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## GrowNYC Announces Micro-loans for Greenmarket Farmers in Partnership with Kiva Zip and MetLife Foundation

New York, NY – Nonprofit GrowNYC’s [FARMroots](#) program announces the first two in a series of micro-loans for Greenmarket producers have been fully funded on [Kiva Zip](#), a crowdsourced micro-lending website. These are the first in a series of loans where FARMroots will contribute 30%, up to \$3,000, of any Kiva Zip loan it endorses. [MetLife Foundation](#) is also generously contributing a 100% match per individual loan. Eligibility requirements include having less than 10 years of agricultural experience and selling through the Greenmarket farmer’s market program or graduating from the FARMroots beginning farmer training course. This “superlender” agreement between Kiva Zip and FARMroots represents the first of its kind in the Northeast.

Beginning and immigrant farmers, historically, have faced the greatest barriers to accessing capital. This innovative collaboration between Kiva Zip and FARMroots combines years of organizational experience in agriculture and micro-lending to leverage critical capital directly into the hands of traditionally underserved farmers. The loan fund will be used to support producers looking to receive small loans of up to \$10,000 to purchase additional equipment, land, seeds and other necessary materials to expand and insure their businesses’ success.

“GrowNYC is proud to work with Kiva Zip to help beginning and immigrant farmers gain access to capital they might not otherwise have,” says GrowNYC Executive Director, Marcel Van Ooyen. “Ensuring these farmers’ success is key to preserving our region’s rich agricultural history and this is just one of the many ways that GrowNYC is shepherding in the next generation of farmers and helping to preserve our region’s farmland.”

“Partnering with GrowNYC is a natural fit for Kiva Zip,” says Katherine Lynch, Kiva Zip NYC Program Manager. “Our lenders recognize that it is incredibly important to the future of agriculture that beginning and immigrant farmers be able to access capital to grow and expand their businesses. With the added endorsement of GrowNYC to each of these loans, lenders know that these farmers will continue to have support from an organization committed to ensuring their success and the success of future generations of farmers still to come.”

“Kiva Zip is an innovative and exciting concept that leverages technology and partnerships to increase access and scale microlending,” said Dennis White, President and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are delighted that MetLife Foundation’s matching loan funds for Kiva Zip are helping to close the financing gap for Greenmarket producers, who contribute so much to the health and well-being of New Yorkers.”

[Rogelio Bautista](#) of R&R Produce in Goshen, NY sought a loan for \$9,000 through Kiva Zip to purchase a refrigerated truck and was fully funded by 157 lenders across four continents in just 5 days. The loan funding campaign was bolstered by a \$2,700 contribution from FARMroots’ own microcredit loan fund and a generous 100% match per individual lender by MetLife Foundation.

Additionally, [Agustin Juarez](#) of Staten Island Family Farm, one of the last remaining farms in New York City, sought \$5,000 for a used cargo van to transport his produce to sell at the Greenmarket. His loan was fully funded by 106 lenders across three continents in less than one week, with a FARMroots contribution of \$1,500 and a generous 100% match per individual lender by MetLife Foundation. In early 2014, Agustin had his first Kiva Zip loan of \$4,500 successfully funded and has since fully repaid the loan.

The loan for another Greenmarket immigrant farmer, [Claudio Gonzalez](#), is currently live on Kiva Zip with 49% of funds left to be raised.

Kiva Zip is a pilot program launched by Kiva, the world's first and largest micro-lending website, which allows for 0% interest loans to entrepreneurs through a community of lenders. You can lend as little as \$5 and as the borrower repays the loan, you will receive your money back.

FARMroots provides both aspiring and established Greenmarket farmers with business technical assistance and training designed to ensure the long-term viability of participating farms and farmland. Technical assistance is provided through both in-house services and through the engagement of cost-shared consultants and includes support for: farm succession and land transfer, financial and business planning, legal assistance, strategic marketing, access to capital, food safety and risk management. FARMroots' Beginning Farmer Program (formally the New Farmer Development Project) identifies, educates, and supports aspiring farmers with agricultural experience to establish their own economically and environmentally sustainable small farm businesses in the NYC region. FARMroots is generously funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the USDA, the New York Farm Viability Institute, and the New York City Council.

For more information on active FARMroots loans on KivaZip visit: <https://zip.kiva.org/trustees/1467>  
For more information on FARMroots visit: [www.grownyc.org/farmroots](http://www.grownyc.org/farmroots)

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GrowNYC is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization that works to make New York City more sustainable and improve the lives of all New Yorkers. Reaching two million New Yorkers every year, GrowNYC operates Greenmarket farmers markets, engages New Yorkers in recycling education and resources, builds and maintains green spaces and engages young people in hands-on education. Learn more at [www.grownyc.org](http://www.grownyc.org)

Kiva Zip provides 0% interest loans up to \$10,000 to financially excluded and socially impactful entrepreneurs in NYC and throughout the United States. Kiva Zip aims to expand financial opportunities for entrepreneurs, reduce the cost of capital, and enhance connections between lenders and borrowers. Visit us and make a loan to a local borrower at <https://zip.kiva.org/loans>.

MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its founding through the end of 2014, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$650 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing \$200 million to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world. To learn more about MetLife Foundation, visit [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org).

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