

PRESS RELEASE: L&M Companies Awarded National Grant from ReFED to Help Reduce Food Waste by Bridging the Gap Between Farmers & Those in Need During COVID-19 Pandemic



L&M Companies, a Raleigh, North Carolina - based year-round grower and supplier of fresh fruits and vegetables, has been awarded a grant from the ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund. The Fund was created to deliver critical support to organizations that could make an immediate impact through solutions that will ultimately make the food system more resilient, with a goal of preventing more than 50 million pounds of food waste, rescuing 41.5 million meals over 90 days.

“COVID-19 has disrupted the regular flow of the food supply chain, making it difficult to get fresh, healthy food to the people who need it most and increasing the amount of food insecurity,” said Alexandria Coari, Capital and Innovation Director at ReFED. “The work of organizations like L&M Companies is urgent, and we’re excited to get them the critical support they need from the ReFED COVID-19 Food Waste Solutions Fund,” added Coari.

L&M Companies has seen first-hand the issues farmers and families are facing with COVID-19, from a surge of on-farm food loss to major food distribution challenges. Since the pandemic began, L&M has sought to provide a solution by sourcing, packing, and distributing over 900,000 pounds of produce to hunger relief organizations in Florida and North Carolina, and expects to rescue 10 million pounds of food through USDA’s Farmers to Families Food Box program.



As one of 26 organizations awarded a ReFED grant, L&M has been able to expand its program in North Carolina, distributing an additional 68,000 pounds of fresh produce to rural families in need through non-profit partner organizations in Wake and surrounding counties.

Nearly 400 organizations expressed interest in receiving ReFED funding, demonstrating that there are many solution providers who are ready to help overcome COVID-related challenges to the food system, and highlighting the urgent need for more funding to scale their efforts.

Headquartered in Wake County, L&M has helped local organizations such as Community of Hope Ministries in Garner, NC, that rely on donations to support their mission. Executive Director Amy White said, “Our food pantry is normally dependent on retail partners and the food bank to supply our fresh vegetables. When consumer demand surged and the supply chain was interrupted because of COVID 19, our donations plummeted, and we were faced with a significant shortage of first quality, fresh fruit and vegetables.”



“ReFED and L&M truly came to the rescue. Our clients have been overjoyed to receive the boxes of vegetables at a time when their own limited incomes were being stretched more than ever before. We are so thankful for the opportunity to be a part of this outstanding partnership bringing fresh produce to families who have faced food insecurity during this crisis,” White said.

L&M will continue their North Carolina program with funding through ReFED for a total of 9 weeks, partnering with 5 hubs of additional non-profit partners and distributing 500 additional boxes of fresh food to at least 2,000 people or families each week.

L&M’s overall initiative will have a national impact on bridging the gap between farm excess and those in need. This year, the company will assist over 100 farmers in 16 states, saving an anticipated 36 million pounds of fresh produce and delivering it to the people who need it most.



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