



Permissions were granted to take the photos above. They are intended to portray examples of community food systems but do not imply any individuals' support of the program proposed on page 2.

Agriculture-Supported Community Development

A proposed state program to offer seed money and technical support to communities that mobilize local farms and agricultural resources in creative ways to address critical needs. Innovative strategies may involve accessible, affordable, nutritious foods; farm income diversification; entrepreneurship and job creation; tourism; youth development and retention; food waste; natural resource protection; tribal food sovereignty; agroforestry and wild foraging; enhanced livability and social cohesion. Successful methods and lessons learned will provide guidance to communities facing similar goals and challenges.

Key concepts

A competitive selection process

Providing a fair means to direct limited state resources to communities that seldom receive prioritized attention and support. Qualifying communities will receive significant assistance with their applications and constructive feedback if not successful in their first attempt. Selected applicants will present bold objectives, innovative methods and all-inclusive outreach efforts.

Community self-determination, equity and stewardship

We invite proposals from underserved rural, urban and tribal communities that decide for themselves what specific problem(s) they will solve by creatively involving local people and resources. To promote Wisconsin values, strategies should promise equitable outcomes for community members while sustaining natural resources for future generations.

An expansive definition of agriculture

Including farms in or near the community as well as entities that process, distribute, retail, prepare or serve food for human consumption, plus local farm organizations, agricultural lenders, farm supply companies, food pantries, nutrition educators and food waste handlers. This broad definition of agriculture can also be called a **Community Food System (CFS)**.

A strategic systems approach

This means involving all local actors and assets in a given community; understanding relationships, interactions, causes and effects; and applying the best practices of community development in order to make the most of local resources, generate the broadest possible support and measure progress toward clearly identified outcomes.

Who can apply?

Small cities & villages
Underserved urban neighborhoods
Rural counties
Tribal nations

Selection criteria

Inclusion of diverse individuals and viewpoints
A respected community member who provides leadership
One organization that provides backbone support
Multi-sector participation (for profit, nonprofit, local government, education)
Co-commitment of staff time that is sufficient to sustain collaboration
Strong support from farms and other food and agriculture assets
Strong support from the county Extension office

Program benefits

Seed funding pooled from state and private sector partners
Liaisons to 7 state agencies (DATCP, WEDC, DHS, DWD, DPI, DNR, DFI)
Fast-track assistance with state grants, loans & investment programs
Improved access to University of Wisconsin faculty, staff & students
Strategic planning and evaluation assistance
Consultation in community food system development
Technical support for Zoom video conferencing

Intended outcomes

Communities prioritize and clarify their needs
Significant local resources are mobilized
Improved delivery of state agency/UW resources
Significant community development achieved
Documented results to inform adaptations
Replication of success in other communities

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