



Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant Program

2024 Impact Report

For more information about this program, please visit: datcp.wisconsin.gov.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

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Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grant Program

Grant Impact Overview 2008-2024

Program Description

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) competitive grant program was launched in 2008 to strengthen Wisconsin's agricultural and food industries. The grants work to reduce the marketing, distribution, and processing hurdles that impede the expansion of sales of Wisconsin's food products to local purchasers. The need for the BLBW grant program remains high. From the start of the program in 2008, 584 applications have been received, requesting over \$20.3 million. To date, BLBW has funded 117 projects for a total of \$2.977 million. The 117 funded projects are making great strides in the areas of infrastructure development, market development, agriculture tourism, producer development, and much more.

Comprehensive Impact to the State

Keeping food dollars in Wisconsin communities supports local businesses, improves farm incomes, and creates jobs. The BLBW grant project recipients have reported on work from July 2008-January 2024. Each demonstrates success and positive impact in Wisconsin communities.

The impact of the BLBW grants is far-reaching across all Wisconsin counties. Over 5,442 Wisconsin producers have positively benefitted from increased sales resulting from the grant funds. As a result of these grants, 210 new jobs have been created across the state and 289 jobs have been retained.

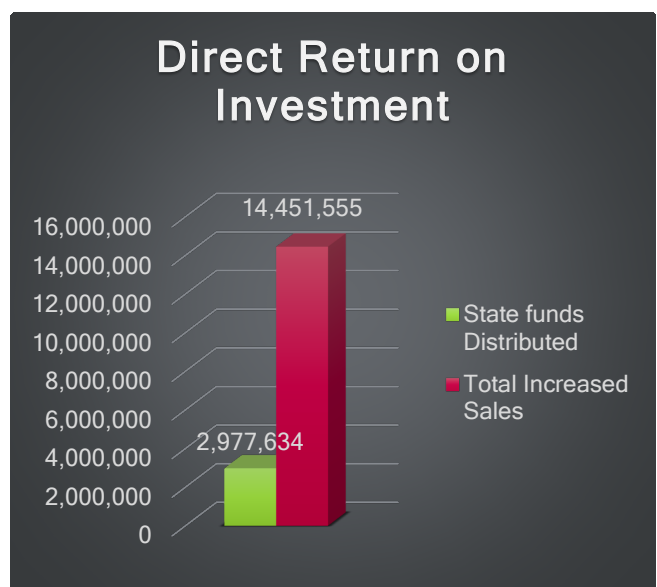
The grant recipients have directly generated over \$14 million in increased sales of Wisconsin food products. These dollars went to Wisconsin farmers, cooperatives, processing facilities, and distribution companies. Furthermore, these dollars circulated in their communities and to all of the suppliers and services these groups depend on.

Yearly average funded projects: 8
Average Awarded Grant: \$25,500
Total Projects: 117

Direct Return:

State Investment = \$2,977,634

- Over \$14 million in increased sales
- Over \$2.9 in new investments
- 210 new jobs created
- 289 jobs retained
- 5,442 producers benefitted
- 5,289 Wisconsin markets benefitted



2024 Funded Program Details

Dream Apple Farm LLC – *Wisconsin Farm Stories: Increasing Sales at DreamPort Harvest Market*

Project Duration: October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2025

Counties Impacted: Multiple Markets

Award \$13,736

Project Purpose

This project will increase sales of Wisconsin local, organic, and sustainable food at DreamPort Harvest Market, a farm market in Port Washington, Wisconsin. Marketing will include a series of “know your farmer” videos; digital marketing, including website, YouTube, and social media; and in-store re-design to increase awareness and promote sales from the farm market. The project will increase sales of healthy, local, farm grown food and value-added products, benefitting Wisconsin farmers and consumers.

Grow It Forward Inc. – *Expansion of Local Food Availability in Downtown Manitowoc*

Project Duration: January 2024 – December 2024

Counties Impacted: Manitowoc

Award \$49,393

Project Purpose

In 2022, Grow It Forward (GIF) established Harmony Café & Juicery at 1501 Marhsall St. in Manitowoc, also home to GIF’s hydroponic farm. GIF sells its hydroponic greens along with other local products in a singular cooler and utilizes these products to prepare ready-to-eat food and drinks. The Marshall St. location served as an incubator until GIF selected an ideal downtown Manitowoc location. In June of 2023, GIF moved its café to 921 S. 8th St. and would like to purchase additional coolers to increase local food sales of Wisconsin products and increase direct sales of GIF’s own products.

