



2025 Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program Request for Proposals

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. central time on March 16, 2025.

More information on the Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program, including application materials is available on the DATCP website at

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/TribalElderCommunityFoodBoxProgram.aspx>.

Contact Information:

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Contents

Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program Overview	3
Available Funds	3
Program Timeline	3
Eligible Applicants	4
Eligible Projects	4
Budget and Expense Detail	4
Submissions	5
Review Process and Evaluation Criteria	6
Grant Recipient Requirements	7

Program Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program is designed to provide grants to nonprofit food assistance organizations for the purpose of purchasing and distributing food to tribal elders and supporting the growth and operations of food producers/processors from Tribal nations in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa as well as all Wisconsin food producers/processors.

The 2023-2025 Wisconsin State Budget included \$1.5 million annually for a Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program.

93.485 Tribal elder community food box program. *From the appropriation under section 20.115 (4) (k), the department shall provide grants to one or more nonprofit food assistance organizations for the purpose of purchasing and distributing food to tribal elders and for the purpose of supporting the growth and operations of food producers participating in the program under this section.*

Rules for the Tribal Elder Community Food Box Program will follow [Wisconsin Administrative Code ch. ATCP 163](#), which is the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Administrative Rule for Grants (proposals, evaluations, contracts, verifications, and public access).

This request for proposal (RFP) details all the information needed to apply. Please read through the evaluation criteria when preparing your application.

Funding Priorities

This program may prioritize projects that:

- Purchase and distribute culturally appropriate foods to Tribal nations in Wisconsin,
- Purchase and distribute whole or minimally processed foods,
- Purchase food from Tribal producers, and
- Partner with or serve multiple Tribal nations in Wisconsin.
- Pool resources and create partnerships to streamline sourcing and delivery to expand access to healthy food.

Available Funds

A total of \$1.5 million is available and will be distributed through a competitive review process. There is no minimum request amount, and applicants may apply for up to \$1.5 million.

This is a reimbursement grant. Grant funds will not be advanced; awardees must request reimbursement and provide supporting documentation and proof of payment for eligible costs being claimed.

Matching funds are not required for this program.

DATCP reserves the right to partially fund projects or award the full amount of available funds to a single project.

Program Timeline

Event	Date
RFP is released	February 6, 2025
Applications due to DATCP	March 16, 2025 (11:59 p.m.)
Applications scored and selected by review committee	April 7, 2025
Selected applications notified by DATCP	April 14, 2025
Approval letters issued by DATCP	April 21, 2025
Anticipated project start date	May 1, 2025
Project end date (all projects must conclude no later than)	April 30, 2026

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must satisfy the following criteria to be deemed eligible for this program.

- *Applicant must be a Nonprofit food assistance organization to be eligible to apply.* Nonprofit organizations located outside of Wisconsin can submit applications for projects that exclusively benefit Tribal nations in Wisconsin.
- Applicants must have a demonstrated ability to work with and support food security efforts with Tribal nations in Wisconsin.
- Applicants must have the ability to track and report food procurement and distribution.

Eligible Projects

Project funds must purchase food for human consumption from:

- Wisconsin producers or processors or
- Tribal producers or processors in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa.

Projects will only be reimbursed for project costs incurred during the project period. A minimum of 90% of the budget must be spent on food procurement. A maximum of 10% of the budget may be spent on other eligible expenses to implement or evaluate the project.

Funds must be used to support Tribal members and serve multiple Tribal nations in Wisconsin. Strong proposals will have clear shared decision-making power between all project partners and demonstrate that Tribal nations participating and receiving food have governance over food products moving to through their pantries and to community members. Projects must collaborate with and partner on food security efforts with Tribal nations in Wisconsin. Purchased food must be distributed to Tribal members in Wisconsin at no cost.

Although projects may receive other federal or state funding that support and complement this project, projects may not receive other state or federal funding for the same expenses.

Budget and Expense Detail

At minimum, 90% of a project budget must be used for food procurement and, at maximum, 10% may be used for other eligible expenses that are directly related to implementing or evaluating the project.

