

# FARM TO FOOD ACCESS

Farm to food access efforts like the Wisconsin Local Food Purchase Assistance Program (WI LFPA) are integral to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities across the state.

## FARM TO FOOD ACCESS

In Wisconsin, **1 in 10 people and 1 in 6 children face food insecurity**.<sup>1</sup> Farm to food access efforts in Wisconsin are working to address food insecurity by moving food from local farms into hunger relief programs. Our food system should benefit farmers and eaters alike. But many small farmers struggle to make ends meet while providing high quality food for their communities. At the same time, many families face hurdles in accessing fresh, nutritious food.

Farm to food access efforts in Wisconsin were revolutionized with the introduction of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA). The program was announced in 2021 with the goals of strengthening local food systems, supporting farmers, and distributing fresh nutritious foods to underserved communities.

Wisconsin Farmers Union believes that **all individuals have a natural, inherent and inalienable right to food**. WFU supports well-funded hunger relief efforts that ensure adequate food access to all people, especially programs that prioritize purchasing from Wisconsin producers at fair prices.

## WI LFPA

In 2022 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection was awarded a LFPA cooperative agreement. In partnership with Wisconsin Farmers Union, Marbleseed, and the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, the WI LFPA program was born.

WI LFPA has proven to be a vital initiative for both Wisconsin farmers and underserved communities across the state. By awarding grant contracts to farmers and community partners, the program has facilitated the growth, distribution, and provision of fresh, nutritious food to those in need.

**As of November 2024 the WI LFPA program had:**

**265** growers participating  
**72** counties served  
**238** food access partners receiving deliveries  
**\$3.67** million worth of food delivered



## CONTINUED FUNDING FOR WI LFPA

In December 2024, WFU members passed a Special Order of Business that supports continued and expanded funding of the highly successful WI LFPA program.

WFU urges state and federal policymakers to recognize the program's success and to allocate additional resources to sustain and grow this initiative. By doing so, we can continue to bolster Wisconsin's agricultural sector, enhance food security, and promote the health and well-being of all Wisconsinites, while ensuring that family farmers have the support and market access they need to thrive.



## FARM TO FOOD ACCESS BEYOND WI LFPA

### *Government Nutrition Programs*

WFU urges state and federal lawmakers to fully fund programs that provide locally produced foods to schools, state institutions, and government nutrition programs. WFU supports WI 2023 SB 713 which requires DATCP to provide grants to food banks, food pantries, and other nonprofit organizations to purchase Wisconsin food products. USDA should protect critical investments in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) at a time of rising food prices and food insecurity. WFU supports expanding (SNAP) coverage to include subscriptions to CSAs and on-farm sales of produce.

### *School Lunch Programs*

WFU supports programs that source local products for school lunch. WFU calls on the state and federal government to pass legislation that provides nutritious meals at no cost to all students and families regardless of household income. Investments in school meal infrastructure should include procurement, preparation, and service of local foods via farm-to-school networks, scratch-cooking resources, and increased wages and benefits for foodservice employees. WFU also supports the Healthy School Meals for All Act which is backed by the Healthy School Meals for All Coalition.

### *Food Waste*

WFU supports efforts to prevent and deter food waste, including a federal and state tax credit or deduction to tax liability for farmers who donate food to hunger relief organizations. WFU supports WI 2023 SB 721, introduced by Senator Jeff Smith, which requires DATCP to provide grants for food waste reduction pilot projects.

### *Food Systems that Serve All*

In order to provide benefits to farmers and eaters, agriculture, food systems, and hunger relief should be considered holistically. Underserved farmers and food workers face disproportionately hard challenges, socially, politically, and economically. WFU explicitly supports value-chain and food systems that take into account historical harms and social barriers. WFU supports programs that help communities prosper through farm to fork investments and supports job creation by improving programs and policies that help grow local and regional food economies.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/wisconsin>