



FY 2026 Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant Program Request for Proposals (RFP)

Proposals must be received by 12:00 p.m. (noon) Central Time on September 15, 2025.

More information on the Buy Local Buy Wisconsin Grant is available on the DATCP website at:
<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrants.aspx>

Contact Information

Brian Williams – Grants Specialist Adv.
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
2811 Agriculture Drive
Madison, WI 53708-8911
(608) 590-7239
datcpdadgrants@wisconsin.gov

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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. The 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. Proposals must focus on a food product or raw agricultural product and increasing Wisconsin local food purchases/sales by clearly demonstrating a need, showing creativity, and showing benefits to the local food system. See the "Definitions and Examples" section for details and definitions.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) details all the information needed to apply. Please read through the evaluation criteria when preparing your proposals. If awarded, grantees will be asked to report on project outcomes/impacts (e.g., increased local food sales, created and retained jobs, and new investments).

Available Funds

Grants are awarded following a competitive review process. Grants will be awarded for projects between \$5,000 and \$50,000 and up to two years in duration.

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 as detailed in the Allowable Expenses section. Matching funds expensed during the project must be documented in the same manner as proof of reimbursable grant expenses.

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.

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	August 5, 2025
Applications due to DATCP	September 15, 2025 - 12:00 p.m. (noon) - Central Time
Applications scored and selected by review committee	October 6, 2025
Selected applications notified by DATCP	Early November 2025
Anticipated project start date	December 1, 2025
Project end date (all projects must conclude no later than)	November 30, 2027

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- 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)
- Farmer/rancher cooperatives, grower associations, schools and institutions, food service operations, and non-profits.

Note: 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. Grants cannot fund feasibility projects or startups.

Preference may be given to applicants who have not received an award from the BLBW program within the previous two years. Preference may also be given to applicants who do not have an open grant with DATCP's Division of Agricultural Development (DAD) as of the close of the application period. DATCP DAD grant programs include Dairy Processor Grant, Meat Processor Infrastructure Grant, Specialty Crop Block Grant, and the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant.

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 and 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 their immediate family members (i.e., parents, siblings, spouses, and children) are not eligible to receive a grant or participate as a project collaborator.

Eligible Projects

- Requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000.
- Requests must provide 1:1 matching funds for all grant funds (matching funds must make up 50% of the total project budget). Matching funds may be in cash or in-kind and must be eligible program expenses.
- Project must be completed within the grant contract's performance period. DATCP may grant a project extension for one year upon request.
- The primary intended beneficiaries of the grant must be Wisconsin-agricultural-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 the "Definitions and Examples" section for details). Value-added food businesses or processors must currently purchase or grow at least 51 percent of their product ingredients, by weight, locally.

Projects will only be reimbursed for project costs incurred during the project period.

Budget and Expense Detail

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

- Salaries/wages and fringe benefits.
- Real estate and equipment rental or leasing.
- Consulting for whole farm planning, accounting, business planning, marketing, food safety, branding and web development.
- Supplies (e.g., coolers, totes, labels, printers, computers, software) whose full acquisition cost is \$9,999.99 or less per item or equipment whose full value is fully depreciable in one year
- Applicable ground transportation costs such as vehicle rental costs, taxi/rideshare fares, necessary parking or mileage reimbursement. 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. Travel must be directly related to project related activities.
- Public information such as banners, yard signs, or brochures.

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

- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project.
- Capital expenses such as build outs, expansions, renovation, building repairs or real estate purchases.
- Consultant or contractor fees for construction (e.g., plumbing, woodwork, electrical work, installation).
- Equipment with a per-unit cost of \$10,000 or more and whose full value is depreciable over more than one year.
- Aggregated costs of equipment components, upgrades, or attachments valued over \$10,000 is not allowed.
- Airfare, hotel, meals, and per diems.

- 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.
- Vehicles.
- Application/registration fees for licenses, tradeshow, or events.
- Any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed outside of the contract period.

Budget Clarification

- Expenses (both requested and matched) must directly result in anticipated measurable outcomes.
- A single budget item may be completely funded by the grant, completely 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 budget justification should also explain how each expense is necessary and how it will achieve project goals (e.g., increase sales).
- Salary and subcontractor/consultant expenses must identify who will perform the associated work, what work will be done, and the hourly rate of those involved. The hourly rate can include wages and fringe benefits.

