

Wisconsin Local Food Purchase Assistance Direct to Farmer Grant Request for Proposals

Must be received by 5:00p.m on Wednesday, November 22nd, 2023

For questions contact a WI LFPA Specialist:

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FUNDING BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin LFPA Community Partner grant is made possible by the USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement with Wisconsin. The program aims to reach socially disadvantaged and historically underserved producers and distribute that local food at no cost to underserved communities in Wisconsin.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The purpose of the WI LFPA program is to strengthen food and agricultural supply chain resiliency, support Wisconsin farmers, and distribute fresh nutritious foods to underserved communities.

The WI LFPA program achieves this purpose in the overarching goals below:

1. Support local producers and processors by building and expanding economic opportunities through new markets and a stable demand for farm products.
2. Connect local farmers and processors with food distribution partners and local food networks, including food banks and pantries, to ensure distribution of fresh and nutritious foods in rural, remote, or underserved communities.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

To meet these goals, 80% of direct farmer contracts will be awarded to socially disadvantaged and other historically underserved producers and processors. We acknowledge the barriers in both funding and market access that the current agricultural system and markets have created for these farmer groups. Because of this, contracted producers will be able to access pre-season payments on their contracts to assist them in purchasing inputs necessary to meet their contracts. Marbleseed will also provide farmer education and community building to create longer standing markets and business opportunities beyond WI LFPA funding.

Food purchases can include both fresh and minimally processed foods. All food purchased must be locally grown, raised, or processed in Wisconsin. Only minimally processed foods with a maximum of up to 10% non-Wisconsin ingredients are allowable (ex. salt and other seasonings). See the FAQ for more details on allowable processed foods.

Distribution Priorities:

- In the same community where it was grown, raised, or processed to support local food supply chain networks.
- To underserved communities not normally served through traditional food distribution networks.
- To underserved communities in the most food insecure counties listed at <https://foodsecurity.wisc.edu>

The WI LFPA Direct to Farmer Grant prioritizes contracting with supplying farmers who:

- Are socially disadvantaged producers, historically left out of wholesale markets.
- Have expressed interest in:
 - Supplying products to serve food access programs.
 - Expanding production.
 - Accessing wholesale markets.
 - Working with supply chain partners to expand business opportunities.
 - Working with other farmers to support professional development of local food producers.
 - Network with local community, farmers, and food system, and hunger relief partners.

Timeline:

- Application released October 12, 2023
- Applications due by 5:00pm Wednesday, November 22, 2023
- Contacts awarded by mid-December 2023
- Contracts executed and announced January 2024

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- For profit farm businesses

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Applications should consist of:
 - Completed application
 - Price list
 - Attached relevant licenses
 - Seasonal projection sheet
- Applications should be received by **5:00p.m on Wednesday, November 22, 2023.**

Link to 2024 Direct to Farmer Grant-- [2024 WI-LFPA Producer Application \(salsalabs.org\)](https://www.salsalabs.org/2024-wi-lfpa-producer-application)

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Reviewers will score proposals using the following scoring matrix:

Points	Application Scoring
30	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Socially Disadvantaged Producer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies as socially disadvantaged or historically underserved
20	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Experience in supplying farm to food access programs or other Wholesale Markets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience supplying for food access programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience supplying wholesale markets • Demonstrates the ability to supply a minimum of \$5000 worth of product priced for standard wholesale.
15	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Product Handling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an ability to professionally handle product. • Provides washing, packing and storage solutions that support quality product and proper packaging for shipping and receiving of quality product.
15	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Professional Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All information requested was provided in the application • Learning Session was selected • Demonstrates professional communication in work with business associates and customers
10	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Products Pricing and Availability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal projection of products being offered for sale to the WI LFPA program is attached. • Price list is attached • Required licenses for wholesaling products are attached • Liability insurance verification attached
10	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Willingness to Contribute and Benefit from the WI LFPA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies ways that WI LFPA will benefit their farm business • Identifies ways that they can contribute to WI LFPA (expertise to offer others, cooling infrastructure, transportation)

