



**Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis
Investment Connection Proposal**

Proposal title	Cooperative Business Development & Mobile Market
Contact	Cynthia Terry
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Organization name/address	Communities Unlimited 3 East Colt Square Drive Memphis, Tennessee 38103
Mission statement	CU's mission is to move rural and under-resourced communities in areas of persistent poverty to sustainable prosperity.
Overview of organization	<p>Communities Unlimited, Inc. (CU), is a 501c3 nonprofit with a 40-year history of providing services to disadvantaged, low-income and very low-income communities in 7 southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.</p> <p>CU is certified by the U.S. Department of Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and has \$15 million in assets. CU has an office in Memphis that has been serving the Memphis, TN-MS-AR Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) since 1998.</p> <p>Our services to the Memphis MSA includes providing small businesses with intensive, mostly one-on-one, managerial and business skills consulting; developing and facilitating workshop training sessions; making small business loans; and enhancing the food security in the TN-MS-AR areas by providing farmers with on-farm training, access to wholesale markets, and helping establish farmers markets.</p>
Website	www.communitiesu.org
Social media link(s)	<p>Facebook</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/communitiesunlimited/</p>

	<p>Twitter https://twitter.com/CommunitiesU</p> <p>Facebook https://www.facebook.com/MemShop2012/</p>
Location of project/activity	<p>Memphis, TN-MS-AR (MSA) Arkansas Mississippi Tennessee</p>
Geographic Impact	Regional
Support request	<p>Grant Investment</p>
Requested dollar amount	\$150,000
Proposal description and structure	<p>This project will continue CU's work with 3 organizations that are exploring cooperative business models for enhancing food security in Memphis. Through federal funding, CU is providing these 3 organizations with intensive, one-on-one, technical assistance to include developing feasibility studies and business plans for their proposed activities. One organization is considering a cooperative grocery store for the Hickory Hill/South Memphis area. One organization is considering a worker cooperative for growing produce on empty lots in S. Memphis. One organization is a group of minority farmers that is considering a producer cooperative to jointly sell to wholesale markets. All three of these organizations are interested in a mobile grocery. CU would provide the loan capital and the managerial and business skills training for this mobile market from inception to launch and through the first 6 months of operations.</p>
Issues addressed	<p>Community Development Finance Economic/Workforce Development Financial Access, Capability and Empowerment Neighborhood Revitalization and Stabilization Small Business Development/Technical Assistance</p>
Target population/geography	<p>This project targets disadvantaged startup and existing small businesses in the Memphis, TN-MS-AR Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Disadvantaged small businesses are typically either minority owned, woman owned, or rural based. CU has a history of serving low-income and minority entrepreneurs including Native Americans, African Americans & Hispanics. In fact, in 2016 CU's beneficiaries were 48.2% low income with 14.2% being very low income; and 15.5% extremely low income (2016 American Community Survey Table DP03).</p>
Population served including income	<p>This project is serving the Memphis, TN-MS-AR. As of the 2012 Census this is a population of 1,369,548 to include Forrest City AR. The U.S.Census 2013 estimates</p>

	<p>1,371,110 people residing within the Combined Statistical Area (CSA). The racial makeup of the CSA was 45.2% non-Hispanic White, 47.3% African American, 0.5% Native American, 2.2% Asian, & 0.1% Pacific Islander, and Hispanic or Latino of any race were 5.1% of the population. Based upon 2012 data from Profile America Facts for Features, the median income for a household in the MSA was \$47,344. The median income for a family was \$57,780. The per capita income for the MSA was \$24,675.</p>
Anticipated outcomes/impact	<p>The goals of this project is to enhance food security by providing intensive, customized, one-on-one, professional managerial and business skills training to at least 3 small businesses in our target geography to result in at least one of these small businesses owning and operating a mobile market that provides fresh local produce to food deserts. This mobile market will become a model for the launch of additional sustainable mobile markets in the future.</p>
How will the program be evaluated	<p>CU's employees use a timekeeping software that tracks time spent by grant and activity. This timekeeping system is used to generate and evaluate grant performance. CU's project manager and senior leadership team evaluates all grant performance by month. CU's senior leadership team holds monthly meetings to review organizational financials by program and by grant. During these monthly meetings the senior leadership team evaluates the status of grant goals and deliverables on all active grant contracts. In cases in which CU is not on track as expected, the senior leadership team works together to develop strategies for making the adjustments necessary for successful outcome.</p>
Project time frame	<p>Existing Program Project Duration: Other, please describe This is a program that was started in Memphis in 2017. We want this program to be ongoing.</p>
Other significant partners in the proposal	
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