

Local Food Purchase Assistance Program Plus (LFPA Plus)

Notice of Grant Availability:
Guidelines and Instructions

Proposal Due Date:
March 20, 2024, 5:00 PM Eastern



Administered by the
The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
P.O. BOX 1163
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Program Solicitation Information

Funding Opportunity Title from USDA AMS:

Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The Local Food Purchase Assistance Plus Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA Plus) will provide grants to agencies that will procure local foods from farmers/producers, focusing on Virginia farmers and more specifically socially disadvantaged farmers and must have the ability to distribute these foods or enter into a collaborative agreement with charitable food assistance organizations that have the capability of distributing these products across the state to needy persons with a special focus on reaching areas of the state that are currently underserved, including both rural and urban areas.

The program will strive to develop long-term relationships to expand opportunities for the farmers/vendors to bring more local foods to families in need and fight food insecurity across the Commonwealth. All foods purchased will be local. They must either be grown or raised in Virginia or be no more than 400 miles from the distribution point.

- LFPA Plus funding may only be used for the purchase of unprocessed or minimally processed food.

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.

Foods that are generally understood to be significantly processed or prepared are unallowable. Examples of **unallowable** products 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.).

The program will follow four objectives listed below:

Objective 1 (purchase related): To increase purchases of local foods, focusing on local foods from underserved farmers/producers, creating a network that provides fresh local foods to food insecure individuals.

Objective 2 (distribution related): To expand the reach of food distribution programs to areas that have not previously been served and to ensure that we are providing for the needs of all food insecure Virginians.

Objective 3 (related to sharing of lessons learned or improving outcomes or fostering adoption of promising best practices): To create lasting partnerships between socially disadvantaged farmers/producers and agencies that distribute food to reach those most in need so we can serve everyone, including people in previously underserved communities.

Objective 4 To develop a more equitable food distribution program that both provides for food insecure individuals and includes farmers that represent the diversity of Virginia.

DEFINITIONS

“*Local Foods*” means food grown, packaged, or processed in Virginia or grown, packaged, or processed within 400 miles of the point of distribution.

LFPA Plus means the Local Food Purchase Assistance Plus Cooperative Agreement Program

AWARD INFORMATION

GRANT PERIOD DURATION

VDACS will award funds for a grant period of up to 16 months in length.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES

VDACS is seeking proposals from agencies that have the capacity to procure local foods from farmers and growers to be distributed to persons in need or be provided to charitable food assistance organizations that can distribute to persons in need. Sub-grantees will be required to contract with local farmers and to concentrate efforts on working with socially disadvantaged farmers. Sub-grantees must also focus the distribution of food to previously underserved areas of the state.

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

VDACS will use a competitive review process to ensure maximum input and benefit. Review panel members will be free from conflicts of interest and conduct fair and impartial reviews. VDACS will notify successful and unsuccessful grant candidates about the outcome of the competitive process as it relates to the candidate's proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated by the following criteria:

Project Purpose (35 points)

- The extent to which the candidate defines the specific plan to work with farmers/vendors to develop a relationship and procure local foods from farmers/producers, focusing on Virginia farmers and more specifically socially disadvantaged farmers and distribute these agriculture products to needy persons in Virginia with a special focus on reaching areas of the state that are currently underserved, including both rural and urban areas.
- The extent to which the project will provide a direct benefit to individuals experiencing food insecurity.
- The extent to which the project will provide a direct benefit to local farmers, including socially disadvantaged farmers.
- The ability of the candidate to demonstrate large scale, community-wide, or regional-reach.

Measurable Outcomes (15 points)

- The objectives are precise, attainable, and meet the purpose of the grant program.

Project Plan (35 points)

- The extent to which the proposal presents a clear, well-conceived, and suitable overall methodology for fulfilling the goals and objectives of the proposed project.
- There is an articulated timeline for project delivery and execution.
- Project assessment plan is articulated.
- The plan includes the regions of the state the sub-grantee will be focusing on to procure foods from local farmers as well as the regions of the state where they will be distributing food. It will be the goal of the program to reach all cities and counties in Virginia.

Budget (15 points)

- The extent to which the proposal budget provides a sufficient description for each category and that the budget is consistent with the size and scope of the project and that the budget relates logically to the project plan and objectives describing the project.

