



Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant Program's Producer and Processor Grants

Applicant Guide & Request for Proposals

Important Notes:

*REMEMBER: This is an economic development grant. A proposal's focus must be on increasing Wisconsin local food purchases/sales. Applicants will be asked to report back on increased local food sales, created and retained jobs, and new investments.

*This is a reimbursement grant. Awardees are not given any funds up front and must prove that they have spent funds before being reimbursed.

*Projects must clearly demonstrate a need, show creativity, and benefit the local food system.

*This grant does not fund feasibility projects or startups. All applicants must show sales figures or profit and loss statements for the past two years. Refer to pages 3 and 4 for more details.

*Proposals must be focused on a food product or raw agricultural product. See section 8 "Definitions and Examples" for details and definitions.

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 18, 2023

**For questions, contact Brian Williams at DATCPdadgrants@Wisconsin.gov, 608.590.7239
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1. Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant Program Overview

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) program seeks to increase awareness and consumption of locally produced foods and related products and to increase the production and improve the distribution of foods and related products for local consumption. The Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant program is an economic development program designed to help the Wisconsin agricultural and food industry find ways to improve food production, processing, marketing, and distribution with the ultimate goal of expanding Wisconsin's local food system. BLBW grant funds are administered by the Division of Agricultural Development at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Wis. Stat. § 93.48.

DATCP may award grants to individuals or organizations to fund projects that are designed to increase the sale of Wisconsin agricultural or food products to local purchasers. This includes grants for projects to create, expand, diversify, or promote any of the following:

- Local food marketing systems and market outlets.
- Local food and cultural tourism routes.
- Production, processing, marketing, and distribution of Wisconsin food products primarily for sale to local purchasers.

Wis. Stat. § 93.48(1).

In keeping with the objectives articulated in Wisconsin law, DATCP invites proposals for projects to increase the demand for and supply of locally produced foods in Wisconsin.

Grants are awarded following a competitive review process. Please read through the evaluation criteria when preparing your proposals. The target date for grant award notification is October 1, 2023.

2. Eligibility Requirements

- Requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000.
- Budgets must show 1:1 contribution matching funds equal to at least 50 percent of the total cost of the project. Matching funds may be in cash or in kind and must be for eligible grant expenses listed on page five.
- Project must be completed within two years after contract is signed by DATCP. DATCP may grant a no-cost extension of one year upon request.
- The primary intended beneficiaries are Wisconsin agriculture products based businesses, including farms, value-added food businesses, processors, growers associations, farmer/rancher cooperatives, schools and institutions, food service operations, and non-profit organizations.
- Private farms or agribusinesses applying for funds must currently sell at least 51 percent of their agricultural products locally ([see definition of local at end of guide](#)). Value-added food businesses or processors must currently purchase or grow at least 51 percent of their product ingredients, by weight, locally.
- If you have received funding from the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant program within the last four years, you are not eligible to apply.
- If you currently have any grant with DATCP's Division of Agricultural Development, you are not eligible to apply (this includes Specialty Crop Block Grants, Meat Processor Infrastructure Grants, Dairy Processor Grants, and Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Resiliency Grants).

3. Eligible Applicants

Individual independent producers selling locally; individual independent processors using Wisconsin ingredients that make up 51 percent of their product by weight (it must be demonstrated in the grant application that they are purchasing Wisconsin product by listing their suppliers and their product used); groups of independent producers (e.g. four farms working together); and farmer/rancher cooperatives, grower associations, schools and institutions, food service operations, and non-profits. Producers and processors will receive extra consideration.

Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships between producers, food businesses, industry, academia or organizations, schools and institutions, and food service operations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization. Applicants MUST supply proof of operation for at least two years, for example, by providing two years of sales figures or profit and loss statements.

Each applicant must designate an individual who has authority to sign a contract with DATCP on its behalf. Each applicant must also indicate an individual who will be the lead person responsible for implementing the project. Each applicant, including co-applicants, must demonstrate a proven ability to carry out all elements of the proposed project. Preference will be given to projects whose lead person or entity has a proven track record of grant management and/or a long-standing track record of strong fiscal experience and capability. Employees of DATCP and immediate family members (i.e., parents, siblings, spouses, and children) are not eligible to receive a grant or participate as a project collaborator.

