



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2023 Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act Report Frequently Asked Questions

The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act (Local Food Act) was enacted in 2017 and amended in 2019 to create, strengthen, and expand local farm and food economies throughout the state. The Local Food Act **requires** institutions to set a goal of at least 20% of their food budget to be spent on local food and **requires** institutions to provide information on their local food procurement budget.

Institutions will complete a form reporting their institution's activities related to the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act for fiscal year 2023 (FY2023). FY2023 began on July 1, 2022, and ended on June 30, 2023. Institutions that do not submit a report will be listed as "Did Not Respond" in the annual report that is submitted to the Governor and Arkansas General Assembly.

The reporting form will open on Wednesday, July 19, 2023. The reporting form will close at 11:59 PM on Friday, September 15, 2023.

The reporting form can be found at the following link:

[cognitofrms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/ 2023LocalFoodFarmsAndJobsActReport](https://cognitofrms.com/ArkansasAgriculture1/2023LocalFoodFarmsAndJobsActReport).

KEY TERMS AND PHRASES:

Institution: The organization for which you are reporting. As defined by the Local Food Act, "institution" can include institutes of higher education, school districts, early childhood education facilities, state agencies or other entities of the state, Medicaid-funded facilities (senior care center, residential treatment facility, skilled nursing facility, etc.), libraries, and others.

Local Food and Farm Products: Food products that are grown in Arkansas and/or packaged and processed in Arkansas. Food packaging is the enclosing of food for transport, storage, and retail sale (ex: enclosing, bagging, etc.). Food processing is the alteration of food from its natural raw state (ex: washing, cutting, etc.)

Food Product: A substance, whether in liquid, concentrated, solid, frozen, dried, or dehydrated form, that is sold for human consumption.

Food Service Programs: A program that provides for the preparation and consumption of food products at an on-site cafeteria and/or regularly served meals, even if prepared in an off-site kitchen or location. Food service programs **do not** include catered events, franchises, or privately-owned third-party vendors that do not serve as the primary provider for the delivery of food products on behalf of an institution.

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Food Budget: The sum total of all dollars spent on any “food product” (as defined above).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. *How do I know if my institution needs to submit the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act form?*
As per the 2019 amendment to the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act, an institution that receives at least \$25,000 in funding from the State of Arkansas and has a food service program is **required** to complete [the reporting form](#). Filling out the “Institution Information” and “Screening Questions” sections of the form will determine whether your institution meets the criteria to submit a local food procurement report. Upon completion of the “Screening Questions” section, subsequent sections will become available in the form if your institution is required to complete the report.
2. *What is included in the \$25,000 funding received from the state?*
The \$25,000 includes any funds that your institution receives from the state for any purpose. The funds that your institution received may support staff, salaries, programs, operations, or services provided by your institution.
3. *Does the \$25,000 funding requirement apply to the entire institution, or just the food service department?*
The \$25,000 funding threshold applies to your entire institution (for example, to the entire school district.)
4. *Does my institution have to submit the report if we do not receive funding from the state?*
All institutions should complete the first two sections of the report: “Institution Information” and “Screening Questions”. This will ensure you are not included in the “Did Not Respond” list in the annual report that is submitted to the Governor and Arkansas General Assembly. If your institution consistently does not receive state funding and you do not wish to complete the first two sections of the form, email LFFJAHelp@arkansas.gov to be removed from future reporting requests and to be removed from the “Did Not Respond” list.
5. *Does my institution have to submit the report if we do not have a food program?*
All institutions should complete the first two sections of the report: “Institution Information” and “Screening Questions”. This will ensure you are not included in the “Did Not Respond” list in the annual report that is submitted to the Governor and Arkansas General Assembly. If you do not have a food program and do not wish to complete the first two sections of the form, email LFFJAHelp@arkansas.gov to be removed from future reporting requests and to be removed from the “Did Not Respond” list.

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6. *What information do I need to have in order to complete the report?*

All institutions must submit basic information about the institution, the individual completing the report on the institution's behalf, and the institution's state funding dollars received in FY2023. The following information is useful for completing the report, if applicable:

- Institution information (name and address, type of institution, institution Employer Identification Number);
 - i. Your institution's Employer Identification Number (EIN) is a 9-digit number (e.g. 12-3456789) assigned to entities for tax filing and reporting purposes. You can locate your institution's EIN on the confirmation letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), previous tax returns, previous business loan applications, your business credit report, or payroll paperwork. You can also contact the IRS to look up your EIN by calling the Business & Specialty Tax Line at 800-829-4933.
- Information about your food service management company;
- Total dollars spent by your institution on food products;
- Total dollars spent on locally grown and/or processed foods;
- A copy of a policy statement signed by the executive head of your institution, or your institution's designee expressing a commitment to comply with the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act legislation. If your institution does not have a written policy statement, you may use [this template](#).

