Feed Iowa First: 2023-2024 Value-Added Grant Recipient

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Sonia Kendrick

Feed Iowa First was founded by Sonia Kendrick in 2011 as a summer project to grow and provide fresh vegetables to food banks in Linn County. Since then, Feed Iowa First has grown into a full-time business that grows and distributes more than 45,000 lbs. of fresh produce to low-income households, immigrant and refugee families, and anyone else in need. The community surrounding Feed Iowa First is home to many immigrants and refugee families. Feed Iowa First specializes in growing culturally diverse foods for these families – close to home. The organization is dedicated to increasing health equity in its communities by creating a sustainable local food system that removes barriers to healthy food access and land for growing food.

Feed Iowa First's Choose Iowa grant project will increase production by purchasing a hoop house and small grain processing equipment for culturally relevant foods and tender greens. The hoop house will extend the growing season by 4-8 weeks and allow the organization to produce more vegetables. A small grain mill will offer opportunities to experiment with the production of edible grains. By utilizing new technology, Feed Iowa First will expand its market.

The organization expects to increase the varieties of produce they can grow. Feed Iowa First also plans to increase local and out-of-state sales, thereby reaching more families and people in their community. The project will support the organization's mission to combat food insecurity by growing food and farmers through training and investing in them.



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