4. Required Proposal Components

Proposal Requirements:

- Proposals will be accepted in .doc or .pdf format only.
- Save and submit proposal as a single file.
- Proposals must include all of the required elements listed below.
 1. Application
 - Single spaced and in 12 point, Times New Roman font or equivalent font and paragraph settings
 - The application form consists of the following sections:
 - Cover page (one page)
 - Project Narrative (max of four pages)
 - Project budget (max of two pages)
 - Budget Table – *add rows as needed within each budget category. Make sure project match equals or exceeds project request.*
 - Budget Justification – *explain how each expense is necessary and helps achieve project goals.*
 2. Sales data from the past two years or Profit & Loss Statements from the past two years,
 3. Your business's current and past year's operational budget,
 4. Two letters of commitment,
 - Include two letters of commitment with your application. Letters of commitment may be written by buyers for the product (CSA members, market customers, wholesale buyers, restaurant, school or institutional buyers) or producers you will purchase raw product from. A single letter can be from/signed by multiple individuals. Commitment and/or role of the partner must be clearly described and outlined. Only two letters of commitment will be reviewed.
 5. W-9 IRS form

Proposals must adhere to the requirements and objectives in the template provided in the application form. Please refer to the evaluation criteria in this Request For Proposals (RFP) when preparing your full proposal.

5. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible Expenses Including but are not limited to:	Ineligible Expenses Including but are not limited to:
Salaries/wages and fringe benefits	Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project
Real estate and equipment rental or leasing	Capital expenses such as build outs, expansions, renovation, building repairs, or real estate purchases
Consulting for whole farm planning, accounting, business planning, marketing, food safety, branding, and web development	Consultant or contractor fees for construction (e.g., plumbing, woodwork, electrical work)
The purchase of equipment whose full value is \$4,999 or less per item and is fully depreciable in one year	Equipment valued at \$5,000 or more per item with a depreciation of more than one year
Travel* via automobile (vehicle rental/mileage reimbursement)	Plane travel, hotel stays, and per diems
Public information such as banners, yard signs, or brochures	Promotional items such as t-shirts, pens, mugs, etc. to be used as giveaways, for staff attire, or for sale
Supplies (e.g coolers, totes, labels, printers, computers, software)	Repayment of loans or mortgages
	Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
	Raw product, product ingredients, or other major costs in product production
	Application/registration fees for licenses, tradeshow, or events

* Travel expenses must follow state travel guidelines.

Budget Clarification

- Expenses (both requested and matched) must directly result in anticipated measurable outcomes.
- Travel expenses must follow state travel guidelines for mileage reimbursement. Airfare, hotel, meals, and other per diems are not allowable expenses.
- Match must be at least 1:1 for every dollar requested for reimbursement (50% of total project budget)
- Matching funds must also be eligible project expenses.
- Items not included in the budget are not eligible for match.
- A single budget item may be solely funded by the grant or solely contribute toward the match requirement or be partially funded by the grant and partially contribute toward match.
- Budget justification should fully describe all project expenses (both requested and/or matched).
- For salary and subcontractor/consultant expenses, applicants must identify who and what work will be done, including hourly rate. The hourly rate can include wages + fringe.
- Explain how each expense is necessary and how it will help achieve project goals (for ex. Increase sales).

6. Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals must be submitted to DATCPdadgrants@wisconsin.gov

All documents must be included in one .pdf or .doc file.

Proposals must be received by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 18, 2023.**

7. Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal must include sufficient information to allow the reviewers to evaluate the proposal. The proposal must merit financial support and demonstrate that the proposed project has clearly stated objectives, a sound work plan, and necessary expertise to successfully complete the project. In evaluating the proposal, the DATCP will consider whether the proposal complies with this Request for Proposals and Wis. Admin. Code § ATCP 161.03.