Matching Funds

Matching fund must be at least 1:1 for every dollar requested for reimbursement (50% of total project budget) and must also be eligible project expenses. Items not included in the budget are not eligible for match.

Submissions

Required Proposal Components

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. Proposals will be accepted in .docx; .doc; or .pdf formats only. Save and submit proposal as a single file.

A complete proposal includes the required elements listed below:

1. Application
 - The application form consists of the following sections:
 - Cover page
 - Proposal Concept Statement
 - Project budget
 - Budget
 - Budget Justification which explains 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. Operation budgets from the past two years for your business
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.

5. W-9 IRS form

Proposal Submissions

The application form is located on the DATCP website at:
<https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrants.aspx>.

Proposal components must be submitted to DATCPdadgrants@wisconsin.gov.

Proposal components must be received by 12:00 p.m. (noon) Central Time on September 15, 2025.

Proposals received after the 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 proposals with unanswered questions or missing letters of commitment may not be considered for funding.

If you have any questions, please contact DATCPdadgrants@wisconsin.gov.

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.

This is a competitive grant. 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.

Evaluation Criteria

Project Need/Justification

- Submitted proposal complies with DATCP's request for proposals.
- Project fills a business need 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.

Goals/Objectives/Work Plan

- Proposed project meets the grant's objectives listed in the request for proposals.
- 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.

Anticipated Project Results

- 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.
- 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 incorporates a viable method for tracking and measuring project outcomes.
- Project clearly defines expected results and project goals clearly translate into anticipated outcomes.

Project Feasibility

- The project's business and market outcomes are viable.
- The applicant has strong management, technical qualifications, and experience.
- Attached financial statements indicate the grant applicant's financial capacity 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 qualifications, capital, and skill of the appropriate people, are present to carry out the project as proposed.
- Applicant has the capacity to provide the required matching funds.

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.
- Qualifications of project team match needs of project.
- Letters of Commitment clearly indicate partners' roles in the project.

Budget

- Budget items are adequately identified, clear, efficient and reasonable. Justification exists for each budget item.
- Budget items and work plan tasks are adequately identified and clearly linked to the proposed project.
- Consultants are identified when proposal is sent to DATCP
- Budget identifies matching funds of at least 1:1 for every dollar requested for reimbursement.

Definitions and Examples

Definitions

- **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.

- **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.
- **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.

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, and no project may begin incurring expenses until the contract is**

signed by 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.

The original term of the contract will be for two years. DATCP may, upon request, extend the contract to no later than November 30, 2028. Project extension request must be submitted at least three months prior to the end of the performance period.

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. Cost incurred during the performance period but prior to a fully executed contract may be eligible for reimbursement on a case-by-case basis. DATCP cannot guarantee payment of any eligible costs prior to a fully executed contract, any cost or activity will be completed at the risk of the recipient organization.

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. Monitoring may include site visits and review of recipients' financial records related to grant-funded activities. The Department reserves the right to monitor recipients' performance after the project's conclusion or the contract's expiration.

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). Matching fund expenditures must be documented in the same manner as reimbursable expenses.

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 for work performed in the preparation of and production of an application or for any work performed prior to the contract's start date, including any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal.

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. Reports shall include the following.

Semi-Annual Performance Reports

1. A status update of the project, including accomplishments and activities accomplished.
2. A description of any issues or barriers faced while completing project activities.
3. A description of the planned activities and fiscal activities during the next reporting period.

4. An update on finance and project status.

Final Performance Report

1. A description of the 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.

Recipients who do not submit 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

Grantees 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. Grantees 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.

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 or recipient requests that any information in an application be deemed a trade secret, the document should be labeled "trade secret" and the requested status should be noted to DATCP 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. 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.

Vetting

Prior to any award, applicants will be vetted in conjunction with a standard risk assessment. Potential risk factors such as delinquent taxes, pending lawsuits, conflicts of interests, instances of unpaid vendors, and instances of uncompleted contracted activities may prevent awards. Vetting includes but is not limited to

research via the United States General Service Administration, the State of Wisconsin Ineligible Vendor List, Wisconsin Circuit Court Access, DATCP, the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, and various other Wisconsin departments.

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 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 websites and social media channels.
- Conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects in order to determine long-term impacts of the project.