



## A Collaborative Effort to Advance Washington State Cut Flowers

WSDA Regional Markets alongside Washington Farm Bureau are working together to raise the profile and advance the marketing of local cut flowers, thanks to 2017-2019 Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. This project will bring together a range of specialty crop industry stakeholders to design and implement an integrated marketing campaign to promote local flowers from Washington and the Pacific Northwest and communicate to industry and consumers about how and why to choose local. The intention of the project's marketing and promotion activities is to help elevate the profile of Washington-grown flowers and to do so in ways that support the marketing and promotion efforts already underway or planned by those in the industry.

### Project Background

Over the last several decades, the consistent growth in consumer demand for locally and regionally produced food has presented opportunities for Washington farmers and food producers to connect with consumers in new ways, expanding direct and regional sales and adding value with information about where and how food is grown. But Washington is not only home to a bountiful diversity of food specialty crops. As the third largest producer of cut flowers, Washington is also an important region for high quality floriculture and this sector would benefit from integrated marketing and education about the many benefits of choosing locally grown flowers.

Effective marketing, messaging and producer, value chain and consumer education is critical to fomenting and sustaining growth and profitability. This project will assist the cut flower industry in building brand awareness and sales for the local and regional flower movement in Washington State with a strategic, collaborative effort between WSDA's Regional Markets team and the Washington Farm Bureau with support from Washington flower growers and marketers

### Project Objectives

Objective 1: Research and report on marketing best practices within the cut flowers industry and gather scientifically-respected benchmark marketing data to advance the interests of industry stakeholders.  
Objective 2: Increase consumer awareness of where their flowers come from and build demand for locally grown cut flowers with end consumers and within the floral industry with a strategic integrated marketing communications campaign.  
Objective 3: Assist new and established producers with cut floriculture marketing and business development opportunities.

### Project Activities

Specifically, WSDA and WFB will use a variety of vehicles to enhance the marketing of Washington-grown specialty cut flowers including:

- Engaging producers and other key industry stakeholders to gather information and for a gap/S.W.O.T. assessment of the current specialty-cut flower industry and its marketing practices.
- Survey research to establish baseline data about the current consumer knowledge and perceptions of local flowers and to identify key motivating messages to incorporate into the integrated marketing campaign.
- Design and implementation of an integrated marketing communications program to educate wholesale buyers and retail customers broadly about Washington flower production the benefits of choosing locally-grown flowers.

- Production of marketing materials that can be used by flower farmers, farmers markets and retailers (educational pamphlets, brochures, collateral pieces, and digital and print promotional pieces).
- Partner and provide support to regional grocers, farmers market managers, and floral businesses to present promotional activities such as farmer talks, floral design competitions, kids and family activities, and live demonstrations. Engage shoppers in participatory social media campaigns.
- Organize industry meetings to facilitate business development through the various market channels within the industry; wholesale markets, direct to florists, pick your own operations, road side stands, farm markets, and subscription.
- Enlist successful flower farmers and floral businesses to provide training for floral buyers farmers market managers, and farmers. Buyer education will focus on topics to increase knowledge about local flower production practices, varieties, seasonality, and quality among. Trainings for growers will provide support for business growth, especially for new farmers, with deeper industry knowledge, education on marketing strategies, and practical tips for successful business development and operations.

## Questions? Contact:

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*This project is funded by a WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant*