4.0 PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

CONTENT AND FORM

Entities interested in submitting an proposal for the LFPA Plus Program must submit the following components:

- A. Cover Page
- B. Narrative
- C. Budget

A. COVER PAGE

Cover Page Must Include:

- I. Project Title
- II. Project Lead (Primary Point of Contact)
 - a. Name & Title
 - b. Organization
 - c. Mailing Address
 - d. Email
 - e. Telephone
- III. Executive Summary (no more than one paragraph)
- IV. Total Amount Requested
- V. Region of the state the project will cover

B. NARRATIVE

I. Project Purpose

Description of how funds will be used to procure local foods from farmers/producers, focusing on Virginia farmers and more specifically socially disadvantaged farmers and distribute these agriculture products to needy persons in Virginia with a special focus on reaching areas of the state that are currently underserved, including both rural and urban areas.

Descriptions should include the following:

- Demonstrate that the candidate will develop a relationship with farmers/producers to acquire products for distribution to persons in need.
- List regions of the state that the candidate will procure local foods from.
- List the regions of the state where the candidate plans to distribute foods. If the candidate plans to partner with a food distribution agency, list the regions of the state that this agency will distribute to.
- The candidate's ability to have large scale, community-wide, or regional-reach.
- Demonstrate that the candidate will utilize or develop a relationship with an agency that will utilize an adequate distribution plan to disburse food to persons in need.
- Demonstrate that the candidate will transport foods to distribution sites.

- Demonstrate that the candidate will provide storage facilities (both cold and dry storage) that will provide secure and sanitary conditions to avoid food loss or contamination.
- Demonstrate that the candidate will provide adequate labor to receive, store, distribute, and track all foods.
- Provide details of the candidate’s system for keeping an accurate food inventory and tracking system.

II. Expected Measurable Outcomes

Include a plan for how outcomes will be measured.

The following outcome measures should be included:

1. Number of local producers purchased from
2. Number of socially disadvantaged producers purchased from
3. Value of food purchases (broken down by both local and socially disadvantaged producers)
4. Value of food distributed
5. Number of individuals served
6. List of regions (counties and cities) served
7. Number of individuals served in previously underserved regions
8. Pounds of food distributed
9. Number of food distribution sites
10. Types of foods purchased

Additional outcomes are welcome. Note that they must be precise, attainable, and meet the purpose of the grant program.

III. Project Plan

Provide a clear timeline for project execution and delivery.

Event	Responsible Party	Timeframe
<i>Ex. Final Report</i>	<i>Joe Smith</i>	<i>September 2025</i>

C. BUDGET

Include a spreadsheet summary of all anticipated costs and expenditures. .

Budget	
Direct Project Costs	
Total	

Budget Narrative

Include a detailed budget narrative, explaining all anticipated costs and expenditures.

- LFPA Plus funding may only be used for the purchase of unprocessed or minimally processed food, as well as food storage and food distribution costs directly related to the purchase of food.

Funding is intended to primarily cover food procurement. Storage and distribution expenses directly associated with food procurement under this program are allowable and can be subsumed in the overall procurement with LFPA Plus funding. Examples of allowable storage and distribution costs under LFPA Plus if directly associated with the food procurement under this program include lease or rental of delivery trucks or other equipment (forklifts, refrigerators, freezers, etc.); payments/fees for common carriers for transporting or storing commodities; lease or rental of warehouse space; or supplies used in the storage and handling of commodity products (boxes, pallets, etc.).

- Costs that are not inherent parts of the procurement cannot be covered with LFPA Plus funding. Examples of costs that cannot be covered include separate coverage of utility costs for leased or owned space; employees to pack food or prepare boxes for delivery; or administrative costs for managing storage and distribution.

SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME

Candidates must submit proposals as one PDF to Seth.Benton@vdacs.virginia.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, March 20, 2024. All attachments (proposal and letters of support) must be included in one email.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

AWARD NOTICES

Once VDACS selects grant recipients, all candidates will be notified of their grant status. Those selected for funding will receive a letter of agreement that sets forth pertinent information about the grant. Projects do not have to be initiated on the grant effective date but should be initiated as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be achieved within the funded project period.

ACCEPTANCE OF AN AWARD

A signature by an authorized representative of the successful candidate organization on the award letter constitutes acceptance of the award and its associated terms and conditions.

PAYMENTS

Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursements will be made on a quarterly or not more often than monthly basis, as warranted. Grantees must submit an invoice, reimbursement form, and detailed documentation of expenditures (individual receipts and proof of payment) to the Program Manager. Reimbursements will be made within 30 days of receipt of proper documentation. The final invoice will be paid upon receipt of the final report.

REPORTING

Grant recipients will be required to submit quarterly, annual, and final performance reports.

Reports should include all information outlined in Section II, Expected Measurable Outcomes.

7.0 AGENCY CONTACT

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or

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