**Grant Resources**

**How do I find out about available grants?**

* Michael Fields Agricultural Institute grant newsletter – sign up for their grant announcements by emailing grants@michaelfields.org and asking to be on the email list. They do a great job of putting sending information on new agricultural grants when they become available. Michael Fields also has grant writing assistance for underserved farmers. Use the same contact email to ask about getting assistance searching and applying for grants.
* Grants.gov – federal website with listing of all federal grants available. Searchable by topic. Sign up for notification on grants of specific topics
* Grant workshops for farmers and food entrepreneurs – these are hosted by UW Extension, Michael field, DATCP and USDA. There are typically four workshops in different areas of the state held during September and October. They focus on a half day of grant writing tips/techniques and have day on finding grant and other funding opportunities. To be on an email list for the info when the workshops are available, contact Diane Mayerfeld at dbmayerfeld@wisc.edu.
* *Building Sustainable Farms* federal program guide – Go to: <https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub-summaries/?pub=279>. This is a fabulous resource for federal agricultural funds. Each program has a full page of information about it. The most recent addition is 2014.
* Got Moo-la – A DATCP directory of grants, loans, banks, investors and other resources for agricultural and food businesses seeking funding. Currently the only way to get a copy is to email tammy.fuller@wi.gov. Once it is updated, it will be available for download on <www.datcp.wi.gov>.
* Foundation Center software – Comprehensive, searchable directory for foundation funding. There is a hefty fee to access it on-line at <http://foundationcenter.org/products/foundation-directory-online>. However, the University of WI system has a subscription and allows public use. You should contact your closest UW to see if they have a copy or if you can access it on-line.

**Annual Grants that tend to be a good fit for growers**

* **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Grants** -   <http://www.sare.org/>  is the website for the national program.  Then look at <http://www.northcentralsare.org/State-Programs/Wisconsin/SARE-in-Wisconsin>.  This is the WI information for the SARE grants.  You can also contact Diane Mayerfeld Phone: 608.262.8188, Email: dbmayerfeld@wisc.edu.  She helps run the program in our state. There are several grants under this broad category. The Farmer/Rancher grants are probably the most applicable, but they also have a research partner grant that may be good too. The application is not very difficult and are often due in early fall but the due date varies from year to year.  The SARE website has a fabulous searchable database on all the projects that have been funded. The funding maximum is around $8000 per applicant for farmer rancher and the research partner grant is around $30,000 or more.
* **USDA Value Added Producers Grant (VAPG) -** <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants> it’s an excellent grant program meant for private business to expand their own business.  The grant is for making value-added products from things you grow/produce so it would only be useful once you establish your operation.  You have to make a value-added product to qualify for this grant.  However, washing and packaging is considered “adding value”, it just won’t help you until you actually start growing something.  Mike Daniels (Mike.Daniels@wi.usda.gov) is the USDA staff member who works with this program in WI.    This grant can fund up to $200,000 for an implementation project or up to $75,000 for a planning grant. It can pay for a lot of different aspects of your value-added product project.  The deadline tends to be in the fall but it really varies from year to year. The application for this grant is difficult and we have some trained grant writers in the state who charge for their services, but I’d highly recommend using one.  This grant is very meticulous about what activities are and are not eligible so definitely look at the application AND contact Mike to ask him advice if you think you’d like to apply.  Follow his advice to the letter.  He truly knows what does and does not get funded and he is extremely helpful.
* **The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin (BLBW) program** is an economic development program designed to help the Wisconsin agricultural and food industry find ways to improve food production, processing, marketing, and distribution with the ultimate goal of expanding Wisconsin’s local food system. Projects must increase local food sales in Wisconsin. Maximum award for this grant is $50,000 with a 1:1 match requirement. Eligible applicants include individual independent producers selling locally, individual independent processors using WI ingredients (that make up 51% of their product by weight, groups of independent producers (i.e. four farms working together), and Farmer/Rancher Cooperatives, Grower Associations and non-profits. Contact Kietra Olson (Kietra.olson@wi.gov) for questions.
* **Farmers Market (FMPP) and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grants** -   <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp> and <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>. These are two separate programs; FMPP isn’t necessarily about farmer’s markets, but about selling directly to consumers. The LFPP is about reducing barriers to getting local foods into local markets. FMPP awards are for $50,000-$500,000 depending on your type of project while the LFPP awards are for $25,000-$500,000 depending on type of project. Applications are usually due in spring. These are great projects but you must have benefit to other growers/community/etc. for your project to be eligible.
* **Foundation funding** - There is also private grant money – all grants listed above are government grants.  Private money tends to go to non-profits or be very small - $500-$5000 but it may be worth checking out.  Try your local utility company’s website to see if they have a foundation or advertise grant giving on their site.  They frequently have smaller grants that might help you get something started. Otherwise, see the Foundation Center software info in the first section of the sheet to locate other foundations.

**Other Funding Resources**

* **USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service** has a lot of cost sharing programs to help you pay for practices on your farm. Find your local agent through the federal website: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/national/home/
* **USDA’s Farm Service Agency** is a federal lending agency that provides low-interest loans for agribusinesses.  Search for your local WI office on the federal website: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>
* **USDA Rural Development Business and industry guaranteed loan program.**  You can find info about it at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_gar.html>.  Also, check out the USDA’s Rural Development Home Page – <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>  in the upper right corner of the home page you can get on their email list to be notified about new programs.
* **Compeer Financial**, headquartered in Prairie du Sac, is a locally owned cooperative serving more than 15,000 members through offices in 17 communities in 33 southern Wisconsin counties. It is committed to delivering on its vision to cultivate prosperity for agriculture and rural Wisconsin. Compeer Financial is part of the nationwide, federally regulated Farm Credit System. Compeer Financial offers loans for real estate, buildings, machinery and equipment, and operating expenses.  It has a specialized loan program for farmers growing for local food systems, and a loan and grant program for beginning farmers.  In addition to loans, the association offers tax preparation and consulting, farm accounting services including recordkeeping and payroll, building and machinery leases, and crop insurance.  Find the Compeer Financial branch office closest to you, visit [www.badgerlandfinancial.com](http://www.badgerlandfinancial.com) or call (877) 789-9058.
* **Other Farm Credit System associations** that serve Wisconsin are: United FCS (central Wisconsin) [www.unitedfcs.com](http://www.unitedfcs.com) AgStar Financial Services (northwestern Wisconsin) <http://agstar.com> GreenStone Farm Credit Services (northeastern Wisconsin) [www.greenstonefcs.com](http://www.greenstonefcs.com)