

Project Title: Olean Farmer’s Market – “Olean Farm Fresh”
FY2024 ARC - Project start and end dates June 2024 – December 2025

Criterion	5 Needs Improvement	8 Good start	10 Exemplary	Comments/Points
Project Summary, Goals, and Reasoning	Applicant does not adequately introduce the project. Discussion of the connection between the proposed project, the applicant’s mission statement, and the goals of the grant program is incomplete or vague. The author fails to make a compelling case.	Applicant provides a rationale for funding. Activities and outcomes are clearly explained but lacking in specificity. The connection between the proposed project, the applicant’s mission statement and the goals of the grant program needs improvement. The significance of the proposed activities is present but can be stronger.	Applicant provides a strong rationale for grant funding, clearly explains activities and outcomes. There is a clear connection between the proposed project, the applicant’s mission statement and the goals of the grant program. The significance of the proposed activities is clear and well defined.	Olean Farmers’ Market is proposing a retail space. The goals and reasoning are to provide local farmers with more options to sell their produce outside of the limited outdoor market times. This will increase revenue and make their products more accessible.
Timetable and Milestones	A partial description of scheduled activities is provided. Milestones are vague and/or indicate limited foresight of project’s impact.	A concise project timetable is provided, but there are inconsistencies or clarifications are needed.	A clear and concise project timetable is provided with relevant milestones that show logical and feasible project progression in relation to project goals, objectives, and budget.	10 – Olean Farmer’s market has a clear timeline for success.
Sustainability	Information regarding how the project will be sustained beyond the funding period shows promise, however, the applicant needs to develop greater partnerships or leverage resources to maintain community/regional impact.	Applicant clearly defines the sustainability of the project that connects with performance and impact measures. The applicant has strong presence and connections in the community/region but needs more partnerships. Past applications have failed to work.	Applicant clearly defines the sustainability of the project that connects with performance and impact measures. The applicant has strong presence and connections in the community/region to maintain and leverage continued support.	10 - The farmers’ market is a fixture in the community that has been steadily increasing its presence and capacity. They have reputable partners and supporters.
Performance/ Impact Measures	Applicant includes performance/impact measures as well as outputs and outcomes associated for the requested timeline. However, project outputs and outcomes need development to increase community/regional development impact.	Applicant includes performance/impact measures as well as outputs and outcomes associated for the requested timeline, however, impact could be improved.	Applicant includes performance/impact measures as well as outputs and outcomes associated for the requested timeline. Project outputs and outcomes have potential to significantly impact community and regional development.	10 – Outputs and outcomes are consistent with the project narrative. There is potential to positively affect revenue and attract new farmers to the area with increased marketability.
Project Funding Sources	Applicant shows the potential for adequate in-kind or cash match for ARC funds requested.	Applicant shows adequate AND pending in-kind or cash match for ARC funds requested.	Applicant shows adequate AND committed in-kind or cash match for ARC funds requested.	9 – Pending sources.
ARC Investment Goal/NYS Implementation Strategy	The Applicant’s proposed ARC Investment Goal and NYS Implementation Strategy does not match the proposed projects reasoning and/or goals.	The Applicant must prioritize one ARC Investment Goal and NYS Implementation Strategy.	The Applicant chooses the ARC Investment Goal and NYS Implementation Strategy that best match the proposed projects reasoning and/or goals.	10 - The applicant provides an ARC Investment goal and tailors the project to meet the goal through the narrative. They must do the same for the state strategy.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

