



Local Procurement

Local food purchasing not only benefits school nutrition programs, but can also serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers and producers. The diversity of crops grown in Wisconsin offers a unique opportunity for school nutrition programs to participate in Harvest of the Month activities through the procurement of local products. There is no federal definition of “local” and therefore is defined by each School Food Authority (SFA). The SFA’s definition of local may change seasonally, or with the type of product, or special event. Local can be defined by a certain number of miles from the SFA, within the county, the state, or adjacent state(s), etc.

Schools can connect with local producers, ranchers, and farmers through a few different channels. The most common are through a prime vendor, such as a commercial distributor, direct to the farmer or processor by attending a farmer’s market or auction, working with a food hub, co-op, or aggregator, and/or using U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods entitlement dollars towards the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Produce Program. Consider using the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#) as a place to begin searching for producers, ranchers, and farmers in your area. Connections can be made by calling, emailing, meeting in person, or if necessary, sending out written solicitations.

Most SFAs utilize the non-competitive micro-purchase or competitive small purchase method to obtain local foods. Before deciding which method to use, estimate the value of your purchase and have your specifications defined. The value of a micro-purchase is estimated by transaction and is the most flexible option. Whereas a small-purchase and formal procurement are typically estimated based on volume used over the course of a typical school year.

For more information, including purchasing thresholds, visit the [WI DPI School Nutrition Team Local Procurement](#) webpage.