



Iowa LFPA: Together We Grow, Together We Thrive

Iowa leads the nation in producing and selling eggs, pork, and other crops and agriculture products. The economic impact of Iowa's agriculture is worth over \$88 billion a year and creates and maintains 315,000 jobs in the state. Yet at the same time, 300,000 people face hunger - 68,990 of whom are children. This is around one-third of the state's population. And, despite the state's family farming history, over 90% of the food eaten in Iowa is imported from outside the state. The rich history is also threatened by a lack of diversity and an aging farm population - there are only 72 Black farmers in the state, and the average age of Iowa farmers is over 55 years old. The challenges are even greater among enrolled families in the Meskwaki Nation where food access is weak and prices are often higher.

To ensure that all of Iowa's farmers and producers continue to grow and thrive - and to help curb rising rates of food insecurity - a unique partnership was created involving USDA, the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship (IDALS), Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development (IVRC&D) and the tribal government of the Meskwaki.

This partnership is funded by the USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program

By the Numbers

\$5.6 million allocated to source and distribute food from Iowa farmers to Iowans

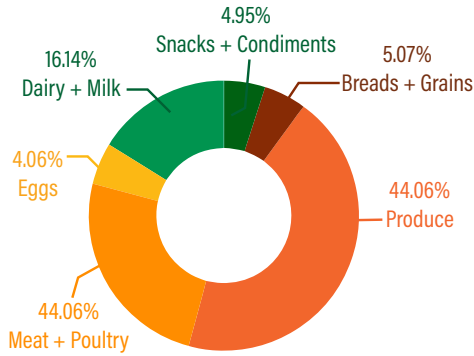
73% of funding is allocated for food purchases from hyper-local farms

\$2 million in new sales by Iowan farmers in the first year

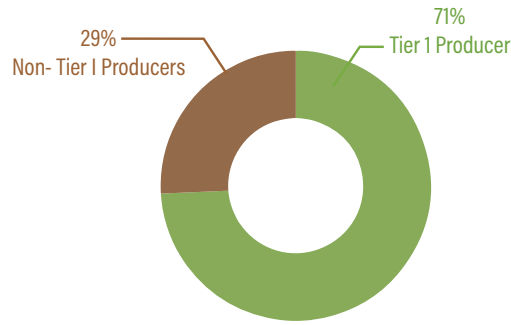
(LFPA) which uses non-competitive cooperative agreements to provide up to \$900 million of American Rescue Plan (ARP) and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funding for state, tribal and territorial governments to purchase foods produced within the state. **Through LFPA, Iowa is on track to buy \$4.1 million in food products from Iowa farmers.** The food is distributed through the state's network of food banks, food hubs, and the Meskwaki Nation, and reaches the most vulnerable Iowans in their communities and homes.

Hyper-Local Focus Benefits Iowa Family Farmers

Nationally, the LFPA program allows state, tribal and territorial governments to purchase foods produced within 400 miles of the delivery destination. The Iowa LFPA program uses a hyper-local definition and requires that all products be produced within Iowa or in the immediate bordering counties. This ensures that the funding directly benefits Iowa farmers and ranchers, including beginning farmers, smaller-scale producers, and those who primarily distribute through local and regional food markets (as opposed to wider commodity distribution methods).



LFPA PROCUREMENT BREAKDOWN



DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

The Iowa LFPA program has a tiered model that prioritizes purchases from “socially disadvantaged” producers (defined by the USDA as belonging to racial or ethnic categories that have historically faced discrimination). Tier One producers are those who identify as BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, women, veterans, and LGBTQIA+. Collectively, Iowa’s food distributors for the LFPA program (food hubs, food banks, and Meskwaki), are aiming to invest between 60% and 100% of food funds in producers that fall into Tier One.

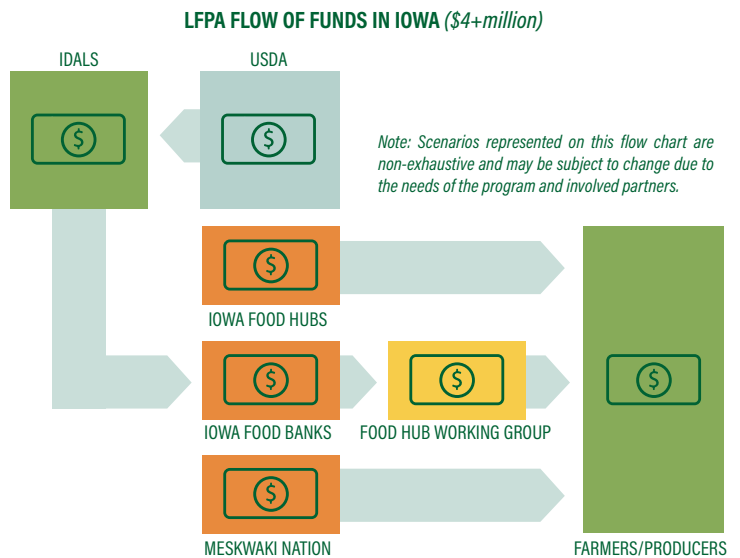
“We are keeping the dollars in the state. This has a big impact in the towns, too. When we spend money with the farmers, they hire more people locally, they spend money on Main Street. It’s a win-win. We can provide higher quality, Iowa-grown food, to food banks and help put dollars into the local communities.”

