



COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grants Frequently Asked Questions

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GENERAL PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Where is this money coming from?

Both grants in the Food Security Initiative (the COVID-19 Food Security Network Support Grant and the COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant) are supported by \$15 million provided by Governor Tony Evers from the funding Wisconsin received through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

What is the difference between the two grant programs in the Food Security Initiative?

The first grant under the Food Security Initiative was the COVID-19 Food Security Network Support Grant. This grant is focused on reimbursing or covering costs incurred by non-profit food banks and food pantries to meet the unique challenges of the COVID-19 public health crisis. These costs could be associated with supplies, equipment or temporary infrastructure for food supply and delivery to food insecure Wisconsin residents.

The second grant, the COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant, is focused on helping food banks and other eligible nonprofit organizations purchase Wisconsin food products for distribution to people experiencing food insecurity.

Who should I talk to if I have questions?

For questions that are not answered here, please send an email to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) at datcpfoodsecurityinitiative@wisconsin.gov.

HOW TO APPLY

Who is eligible to apply for this grant?

This grant is focused on reimbursing or covering food purchases made by non-profit food banks and other eligible non-profit organizations to distribute to people experiencing food insecurity.

What documents do I have to submit with my application?

Applicants are required to include the following documents as part of their application:

- W-9 tax form
- Proof of non-profit status
- Completed [budget workbook](#)
- Letters of commitment from all Wisconsin food product partners

If for any reason you are not able to provide any of these required documents, please provide an explanation in the "Purpose Statement" section of your application.

What kinds of other non-profit organizations can apply?

Non-profit or charitable organizations are defined in s. 202.11(1), Stats. as any organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the internal revenue code qualifies as a charitable organization and a person who is or purports to be established for a charitable purpose also qualifies as a charitable organization.

The Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions has information on Wisconsin requirements for non-profit organizations at the following link:

https://www.wdfi.org/CharitableOrganizations/faq.htm#COR_exempt

How can I participate in this program if my organization is not a food bank, pantry, or other eligible nonprofit?

If your organization is not a food bank, pantry, or other eligible nonprofit (such as a Tribal Nation), you should work in partnership with eligible organizations to ensure that your needs are represented in their application.

If an organization is not eligible to apply and needs assistance connecting with eligible organizations, they should email DATCPFoodySecurityInitiative@wisconsin.gov with their contact information. DATCP will distribute that information to eligible food banks statewide.

What is a letter of commitment and what should it include?

The COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant requires that all applications include a letter of commitment from each Wisconsin food product partner. The letter of commitment is intended to demonstrate that the food product partner is committed to provide the products specified in the proposed application and within the proposed timeline. If the applicant desires, the letter may also include a statement that the product meets the definition of a Wisconsin food product.

If my application includes more than one letter of commitment, how should I include them in the application?

The online application provides a section for uploading documents, including letters of commitment. Organizations may also upload a single pdf document containing all of the letters, instead of individual documents.

If I have already purchased the food for which I am applying to be reimbursed, do I need to provide a letter of commitment?

No, a letter of commitment is not required for COVID-19-related purchases of Wisconsin food products that have already occurred.

How do I apply for the COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant?

To apply, please visit DATCP's website: FoodSecurity.wi.gov

ELIGIBLE PURCHASES

What is a "Wisconsin food product"?

For the purposes of this grant, a Wisconsin food product is defined as "at least 50 percent of the value of the product or service being attributable to Wisconsin ingredients, production or processing activities".

What is an "approved source" for food products?

Generally, food products must be purchased from licensed manufacturers and have the required labeling for distribution. [This document](#) provides specific requirements for processed foods, retail establishments, food processing plants, meat processing facilities and dairy processing facilities.

Can "Wisconsin food products" include prepared meals?

Prepared meals may be considered for reimbursement as long as they meet the grant criteria, including letters of commitment and meeting the definition of a Wisconsin food product. The application would need to describe how providing meals helps meet increased demands for service due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Who determines whether a product meets the definition of a Wisconsin food product?

