

Harvest for Hope Frequently Asked Questions

What are Harvest for Hope Grants?

“Harvest for Hope” grants encourage the harvesting of Wisconsin produce that would otherwise go to waste by providing farmers with funding to cover the costs of harvesting, processing, and transporting fresh produce to local food banks. The fresh produce will go directly to the statewide network of food banks, complementing the work done by regionally-based food banks.

Harvest for Hope is a market-driven grant program that utilizes private and public funds. All private sector funding for Harvest for Hope is matched dollar for dollar by the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) up to a total public contribution of \$250,000 each year from 2016 to 2020.

Why are Harvest for Hope Grants necessary?

Many Wisconsin farmers donate excess and unmarketable produce to food banks in their communities that would otherwise remain unharvested and be plowed under in the fields. These donations play an instrumental role in providing healthy food options to Wisconsin residents at risk of hunger. However, farmers make these donations at a financial loss to their businesses.

Despite Wisconsin farmers’ extraordinary acts of charity, fresh fruits and vegetables remain the number one unmet demand at food banks across the Badger State.

Greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables would extend food buying dollars for low income families, increasing the likelihood that those receiving financial assistance from the state lead healthier lives and are able to pursue economic opportunity.

How would Harvest for Hope affect local food pantries?

In short, it would make more fresh, Wisconsin grown food available. Local pantries would still receive donations directly from their communities and would not incur any additional costs in order to receive Harvest for Hope foodstuffs.

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Will local food pantries be required to pay anything to offset costs associated with administering Harvest for Hope?

No. Food that becomes available through Harvest for Hope will be available to food pantries free of charge and food pantries will provide this food to people absolutely free of charge.

Will Harvest for Hope require any changes to the existing supply chain?

No. These grants will allow the movement of more fresh produce into food banks and thus, into local food pantries. The staging, transportation, donation, warehousing, and distribution networks will continue to operate as they have for years.

Does access to produce harvested under these grants require any new costs or payments to local pantries?

No.

Will farm products harvested using Harvest for Hope grants be distributed or sold to any organizations other than food pantries?

No.

What role will Feeding Wisconsin play in the administration of Harvest for Hope grants?

Feeding Wisconsin will coordinate the private fundraising match. Once the program begins, Feeding Wisconsin will utilize grant funds to acquire donations of fresh produce and fresh-processed Wisconsin grown products from agricultural and food industry partners. These donations will be distributed, for free, to local pantries through regional food banks.

Will Harvest for Hope unintentionally harm food pantries or churches that have been receiving donations from local farmers?

No. Harvest for Hope grants are intended to promote large scale donations - in the thousands of pounds - that currently exceed the capacity of churches or individual, small pantries to collect and distribute. Small donations from local farmers will continue to play an important role in the operations of community organizations in feeding the hungry.

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In order to participate in Harvest for Hope, will local organizations, such as churches, be required to pay a membership fee, delivery fee, and poundage fee for produce it was previously getting for free?

Food donated through Harvest for Hope grants will not have ANY fees associated with it for distribution to local pantries.

Will any local food pantries need to travel to Minnesota to receive access to Harvest for Hope donations?

No. Food harvested through Harvest for Hope grants will remain in the state of Wisconsin.