

Connecticut Department of Agriculture's

2026 Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant

This competitive grant is intended for applicants including food hubs, food access organizations, and municipalities with demonstrated capacity to purchase, aggregate, and distribute Connecticut Grown food to underserved communities.

FY 2026/27 Grant Application Guidelines

Application Deadline:

March 11, 2026, at 4:00 PM



**Ned Lamont, Governor
Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner**

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CTGrown.gov



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Important Dates & Key Information

1. There will be a webinar and question and answer session on Wednesday February 25, 2026 from 4:00-5:00pm. Please register for the webinar [HERE](#) or by going to www.CTGrown.gov. This will be recorded and posted on the [LFPA webpage](#).
2. Final applications must be received no later than 4:00 pm (EST) on **Wednesday March 11, 2026**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed. No exceptions will be made.
3. Questions may be directed to Cyrena Thibodeau, Cyrena.Thibodeau@ct.gov or 860-895-3094.

Grant Opportunity & Purpose

The purpose of CT DoAg's LFPA grant program is to provide CT Grown farm products to underserved communities, at no cost to the individual, while maintaining and improving the CT agricultural supply chain resiliency. This is done through:

1. Establishing and strengthening partnerships across the food supply chain to ensure access to fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate food in underserved communities.*
2. Purchasing from small ** Connecticut producers to build and expand market access and opportunities.

CT DoAg has a total of \$1,550,000 available to award through a competitive grant process. The selected applicant pool shall be considerate of geography and reach to ensure distribution and sourcing throughout the state.

Funding for the 2026 LFPA Grant is provided by the State of Connecticut in Special Act 25-1 through the Budget Reserve Fund.

Definitions

For the purposes of this funding, the following terms are defined:

****Underserved communities** refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

****Small producers** are defined as those that have an annual gross cash farm income (GCFI) of less than \$250,000.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are *eligible* to apply:

1. Food hubs and other CT aggregators
2. Food pantries, soup kitchens, and pantry networks
3. Municipalities
4. Community Health Center, hospitals, or other healthcare facilities
5. Mutual Aid networks
6. Faith based organizations
7. Senior Centers
8. Agricultural non-profits

Applicants must be located and operate in Connecticut and be considered in good standing with the state of Connecticut.

Project & Application Requirements

Projects must provide CT Grown farm products to underserved communities, at no cost to the individual, while maintaining and improving the CT agricultural supply chain resiliency by purchasing from small and socially disadvantaged producers to ensure access to fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate food

The structure of projects eligible for funding must reflect the following requirements:

- 1) All purchases and distribution of CT Grown food and farm products must occur from April 15, 2026 through June 30, 2027.
- 2) 100% of farm products purchased must be *grown in Connecticut (CT Grown)*. Value-added (pickles, jams, honey, maple syrup, etc.) minimally processed products (frozen and/or cut/chopped,) and prepared meals that are produced in CT and contain predominantly CT Grown ingredients are allowable.
- 3) At least **90% of project funds** must be spent on direct food purchases. **Up to 10%** of project costs directly attributable to the LFPA program may be taken to cover administrative, supply, and distribution costs.
- 4) Projects that source from multiple Connecticut producers, particularly small and socially disadvantaged producers, may receive additional consideration during evaluation.
- 5) Target populations for distribution include any low-income food insecure household, citizen or non-citizen, who is at or below the federal poverty level or who is considered Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE)

All applications must complete a project narrative on Cognito, the agency's online application portal.

While the recommended materials below are not required for eligibility, they may strengthen an application's competitiveness.

1. Letter(s) of intent from community partners that you will work with to distribute the food if applicable. A template that may be used is available for download on the DoAg LFPA webpage.
2. Documentation of interest from producers and/or vendors interested in selling products through your program. Please note that you are not limited to sourcing from the producers/vendors who express interest. CT DoAg can provide additional resources to connect with producers/vendors. Documentation can come in the form of a letter or an email.

Expenses & Payment

The amount awarded to an applicant through the LFPA Grant shall be a minimum of \$100,000 and cannot exceed \$310,000 for a 14-month award period. There is no match required for this grant.

Payment will be made to applicants in using the following payment schedule:

- Advance of 50% of project funds upon contract signing and approval of an advance request.
- Advance of 40% of project funds after proper documentation is approved from the first advance and approval of a second advance request.
- The remaining 10% of project funds will be reimbursed upon project completion and submission of final report. Please note that the burden of this remaining 10% must lie with the contract holder and cannot be at the expense of producers and/or vendors.

Submission Process

All applications and corresponding documentation are required to be submitted through the agency's grant application portal, Cognito.

[The grant application can be accessed here.](#)

Applicants requiring reasonable accommodations to complete the application may contact CT DoAg in advance of the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The LFPA Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined above and submitted timely, will be evaluated.

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Organizational capacity and past performance
- Strength of producer relationships
- Strength of community distribution partnerships
- Impact on underserved populations
- Feasibility and clarity of proposed approach

CT DoAg reserves the right to offer partial awards.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Projects must be **completed within 14 months** of contract execution. Final project reports are due 30 days prior to the end of the contract period.

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following

- Signing an agreement with the State of Connecticut,
- Providing a Certificate of Insurance holding the state harmless or listing the state as an additional insured on the grantee's liability insurance policy,
- Completing the project within the contractual timeframe,
- Submitting a final project report
- Submitting a final financial report itemizing actual expenses. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with the payment request at the conclusion of the project,
- Quarterly reporting and check-ins with CT DoAg program manager,
- Presentation of final project results and lessons learned to interested stakeholders at the conclusion of the project period, and
- Compliance with all applicable food safety requirements.

Awardees will be provided with templates and guidance to comply with all reporting requirements for this program which shall include but not be limited to:

- Quarterly submission of producers sourced from including business name, product type, quantity, and price.
- Quarterly submission of distributions made including organization or community distributed to, and number of individuals served.

- Quarterly financial reports with paid invoices to producers and other receipts as necessary to CT DoAg program manager, templates and guidance will be provided.