FARMER REQUIREMENTS FOR WI LFPA

1. Provide pricing in time for your contract.
2. Pack to spec (following the guide provided). You will need to purchase packaging. The cost of packaging should be included in the product price that you provide for the program.
3. Have your product transported with refrigerated transport (by farmer, WFHC, subcontractor, or food pantry) Exceptions of products needing refrigerated transport include dry onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, rutabagas, unripe tomatoes, and freshly harvested apples.
4. Project the availability of your product through the online link provided in a timely fashion. Provide projections by deadline the week before. You can tweak your projections as you get closer to your pickup/delivery date. Failure to project in a timely fashion could result in denial of transport or additional fees for pickup as the program only has a finite budget for transport. Pre-season routing will be done to determine the most efficient pickup days and times for all involved.

5. Provide a correct and complete invoice at the time of pickup. It must match what you are putting on the truck.
6. Attend a Wholesale Readiness Onboarding in-person session, with options across the state. Exact dates and locations are TBD.

CONTRACTS

A contract will be developed by Marbleseed for each farm. No contract is final until the contract is signed and executed and Marbleseed has the required documents:

- W9
- Confirmed price list
- Seasonal projections
- Licensing required for wholesaling products
- Liability insurance verification

All contracts **MUST** be completed by January 17th, 2024.

PAYMENTS

Pre-season payments will not exceed 20% of the total contract and will be based on funding needs identified before harvest to meet the contract.

Invoices must be submitted to the WFHC at time of product delivery. Invoices will be checked against the bill of lading and agreed on purchase price for all products. Farmers will not be compensated for product rejected due to poor quality product or packaging or other issues.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is “Local Food” defined for this grant?

For this grant, local is defined as from Wisconsin. The food must be grown, raised or processed in Wisconsin. If the item is processed, 90% of the ingredients must be grown or raised in Wisconsin.

Can processed local food products be sold into this program?

Yes, minimally processed & shelf stable local food products can be purchased if they are locally produced and meet the USDA definition for “Minimally Processed Goods”. Within this definition, up to 10% of eligible ingredients can be not local, such as seasonings and 90% of the ingredients must be grown or raised in Wisconsin.

Are some processed foods unallowable?

Yes, foods that are generally understood to be significantly processed or prepared are unallowable. Examples of unallowable products are ready to eat foods, which would include baked goods such as breads, muffins, or crackers; prepackaged sandwiches or meals; other prepared and/or pre-cooked items that come ready-to-eat or that require no further preparation beyond heating (e.g. chicken nuggets, fish sticks, pre-made pizzas, etc). Examples of allowable food products include fruits and vegetables (including 100% juices); grain products such as pastas and rice; meats (whole, pieces, or food items such as ground meats); meat alternates such as beans or legumes, and fluid milk and other dairy foods such as cheese and yogurt. Foods in a wide variety of minimal processing states (e.g., whole, cut, pureed, etc.) and/or forms (e.g., fresh, frozen, canned, dried, etc.) are also allowable.

How are food prices determined?

Farmers will provide a price list with the application letting the program know their asking prices. Marbleseed will accept fair wholesale prices. The intention of WI LFPA is to pay farmers a fair price for products and provide communities with nutrient dense culturally appropriate foods. WI LFPA will not underpay nor overpay producers for food products.

What licensing or other requirements are there for WI-LFPA program sellers of eggs, poultry, meat and value-added products?

- Egg producers are required to have a Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) food processing plant license to sell into the WI-LFPA program. Assembly Bill Act 245 is not applicable as sales are not direct to consumers.
- Meat producers who warehouse or sell their product post processing to the end-user are required to hold a WDATCP license. This is not applicable for producers whose finished product is picked up directly at the butcher by Food Hub or another aggregator. If a producer distributes the product from the processor to other parties, they need to register with WDATCP as a meat distributor.
- Maple Syrup producers are required to have a WDATCP food processing plant license.

