



# 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 WI 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 upfront and must prove that they have spent money before being reimbursed.

\*Projects must clearly demonstrate a need, show creativity, have significant support from Wisconsin producers, and benefit the food system.

\*This grant does not fund feasibility projects or startups. All applicants must show sales figures for the previous 24 months or profit and loss statements for the past 2 years. Refer to pages 3 and 4 for more details.

\*Proposals must be focused on a food product or raw agricultural product.

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## 1. About the Buy Local Grant Program

The *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* (BLBW) 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 & Consumer Protection (DATCP). Wis. Admin. ATCP §§ 161.40-161.46.

The Wisconsin legislature states that 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." Wis. Stat. § 93.45.

DATCP may award grants to individuals or organizations to fund projects that are designed to increase the sale of agricultural products grown in this state that are purchased in close proximity to where they are produced. 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 closely refer to the evaluation criteria when preparing your proposals. The target date for grant award notification is early April 2019.

## 2. Eligibility Requirements

- Requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000.
- Budget must show at least a 1-to-1 match. (For every dollar of BLBW funds requested, applicant must show at least one dollar of matching funds.)
- Project must be completed within 24 months after contract is signed by DATCP. A no-cost one year extension is available upon request and is granted at the discretion of program manager.
- Primary beneficiaries are Wisconsin agriculture products based businesses (including farms, value-added food businesses, processors, growers associations, farmer/rancher coops and non-profit organizations).
- Private farms or agribusinesses applying for funds must be selling at least 51% of their agricultural products locally ([see definition of local at end of guide](#)). Value-added food businesses, or processors must be purchasing, or growing at least 51% of their product (by weight) ingredients 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 and Dairy Processor Grants).
- Dairy processors looking for grant funds should apply to DATCP's Division of Agricultural Development's 30x20 Dairy Processors Grant.

## 3. Eligible Applicants

Individual independent producers selling locally, individual independent processors using WI ingredients (that make up 51% of their product by weight, it must be demonstrated in the grant that they are purchasing WI product by listing their suppliers and their product used), groups of independent producers (e.g. 4 farms working together), and Farmer/Rancher Cooperatives, Grower Associations and non-profits. Producers and processors will receive extra consideration.

Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships between producers, food businesses, industry, academia or organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization. Applicants **MUST** supply proof of operating a business for at least 2 years (e.g. 24 months of sales figures).

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 family members (i.e., mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, and children) are not eligible to receive a grant or participate as a project collaborator.

#### 4. Creating a Strong Proposal: Technical Assistance Is Available

As you develop your grant application and work to create the strongest application possible, consider the following tips and suggestions:

- Have a UW Agricultural Extension Agent, educator, industry expert or producer read your application and provide feedback.
- Use an outline to help you organize your application.
- Use the scoring criteria as a guide.
- Focus on project tasks and results, not on philosophy and/or personal opinion. Remember, the goal for all projects proposed should include increasing local food sales in Wisconsin.
- Keep your responses brief and focused on the purpose and impact of the project.

#### 5. Required Proposal Components

##### Proposal Required Elements:

- Proposals must include all of the required elements listed below.
- Proposals narrative may not exceed 4 pages in length excluding the cover page, sales figures & budget templates.
- Proposals must be in 12pt, Times New Roman font and single spaced.
- Proposals will be accepted in .doc or .pdf format only.

##### Proposal Required Elements Checklist:

- Cover Page – use template provided
- Budget – use template provided
- Narrative – may not exceed 4 pages (reviewers are only required to read 4 pages of narrative)
  - Project Goals and Objectives/Work Plan
    - List the project goal(s).
    - List the specific objectives necessary to meet goal(s).
    - Provide a brief outline of the work plan. (Assume projects will start in June 2019).
  - Anticipated Project Results
    - Funded projects will be asked to report on economic development activity including: increased local food sales, new and/or retained jobs, and new investment generated. List and describe your economic development results and **how you plan to measure them**.
  - Financial Capability/Sustained Business Growth
    - Include the past two years' sales figures or a P&L statement (doesn't count toward the narrative).
    - Include award of other state or federal grants for this project.
    - Explain how this project or outcomes from this project will continue when grant funds are expired.
    - Explain the financial feasibility of project.
    - Submit a copy of organization/business two-year budget for 2019-2020, in addition to the grant project budget.

- Support/Commitment
  - This section should illustrate how the proposed project is either driven by or supported by local food producers and buyers.
    - Do you have buyers/markets committed to purchasing food products as a part of this proposed project?
    - Do you have producers/suppliers committed to selling food products as a part of this proposed project?
    - Include two letters of commitment. Letters of commitment may be written by buyers for the product (CSA members, market customers, wholesale buyers, restaurant buyers). Letters of support will not be reviewed.

