

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS

\$341,000

HFFI grant funding received through CEN-TEX Certified Development Corporation

16,000

Number of local residents projected to be reached through Salud Corporation's health education campaign

\$0.10

For every bottle of olive oil sold, this amount is donated to support women-, veteran-, and entrepreneurs of color-owned businesses

3,000

Square feet of food manufacturing hub space projected to be developed in the next expansion phase

6

Number of jobs created or retained



Company President, Rosa Rios Valdez

Profile: Salud Corporation

Austin, Texas



When [Salud Corporation](#) was formed in 2012, President Rosa Rios Valdez established the company's larger social mission: to help low-income Latino families eat nutritious food and prevent chronic health conditions while creating local jobs in the farm-to-table industry. Salud Corporation is headquartered in Austin, Texas with a main facility in Dripping Springs, Texas. Salud Corporation is a for-profit social enterprise subsidiary of Business and Community Lenders of Texas (BCL of Texas), a nonprofit economic development organization. Salud is the country's first Latina-led, start-up to manufacture and distribute high-quality, 100 percent extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) from locally sourced ingredients.

To address traditional cost barriers to purchasing olive oil for many families, Salud Corporation makes sure its products are affordably priced for modest income families — at just \$7.99 for a 250 ml bottle. The company has also continued its commitment of donating 10 cents per bottle sold to BCL of Texas, to support other women-, veteran-, and entrepreneurs of color-owned businesses.

In 2011, Salud Corporation received a \$341,000 [Healthy Food Financing Initiative](#) (HFFI) grant to grow the olive oil milling, bottling, and distribution capacities at a local facility in Dripping Springs, Texas. Dripping Springs is a small, rural community of 1,800 residents, almost a third of whom are Latino, which has a 25 percent adult obesity rate and nearly 14 percent poverty rate. HFFI funding provided a critical investment for equipment and working capital that enabled Salud to collaborate with a local olive oil grower, the Texas Hill Country Olive Oil Company. Salud operates out of Texas Hill Company's production facilities in Dripping Springs at no cost, and in turn shares the use of Salud state-of-the-art olive milling equipment, to build up a base inventory.



Salud Corporation markets its products extensively in underserved Latino communities. The company sells to farmers' markets in Latino neighborhoods and has partnered with a number of local organizations to organize health education campaigns and cooking classes to demonstrate that olive oil can be a healthy alternative to lard in cooking traditional Mexican dishes. In 2013, Salud Corporation received a grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture to distribute sample packs of their olive oil products as part of a "Diabetes Healthy, Heart Healthy" olive oil campaign. Their goal is to reduce the high rate of diabetes in the Latino community by working through local hospitals, clinics, schools, food banks, diabetes councils, community nutrition programs, and other avenues.

Salud Corporation is also intentional about providing job opportunities for local residents in Dripping Springs who are interested in the production, manufacture, and distribution of Texas olive oil. Their partnership with Texas Hill Country Olive Oil Company has strengthened existing production jobs and added new roles within the organization, including production and sales positions. Salud Corporation also offers business development training and technical assistance so staff who are interested in starting a business will have the know-how to launch an independent enterprise and partner with Salud Corporation.

Since bottling and production began in March 2013, Salud's olive oil products have taken off and expanded reach into a number of diverse markets, including independently owned grocery stores, farmers' markets located within communities experiencing limited healthy food access, local restaurants, and online. In 2014, they signed a major distribution contract with H-E-B, one of the largest grocery chains in Texas, to carry their products. Building upon the momentum of the H-E-B contract, Salud Corporation plans to expand further. The manufacturing hub will create additional jobs in grocery and institutional sales and also house two food-related businesses as tenants in the facility.

President Rios Valdez attributes success to the company's mission-driven orientation and to critical support from the Healthy Food Financing Initiative.

"I think that's what makes us different. We're true to the mission, we're true to the purpose, and we're...focused and willing to take the risk when nobody else wants to ... [but] we couldn't be this far without [HFFI dollars]. There's no way we could have opened and started this program without that funding."

--Rosa Rios Valdez, President of Salud Corporation



For more information about the Healthy Food Access Portal, contact us at info@healthyfoodaccess.org.