

Buy Local, Buy WI (BLBW) Grant Program

Request For Applications (RFA)

2008 Guidelines

Application submission deadline: April 14, 2008 (4 p.m. CST)
Target date for grant award notification: May 9, 2008

Questions related to the proposal submission should be directed to:
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2008 Application (RFA) Guidelines**

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) invites proposals for projects that will increase the demand for and supply of locally produced foods in Wisconsin. Project work submitted under this request for application(s) is to be conducted primarily in Wisconsin. For consideration, all proposals must: **Increase the purchase of locally grown or produced Wisconsin food products¹ for sale to local purchasers.²**

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program is an economic development program designed to help the Wisconsin agricultural and food industry find ways to reduce marketing, distribution and processing hurdles impeding the expansion of Wisconsin's local food system. DATCP is authorized to award grants for projects designed to increase the sale of Wisconsin food products to local purchasers. For example, under administrative code ch. ATCP 161, DATCP may award 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 trails.
- Production, processing, marketing and distribution of Wisconsin food products primarily for sale to local purchasers.

Grants are awarded following a competitive review process. Target date for grant award notification is May 9, 2008.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

The BLBW grant program has \$225,000 allocated for grant awards beginning on June 1, 2008. Projects must be concluded within two years of award. The maximum grant award is \$50,000 per project. DATCP may not make more than one grant award to the same person in the same state fiscal biennium. Grant applicants must provide at least a 33% cash or in-kind match toward overall project expenses. The contract period will begin in the state's fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008. Proposed projects must include annual work plans and budgets.

Grant recipients may request a maximum of 25% of the total approved grant funds at the beginning of the contract period to initiate the tactics outlined in the project proposal. The remaining 75% will be released on a reimbursement basis after documentation has been approved for the initial 25% allotment.

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

Proposals will be accepted from individuals, groups, businesses and organizations involved in Wisconsin agriculture, Wisconsin agricultural tourism, Wisconsin food processing, Wisconsin food distribution, Wisconsin food warehousing or Wisconsin retail food establishments. Proposals may involve collaborations or partnerships between producers, food businesses, industry, academia or organizations. Applicants may cooperate with any public or private organization. Employees of DATCP and family members are not eligible to receive a grant or participate as a collaborator.

Projects with a greater number of strong Wisconsin partners and those projects with broad reaching impacts will receive higher consideration.

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 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.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Operating expenses, including expenses for salaries and wages, contract and consulting services, travel,* supplies and public information.
- Real estate and equipment rental.
- The purchase of equipment whose full value is ordinarily depreciable within one year.
- Reasonable depreciation expense incurred for capital equipment during the grant contract term.

* Travel expenses must follow state per diem guidelines. For details: <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=5025>.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include:

- Real estate purchases.
- Repayment of loans or mortgages.
- Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract.
- Equipment purchases, except for certain equipment purchases and depreciation expenses specifically authorized by this rule.
- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project.
- Expenses incurred prior to grant approval and signed contract date.

MATCHING FUNDS

The applicant's contributions to the project need to be identified. The applicant must provide at least 33% of the total proposed project cost as a matching contribution. Matching funds may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions for eligible project expenses. A matching commitment may include a commitment of capital, land, labor, equipment or cash related to the grant project. Grant funds received under other government grant programs do not count as matching contributions. Existing land, equipment or other assets may be listed as supporting resources in the budget narrative section, but are not considered matching contributions to the proposed project.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should be no more than eight (8) pages in length (excluding letters of support and supporting documents). Each proposal should include the following sections: 1) Cover Sheet, 2) Application Concept Statement, 3) Application Background and Industry Need, 4) Plan of Work, 5) Project Goals & Measurements 6) Key Personnel and Industry Support, 7) Detailed Budget and 8) Communication Plan. (See Appendix 1 & 2 for details).

APPLICATION REQUIRED ELEMENTS

Cover Sheet*

- Project name
- Contact information

Application Concept Statement (3-4 sentences)**

- Describe the primary purpose of the proposed project.
- Introduce how the project will reduce marketing, distribution and/or processing hurdles impeding the expansion of Wisconsin's local food system.

Application Background and Industry Need**

- Explain why this program is important to Wisconsin's local food system development.
- Outline the industry need that the application addresses.
- Describe preliminary work completed that justifies this proposed project.
- Introduce how your project will increase the purchase of locally grown or produced Wisconsin food products for sale to local purchasers.

Plan of Work**

- Describe your proposed project in more detail.
- Include specific tasks, timetables and persons responsible.
- List milestones needed to be met for successful project progression and completion.
- Demonstrate the industry sector(s) that this application will impact.
- Include a statement about how this project could be replicated in other areas of the state.

Project Goals & Measurements**

- List the specific objectives, goals and measurements. Measurements must quantitatively show how this project will increase the purchase of locally grown or produced Wisconsin food products for sale to local purchasers.
- List any other key results or expected outcomes from the project.

Key Personnel & Industry Support**

- List the names, contact information and qualifications of each key project participant. Be sure to outline any current or previous food industry or local food expertise.
- Specifically address lead applicant's previous grant or business management experience.
- Outline lead applicant's fiscal experience.
- Include letters of support and commitment from key personnel, industry leaders, and industry organizations.