OLEAN FARM FRESH RETAIL STORE, FOOD HUB & CAFE

1. Goals and Strategies

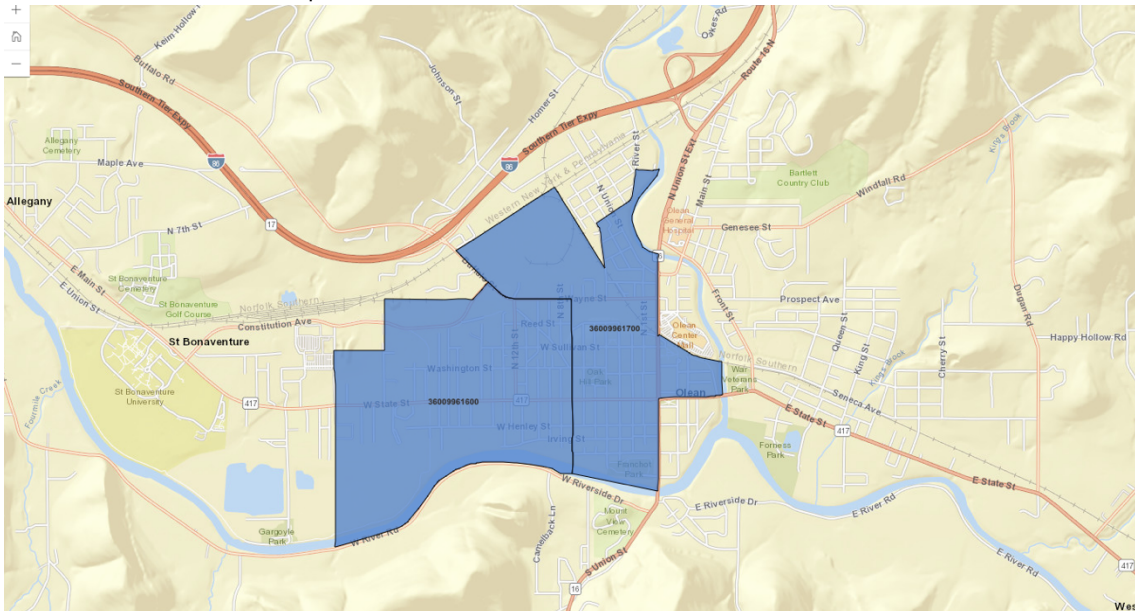
ARC Goal #1: Building Appalachian Businesses

The “Olean Farm Fresh” project is designed to build and support small family farm businesses, which are designated a challenge in New York’s 2020 Strategy Statement. This project will dovetail with targeted investment priorities for New York State: developing regional economic clusters, encouraging entrepreneurship, developing assets, prioritizing pockets of distress, and revitalizing downtowns as centers of regional economic activity.

2. Project Description

- a. Short Summary: The Olean Farm Fresh project will provide Olean area farmers with a cooperatively run, self-designed marketing outlet that allows them to reach more customers, aggregate their products, and facilitate purchases for larger buyers. A farm-to-table café featuring only one or two dishes each day, with accompanying recipes, will teach customers how to eat seasonally and how to cook locally available foods. The store’s seating area will also serve as a gathering space for agricultural business planning workshops, workforce development events and for a winter farmers market.
- b. Workplan/Timeline: The project begins prior to funding disbursement, in the late summer of 2023. Building owner will conduct renovations from August to December of 2023, with farmers market board input. In June 2024, when funding is released, the market will purchase the necessary display equipment and start paying the manager to staff the retail space and café. By winter 2024, the market will create a regular winter farmers market within the space and beginning planning a business skills series and workforce development series to grow the project into more value for farmers in 2025. As the 2025 season gets underway, plans will be made for creating a farmer/owner investment commitment using a cooperative membership model.
- c. Service area: The Olean Area Farmers Market and its proposed retail space are both located within census tract 9617, which is a distressed area and Opportunity Zone in downtown Olean, Cattaraugus County, NY. The market’s immediate service area farmers and customers within a 15-mile radius of Olean, including Allegany, Vandalia, Salamanca, Humphrey, Hinsdale, Ischua, Franklinville, Cuba, Portville, and the northern towns of McKean County, PA. However, the market also draws vendors from as far away as Alfred, Angelica, and Fillmore in Allegany County. The project site is well positioned to connect as a transportation stop and food aggregation hub for other distressed tracts, which sit along the Interstate Route 86 corridor to the east and west of Olean. Route 16 is also one block away, serving as a north-south arterial that can transport farm products to any food

hubs in the northern part of Cattaraugus County, with the goal of reaching Buffalo area customers. See map of distressed tract 9617 below.



3. Strategic Rationale

a. What is the problem/opportunity the project addresses?

As of June 2023, the Olean area has two farmers markets, the Enchanted Mountains Farmers Market on Fridays and the Olean Area Farmers Market on Saturdays. Nowhere else during the week can customers buy primarily locally grown food. No stores carry a substantial volume of local farm products, and while a few restaurants occasionally feature local products, none are committed to local products as the centerpiece of their meals. With so few marketing opportunities, the Olean area is not inviting to start-up farms, and most new or emerging farmers will choose to buy land further north of Olean, where they have easier access to Buffalo markets. Olean Area Farmers Market board president John Policastro observed that “sales outlets for farm products are so hard to find. Next to the work and investment, it is probably the single biggest factor that limits farmers from being successful at small farm ventures.” This project will develop an alternative retail marketing opportunity, in which farmers can sell their products in a venue designed just for them, right in Olean. Customers who cannot make it to the brief farmers market open hours will have the opportunity to make purchases during the remainder of the week.

b. Why was this strategy chosen?