Eligible Expenses (including but are not limited to):

- Procurement of eligible foods.
- Food sourced from Tribal producers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa.
- Food sourced from Wisconsin producers.
- Minimally processed food utilizing ingredients produced by Tribal producers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Iowa or from any other Wisconsin producer.
- Eligible food products as defined above purchased from a distributor in Wisconsin.
- Contracted aggregation, distribution or storage costs necessary for the project. Current Wisconsin mileage reimbursement rate for use of a vehicle is \$0.51/mile, please see the state's [Pocket Travel Guide](#) for basic reimbursement limits.
- Rental of a truck or equipment necessary for project implementation.
- Distribution supplies such as boxes, pallet wrap, labels, etc. and other post-harvest supplies needed to pack and move food through the hunger relief supply chain. Items must have a per-unit cost of less than \$10,000.00. Contracted evaluation/reporting, financial or other administrative services necessary for project activities.
- Communication/outreach materials.
- Staff time with direct roles in project implementation.
- Repackaging and labeling of purchased products.

Ineligible Expenses *(including but are not limited to):*

- Real estate purchases.
- Repayment of loans or mortgages.
- Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract.
- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project (indirect costs).
- Advertising expenses.
- Legal fees.
- Lobbying, fundraising, or other political activity.
- Airfare, hotel, staff meals and other per diems.
- Any work performed in the preparation or production of a proposal.
- Capital acquisitions or assets and equipment with a per-unit cost of more than \$10,000.00.
- Alcohol.
- Supplies for farm production or harvest.

Matching Funds

Matching funds are not required.

Submissions

Application materials are located on the DATCP website at:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/AgDevelopment/TribalElderCommunityFoodBoxProgram.aspx>

Letter(s) of commitment from Tribal nation(s) proposed to receive product must be provided. Letters of commitment must outline the Tribal nation's commitment to the project, be prepared on the Tribal nation's letterhead, and be dated and signed. Letters of commitment should use the provided template. If you do not have computer access to download and complete the application, contact Brian Williams at 608-590-7239.

Applications and required letters of commitment must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2025. Emailed applications and required proposal materials should be sent to

DATCPDADGrants@wisconsin.gov. Mailed applications should be sent to:

ATTN: Brian Williams/Division of Ag Development

2811 Agriculture Dr

PO BOX 8911

Madison, WI 53708-8911

Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) encourages submitting proposals early to ensure it is received prior to the deadline. Incomplete applications with unanswered questions or missing letters of commitment may not be considered for funding.

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

This is a competitive grant. Each proposal must include sufficient information to allow the reviewers to evaluate the proposal. Each complete and on-time proposal will be reviewed by a committee and will receive a rating based on scoring criteria outlined in the Evaluation Criteria, with the maximum score being 100. The rating score will determine the proposals to be funded. DATCP may require additional information to review the proposed project. Review and scoring will be conducted consistently with the criteria listed in Wis. Admin. Code § ATCP 163.03(2). More points will be awarded to projects that meet funding priorities.

Evaluation Criteria

Project Justification (10 points)

- Clearly describes:
 - The need and/or opportunity.
 - How Tribal nations in Wisconsin will benefit.
 - How projects will collaborate with food security efforts in Tribal Nations in Wisconsin.

Project Partnerships (25 points)

- Is Tribal-led or shows clear Tribal nation decision-making leadership capacity.
- Identifies all necessary supply chain partners to efficiently source, aggregate, distribute and receive local food at hunger relief/food access sites: including producers and processors, any aggregator(s) or distributor(s); and all hunger relief/food access partners.
- Identifies which supply chain partners are tribal owned and operated.
- Clearly defines the role(s) of each partner, highlighting any past experience working together that demonstrate project readiness.
- Letters of commitment from supply chain partners and from all tribal nations that will receive product are attached and clearly indicate all partners' roles in the project.
- Shows how multiple Tribal nations will be involved.

Project Work Plan (15 points)

- The work plan aligns with accomplishing project objectives with adequate time allocated for each work plan task.
- Clearly and adequately describes the work to be accomplished.
- Identifies which partner is responsible for each work plan item.

Project Outcomes & Impact (20 points)

- Clearly describes:
 - Which Tribal nation community(ies) that this project will benefit.
 - How much and what types of food will be procured and distributed and highlights how culturally appropriate whole or minimally processed foods will be the focus of the foods distributed to Tribal nation communities.
 - How this project strengthens or expands partnerships.
 - How Tribal producers will benefit.

Project Management & Impact (10 points)

- Clearly describes the systems, policies and plans in place to ensure financial oversight and prevent fraud or mismanagement of project funds.
- Clearly describes tracking systems to ensure producers and processors are fairly paid and that safe high-quality food is timely delivered to Tribal nation communities.