Detailed Budget**

- Include a budget narrative to more fully describe project expenses.
- Identify 33% in-kind or cash match contributions.
- For salary/fringe and subcontractor/consultant, identify who and what work is to be done and use an hourly rate.
- For travel, state rates must be followed. Use the Office of State Employment Relations website as a guide: <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=6680>

*See Appendix 1 for template. ** See Appendix 2 for template.

Communications Plan

- Identify how the applicant will use project results to enhance its industry's competitiveness in the state and how the applicant will share appropriate project information within the Wisconsin local foods community.
- In this communication plan, recipients must indicate how they will communicate that the DATCP Buy Local, Buy WI program is the funding agency.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMITTAL PROCESS

Proposed projects must adhere to the requirements, objectives and format identified in this RFA. Proposals will be accepted in Word or pdf format, single spaced, Times New Roman with 12 pt font. Each proposal must be limited to one project and applicants may submit separate proposals for different projects. However, DATCP may not make more than one grant award to the same person in the same state fiscal biennium. An original of each proposal submitted must be received at DATCP by **4 p.m., April 14, 2008** in order to meet the application deadline. Applications may be submitted by one of the following options:

1. Email (encouraged): DatcpBLBW@wisconsin.gov
Please submit applications as a Word or pdf file attached to the email message. We advise support documents be sent separately. All support documents are subject to the April 14, 2008 4 p.m. deadline. (NOTE: Files larger than 3MB may be blocked by the DATCP email server. Please check with BLBW program staff for instructions.)
2. Mail: DATCP- BLBW Grant
2811 Agriculture Drive
PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911
3. Fax: 608-224-5111 Attention: Amy Bruner Zimmerman
4. Hand-Delivery to DATCP: 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison, WI
4th Floor, Agricultural Market Development
(Office hours are Monday-Friday 7:45a.m. – 4:30 p.m.)

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

Each application must include sufficient information to allow the reviewers to evaluate the application. The application must merit financial support and demonstrate that the proposed project has clearly stated objectives, a sound workplan, and necessary expertise to successfully complete the project.

As part of the evaluation process, a meeting with applicants and/or a visit to the applicant's enterprise may be required. DATCP reserves the right to make final selections.

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.

DATCP's 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 quarterly basis. To receive reimbursement, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e. include receipts, invoices) and clearly outline expenditures. Twenty five percent of the total grant funds will be retained until receipt of the completed final report including receipts for all expenditures.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

DATCP reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Each approved grant recipient must submit a six month and final performance report.

The semi-annual performance reports 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. Outline work to be performed during the next reporting period for each project.
4. Comment on the level of grant funds expended to date for each project.

The final performance report 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. Results, conclusions, and lessons learned for each project.
4. How progress has been made to achieve long term outcome measures for each project.
5. Additional information available (e.g. publications, web sites).
6. A plan to disseminate the project results to the industry.
7. 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.

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. The grant applicant or recipient must clearly mark any information deemed a 'trade secret' that is included in the application, progress reports or final reports as "Confidential – Trade Secret – Not For Public Disclosure" at the time of submission. 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. The grant recipient may then proceed to obtain judicial protection for the

information. Such information may be kept confidential by the department only as authorized by law (see s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats.).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

All applications submitted in response to this RFA 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 RFA 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 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.

NOTES

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.

BLBW APPLICATION TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

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.
- Keep your responses brief and focused on the purpose and impact of the project.
- Focus on project tasks and results, not on philosophy and personal opinion.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- All applications must demonstrate a quantifiable/measurable impact to Wisconsin's local food consumption (i.e. increase in WI local food purchases, increase in WI local food consumption, increase in the number of farms selling locally, increase in food processing capacity for local food, increased volume of food distributed locally).
- All applications must be completed fully and address all aspects of the application format.
- In determining whether any person is fit, qualified or equipped, the department shall consider, among other things, character and conduct, including past compliance or noncompliance with law.

Other Evaluation Criteria to include:

- Project's contribution to strengthening Wisconsin's system for the production or sales of local foods.
- Project's direct impact on local food production or sales.
- Strength of project team.
- Reasonable and efficient budget and work plan.
- Project's approach to measuring and tracking project result(s).

2008 Buy Local, Buy WI (BLBW) Grant Application Cover Sheet

Project Title:

Amount Requested:

Full Legal Name of Applicant/Organization:

Applicant's Address:

Name and Title of individual(s) that can execute a contract for the Applicant:

Name of Primary Contact:

Telephone:

Email:

Website:

County of Project Location:

Project Start Date:

Project Completion Date (Proposed project must be completed within two years.):

2008 Buy Local, Buy WI (BLBW) Grant Application Required Elements

Application Concept Statement (3-4 Sentences)

Describe the primary purpose of the proposed project.

Application Background and Industry Need

Explain why this program is important to WI local food system development. Outline any preliminary work completed that helps justify further work on the project.

Plan of Work

List the specific objectives and tasks of the project.

Project Goals & Measurement

List the specific objectives, goals and measurements. Measurements must quantitatively show how this project will impact Wisconsin's local food consumption and production.

Key Personnel & Industry Support

List the names, contact information and qualifications for each key project participant. Outline any relevant grant or project management experience and key industry involvement.

Detailed Budget

Provide detailed budget narrative outlining project expenses and at least 33% match.

Communications Plan

Discuss how you will share appropriate project information within the Wisconsin local foods community.