City of Richmond**

*~AFID Awards Support Projects to Assess Opportunities for  
Agritourism at Montpelier, Food Access in Richmond~*

**RICHMOND** – Governor Terry McAuliffe announced today the award of two planning grants from the Governor’s Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID). Projects in Orange County and the City of Richmond have been awarded \$40,000 to support the growth of agricultural and forestry projects in the Commonwealth.

These are the ninth and tenth awards the Governor has made from the AFID planning grant program, established to encourage local governments to work strategically with their agricultural communities to identify projects and opportunities that can bring important benefits to local producers and the community as a whole.

Speaking about the AFID planning grant awards, **Governor McAuliffe said**, “Innovative efforts and partnerships in agriculture are integral to building a new Virginia economy. The Commonwealth’s legacies in both history and agriculture are tremendous, and today our

communities promote not only those legacies, but also strive to better develop them to enhance their economies. In addition, with such a powerful agricultural economy producing so many high-quality and wholesome products, we need to work harder to get those products into food deserts and bridge the nutritional divide, one of the First Lady's most important initiatives. I believe it is important to use all the tools we have at our disposal, like the AFID, to capitalize on our strengths and move our economy forward."

"I am pleased to see the AFID planning grant program being utilized in both rural and urban localities across the state," **said Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Todd Haymore.** "With these two projects coming online, the program has helped 50 localities further develop agriculture and forestry assets in their economic development and jobs creation strategic plans. I applaud Orange County and the City of Richmond for their commitment to agriculture and willingness to learn more about how best to utilize it to the benefit of their economies and their citizens."

The AFID planning grant program, funded annually at \$250,000, was developed to encourage localities to plan strategically how they can better support and integrate agriculture- and forestry-based businesses into their overall economic development and job creation efforts. Since its creation in 2012, AFID planning grants have been awarded to 25 projects in 50 localities across the Commonwealth, leveraging more than \$505,000 in funding. The planning grants are part of the larger Governor's AFID program, an economic development tool specifically tailored for agriculture and forestry value-added or processing projects.

"Orange County looks forward to this partnership with The Montpelier Foundation to assess potential agribusiness and agritourism opportunities to benefit Montpelier and to advance economic development efforts within the county." **said Lee Frame, Chairman of Orange County Board of Supervisors.**

"I am extremely pleased the City has been selected to receive this AFID planning grant," **said Richmond Mayor Dwight C. Jones.** "It will aid in the development of a Food System Plan to promote urban agriculture, nutrition education, community engagement, policy change and overall access to healthy food for low-income, low-access communities in Richmond. This plan furthers the work of the Food Policy Task Force I established in July 2011 to ensure all residents have access to healthy foods and an understanding of the impact it has on both an individual's health and the health of the community at-large."

AFID planning and facility grants are available for political subdivisions of the Commonwealth interested in growing their agriculture and forestry industries by strategically targeting businesses that add value to Virginia-grown agriculture and forest products. Nearly \$1.8 million in AFID facility grant funding has helped create 1,266 jobs and spur more than \$145.3 million in capital investment throughout the Commonwealth since the first announcement in December 2012.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) administers the AFID program, and planning grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the fiscal year. Successful funding requests must demonstrate a clear need, a proposed solution, strong support from local government and the agriculture and forestry community, and the ability to provide cash or in-kind matching funds. Localities interested in applying may visit <http://vdacs.virginia.gov/agribusiness/planning.shtml> or contact AFID Fund Coordinator Stephen Versen at [stephen.versen@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:stephen.versen@vdacs.virginia.gov) or 804.786.6911 for more information.

Details on the grant awards are below:

**1. Project Title: Assessing Opportunities for Agriculture and Agritourism at Montpelier**

**Applicant:** Orange County

**Award:** \$20,000

**Summary:** The overall project purpose is to explore sustainable agriculture and agritourism opportunities that fit Montpelier's mission and the rural character of its Orange County surroundings, while offering the potential to generate jobs, spur enterprise development, increase visitation, and enhance income in the region. Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development, in coordination with the Orange County Ag-Ventures Working Group, will conduct the study.

**2. Project Title: Building a Sustainable Food System Plan in Richmond**

**Applicant:** City of Richmond

**Award:** \$20,000

**Summary:** The City of Richmond's Food Access and Equity Task Force, with assistance from the Institute for Public Health Innovation, will conduct a local food access and equity policy assessment. They will also develop a new Food System Plan to promote urban agriculture, nutrition education, community engagement, and policy changes that will improve overall access to healthy food for low-income, low-access communities in Richmond. Key components of the plan include identifying parcels of land near food deserts which are appropriate for urban agricultural development, conducting focus groups and surveys within target neighborhoods and developing policy recommendations that will reduce food access barriers citywide.

According to a 2013 economic impact study conducted by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, agriculture and forestry are two of Virginia's largest private industries with a combined economic impact of \$70 billion annually. Agriculture generates more than \$52 billion per annum, while forestry generates more than \$17 billion. The industries also provide more than 400,000 jobs in the Commonwealth. More information about the Weldon Cooper Center's study can be found at <http://www.coopercenter.org/node/2/publications/economic-impacts-agriculture-and-forestry-virginia-revised-2012>.

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