Proposals must adhere to the requirements and objectives in the template to be provided to selected applicants. Please refer to the evaluation criteria found in this manual when preparing your full proposal.

## 6. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible Expenses Including but are not limited to:	Ineligible Expenses Including but are not limited to:
Operating expenses, including expenses for salaries and wages.	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 or expansions, real estate purchases.
Consulting for whole farm planning, accounting, business planning, marketing, food safety, branding.	Consultant fees for construction (e.g., plumbing, woodwork, electrical work, etc.)
The purchase of equipment whose full value is \$4,999.00 or less per item.	Equipment valued at \$5,000.00 or more per item.
Travel* via automobile	Plane travel, hotel stays, per diem
Public information such as banners, yard signs, or brochures.	Repayment of loans or mortgages
Supplies (e.g coolers, totes, labels, printer, software)	Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
	Raw agricultural product to be used in value-added food product.
	Application/registration fees for licenses, tradeshow, or events.

\* Travel expenses must follow state travel guidelines.

## 7. Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals must be submitted to Kietra Olson at [Kietra.Olson@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Kietra.Olson@Wisconsin.gov). .doc or .pdf versions are the only format accepted. All documents must be included in one file, (e.g a single pdf or doc).

Proposals must be received by **Noon (12:00p.m) on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2019.**

## 8. 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.

Evaluation Criteria
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary work justifies the proposed project.</li> <li>• Project demonstrates filling a business need or opportunity.</li> <li>• Fills or creates a clearly defined new market opportunity for selling Wisconsin produced foods to Wisconsin buyers.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Goals/Objectives/Work Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed work plan is reasonable in relation to timeline and project team.</li> <li>• Work plan clearly linked to project goals and desired outcomes.</li> <li>• Demonstrates innovation in project management and approach.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Anticipated Results</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project demonstrates that it will increase the purchase of WI food products for sale to local purchasers, and includes a way to measure the increase that is directly related to project work.</b></li> <li>• Project demonstrates economic development in the form of new/retained jobs, new investment, increased sales, etc.</li> <li>• Project benefits clearly demonstrate return on project investment.</li> <li>• Project illustrates a direct benefit to local food producers and local markets.</li> <li>• Will build supply chain infrastructure for building Wisconsin's local food system.</li> <li>• Builds a competitive advantage for Wisconsin agriculture.</li> <li>• Is the applicant a processor or producer?</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Project's approach to measuring and tracking project results.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project clearly defines expected results.</li> <li>• <b>Project incorporates a viable method for tracking and measuring project results.</b></li> <li>• Project goals clearly translate into anticipated results</li> <li>• Budget allocation for tracking and measurement is reasonable.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Financial Feasibility/Sustained Business Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viability of business and market outcomes.</li> <li>• Fiscal strength of applicant</li> <li>• Project will result in sustained economic impact or business growth.</li> <li>• Proposal clearly identifies how the project will continue/be sustained beyond the life of the grant.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Budget</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget items are clear, efficient and reasonable. Justification exists for each budget item.</li> <li>• Budget items and work plan tasks are clearly linked.</li> <li>• Consultants are identified when proposal is sent to DATCP</li> <li>• Your budget must include any expenses you anticipate for the grant.</li> <li>• 50% of total project costs match is identified.</li> </ul>

### Support/Commitment

- 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.
- Capabilities of project team match needs of project.

### Communications/Project Replication

- Clearly defines how project information will be shared with the local food community.
- How similar efforts could be replicated in other areas of the state.

## 9. Receiving a Grant: Expectations

### 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.

BLBW program staff will monitor and evaluate each funded project. DATCP reserves the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to three 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. To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e., include receipts and invoices) and must clearly outline expenditures. Twenty-five (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.

### LIABILITY

DATCP will not be held liable for 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 shall be subject to disclosure under the Public Records law. If the grant applicant or recipient requests any information be deemed a trade secret, the document should be labeled using "trade secret" and the requested status should be noted to DATCP when the document is submitted. The department shall 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 the department only as authorized by law (see s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats.).

### 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.

The semi-annual performance report template will be provided and 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.

#### 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 also 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 project sponsor to work with DATCP subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Wisconsin.
- Withhold any payments when contract conditions are not met.

## 10. Definitions & 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 consumer who buys a Wisconsin food product at a location near the place where the food product is produced, or a person who buys a Wisconsin food product for resale at a 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

1. Jeff, 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.

3. Phyllis is farming on 4 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.

4. Lars has developed a delicious cider syrup made from cider he purchases from local Wisconsin orchards. He has been selling it at the local market for 3 years, now he wants to expand his sales. Lars applies to hire a part time sales person, and to hire a consultant to create labels and a website for his business.

5. 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.