



# Delta Farming Start

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Mississippi Delta Council

for Farmworker Opportunities, Inc.

BFRDP Award # [2015-70017-23935]

# Presentation Agenda

Project Overview.....	3 min
Project Accomplishments.....	2 min
Impacts and Evaluation.....	5 min
What We're Learning .....	5 min
Next Year and After.....	5 min

# BFRDP Project Overview

## WHO we are and WHERE we work

- African-American limited-resource farmers & seasonal farmworkers (100%)
- Vegetable farming and poultry
- Mississippi Delta



## **WHAT we do**

- In this 3-year BFRP project:
- Activities:
  - + Basic business training + technical assistance
  - + Mini-grants (\$500 to start farming or increase income)
  - + Access to land and capital (IDAs and micro-loans)
- Objective: 75 beginning farmer-ranchers

## WHY it matters

1. Short-term: Opportunity to increase incomes for individuals.
2. Long-term: Stronger local economy rooted in community assets and traditions.



# Project Accomplishments

## Highlights in first year:

- 45 participants in 2 cohorts
  - 20 started in February 2016
  - 25 started in August 2016
- Technical assistance and support provided
- IDAs with Southern Bancorp
- 44 acres farmland donated for participants' use

# Preliminary Example of Micro-grant Return on Investment:

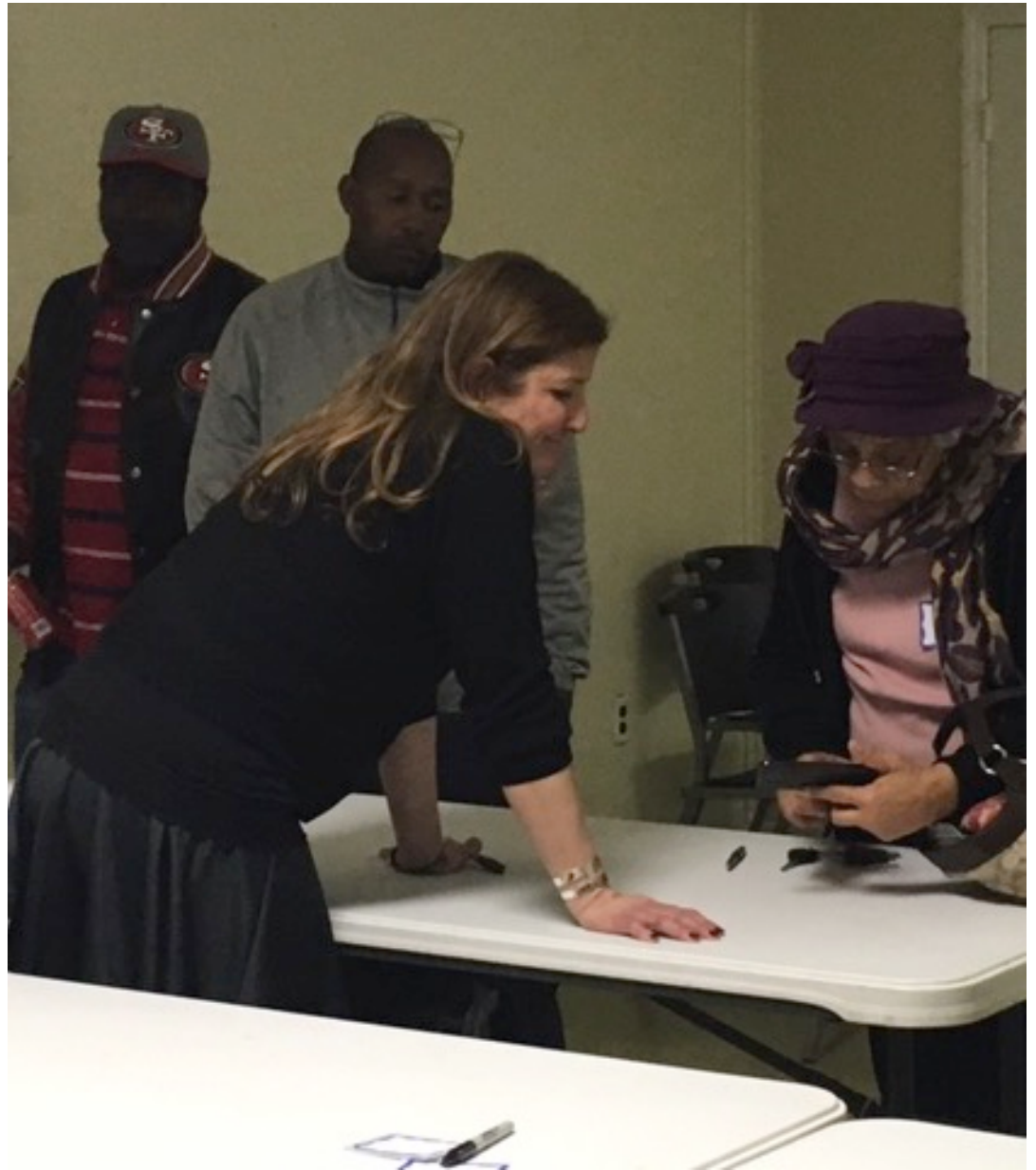
- Heat rupturing tomatoes in hoop house – farmer lost initial yield with no income to reinvest.
- Micro-grant provided \$500.00 → \$356.00 shade cloth for hoop house, \$144.00 to purchase 72 additional tomato plants.
- Anticipated yield is 100 bushels, to be sold at \$34 to \$42.50 per bushel
- Anticipated **sustainable/recurring** Return on \$500 Investment: \$3,400 - \$4,250 per season

