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NEWS RELEASE

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CDFA Announces Intro Food Systems Finance WebCourse *New Training Institute Course Offered this June*

Columbus, OH – The Council of Development Finance Agencies is pleased to announce the Intro Food Systems Finance Webcourse, the newest course offering from the CDFA Training Institute. The WebCourse will be held online this June 4-5 from 12:00-5:00pm (EDT) daily.

The Intro Food Systems Finance WebCourse examines the development finance programs that sustain a local food system and how investments in that system can drive economic development on a broader scale. Topics covered include federal, state, and local sources of capital, stakeholders involved in the financing process, and case study examples that showcase the variety of financing programs.

“Understanding the role that development finance plays in supporting a healthy food system is a critical component of the economic development ecosystem,” said Toby Rittner, CDFA President & CEO. “The new Intro Food Systems Finance WebCourse adds an important element to the CDFA Training Institute and gives our members and the entire development finance industry access to critical education in this area.”

This course will explore how bonds, tax credits, loan programs, foundation grants, and other financing tools can be used to support a local food system and encourage follow-on investment, small business development, and sustainable growth. In particular, this course will address the financing challenges associated with growing, processing, distributing, marketing, and selling food.

Nessa Richman, founder of Brightseed Strategies, will serve as the Course Advisor for the Intro Food Systems Finance WebCourse. She is a food systems consultant and often works with umbrella organizations, assisting their stakeholder groups in understanding issues related to sustainable agriculture and food enterprise, local/regional food marketing chains, and low-income food access. She was a sub-contractor for the Treasury Department’s Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) Fund “Financing Healthy Food Options” Capacity Building Task Order, and in 2014, was named to the Advisory Committee for Rhode Island’s Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grants Program.

“Investments in a healthy food system can be made all along the food marketing chain – from production and processing to distribution and retail,” said Richman, “and retail doesn’t just mean full service supermarkets. Farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms, healthy corner stores, and mobile markets all need access to appropriate financial products and services in order to thrive.”

The Intro Food Systems Finance WebCourse qualifies for the CDFA Training Institute’s Development Finance Certified Professional (DFCP) Program. Registrations for this course are now being accepted on the CDFA website at www.cdfa.net.

The **Council of Development Finance Agencies** is a national association dedicated to the advancement of development finance concerns and interests. CDFA is comprised of the nation’s leading and most knowledgeable members of the development finance community representing public, private and non-profit entities alike. For more information about CDFA, visit www.cdfa.net.

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