

NWCT Regional Food Hub
October 2017 UPDATE

In July 2017, the NWCT Regional Food Hub began its official operations- picking up tomatoes, leafy greens, potatoes, squashes, leeks, onions, carrots, and beans from farms in Roxbury, Washington, Litchfield, Harwinton, Cornwall, and Warren and delivering this food to grocery stores and restaurants. As you may recall, the main purpose of the NWCT Regional Food Hub is to create a new wholesale market channel for local farmers and increase the sustainability of farm businesses in our region.

We have an amazing Food Hub Manager- Renee Giroux who lives and farms herself in Warren, CT. She, along with Kay Carroll of Partners for Sustainable Healthy Communities, have been doing the day to day work to get this Hub off the ground. Renee and Kay report that the farmers they are working with are happy (there are 10 participating farms in this pilot year) and the new Hub's customers are happy including Forman School in Litchfield, CT and New Morning Market in Woodbury, CT. They have learned a lot during these first few months of operating the Hub. ***"We are in a really good spot to continue to grow," says Renee.***

The Hub's physical location is currently a warehouse on Broad Street in Torrington and its online location will be up shortly. This website will list and describe the participating farms and allow wholesale customers (schools, restaurants, grocery stores) to order online.

Unfortunately, we were not awarded the USDA grant that we had applied for in March. This funding would have provided \$300,000 over three operating years to get the Hub to where its income would cover its operating costs. Only 14% of those who applied for the USDA funding received it. The Hub has however received another \$40,000 Farm Viability grant (CT Dept. of Agriculture) to support this initial year's operating costs and two NWCT Community Foundation Draper Fund grants to purchase equipment (Thank you!). The Northwest Hills Council of Governments has also committed \$25,000 to this initial year of Food Hub operations which will match the new Farm Viability Funding. The Hub will continue to operate over the Fall, Winter and Spring selling products like squash, onions, potatoes, and salad greens and securing commitments from farmers and customers for next year's growing season.

The Hub can continue operations with existing funding through June 2018. The PSHC Board, Hub staff, and NHCOG are actively looking for potential sources of funding for the \$65,000 that will be needed for July 2018-June 2019. We appreciate the support that has been received to date from all the Hub's funders, from the farmers who have trusted the Hub with their high quality locally grown food products, and from the customers. We look forward to working with all these partners to continue to make the Food Hub a success. ***Would you like to help the Food Hub continue its good work?! [Click here](#) to contribute!***