



# 2025 Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant Program

## Request for Proposals

### Important Notes:

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

\*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 11:59 p.m. Central Time on September 9, 2024. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. DATCP encourages submitting your proposal early to ensure it is received prior to the deadline.**

For questions, contact Brian Williams at [DATCPdadgrants@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPdadgrants@Wisconsin.gov), 608.590.7239

## Table of Contents

1. Grant Program Overview .....	page 3
2. Eligibility Requirements .....	page 3
3. Eligible Applicants .....	page 4
4. Required Proposal Components .....	page 4
5. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses .....	page 5
6. Submitting a Proposal .....	page 5
7. Review Process and Evaluation Criteria .....	page 6
8. Definitions and Examples .....	page 7
9. Grant Recipient Requirements .....	page 8

## 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 & Consumer Protection (DATCP). The program is authorized by 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.

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.

## 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 the two-year Performance Period in the grant contract.. DATCP may grant a project extension of one year upon request.
- The primary intended beneficiaries are Wisconsin-agricultural-products-based businesses, including farms, value-added food businesses, processors, growers associations, famer/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 your entity has an open BLBW grant as of the close of the application period, your proposal will not be eligible for funding.

### 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 as a contract signer an individual who has authority to sign a contract with DATCP on its behalf. Each applicant must also designate a principal investigator who will be the primary point of contact for communications, reporting, for the grant. 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.
- A complete proposal includes 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 (1 page)
      - Project Narrative (maximum of 4 pages)
      - Project budget (maximum of 2 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.
    - 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.

Only complete proposals will be scored and are eligible to be selected for funding. 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 and supplies with a per-unit acquisition cost of \$9,999 or less and whose fully value is fully depreciable within one year	Equipment with a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more whose full value is depreciable over 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
	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

### Budget Clarification

- Expenses (both requested and matched) must directly result in anticipated measurable outcomes.
- Travel expenses must follow state travel guidelines for mileage reimbursement. The state mileage rate for use of a vehicle is \$0.51/mile. Airfare, hotel, meals and other per diems are not allowable expenses.
- Matching fund 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, solely contribute toward the match requirement, or be partially funded by the grant and partially contribute toward match.
- The budget justification should fully describe all project expenses, both requested and matched. The justification should also explain how each expense is necessary and how it will achieve project goals.
- For salary and subcontractor/consultant expenses, applicants must identify who will perform the work, what work will be done, and the hourly rate. The hourly rate can include wages and fringe benefits.

## 6. Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals must be submitted to [DATCPdadgrants@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPdadgrants@wisconsin.gov)

Proposals must be received by **11:59 p.m. Central Time on September 9, 2024.**

## 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 the criteria listed below. See Wis. Admin. Code § ATCP 163.03.

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

## 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 or Locally: "Local" or "Locally" means within the borders of the State of Wisconsin or a within a 100 mile radius of the location of the applicant's 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 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.
- 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**

This is a reimbursement grant. 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 Request for Reimbursement Cover Sheet provided by DATCP. To receive reimbursement, grantees must clearly outline expenditures and provide supporting documentation and proof of payment (e.g., copies of invoices and cleared checks, timesheets, etc.). Matching fund expenditures must be documented in the same manner as reimbursable expenses. Ten percent of the total grant funds will be withheld until DATCP receipt and approval of the completed final report and final reimbursement request for the project.

### **PRE-AWARD COSTS**

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. Costs incurred before contract execution cannot be used as matching funds.

### **OPEN RECORDS**

Applications submitted for funding and all related contracts and reports are subject to disclosure under the Wisconsin 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. A brief summary of activities performed, targets, and/or performance goals achieved during the reporting period for each project.
2. Notes of 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. An outline of work to be performed during the next reporting period for each project.
6. Comments 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. A description of 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. A summary of results, conclusions, and lessons learned for each project.
5. A description of how progress has been made to achieve long term outcome measures for each project.
6. Additional information available about the project (e.g., publications, web sites).
7. A plan to disseminate the project results to the industry.
8. A 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 requirements 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.