7. *What happens if my institution does not submit a report?*

If a state-funded institution chooses not to complete any component of the report, including the two required sections, the institution shall be listed as "Did Not Respond" in the annual report that is submitted to the Governor and Arkansas General Assembly. If you are unsure whether you meet the criteria for completing the report, contact the person responsible for receiving funds at your institution, and/or the person responsible for any food-related activities that take place within your institution.

8. *When is the report due?*

The report is due by 11:59 PM on September 15, 2023.

9. *Can I save my information in the report and come back to it later or share it with someone else?*

You can save the form at any point and continue at a later date and time. Scroll to the bottom of the form and press "Save." The form will prompt you to "copy your form link." **Please keep note of this link.** You can receive an email with the link to your saved report by entering your email and clicking "Send." To return to the form, copy the link and paste it into your browser. Alternatively, you can click "Resume Now" in the email received from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture if you chose the option to receive the link in your email inbox.

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10. *What is the reporting process if I am not the right person within my institution to complete the form?*

You can forward the form link to the correct person. The form link is not unique to the original recipient.

11. *What is the reporting process when our institution has a contract with a food service management company, like Aramark, or something similar?*

If a third-party food service management company manages your food service program, you should work with them to gather all the required information that you need to complete the form. The form is designed so you can save what you have completed and forward the form to your vendor to complete the questions specific to the food service program at your institution. (See Question 9 on this document for a detailed description on saving and returning to your form.)

12. *How do I report that our institution serves food at more than one location?*

The form asks a question on the total number of locations where food is served by the program. You will enter a number indicating how many locations exist. If different food service management companies operate at those locations, each company will need to submit a report. See Question 13 on this document for more information on reporting when an institution has multiple food service contracts.

13. *What is the reporting process for an institution that has multiple food service contracts because they work with different food service management companies (ex: Area Agencies on Aging)?*

If each of your institutions has multiple food service contracts because you work with different food service management companies, then a report needs to be submitted for each contract. Work with each contract provider to complete the food budget and procurement questions.

14. *How do I find Arkansas farmers?*

Several resources are available for locating Arkansas farmers. [The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act 2022 Annual Report](#) includes a list of farms in the appendix. The Arkansas Grown and Arkansas Made database can be found at www.arkansasgrown.org; it includes both a list and a map of farms in Arkansas. Arkansas MarketMaker is another resource and can be found at ar.foodmarketmaker.com.

15. *Is dairy included in the local food sourced by my institution?*

Yes, dairy is considered a local farm/food product if it is produced on an Arkansas farm, or sourced from a business located in Arkansas that processes or packages dairy.

16. *Are larger Arkansas companies, such as Tyson and Hiland Dairy, considered local?*

Yes, at this time, these companies are considered local, even though they have operations

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outside of Arkansas state lines. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is working to understand the traceability of the products provided by these companies.

17. *If our institution's agriculture department or agriculture team produces and/or processes meat to sell to the public, can we count that toward our 20% local food goal if we purchase from them for use in our food service program?*

Yes, food purchased directly from an institution's agriculture department, or from a school garden, will count towards the 20% local food goal.

18. *Is food purchased for educational purposes (e.g. a hospitality training program, classroom taste tests, school garden purchases) reportable?*

Not at this time. We welcome knowing more about procurement practices for food purchased for educational purposes, however, such purchases are not part of your food service program, and hence, are not required to be reported.

19. *What happens if my institution's form indicates that my institution doesn't purchase 20% of our total food budget locally?*

The only requirement of the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act is that qualifying institutions report their food purchases annually. The 20% local food purchase goal is a target. By reporting annually you provide the Arkansas Department of Agriculture with important feedback that helps us reach this target.

20. *What should I do if I have further questions?*

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture hosted a **Local Food Q&A Webinar** on **August 9, 2023**, to address further queries on the report. The recording of the webinar, as well as some additional resources and information, can be found on the [Arkansas Department of Agriculture's website](#).

If you have any specific questions, please email LFFJAHelp@arkansas.gov.