*\*ROI data for each micro-grant at the end of the initial season.*

# Training and Support

February 2-day workshop

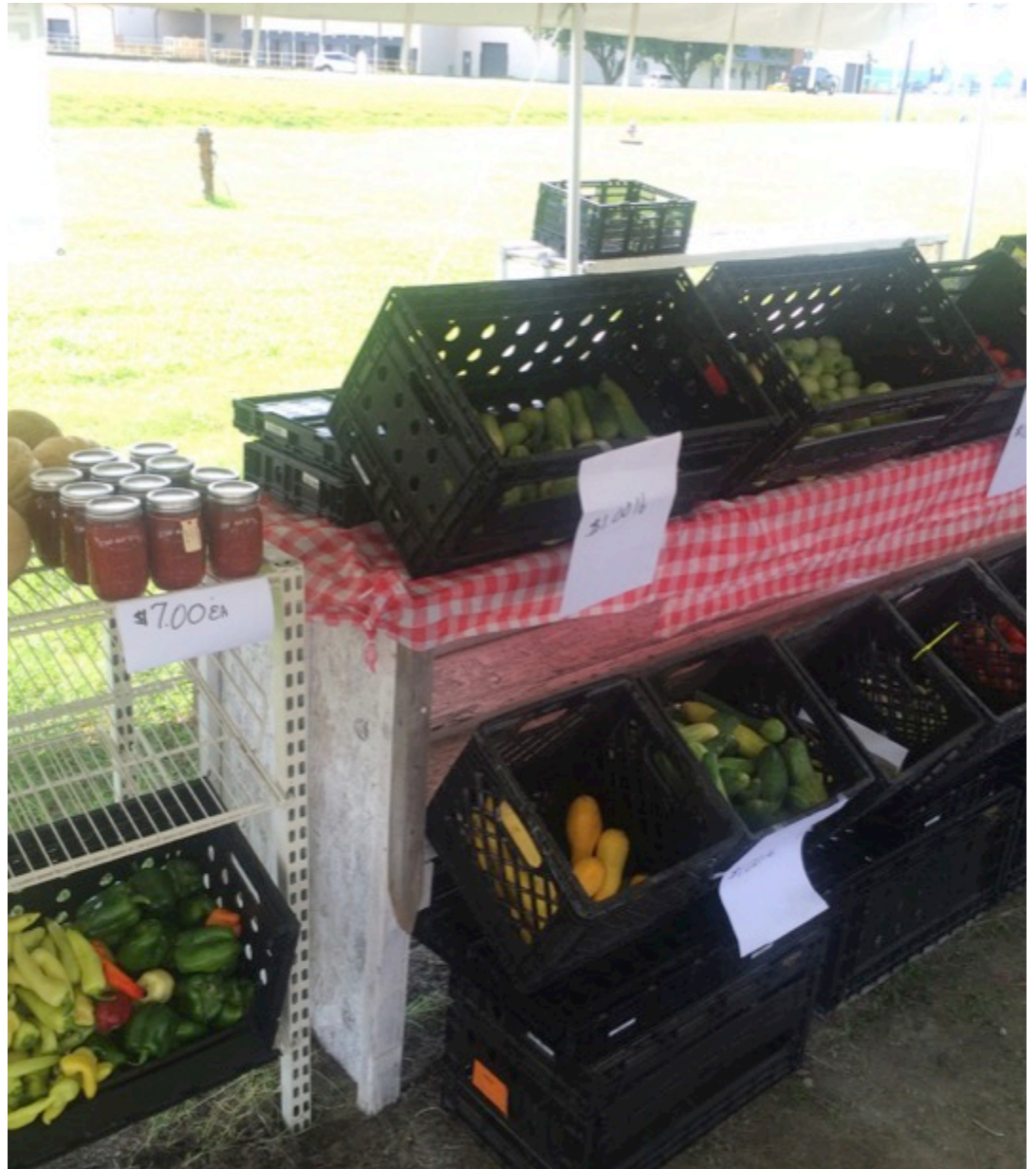
August on farm site workshop with partners





# Sales Opportunities

- Crossroads Farmers Market
  - Market in Marks
  - Other markets in the area
  - Value-added bizs
- Plus
- Aggregated produce contracts with leading grocery chains and schools



# Access to Capital

- At \$640 in savings, bank will match 3 to 1 up to \$3000
- Savings may be used in farm businesses



## Access to Land

44 acres in 3  
donated parcels:

- 25 acres in  
Quitman County
- 5 acres in  
Coahoma County
- 14.5 elsewhere



# Impacts and Evaluation

## **Measurable Impacts So Far:**

45 participants in year 1

Income data to be calculated

Anecdotes of change for individuals

## **Evaluation Plan:**

- Continued monitoring and counting
- Outside evaluation team site visits (2-3x/year)
- Analyze for
  - changes in farm income,
  - increase knowledge, skills, and
  - readiness to own or operate a farm or ranch or to become self-employed in agriculture

# The Youngs + Sweet Magnolia Gelato





# Lessons to Share

**Collaboration. Community Assets. Connection.**

- Alcorn State U processing facility
- SRBWI
- Tougaloo College extension
- AARP MS
- local businesses, churches
- USDA programs
- school food service
- agri & tech high schools
- and more...





# Next Year and After

Looking forward over the next two years:

- New cohorts
- Maybe: more land!
- Participants to use IDAs and apply for bank loans and Farm Service Agency
- Youth programming

And after the project funding ends?

- This funding is helping us deliver on vision and mission.  
No stopping us now!





# Connect with us.

Mississippi Delta Council for Farm Worker Opportunities, Inc.

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[www.crossroadsfarmersmarket.org](http://www.crossroadsfarmersmarket.org)

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