Project Evaluation (10 points)

- Links project activities to project outcomes.
- Demonstrates ongoing evaluation with beneficiaries and project partners and describes methods to respond or adjust as needed. Including gathering and responding to input from producers, distribution centers, and food recipients.
- Clearly outlines a plan to:
 - Measure project impact, including how this project will benefit producers and Tribal nation community members receiving the food.
 - Document successes, challenges, and next steps.
 - Capture quantitative and qualitative data.

Project Budget (10 points)

- Budget items are adequately identified, clear, efficient and reasonable.
- Narrative justification exists for each budget item.
- Budget items and work plan tasks are clearly linked.
- Budget identifies at least 90% food procurement.

Grant Recipient Requirements

Contracts

DATCP will develop a contract for each funded project, which will be signed by DATCP and the recipient. **No funding commitment is final until the contract is signed by the grant recipient and DATCP. Any project expenses incurred prior to the start of the Performance Period in the contract are not eligible for reimbursement. No project may seek reimbursement for eligible incurred expenses until the contract is signed by both the grant recipient and DATCP.** To be included with the contract, the grantee may be asked to provide additional information to finalize the details of the work plan, timeline, budget, and implementation plan beyond the grant application information.

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.

Project work may not begin until DATCP signs and returns the contract.

Payments/Reimbursements

This is a reimbursement grant. Payments will be made following DATCP's receipt of an invoice documenting

expenses incurred by the grantee. The final payment will be made upon DATCP approval of written reports of the project. Invoices must include receipts or other proof of payment.

Requests for reimbursement must be submitted on the Request for Reimbursement cover sheet provided by DATCP. To receive reimbursement, grantees must clearly outline costs being claimed, provide supporting documentation and proof of payment (e.g., copies of invoices with cleared checks, timesheets, etc.).

Ten percent of the grant award will be withheld as a final payment until DATCP receipt and approval of the completed final performance report and receipt of the final reimbursement request.

Pre-Award Costs

DATCP will not reimburse any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of an application or any work performed prior to the start of the project's Performance Period listed in the contract, including any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal.

Reporting Requirements

Quarterly reporting (on prescribed format) will be required, which will include billings for reimbursement of eligible project costs. Reports should include information on: How much food was purchased and from whom, to whom the food was distributed, and the impact of this food on served communities. DATCP reserves the right to modify these reporting requirements during the course of the program.

Applicants who do not submit quarterly 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.

In addition, DATCP reserves the right to conduct follow-up surveys of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the program.

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 contract 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.

Monitoring

DATCP reserves the right to perform site-monitoring visits to any and all grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required period and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both review of financial and program information as well as physical inspection of facilities.

Verified Statement and Audit

As required by Wis. Admin. Code § ATCP 163.04(4), grantees who receive awards of \$100,000 or more will be required to submit to DATCP a verified statement accounting for the use of all grant funds received. The statement must include the following:

- The amount of funds received.
- A clear itemized description showing, by expenditure category, how all funds were spent.
- Documentation of the deliverables provided by the recipient under the contract, and the dates on which the recipient provided those deliverables.

- Signatures of an independent certified public accountant licensed or certified under Wis. Stat. ch. 442 and the director or principal officer of the recipient attesting to the accuracy of the verified statement
- If applicable, grantees also will be required to comply with the State of Wisconsin's Single Audit Guidelines.

Open Records

Applications submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports are subject to disclosure under Wisconsin's Public Records Law. If the grant applicant 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).

Budget Adjustments

If a substantial change (10% or greater of a budget category) in the budget is needed during the project period, a written request must be made to DATCP to reallocate budget funds between budget categories. The total budget amount cannot be adjusted.

Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP become the property of DATCP. DATCP 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 proposals, summary reports and survey findings to the DATCP website.
- Reject any or all proposals received.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant.
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the RFP requirement and with appropriate notice to potential 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 part of the project sponsor to work with DATCP subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results in Wisconsin.
- Partially fund applications.
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights.
- Withhold or recoup any payments when contract conditions are not met or if the recipient submits false or misleading information to the department.
- Modify reporting requirements during the course of the project.
- Share program report data and success stories with USDA and on DATCP and WI-LFPA websites and social media channels.
- Conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.