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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Market Umbrella receives grant of \$200,000 to advance health equity and Louisiana agriculture**

***Funding will address local, healthy food access through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Louisiana***

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**New Orleans, LA, August 2, 2021** — As celebrations for National Farmers Market Week (August 1-7) kick off across Louisiana and the nation, Market Umbrella is proud to announce it recently received \$200,000 in grant funding to address food insecurity and healthy food access, as well as support local agriculture in Louisiana. These funds will support our commitment to dismantling the health inequities people with low incomes and people of color face right here in our state as well as supporting many Louisiana farmers who continue to struggle as well, with 63% of farms in the state operating at a loss, compared to 56% nationally.

“Families in Louisiana have had difficulty accessing fresh, healthy food for quite some time,” said Cordelia Heaney, Executive Director of Market Umbrella. “COVID-19 and the fallout that followed exacerbated those challenges, and there is great need to strengthen farmers markets’ ability to respond. With over 2,000 small farmers in Louisiana producing fruits and vegetables such as greens, root vegetables, and Creole tomatoes in our rich Mississippi River Delta soil, the goal of this campaign is to establish a state-wide program that would help to connect shoppers in need with these nutrient rich crops across Louisiana.”

Market Umbrella is partnering with the Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance (BREADA) and the New Orleans Food Policy Action Council (FPAC) to lead a campaign to leverage public and private funds in order to increase the purchasing power of SNAP beneficiaries at farmers markets. This campaign will include outreach and advocacy across the state to build support for a state policy that allocates government funds for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) incentives for

healthy, fresh produce grown in our local foodshed. This collaboration represents the first formal effort for farmers market development at a state level in Louisiana, and if successful will help make it possible for all Louisiana farmers markets to match SNAP spending and incentivize the purchase of fresh, local food - positively impacting health outcomes for low-income shoppers through increased access and economic outcomes for local farmers by keeping federal SNAP dollars within the state. Market Umbrella and BREADA currently operate successful privately- and federally-funded SNAP incentive programs at the Crescent City Farmers Markets and Red Stick Farmers Markets, respectively, and have the experience and expertise to assist smaller Louisiana farmers markets with implementing these programs throughout the state if backed by state-level appropriations.

“States across the country are investing in and recognizing the power that SNAP incentive programs have to increase the number of families incorporating healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables into their meals while also benefiting regional economies by supporting local farmers,” said Elisa Muñoz, Executive Director of the New Orleans Food Policy Action Council. “With Louisiana’s continued low-rankings in key performance areas such as food security and poverty, a state-funded SNAP incentive program could improve the buying power and health outcomes of many low-income families in our state.”

[Voices for Healthy Kids](#), an initiative of the American Heart Association — the world’s leading voluntary organization dedicated to a world of longer, healthier lives — awarded Market Umbrella the funding. Additionally, the initiative awarded policy campaign grants to four other nonprofit organizations nationwide for use in strategic issue advocacy campaigns focused on improving health equity with a focus on economic security, food security and healthy eating.

“SNAP incentive programs have a dual benefit of improving access to healthy food for families with low incomes as well as increasing sales for small farmers and ranchers,” shared Darlene Adams Rowland, Executive Director of BREADA. “Connecting producers to customers is essential to the viability of their businesses, and our role as farmers market operators is to help build both the supply and demand for local, fresh food.”

Campaign work is set to launch in coming weeks and will continue throughout the 2022 Louisiana Legislative session.

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**About Market Umbrella & The Crescent City Farmers Market**

Market Umbrella is the nonprofit parent organization for the Crescent City Farmers Market, celebrating over 25 years of serving the greater New Orleans area. Market Umbrella works to directly connect New Orleans consumers with regional farmers, fishers, and food producers; provides community education related to nutrition and healthy eating; and offers a robust array of food access programs. Our work supports Southeast Louisiana foodways and culture, serves as a small business incubator and supporter of the local economy, and provides food access programs to help all New Orleanians have greater access to fresh, local foods. The Crescent City Farmers Market operates weekly farmers markets in the New Orleans area, hosting over 60 local small farmers, fishers, and food producers, and more than 100,000 shoppers annually. While the pandemic has shifted the market experience, Market Umbrella has pivoted around new approaches for engaging the community, including walk-up and drive-thru markets, at-home food box delivery, and food access programming. For information, visit [marketumbrella.org](http://marketumbrella.org) or call (504) 861-4488. Facebook: [Crescent City Farmers Market](#) / Twitter: [@ccfmtweets](#) / Instagram: [@crescentcityfarmersmkt](#)

### **About the Big River Economic and Agricultural Development Alliance (BREADA)**

Founded in 1996, BREADA has a 25-year history of building a healthy, local food system by providing economic opportunities for Louisiana's small family farmers and connecting our community with fresh, locally-grown food. BREADA creates vibrant gathering places for our community with up to four weekly locations of its Red Stick Farmers Market and a brick and mortar public marketplace, Main Street Market, in downtown Baton Rouge. BREADA's outreach programs focus on the promotion of fresh, locally-grown food and their health benefits to families, seniors, and children through cooking demonstrations, nutrition education, and fresh food incentives. For more information, visit [www.breada.org](http://www.breada.org), [Facebook](#), Instagram [@redstickfarmersmarket](#) or email [market@breada.org](mailto:market@breada.org).

### **About the New Orleans Food Policy Action Council**

The New Orleans Food Policy Action Council (FPAC) works to shape public policy to improve equity, collaboration, and opportunity in our local food system. Comprised of over 40 organizations, individuals and businesses, FPAC is committed to collaborative and community-driven policy and systems change working at the local, state and national level.. More information about FPAC can be found at [www.nolafoodpolicy.org](http://www.nolafoodpolicy.org) and on Instagram [@nolafoodpolicy](#).

### **About Voices for Healthy Kids**

Voices for Healthy Kids is an initiative of the American Heart Association, working to make each day healthier for all children. Voices for Healthy Kids empowers advocates to take action in their communities and improve the health of children across the nation. Join us at [VoicesForHealthyKids.org](http://VoicesForHealthyKids.org), on [Twitter @Voices4HK](#) and [Facebook](#).

**About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on [heart.org](https://www.heart.org) , [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.