- Canned and other value-added items require a WDATCP food processing plant license. Wisconsin Act 101, commonly referred to as the Pickle Bill, is not applicable as sales are not direct to consumers at public events.

Please contact WDATCP Division of Food and Recreational Safety licensing staff for specific requirements for your business by emailing datcpfdslicensing@wisconsin.gov or calling 608-224-4923.

What is included in a price list, and can future actual prices deviate from the submitted price list?

Price list should include information on specific crops and minimally processed food products and projected price per quantity, along with the quantity available. If conditions in the market, weather or other factors require a price change, farmers will work with their assigned Marbleseed Specialist to make adjustments in either price or quantity available to WI LFPA.

How much food can be purchased from a single producer or processor?

Marbleseed anticipates producer contracts between \$5,000.00 to \$25,000.00.

Can seconds be purchased and distributed through this program?

This program is designed to prepare producers to scale up production so that they can provide market quality products to hunger relief sites. Seconds can be perfectly safe, healthy, and nutritious produce that is “imperfect” or misshapen. For example, green peppers may have an extra lobe or cucumbers may have a bend in them that fall outside of Grade 1 standard. This program is not intended for farmers to get rid of their spoiled or damaged produce. Oftentimes, hunger relief sites receive seconds-quality donations and low-income patrons have become accustomed to receiving food that is of a lower quality standard. However, the intention of this program is that community members receive the same quality of food at a food pantry as they would if shopping at a local market.

Can food that was produced in 2023, for example: root vegetables, meat, honey be purchased?

As long as the food meets food quality and shelf-life standards, including that the food is not expired, spoiled, and absent of blemishes or bruises, products that have been produced in 2023 are eligible for sale into this program. **Meat must be sold into the program within 8 months of the processing date.**

As a farmer am I required to transport my products?

The unique partnership established with the WI LFPA provides the benefit of on-farm pick-ups by the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative (WFHC) or one of their subcontracted businesses. Generally, this is how farm products are collected and distributed to the most food insecure communities in Wisconsin. However, the program can arrange for farmer transport if it meets transportation requirements. All farms must check in with WFHC regardless of whether they are hauling their own product, getting picked up by a food pantry, subcontractor, or WFHC.

What liability insurance is required?

Producers must maintain and carry commercial general liability insurance (including product liability coverage) in a sum no less than \$1,000,000.00. Your current insurance company may be able to add on general liability insurance. Additionally, 2024 WI LFPA awardees will have the opportunity to sign up for a free annual Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) membership and members of WFU receive a 9% discount

on Hastings Farm Mutual Insurance. Reach out to Forrest at WFU for more information.
fhumphrey@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

How is the term “Historically Underserved” defined?

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) includes provisions that address the unique circumstances and concerns of socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers (“historically underserved producers”). Some groups of people are identified in Farm Bill legislation and in USDA policy as being Historically Underserved (HU). Members of these groups have been historically underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs. Four groups are defined by USDA as “Historically Underserved,” including farmers or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource.

<https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-historically-underserved-factsheet-07-20-2022.pdf>

How is the term “Socially Disadvantaged” defined?

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group. A Socially Disadvantaged Group is a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12096>

Can my farm work with schools and early care programs in my community?

WI LFPA funds cannot supplement other USDA funded nutrition programs; however, schools and early care programs can serve as a drop site for distribution to community members.

I’m a farmer, aggregator/distributor already participating in the WI-LFPA program, can I also apply for or be involved with a WI-LFPA Community Partner grant project?

Yes. A farmer can have an individual WI-LFPA contract with Marbleseed and also participate in a WI-LFPA Community Partner grant project. A farmer cannot get paid twice for the same product. Likewise, other supply chain partners can be subcontracted or be involved in other WI-LFPA efforts and still be a partner on an awarded WI-LFPA Community Partner grant project.

For more information about the national LFPA program visit:
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfpacap/plus-faq>