*Please submit this completed application and any relevant supporting documentation by the deadline listed on the SSC website to* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.The Working Group Chairs will be in contact with you regarding any questions about the application. If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the SSC at* *Sustainability-Committee@Illinois.edu**.*

# General Information

**Project Name:** Illinois Sustainable Food Project – Tortilla Expansion

**Total Amount Requested from SSC:** ~$135,000

**Project Topic Area(s):** [ ] Energy [ ] Education [x] Food & Waste

 [ ] Land [ ] Water [ ] Transportation

# Contact Information

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**Project Team**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Department** | **Email** |
| Juan Andrade | FSHN | Email Address |
| Dawn Aubrey | UIUC Dining Services | Email Address |
| Jedi Brown | FSHN/UIUC Dining Services | Email Address |
| Bill Davidson | UIUC Extension | Email Address |

# Project Information

Please provide a brief background of the project, the goals, and the desired outcomes:

This exciting expansion to the Illinois Sustainable Food Project (ISFP) proposes to add equipment to the grain milling line that will allow for additional finished products to be made, and additional grain to be processed through our mill on campus. Some of the products will include corn and flour tortillas, as well as tortilla chips; all made from grain grown on campus, processed in the Food Science & Human Nutrition Pilot Processing Plant (FSHN-PPP), and served at the University Dining Halls.

Much of the necessary equipment is already in place and tested. This includes everything from planting and harvesting of the grains, to cleaning and milling into flour, and producing doughs and masa. This year, nearly 50,000lbs of grain will be milled in the FSHN-PPP and provided to the Dining Halls. Necessary for this expansion is a forming and baking line for the tortillas and chips.

Our overall goal is to provide locally-sourced, healthy, and nutritious product for UIUC Dining to serve to the campus population, while providing an educational experience to the student body. For those most interested, there will be opportunities to work with the project producing finished product; and for the rest of the campus (and off-campus) community, presentations, videos, articles, and tours will be made available. Possibly most importantly, this project will reach every student who eats in the Dining Halls.

This project in particular has some exciting possibilities as our partners in Crop Sciences have done research into locally-grown, organic varieties of corn. Among other things, this has resulted in some interesting orange and blue colored corn that would make a very stand-out (and very Illinois) tortilla chip. UIUC Dining is renovating the ISR Dining Halls, and will feature many different “restaurants”, one in particular that would feature the tortillas we are producing, presenting a very public presentation of our local-sourced products. Our existing sauce lince can produce salsa and/or hot sauce for the chips, making a complete package of locally-produced products for the Dining Halls, at events, tailgates, etc.

Please provide a brief summary of how students will be involved in the project:

Student interns will be responsible for the actual operation of the project, from planting, through harvesting and processing. Student employees in Dining will even have the opportunity to create dishes for their peers using our product, while working side by side with trained chefs.

The completed product will be consumed by any student who eats in the campus Dining Halls. This extremely local source of food will be well-documented and advertised with the finished product. Additionally, any student who has a class in the FSHN Pilot Plant, or tours it through events like EOH/ExplorACES will have the opportunity to learn the hands-on process.

Please provide a brief summary of the project timeline:

With funding available in Spring 2018, we would immediately move to purchase the equipment to be ready for Fall 2018 harvest. Thankfully, corn stores well, so we can start processing as soon as the equipment arrives. We will have some product remaining from 2017 harvest for testing, or could store the 2018 product as necessary. In short, we can move as fast as procurement can source us the equipment.

Additional comments

The Illinois Sustainable Food Project (ISFP) is a partnership between several groups in the Department of Crop Sciences, the Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition, and University Housing Dining Services that began in 2013. The project processes items grown on campus into finished products for the University Dining Halls. Since inception, over 100,000 lbs of fruit, vegetables, grains, and other items have been processed into finished products for the University Dining Halls. Some of the projects include pizza sauce, several varieties of flour, diced vegetables, hot sauce, juices, pesto, and more.

The project continues to grow, and has received significant recognition for its work. A permanent FT staff person has now been put in place to manage the project, and dozens of students have been employed working on the project and learning the value of local foods. After the capital infusion necessary to buy the processing equipment, the projects are completely self-supporting, all staff and maintenance is paid through redirected dollars from traditional, non-local food vendors. The project has received many mentions in both social and traditional news coverage, along with winning an Innovation Credit to assist UIUC in becoming a “Gold-Ranked” institution from STARS.

In addition, the project has a growing impact external to campus as those affiliated with the project have begun to work with outside agencies in support of our mission. One such example is the Artisan Grain Collaborative, a group working tirelessly to restore local grains to the Chicago area and greater Midwest food economy. Through outside grants, the collaborative and UIUC grad students are now working to use the ISFP model and resources to improve the food economy across the region. It is a first step, but some huge possibilities are just around the corner, dependent on a funding decision from the USDA Local Foods Promotional Program. These projects are separate from the ISFP and any SSC funds, but show the huge impact of the start-up capital provided by the SSC. None of this would have been possible without our ISFP campus model, data that is being gathered, and learning provided to the students.