Evaluation Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project Justification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project demonstrates filling a business need or opportunity. • Fills or creates a clearly defined new market opportunity for selling Wisconsin produced foods to Wisconsin buyers. • Is the applicant a processor or producer? • The project utilizes primarily Wisconsin food products.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Goals/Objectives/Work Plan/Outreach</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed work plan is reasonable in relation to timeline and project team. • Work plan clearly linked to project goal(s) and desired outcomes. • Demonstrates innovation in project management and approach. • Adequate time is allocated for project outreach. • Project outreach will benefit and support the Wisconsin local food system.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Anticipated Project Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project demonstrates that it will increase local purchases of Wisconsin food products and includes a way to measure the increase that is directly related to project work. • Project demonstrates economic development in the form of new/retained jobs, new investment, increased sales, operational efficiencies, etc. • Project benefits clearly demonstrate return on project investment. • Project illustrates a direct benefit or competitive advantage to local food producers or local markets. • Project clearly defines expected outcomes. • Project incorporates a viable method for tracking and measuring project outcomes. • Project goals clearly translate into anticipated outcomes.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project Feasibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability of project's business and market outcomes. • Strong management and technical qualifications and experience of applicant. • Attached financial statements indicated financial capacity of the grant applicant to complete the project. • Project will result in sustained economic impact or business growth. • Proposal clearly identifies how the project will continue/be sustained beyond the life of the grant. • The necessary and appropriate people, capital and skills are present to implement the project. • Applicant has the capacity to provide the required matching funds.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Support/Commitment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong project support by participants, partners, industry and other relevant individuals or organizations. • Project leadership and commitment detail the experience of the project leader to carry out the project. • Qualifications of project team match needs of project. • Letters of Commitment clearly indicate partners' roles in the project.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Budget</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget items are adequately identified, clear, efficient, and reasonable. Justification exists for each budget item. • Budget items and work plan tasks are clearly linked. • Consultants are identified when proposal is sent to DATCP. • Budget identifies matching funds of at least 1:1 for every dollar requested for reimbursement or 50 percent of the total project's costs.

8. Definitions and Examples

Definitions

1. Wisconsin food products: "Food product" means an unprocessed commodity or processed product that is used for food or drink by humans. "Food product" includes a food product ingredient. "Wisconsin food product" means a food product that is one of the following: grown in this state; produced from animals kept in this state; or primarily derived from food products that are grown in this state or produced from animals kept in this state.
2. Local purchaser: "Local purchaser" means a person who buys a Wisconsin food product at a retail location near the place where the food product is produced, or a person who buys a Wisconsin food product for resale at a retail location near the place where the food product is produced.
3. Local/Locally: "Locally"/"Local" means within the borders of the state of Wisconsin and/or a 100 mile radius of the location of the farm or business.

Grant Examples

- A honey producer wants to partner with a neighboring farm growing herbs and chili peppers to create spicy and herbal-infused honey. He applies to the BLBW grant to fund his time, his employee's time, a few supplies, and label development.
- A vended meal company that prepares and delivers vended/catered meals to early care centers, schools, and elder care feeding sites wants to meet the market demand to use more Wisconsin-grown foods in their vended meals. They hire a consultant to develop new menus and recipes that meet their customer needs, purchase small equipment to increase their use of local whole, fresh product, and hire a graphic designer to create new marketing and educational materials to be provided with their new/improved meals.
- Phyllis is farming on four acres in northwest Wisconsin. She has a CSA and is selling to several restaurants in her area. She wants to hire a consultant to create a better business plan that includes a 10-year strategy so she will be able to sell to more local wholesale accounts, and to purchase a cooler for \$4,000.
- A hospital/school has a successful practice purchasing produce from a local farm or farmer-owned cooperative, and they want to increase the amount of local foods they purchase and use in their food service operation. Their plan is to purchase a large volume of produce in August and September, and process it into ratatouille, and freeze it for use throughout the winter. They will use the grant funds to hire a food service consultant to analyze their processing and food safety practices, purchase reusable storage supplies, and hire an evaluator to report on the process, create a case study, and share their lessons learned with other hospitals/schools.
- Elin wants to hire an on-farm food consultant to help streamline her post-harvest operations and work with her employees on training about food safety practices.
- A Wisconsin grower and packer of dry beans and legumes predominantly sells their product for export. They want to create a supply chain for their dry beans in the state of Wisconsin, including packaging, distribution, and marketing - with an emphasis on the institutional markets. They will use the grant funds to develop institutional-scale packaging and labeling, hire a salesperson to create/manage relationships with distributors and vendors that service Wisconsin, and create recipes and educational services to help institutions learn to use dry beans and incorporate them into menu items.

