

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amina Omari appointed Director of the Food Processing Business Incubation Program

Ithaca, New York, November 27, 2018 – The Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County announced today that Amina Omari has been appointed the founding Director of the Food Processing Business Incubation Program (FoodBIP). FoodBIP is a technical support program for the Finger Lakes food and beverage manufacturing sector.

Funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Tompkins County Development Corporation will provide initial support for the FoodBIP program to serve Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tompkins counties. The program will provide technical assistance, develop the food sector’s entrepreneurship eco-system, and implement a web-based information portal for growing food businesses. After the first year pilot, the program will be expanded to serve a 12-county Finger Lakes region.

“Following several years of careful planning, we are excited to launch the Food Processing Business Incubation Program and to have Amina Omari bring her knowledge and skills to lead the program,” says Janet Hawkes, Co-Chair of the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network. “FoodBIP will stimulate the growth of the Finger Lakes region’s nascent local-foods industry. We are excited to work with farm-based processors and other food manufacturers. These food and beverage entrepreneurs are eager for additional support to help them connect to their markets and grow jobs in the region.”

Ken Schlather, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County says, “We are particularly interested in this program because it brings together a partnership of CCE and economic development resources to address a regional challenge. This combination can uniquely support the local food sector’s growth to serve large commercial markets. FoodBIP is especially relevant in the highly competitive and increasingly regulated food sector.”

Ms. Omari adds, “The Finger Lakes region is becoming a regional food and beverage powerhouse. I am thrilled to use the skills and experience I’ve developed to help this vision become a reality on a larger scale.”

Amina Omari has over 18 years of experience in the Finger Lakes food and beverage sector. As the most recent COO of Gimme! Coffee, she led the business to success in both regional and national markets. As the COO of a growing business that included a chain of cafes, a coffee roastery/wholesaler, and a fast-growing bakery, she has extensive experience in marketing, sales, HR, finance, regulatory compliance, product development, and every aspect of business development. In this role, she has also collaborated extensively with local food and beverage businesses and cultivated win-win relationships across the region. Ms. Omari holds a bachelor's degree from Cornell University and resides in Ithaca.

FoodBIP is a project of the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network (FLRPnet), a nonprofit organization working to improve the economic condition of the region by connecting regional partners to forward entrepreneurship, workforce development, industry resources, and the Finger Lakes brand. For more information contact Martha Armstrong: marthaa@tcad.org (607) 273-0005, or contact the program at FoodBIP18@gmail.com.

###