Program Optimizes Existing Food Bank Networks

Iowa’s LFPA design team emphasized using existing networks and relationships among the state’s six food banks and more than 2,000 food bank network partners and value chain coordinators (such as food pantries). These partners contracted food hubs, cooperatives, and other local food businesses and nonprofits to coordinate procurement from local farms and distribution to food access organizations. Within this unique agreement, sixteen distributors — representing food hubs, food banks, and Meskwaki Nation — work directly with producers and distribute food to community partner sites, ensuring an efficient and streamlined process.

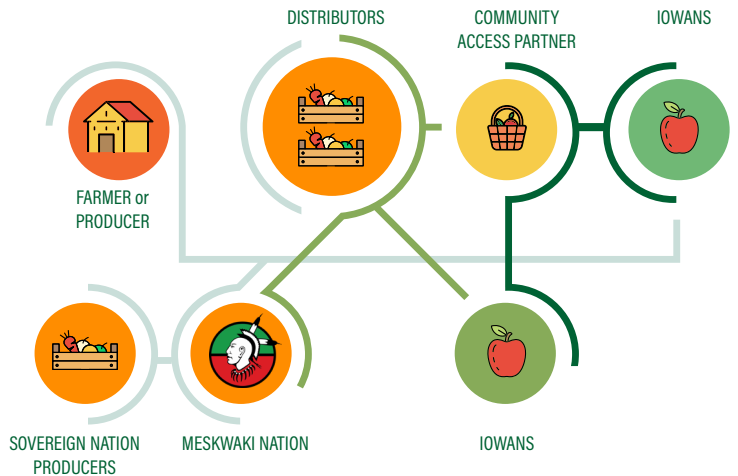
“River Bend Food Bank has been able to utilize food funding through the LFPA to purchase food produced by Tapestry Farms’ farmers, who are immigrants and refugees. That has allowed them to donate that food free of charge to the end-user, around the Quad Cities.”

Distributors – including 6 Feeding America Food Banks, 9 Food Hub Entities, and Meskwaki Nation – submit work plan proposals to participate in the program’s three phases. New applications are reviewed and approved by a Community Food Distribution Committee and funding allocations recommendations for approved plans are made by a Financial Controls Committee. Once an organization becomes a community access partner, they are eligible to receive local food, free of charge, from an LFPA Distributor within a strategy tailored to their respective regions and communities.



Meskwaki Nation is a Key Partner in Reaching All of Iowa

Within the LFPA program, Tribal governments were given the opportunity to operate independently or partner with state agencies and other organizations. The Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa, known as the Meskwaki Nation, or the "People of the Red Earth," is Iowa's only federally recognized Indigenous tribe. Meskwaki chose to partner with the IDALS and IVRC&D to ensure that tribal community enrolled members have access to the most robust network of producers and food aggregators to leverage for procurement. The Meskwaki also prioritize purchasing culturally relevant foods for their community and making purchases from Tribal producers.



Note: Scenarios represented on this flow chart are non-exhaustive and may be subject to change due to the needs of the program and involved partners.

“Our partners are now finding sources they didn't know about for some socially, and culturally relevant local foods that they can't get from their mainstream providers. Like a white eggplant, African white eggplant is a hot item they now know how to get a hold of through local Iowa producers. Money stays in the state, and they can meet the needs of the population with what they're able to serve.”

Together the partnership reaches the most vulnerable communities and is on track to reach all of Iowa's 99 counties.



Additional Resources

More information about Iowa's innovative approach to LFPA can be found through the Iowa Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program (ILFPA) at iowalfpa.org.

About LFPA

The USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement (LFPA) is a transformative federal initiative that empowers state agencies, tribal governments, and their community partners to collaboratively source and distribute food, benefiting local socially disadvantaged producers and underserved communities. With a budget of \$900M, LFPA, led by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Commodity Procurement Program, aims to strengthen regional food systems, support local and regional farms, and address hunger and food insecurity through partnerships with food assistance programs. This groundbreaking program has demonstrated its potential as a powerful investment in farms and communities in a short time since its inception in 2021.