Fitchburg’s Orchard Inc. – *Expanding Value-Added Apple Product Offerings at Eplegaarden Orchard*

Project Duration: Summer/Fall 2023 – August 2024

Counties Impacted: Dane

Award \$14,018

Project Purpose

This project is designed to expand the offerings of value-added products using fresh fruit grown at Eplegaarden Orchard in Fitchburg, Wisconsin in two phases. Phase 1: Surveying and rezoning the property to A-S; and securing a Conditional Use Permit and partnering with a local bakery and cidery to create value-added products for sale in their farm store. Phase 2: Building a commercial-grade kitchen that will enable production of value-added products on-site. Subsequent food and alcohol licenses will allow the business to increase agritourism with events such as a hard cider festival and corn boil.

Fromage Spa dba Love-It Foods – Website Development and Improvement

Project Duration: October 2023 – April 2025

Counties Impacted: Multiple Markets, especially Brown, Door, and Outagamie

Award \$50,000

Project Purpose

Lov-It Foods will use grant funds to create a retail website to sell newly branded Lov-It cheese products, converted from 40-pound blocks, artisanal wheels, and trim cheese from local Wisconsin cheese manufacturers to local Wisconsin residents and tourists looking for local Wisconsin-crafted artisanal products.

Mayberry Farms LLC – Raw Honey Marketing Improvement

Project Duration: October 2023 – September 2025

Counties Impacted: Dodge

Award \$28,087.50

Project Purpose

The primary objective of this project is to enhance the sales of locally sourced raw honey. This will be accomplished by implementing a refined online marketing strategy to drive online sales and the expansion into new local wholesale accounts. Additionally, a local employment opportunity will be established to further strengthen community engagement and support the growth of the business.

Success Stories

Siren Shrub Company (City of Stevens Point, Portage County)

Received a BLBW grant in 2022 to drive the Siren Shrub Company brand, produce and sales awareness, showcase our Wisconsin based partnerships, and promote an inclusive drinking culture. We produced five Siren Shrub Company products with four Wisconsin farm partners and partnered with five diverse mixologists across the state to develop and distribute inclusive recipes. We used this grant to create compelling storytelling mediums that use Siren Shrub Company products to showcase Wisconsin farm partnerships and inclusivity in a drinking culture to increase traffic (100%) and sales (15%) on sirenshrubs.com. We also worked with L'eft Bank Wine Company, Co-op Partners Warehouse, and Faire Wholesale to increase our distribution throughout Wisconsin by 25%.

Our company will continue to use the valuable video and photos we developed to tell the story of our company and work towards a more inclusive drinking culture in Wisconsin. We hope to release the Shrub Club in 2024, a limited release flavor subscription. This model will be built based on the feedback we received from the large gathering we had for the video and photography component of this grant. During this event, we sampled five new flavors of shrub and each participant had a comment card for feedback. We will also solidify our manufacturing plans with either the City of Stevens Point or Nessalla Kombucha; and continue to grow through key Wisconsin grocery accounts as well specialty niche retailers, using marketing and storytelling through content created with this grant.

Turner's Fresh Market (City of Waupaca, Waupaca County)

Received a BLBW grant in 2022 to increase the number of local products sold at Turner's Fresh Market's retail market. We increased the quantity of local produce and value-added products sold by Turners. We added 60 new items in 2023 and 51 items in 2024. This was accomplished by increasing refrigerated and freezer storage for the market; launching more newsletters and Facebook ads; ordering through Wisconsin Food Hub; and maintaining direct relationships with many more local suppliers. Our market sales increased by 22.69% and our gross profit went up 28.46% in 2022; and our gross profit went up by 19% between 2022 and 2023. Also, in 2024, our sales increased by 19%.

In the future, we hope to develop a commercial kitchen so local farmers and value-added producers can produce products able to be sold at retail, but also to supply our market to these local producers for sales. Finally, we launched Turners Fresh Gourmet this year and had exciting new success with our first product: Turners Fresh Ketchup. We will add pumpkin butter and corn salsa, as well as other produce exclusively from Wisconsin, later on.