One of the reasons that farm-to-table restaurants and food hubs are so challenging is that communicating with farmers, learning what is in season that week, and coordinating multiple

product deliveries is an enormous time commitment. This project is more practical and cost-effective than most for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed retail space is a block away from the farmers market pavilion, so vendors can drop products off before or after their markets.
- 2) The proposed retail space is in the heart of Olean's downtown revitalization project.
- 3) The proposed retail location is part of a large renovation of former office space into residential units, with residents who are eager to have a farm-to-table café close by.
- 4) The farmers market's current manager can conduct their pre-existing management work while also operating the retail store.
- 5) Ingredients for farm-to-table dishes will already be on-site, so menu preparation will be streamlined and simple.

c. What is the evidence of the demand for the project?

With the creation of Olean's new farmers market pavilion in 2019, vendor interest has soared, and customer attendance is estimated to have more than tripled. The customer interest spans all income levels, according to observations made by vendors. New evidence to this effect arose early in the 2023 growing season, when the farmers market began participating in the NYS FreshConnect SNAP incentive check program. The program matches a SNAP customer's swipe up to \$50 for additional check/coupons to use for shopping at the market. Since the program's inception in May 2023, SNAP card transaction totals have more than quadrupled:

SNAP transaction sales at the Olean Area Farmers Market

May and June 2022 = \$1,154

May and June 2023 = \$5,325

Board president John Policastro noted that this indicates that low-income customers in the immediate area of the market are highly motivated to use their SNAP on local products if they are confident it can stretch their food dollars far enough. "While the sample size is small, the data show that we have seen a marked shift in shoppers from those in a higher income bracket who might see a farmers market as a novelty, to more SNAP-eligible families who are buying family groceries for regular meals." The farmers market and its proposed retail store can have a significant positive impact on the health of residents within this distressed tract, with a location within walking distance of many residential areas surrounding the downtown district.

d. How does this project relate to the region's strategies?

On the regional level, Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board has been studying the demonstrated need for food processing, aggregation facilities and collaborative

marketing since it published its food hub viability study in June 2013. Cattaraugus County and Chautauqua County each published new farmland protection plans in 2020 and 2022 that echoed the need for processing facilities, food hubs and collaborative marketing strategies.

A new CEDS is scheduled for publication by Southern Tier West in September 2023, and the agriculture focus group determined that shared processing and distribution facilities were one of its top five priorities for the region.

4. Collaborative Partnerships

Describe all collaborations with partners (community, state, regional or federal).

Olean Area Farmers Market currently collaborates with the City of Olean to lease its pavilion for a nominal annual fee. One of the community contributors to the pavilion space has renovated nearby office spaces into residential housing units, and he is interested in leasing a downstairs storefront space to the farmers market board. This contributor would provide a discount off the market rate price of the storefront, and his private investment will be substantially leveraged in this project.

5. Project Sustainability and Grantee Capacity

a. Sustainability Plan:

The Olean Farm Fresh retail store and café will develop an annual membership fee for all farms who sell in its store. This fee will support the café in a cooperative way, helping to cover staff time, electricity costs, and rent. Community events and fundraisers such as a seed swaps and gardening workshops will attract community interest and commitment in the form of donations and volunteers. Through a combination of SRP product mark-ups, membership fees, and contributions to community events, the retail store and café will become self-sufficient without needing to pull a high margin from its café activities.

b. Grantee Capacity:

The Olean Area Farmers Market is a nonprofit with a pending 501(c)6 status. The board's 8 members are all farmers and active participants in planning strategically for the market's future. The board has in the past held educational programs on nutrition and homesteading, hosted musicians, partnered with FeedMore WNY to collect food donations, and regularly hosts different nonprofit guests to promote their causes at the market. This year the market board launched a program called "Taste of the Region," in which the market sources other farm products from a 50-mile radius that are not being grown in the immediate area. The board has strong community relationships and is effective at collaborating for the betterment of the market and the downtown district in which it operates.