It is the responsibility of the organization who submits an application to determine whether the food purchases they submit as part of their grant application meet the definition and are therefore eligible to be included in the proposal. The applicant can also request that food product partners certify that the products meet the definition in their letter of commitment.

Can I be reimbursed for payments to producers for harvesting their crops?

Applications may only include the cost for purchases of Wisconsin food products. Payments made to producers, food processors, or other entities for the purposes of harvesting a crop would need to be included in the purchase price for the food products included in the application.

Is there a minimum or maximum dollar value on proposals?

No. This grant does not have a minimum or maximum dollar value for proposals.

Can I be reimbursed for COVID-related purchases of Wisconsin food products related to that were made prior to the application period?

Yes, the federal funding used in this grant program allows for reimbursement of eligible costs incurred from March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020. The department is allowing and encouraging applicants to submit for reimbursement of eligible costs that were incurred prior to the signing of the grant contract.

What if my actual expense is less than I proposed? Will I have flexibility to utilize this funding for other eligible expenses?

Each contract will specify the final grant requirements. It is anticipated that the grantee will have some flexibility within the budgets to adjust costs to ensure that the funding is used for eligible purposes. The grantee will not be allowed to exceed the contracted funding amount.

Can I apply for funding and determine its purpose later on in the process?

The department cannot approve an open dollar amount without some description of the purpose for the funds that is COVID-19 related. We understand there may be many unknowns given the nature of the pandemic. The Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant program aims to help food banks and pantries cover purchases of Wisconsin food products they have already made or plan to make due to COVID-19.

Can I be reimbursed for products that are purchased now, but will be produced or distributed after December 30, 2020?

To be eligible, the product must be in the "possession" of the grantee by December 30, 2020, even if pre-paid by the final billing date. This does allow for actual product to be stored at a different location

but the product must physically be accounted for and be available for inspection. The grant allows products that have been produced and paid for within the grant period to be delivered and distributed to clients after December 30, 2020. The grant does not allow for the products to be prepurchased for production after December 30, 2020. If a Wisconsin food product is paid by the grantee, reimbursement is made through the grant, and subsequently the product is not available to be distributed (“sale falls through”), the grantee would need to report and reimburse the CARES Act funding/award for that failed purchase.

CONTRACTS, REPORTING, BILLING, AND AWARDS

The grant application requires monthly work plans to be submitted. Are grantees required to complete the work exactly as recorded in the application, or is there flexibility in when the costs will be reimbursed?

The department is requiring monthly work plans in the applications to allow for program planning. It is understood that flexibility is needed and that some costs may be billed in alternate months.

What are the reporting requirements?

Monthly reports will be required for the COVID-19 Food Security and Wisconsin Products Grant. A template for these monthly reports will be provided to the grantees as part of the contracting process. Grantees will be required to summarize the work that was completed and expenses submitted for reimbursement for the completed work for the previous month. Grantees will be required to submit proof of payment along with their monthly report in order to receive payment. The first monthly report/billing date will be August 21, 2020 with the final monthly report/billing date on November 21, 2020.

If the contract goes through December 30, 2020, why is the final report/billing on November 21, 2020?

The funding for this program was provided by Governor Tony Evers from the money Wisconsin received through the federal CARES Act. In accordance with federal requirements, the department must close the program and use the full grant funding by December 30, 2020. In order to meet that deadline, we must receive the final reporting and billing from grantees by November 21, 2020.

What are the terms and conditions of accepting a grant?

If awarded a grant, grantees will be required to enter into a contract with the department. A sample contract is available here that outlines the anticipated terms and conditions expected as part of this grant program.

How will the department decide awards if more requests are made than funding available?

Depending on the number and amounts of requests, the department may not be able to fund the full amount of the requests. The department may contact grantees to determine what alternate work plan is possible if a lower funding amount is possible. Grantees are highly encouraged to consider prioritization within their proposals as they develop them. The department is not requiring that this prioritization be submitted with the application, but to be available for discussion if needed.

What will you do if there is more funding available after all grants are awarded?

Given the federal requirements for this grant funding, the amount of Wisconsinites experiencing food insecurity, and the abundance of high-quality food products that are produced and processed in Wisconsin, DATCP expects that the full amount of the funding will be awarded.