



**Maryland Certified Local Farm
and Fish Program Report**
to the
**Senate Committee on Education,
Energy and the Environment**
and
**House Committee on Health and
Government Operations**

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to the
Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
House Health and Government Operations Committee**

Fiscal Year 2024

Program Overview

The Maryland Department of Agriculture created the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program (CLFF) in 2021 to encourage state agencies, including public four-year universities, to achieve an overall goal of purchasing 20% of their food from Certified Local Farm and Fish Directory per Agriculture Article, §2-103; State Finance and Procurement Article, §14-701 14-707, Annotated Code of Maryland. The purpose of the program is to increase economic opportunity and participation of qualified Maryland farms in State government procurement. State agencies and universities shall report on purchasing from providers listed in the Certified Local Farm and Fish Directory.

In accordance with §2–1257 of the State Government Article on Program Implementation and Participation, 2023 Chapter 576 states that the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) shall submit a consolidated report to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment and the House Health and Government Operations Committee by December 31 of every year.

There is no cost to become a Certified Local Farm or Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider. Once certified, farms or seafood providers must renew annually. Registration and renewal of certification take place through the State’s OneStop portal.

A certified local farm is a farm that has a nutrient management plan or meets the nutrient management requirements, i.e. apiarists or aquaculturists, with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. A Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider is a seafood dealer that is licensed as a Tidal Fish Dealer with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. DNR provides MDA with a list of Tidal Fish Dealer licensees on an annual basis. There are 133 farms or Certified Chesapeake Invasive Species Providers in the CLFF Directory.

Maryland Department of Agriculture identified the following agencies that procure food with state funds through the review of the agency’s mission: Department of General Services, Maryland Dept of Health, Dept. of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Dept. of Juvenile Services, Dept. of Veteran Affairs and 10 Universities. The Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE) processes meat and seafood products for state agencies. It remains unclear whether MCE is mandated to report on its local food procurement activities.

The following agencies and universities requested waivers from the Certified Local Farm and Fish Program for FY 2024:

- Department of Public Safety & Correctional Services
- Department of Juvenile Services
- Coppin State University
- Frostburg State University
- University of MD College Park (UMCP)

The primary data point used to measure the state entity's food purchasing goal is payment dollars. During FY 2024, total expenditures from 16 Certified Local Farm and Fish providers across the state agencies/universities was \$238,919 while approximately \$97 million was spent on food from over 100 food vendors (Appendix 1). Over 56 million meals were served. Only the work of a CLFF provider, performing as either a prime contractor or a subcontractor, was counted toward the food procurement goal. The following Comptroller Expenditure Object Codes were used to determine food procurement: OBJ 0811 and OBJ 0920 while credit card payments used Merchant Category Codes: 5300, 5411, 5422, 5441, 5451, 5462, and 5499.

	# of CLFF providers selling to state agencies	State expenditures to CLFF providers
FY 23	10	\$522,334
FY 24	16	\$238,920

In FY 24, State agencies and universities bought over \$800,000 from Maryland agriculture producers and over \$300,000 from seafood providers who were not certified with CLFF. The report author spoke to a distributor involved with the CLFF program and the distributor stated “Food safety is a priority. I can only buy from Maryland producers who have their USDA Good Agricultural Practice (USDA GAP) certification in addition to the producers who meet the state’s nutrient management requirements.”

The state agencies’ food specifications may or may not include USDA GAP certification, however, MDA is seeing a trend that food distributors are requiring USDA GAP certification from Maryland producers. MDA offers a cost-share program for producers who want to become USDA GAP certified and are part of the Maryland Food Safety Network, so USDA GAP certification should not be a barrier to selling to state institutions.

State agencies and universities are encouraged to become more aware of the Maryland agriculture and seafood providers being used in their food procurement and reach out to MDA if their agricultural or seafood providers are not in the CLFF program. MDA will work with the provider to have them become a part of the program if they meet the program’s requirements.

Producer participation is a key element of the CLFF Program's success. The Maryland Department of Agriculture will continue to build the program to implement marketing, outreach, and training to increase the number of providers in the Certified Local Farm and Fish program.

Program Highlights:

- On December 5, 2024, representatives from the Department of General Services (DGS), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) met with a diverse group of farmers and seafood businesses at MDA headquarters. The discussion focused on expanding opportunities for local producers to sell food to state agencies through the Certified Local Farm and Fish (CLFF) Program and schools through the Maryland Farm to School program. MDA and DGS emphasized their commitment to increasing the use of local food in state agencies. DGS is also exploring possible state procurement tools to facilitate increased participation. MDA and DGS plan to host another outreach session for farmers in early 2025. Additionally, MDA will reach out to the University of Maryland's dining services team and other public universities to hold a similar event in 2025.
- The Certified Local Farm and Fish directory increased the number of providers by 33%.
- MARBIDCO Certified Local Farm Aggregation Grant Fund: 5 projects are approved for 245,192 pending USDA RFSI Approval in early 2025.
- The following state entities requested Certified Local Farm and Fish language to include into their Request for Proposals on the program:
 - Salisbury University
 - University of Maryland College Park

APPENDIX 1

State Agency / University	Total Value food purchased (\$)	Payments to CLFF (\$)	%	Report Requirement	Report status
Department of General Services	\$2,216,067	\$0	0.00%	Required	Reported
Dept of Health	\$3,896,176	\$5,731	0.25%	Required	Reported
Dept of Juvenile Services	\$66,848	\$6,626	*1	Required	Reported
Dept of Public Safety & Correctional Services	\$39,012,084	\$7,055	0.02%	Required	Reported
Dept of Veteran Affairs	\$2,237,811	\$0	0.00%	Required	Reported
University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)	\$6,319,308	\$5,999	0.09%	Required	Reported
University of Maryland College Park (UMCP)	\$25,710,194	\$192,839	0.75%	Required	Reported
Towson State University	\$9,070,722	\$6,507	0.07%	Required	Reported
Bowie State University				Optional	
Coppin State University	\$1,059,922	\$2,240	0.21%	Optional	Reported
Frostburg State University (FSU)	\$2,165,660	\$6,120	0.28%	Optional	Reported
Morgan State University				Optional	
Salisbury University (SU)				Optional	
St. Mary's College of Maryland				Optional	
University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)	\$5,900,546	\$5,803	0.10%	Optional	Reported
TOTAL	\$97,655,338	\$238,920	0.25%		

**1 MDA was unable to calculate the percentage due to the discrepancies reported in Total Value of Food Purchased from FY 23 to FY 24. MDA reached out several times for clarification and did not receive a response before the report's due date.*

Universities that have the option to report¹:

University	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date
Frostburg State University	Before 3/14/2021	6/2024
Coppin State University	Before 3/14/2021	7/31/2030
Morgan State University	6/1/2020	6/1/2025
Salisbury University	1/3/2017	6/30/2025
Bowie State University	7/1/2019	6/30/2029
University of Maryland Baltimore Co.	7/1/2018	6/30/2033
St. Mary's College of Maryland	7/1/2020	6/30/2027

¹ State agencies or universities that signed a food service contract before the law took effect on March 14, 2021, have an option to submit a report. They do not need to report until the contract ends or is renewed.

Universities that do not have dining halls or cafeterias and therefore not required to report:

- University of Maryland Global Campus
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- University of Baltimore