



Dairy Business Innovation Alliance

Request for proposal (RFP) for Organic Dairy Product Distribution

Issuing Organization:

Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA)

A partnership between the Center for Dairy Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association (WCMA)

Project Overview

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) seeks proposals from organic dairy processors to participate in a program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through its Organic Dairy Product Promotion. The goal is to strengthen organic dairy producers and processors in the DBIA's 11-state region, which includes Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

DBIA will distribute \$3.75 million in competitive grants to support the costs associated with the distribution of organic dairy products for students and young adults (ages 0-25) in institutional settings such as schools, colleges, and youth organizations.

Grant award periods will be 2 years.

Eligibility

DBIA invites organic dairy processors who are committed to expanding their business while increasing consumer exposure to organic dairy products in youth and young adult institutional settings. Eligible dairy products include, but are not limited to:

- Milk
- Half-and-half
- Cheese
- Butter
- Cottage cheese
- Sour cream
- Dairy-based dips
- Yogurt
- Kefir

Participating processors must agree not to displace existing traditional dairy offerings and must comply with reporting requirements.

Scope of Work & Reporting Requirements

Selected processors will:

- Provide organic dairy products to institutions serving students and young adults.
- Ensure that distributions target new markets and do not replace existing dairy contracts.
- Submit biannual reports summarizing distribution activities, including the number of individuals served and the volume of organic dairy products distributed.
- Submit a final report detailing the locations served, number of organic farmers benefiting via the associated distribution, summary of the distribution activities, including total number of individuals served and volume of organic dairy products distributed.

Funding and Budget

Grant funds can be used for the procurement, storage, and distribution of organic dairy products. However, funds cannot be used for administrative expenses, marketing, advertising, supplies, or equipment.

The price of organic dairy products provided through this program will be set by the engaged dairy processors and should be considered reasonable by DBIA program administrators.

The DBIA anticipates offering the following grant awards:

- 1-2 grants of up to \$1.5 million
- 1-3 grants between \$250,000 and \$500,000
- 2-5 grants up to \$100,000

Funds will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis, and grant recipients must include receipts with reimbursement requests.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants must provide:

- A detailed plan outlining their approach to distributing organic dairy products to the target population.
- Estimated volumes and serving sizes of the organic products they intend to distribute.
- A clear strategy for meeting the program's goals without displacing traditional dairy offerings.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Ability to increase consumer exposure to organic dairy products in new markets.
- Demonstrated capacity to manage the logistics of distributing organic dairy products.
- Impact on the organic dairy production market.
- Innovation in product distribution.

Overall Grant Application- 10 points

Is the project or initiative thoroughly described, well-organized and easy to follow?

Project Summary, Work Plan/Timeline - 30 points

- Does the project meet the Organic Dairy Product Distribution program goals?
- How well has the applicant explained the project and their goals?
- Are there clear timelines and milestones?

Project Budget – 15 points

How complete is the project budget scope?

Does the budget reflect the full cost of the project*?

How reasonable are the estimated costs?

*Although administration (staff/personnel) and marketing costs are not eligible for reimbursement, please include them in the project budget – additional expenses, to provide a comprehensive view of the program's total cost.

Project Logistics – 20 points

Does the applicant clearly lay out a distribution plan to meet the goals of the program?

Outcomes – 25 points

- Does the applicant clearly specify the number of consumers impacted by the program?
- Does the applicant clearly specify the volume, serving size and types of products to be distributed as a part of the project?

Key Dates

- **RFP Released:** January 8, 2025
- **Proposal Submission Deadline:** February 21, 2025
- **Grant Review Period:** February 24 – February 27, 2025
- **Award Notification:** February 28, 2025
- **Subaward Public Announcement:** March 12, 2025
- **Subaward Execution Period:** March 12, 2025 – March 12, 2027.
- **Biannual Reports Due On:** 9/12/2025, 3/12/2026, 9/12/2026 and 3/12/2027
- **Final Reports Due from Subawardees:** July 12, 2027

Submission Instructions:

Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm CT, Friday, February 21st, 2025, via Microsoft Form link [HERE](#).

WCMA requires signed letters of support from all proposed partner organizations. The letters should be on the organization's letterhead, acknowledge willingness to participate in the program and agreement of the proposed project timeline. The letters of support must be submitted via email to dnilsestuen@wischeesemakers.org by the application deadline.

Late submissions will not be accepted.

Contact information

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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