



County of Albemarle
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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ahernandorena@albemarle.org
tel: 434-972-4016

On October 31, 2025, Albemarle County applied to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) for the Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID) Infrastructure Grant) on behalf of Penny's Imperfect Pizza, a family-owned farm-to-freezer food enterprise in the county. They produce handcrafted frozen sourdough pizzas using locally sourced ingredients, including vegetables grown on-site, pasture-raised sausage from neighboring farms, and regionally milled flour. The business's model supports small-scale agricultural producers, reduces food miles, and promotes sustainable, community-centered economic development.

As a current member of BEACON Kitchen, the business is experiencing increased demand across Virginia but faces production limitations due to manual processes, restricted cold storage, and minimal staffing. Current capacity allows for approximately 300 crusts per shift, which constrains their ability to fulfill orders from retailers, food hubs, and farmers markets. These limitations also restrict the volume of ingredients purchased from local farms, thereby capping the company's contribution to the regional food economy.

PROPOSED INVESTMENT: \$16,085.45 - AFID INFRASTRUCTURE LOCAL MATCH REQUEST

Penny's Imperfect Pizza is requesting \$31,170.89 in total grant funding to support their expansion:

- Acquisition of dough divider and rounder to triple dough ball output
- Purchase of a pizza dough press to scale crust production to ~1,000 per shift
- Expansion of cold storage via a commercial chest freezer
- Addition of a rechargeable portable generator to ensure cold-chain reliability
- Soil and compost amendments to increase on-farm vegetable production
- Hiring and training of two new staff members to support expanded operations

The proposed equipment expansion project will:

- Increase weekly pizza output to 800–1,000 units
- Triple local sourcing of key ingredients such as sausage, flour, honey, and vegetables
- Expand market reach through new retail and distributor partnerships
- Create two permanent jobs and support youth workforce development programs
- Generate measurable revenue growth and increased purchases from Virginia suppliers
- Enhance community engagement through monthly donation events and food pantry partnerships

All equipment will be housed at BEACON Kitchen under shared-use agreements. New hires will receive training in food safety and standard operating procedures aligned with commercial kitchen protocols.

Staff recommend this equipment expansion project based on its potential to strengthen Central Virginia's regional food network, expand market access for local food producers, and contribute to sustainable economic growth in Albemarle County.

At the November 18th Economic Development Authority meeting, staff will share additional background on this grant application and a request for matching fund support will be made if the application is awarded later this year. At that point, staff will request action by the EDA. If approved, source funds would be the Economic Development Opportunity Fund (EOF).