6. Performance/ Impact Measures

a. Outputs and Outcomes:

Outputs	Outcomes	Additional Benefits
30 member farms served	30 farms' income stability increased	Farmers tend to spend locally
5-10 farms and food businesses begun in area	5-10 farm and food businesses able to find viable markets in Olean	Signals to other start-up farmers that the area is friendly and ripe for more farmers
500 weekly customers served	500 weekly customers able to access healthy foods at a more convenient time for them	Customers can learn how to cook local food while they shop
6 winter farmers markets held annually	6 winter farmers markets enable customers to access seasonal local foods year-round, and farmers to sell during a slow time of year	Continuity of connection with customers
3-4 agriculture workforce development events held	Farmers have opportunity to share stories, teach skills to their staff, learn new skills themselves	Community building within agricultural community
50% increase in market-sponsored farm product revenues	Increased stability of income for 30+ small farms	Preservation of 500-2000 working acres of farmland due to increased income stability

(Non-Construction Project) BUDGET FORMAT B

Project Name: "Olean Farm Fresh"

Budget Period: June 2024 – December 2025

Start and end dates: June 2024 – December 2025

CATEGORY	% OF TIME	18-month SALARY	ARC FUNDS	OTHER FEDERAL	STATE	LOCAL CASH	LOCAL IN-KIND	TOTAL
1. PERSONNEL								
Retail Manager		\$54,600	\$52,200			\$2,400		\$54,600
P/T Staff – bookkeeping & retail help		\$7,800					\$7,800	\$7,800
SUBTOTAL PERSONNEL		\$62,400						\$62,400
2. UTILITIES		\$13,050	\$13,050					\$13,050
3. SUPPLIES		\$24,600	\$24,600					\$24,600
4. RENT		\$45,000	\$9,000				\$36,000	\$45,000
5. OTHER		0						
OPERATIONS – TOTAL (#1 through #5)		\$145,050	\$98,850					
6. CONSTRUCTION / RENOVATION <small>Specify in budget narrative</small>		n/a						
7. EQUIPMENT <small>Specify in budget narrative</small>		n/a						
EQUIPMENT - FUNDING SOURCE PERCENTAGE								
TOTAL PROJECT - FUNDING SOURCE PERCENTAGE								
GRAND TOTAL		\$145,050	\$98,850			\$2,400	\$43,800	\$145,050

SECTION 4: BUDGET INFORMATION

ARC Area Development Grant

Budget Narrative

Project: "Olean Farm Fresh" Retail Store, Food Hub, & Farm-to-Table Café

Project applicant: Olean Area Farmers Market

Timeline: 18-month project period

Personnel - \$62,400

Retail manager salary would primarily be covered by ARC, with board members volunteering in-kind \$7,800 to conduct bookkeeping and assist with needed hours coverage in the retail store. Farmers market already pays manager approximately \$2,400 to work from their home, which would also be considered in-kind contribution toward the personnel costs of the retail manager position, as that work would take place in the retail space.

ARC: \$52,200

Local In-kind: \$10,200

Utilities - \$13,050

Utilities will include electricity for all the refrigeration and freezer equipment, water, and telephone and internet service.

ARC: \$13,050

Local cash: \$0

Local in-kind: \$0

Supplies - \$24,600

Refrigeration and freezer equipment, display racks, baked goods display cabinets, and other front-end product presentation furnishings, tables and chairs.

ARC: \$24,600

Local In-kind: \$0

Rent - \$45,000

Building owner would allow reduced rent of \$500/month for the first two years, compared to the market rate of \$2,500, contributing \$36,000 in-kind toward rent costs.

ARC: \$9,000

Local in-kind: \$36,000

Construction/ Renovation: \$0

Not applicable to this project's activities or budget.

Total "Olean Farm Fresh" Project Expenses: \$145,050

ARC: \$98,850

(68.15%)

Local cash: \$2,400 (1.7%)

Local In-kind: \$43,800 (30.2%)

Table 3.2(b): Project Workplan & Timeline

Activities/Tasks Corresponding to Project Workplan	At/Before Start-up	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Post-Yr #1 Qtr(s)	Responsible Party (Specify Dept./Team & Leader)
Renovate storefront space to specs	X						Private partnership with building owner
Purchase refrigeration and display equipment		x					Treasurer Stacie Holcomb
Prepare recipes and menu items	X						Manager Rita Schichtel
Plan market strategy and opening day fanfare		x					Board Marketing Committee
Open for business			x				Board and Manager
First winter farmers market planned				x			Board Marketing Committee
First workforce development and small business skills events planned					x		Board Education & Outreach Committee