

# Jersey Fresh for All, Local Food Purchase Assistance

## Frequently Asked Questions



The Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement program (LFP), known as Jersey Fresh for All in New Jersey, awards funds to states and local governments to buy food from local and socially disadvantaged farmers. The program aims to provide food for underserved communities and improve the resilience of the food supply chain. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) will implement LFP's food purchasing programs and establish partnerships with NJ farmers that best suit local needs and seasonal harvests. CFBNJ will coordinate with other food banks and distribution organizations to ensure that the agricultural products purchased through LFP are distributed in all 21 NJ counties. The Common Market and NJ Food Democracy Collaborative, NJ's state-level food policy council, will be key collaborators in the research, outreach, and relationship development activities for the first two years of the program. You can learn more about this program on the [USDA](#) and [NJFDC](#) websites.

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Q1: Can pantries and food banks enter into agreements directly with NJ Producers?

A: No. Although the other five NJ Food Banks (Food Bank of South Jersey, NORWESCAP, FulFill, CFBNJ, and Mercer Street Friends) can and are encouraged to work with local farmers and CFBNJ to participate in, and benefit from food purchased through LFP, the Community Food Bank of NJ is the holder of the funds and the lead manager of all contracts.

If you are unsure of which of these five NJ Food Banks your farm is within the area of (or which of these five NJ Food Bank networks your local food pantries participate in), we suggest you reach out to one or more of your local food pantries to inquire, or use this guide: <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/fn/pdf/EFO%20%20Listing.pdf>

Please note that only food pantries participating in one of these five NJ Food Bank networks can participate as recipients of food purchased through LFP.

### Farm Identification and Vetting

Q2: How are farms with managing staff that are “socially disadvantaged,” but not ownership, classified?

A: Only the owner/principals are eligible to participate in LFPA. Farm owners should submit a “self-identification” form (found here: <https://www.njfooddemocracy.org/self-identify-as-a-socially-disadvantaged-farmer-or-producer>). The owners/principals of the farm business are empowered to contract with CFBNJ with regard to volume, delivery dates, pricing, and logistics.

Q3: Can LFPA funds be used to help farmers invest in their workforce?

A: No.

Q4: Can LFPA funding be used to pay for Good Agricultural Practices (G.A.P) certifications, training, seed, or crop insurance?

A: No. Food safety certifications, training, seed, or crop insurance are examples of production costs. Costs associated with food production activities, or costs associated with general purpose development or training, are unallowable.

### **Farmer Logistics**

Q5: What are the pricing allowances for different products, models, etc.?

A: Expect to be paid market prices for products and services contracted for by the CFBNJ. In addition to a market \$/Lb, a producer may be paid a higher price if they provide value-added. For example, a higher price can be allowed if the product includes delivery to a food bank warehouse or direct delivery to agencies.

Q6: What are the reporting requirements for farmers participating in LFPA?

A: Producers must provide standard shipment paperwork, like bills of lading and invoices, for each shipment.

Q7: What are the key requirements for a producer in terms of liability insurance, gap certification, licensure, business status, yields, etc.?

A: Producers are encouraged to be Good Agricultural Practices (G.A.P) certified. To set up a vendor in the CFBNJ system, a supplier must complete a W9 and contact information with CFBNJ. Produce is expected to be market-ready (e.g., rinsed at a wash station) to be used by a food bank or pantry. Most meet the standards of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

### **Infrastructure Needs or Barriers**

Q8: What are the specific guidelines for spending infrastructure funds?

A: There are no LFPA funds budgeted for “infrastructure”. However, they may be used for supplies and equipment rental. So, LFPA funds could potentially be used to buy packaging materials or rent coolers.

Q9: Are there examples or precedents that can be followed?

A: So far, LFPA funds have been used to support the purchase of necessary supplies or rent equipment, including extra CSA share bins.

Q10: Can LFPA support administrative time for aggregators/distributors and local food connectors?

A: The product's sale price should include an aggregator or distributor's administrative, operating, and overhead costs. That is the value they are providing. For example, Common Market's \$20.00/produce box price is high. However, Common Market provides added value by aggregating product from several sources, inspecting it, packaging it, and delivering it directly to the agencies.

Q11: Can LFPA support specific infrastructure needs for a farm for wholesale readiness, such as refrigeration or packing supplies?

A: LFPA funds can be used for supplies or equipment for a partner-producer directly related to participation in Jersey Fresh for All. There is a \$5000 limit for supplies costs. Equipment needs would be on a lease/rental agreement with the CFBNJ. Please feel free to let NJFDC know about infrastructure gaps that, if addressed, could allow for your farm's participation in Jersey Fresh for All. We will forward those needs to CFBNJ for review for compliance with LFPA guidelines.

Q12. What if a producer does not have their own vehicle or cannot deliver the product?

A: CFBNJ can arrange for the product to be picked up either by another agency (food bank or pantry in its network) or a trucking company.

### **Expansion of Food Access Partnerships**

Q13: What are the constraints and opportunities in expanding partnerships with food access partners outside of CFBNJ's existing partners?

A: A local food distribution location (e.g., a food pantry) must be part of the existing network of one of NJ's food banks or be willing to onboard into that network. If you are unsure if a pantry near you is part of one of NJ's food bank networks, please ask us and we will confirm.

### **Flexibility and Innovation in Pilots**

Q14: From CFBNJ's perspective, are there specific questions or points of clarity about innovative and flexible models that must be addressed?

A: CFBNJ is open to exploring any purchasing proposals-- small or large scale-- that align with LFPA goals. They aim to provide a market for and a partner to socially disadvantaged and emerging producers. They also intend to provide agencies and partner food banks with more of the products they desire.

Q15: How can the program remain flexible to accommodate alternative and decentralized approaches?

A: CFBNJ is open to proposals for both produce and other products, including meats, fish, and dairy.

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For more information about the USDA LFPA program, visit:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/lfpacap/exec-summaries/nj>

For details and information about the focus groups, and to provide program feedback on Jersey Fresh for All, visit the NJ Food Democracy Collaborative's website:

<https://www.njfooddemocracy.org/jersey-fresh-for-all>

You can reach Jeanine Cava, Lead Facilitator of NJ FDC here: [njfdc@foodshedalliance.org](mailto:njfdc@foodshedalliance.org)

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