9. Grant Recipient Requirements

CONTRACTS

A contract will be developed by DATCP for each funded project. Upon agreement to the contract terms by the applicant, the DATCP Secretary will consider the contract for final approval. No funding commitment is final until the contract is signed and executed. **Project work may not begin until DATCP signs and returns the contract.**

Grant contracts must be signed and returned to DATCP within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the contract within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded grant funds, unless the delay is approved by DATCP.

MONITORING

BLBW program staff will monitor and evaluate each funded project. DATCP reserves the right to audit the applicant relating to the performance of the project during and up to four years after completion of the project.

PAYMENTS

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a semi-annual to quarterly basis. There must be at least two requests for reimbursement throughout the year. One large reimbursement at the end of your project will not be allowed. Payment requests must be submitted on the Reimbursement Request Form provided by DATCP. To receive reimbursement, grantees must clearly outline expenditures and provide documentation that the work has been completed, for example, by submitting receipts and invoices. Matching fund expenditures must be documented in the same manner as reimbursable expenses. 25 percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the completed final report, presentation of project and receipts for all expenditures.

PRE-AWARD COSTS

Pre-award spending is not allowed. DATCP will not reimburse any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of an application or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

OPEN RECORDS

Applications submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports are subject to disclosure under the Public Records Law. If the grant applicant or recipient requests any information submitted to DATCP be deemed a trade secret, the document should be labeled using "trade secret" and the requested status should be noted when the document is submitted. DATCP will notify the grant recipient if a public records request is made for the information claimed to be trade secret by the grant recipient. Such information may be kept confidential by DATCP only as authorized by law. See Wis. Stat. § 19.36(5).

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

DATCP reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Each approved grant recipient must submit semi-annual performance reports and one final performance report. Reports must be submitted on templates provided by DATCP.

The semi-annual performance report shall include the following:

1. Briefly summarize activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals achieved during the reporting period for each project.
2. Note unexpected delays or impediments as well as favorable or unusual developments for each project.
3. A quantitative summary illustrating the increase in sales of locally grown or produced Wisconsin food products, new and/or retained jobs, and new investment during the reporting period due to project work.
4. Other quantitative measures including number of producers and Wisconsin buyers affected by work, infrastructural improvements to local food industry, and media/communication work performed.

5. Outline work to be performed during the next reporting period for each project.
6. Comment on the level of grant funds expended to date for each project.

The final performance report template will be provided and shall include the following:

1. A brief description of original intent of the project and perceived benefit of the project. How the issue or problem was approached via the project.
2. How the goals of the project were achieved.
3. A quantitative summary illustrating the increase in sales of locally grown or produced Wisconsin food products, new and/or retained jobs, and new investment during the reporting period due to project work.
4. Results, conclusions, and lessons learned for each project.
5. How progress has been made to achieve long term outcome measures for each project.
6. Additional information available (e.g., publications, web sites).
7. A plan to disseminate the project results to the industry.
8. Contact person for each project with telephone number and email address.

In addition to the final project report, DATCP reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.

Applicants who do not submit monthly reports on time, and/or submit incomplete reports, may be required to return all previously disbursed funds to DATCP and/or may be removed from future funding opportunities.

RECORD REQUIREMENTS

The grantee will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with DATCP, receipts, invoices, and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. The grantee shall retain all data and other records relating to the acquisition and performance of the Grant Award Agreement for a period of four years after the completion of the contract. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by state personnel at reasonable times. Upon request, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

All applications submitted in response to this RFP become the property of DATCP. The agency reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

DATCP reserves the right to:

- Post funded applications to the DATCP website.
- Reject any or all applications received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and agreement of applicant.
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights.
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to all applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of Wisconsin.
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants.
- Require a good-faith effort on the part of the grant recipient to work with DATCP subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Wisconsin.
- Withhold or recoup any payments when contract conditions are not met or if the recipient submits false or misleading information to the department.