



COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus Disease) Resources for Small and Direct Marketing Farm Businesses

For current public health and safety practices with the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the Washington State Department of Health coronavirus webpage at doh.wa.gov/coronavirus or find your local health department website doh.wa.gov/AboutUs/PublicHealthSystem/LocalHealthJurisdictions.

The following resources include direct responses to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, and ongoing farm and small business programs that may be especially helpful now for small and direct marketing farms and food businesses.

Information and resources are changing quickly. Please follow the links provided for current information.

Consolidated Washington Business Resources

State, local, and federal governments are quickly rolling out COVID-19 response programs and policies to assist impacted businesses and households. These go-to clearinghouse sites are updated frequently.

- **Washington State Coronavirus Response** - The portal for all state announcements, information, and resources related our state's the pandemic response (coronavirus.wa.gov)
- **Governor's Office Covid-19 Resource list for Businesses** – Financial assistance, insurance, and loans available to businesses (governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-resources-businesses-and-workers)
- **StartUpWashington Covid-19 Resources from the Department of Commerce** - small business planning tools, and links to financial assistance, employment, insurance, and health practices (startup.choosewashingtonstate.com/links/crisis/covid-19-resources/)
- **BUSINESS.WA.GOV Small Business Guidance Covid-19 resources** – Information available via chat, phone, text, and email. Access to the Washington State Small Business Liaison Team – the Department of Health, Labor & Industries, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, , emergency preparedness, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and more (business.wa.gov/site/alias_business/1561/covid-19.aspx)

Paid Leave and Unemployment Resources for Employers and Workers

- **Employment Security Department (ESD)** manages unemployment insurance and can help Washington businesses with Standby/ Unemployment benefits and options to support or retain employees.
 - Q&A information for both workers and employers about leave benefits and responsibilities during COVID-19 impacts (esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19)
 - **ESD Layoff Assistance** for businesses and workers that can help with strategies to retain workers (esd.wa.gov/newsroom/layoff-assistance)

Financial Assistance for Businesses

- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loans** - Small businesses in many Washington counties are now eligible to apply for low interest SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans to offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. (sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance)
- **USDA Farm Loans and Insurance** can help for certain emergency and ongoing business needs. (fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Washington/index)
 - **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Emergency Farm Loan Program** can help producers in designated disaster counties recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters (fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/emergency-farm-loans/index)
 - **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** helps producers to manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters (fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index). NAP is FREE for socially disadvantaged farmers (lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/SDFP_Definition.aspx)
 - **Whole Farm Revenue Insurance** is designed for diversified farms and protects against income loss (rma.usda.gov/en/Fact-Sheets/National-Fact-Sheets/Whole-Farm-Revenue-Protection-2020)

Tax Relief

The following are not currently required in most areas, but consider including these in your disaster planning:

- **Washington State Department of Revenue** is taking measures during the state of emergency to provide relief to all COVID-19 impacted businesses addressing business and occupation (B&O) tax, real estate excise tax, and other state taxes (dor.wa.gov/about/business-relief-during-covid-19-pandemic)
- **Internal Revenue Service** has relaxed filing dates for some federal taxes (irs.gov/coronavirus)

Small Business COVID-19 Guidance and Tools

- **SBA Guidance for businesses and employers to plan and respond to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)** (sba.gov/page/guidance-businesses-employers-plan-respond-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19)
- **SBDC** is a network of business advisors that provides one-on-one, confidential and no-cost advising. They are offering regional business resiliency webinars details at (wsbdc.org/protect-your-business/)

Adaptive Sales and Marketing Strategies for Small and Direct Marketing Farms

Small and direct marketing farms and food businesses are facing very difficult impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and are responding with creativity and determination. Here are some ways farms can sell products directly to consumers.

- Direct to consumer strategies like CSA's, bulk order customer lists, online or on-farm farm stands, social media connections, and cooperative "food hub" aggregation and delivery are all marketing and sales strategies well suited to the present situation. Some direct marketing adaptations are:
 - Expanding or adding CSA share slots
 - Partnering with other farms to start CSA deliveries with products from multiple farms, online sales marketplaces, or home delivery services.

- Coordinating orders for pick-up at a specific location in lieu of a farmers market
- Maintaining an on-farm stand
- Farm directories and listings are marketing tools that can help consumers find your farm and products. Take advantage of opportunities to list your farm and make sure your farm and product information is up to date. Some directories in Washington include:
 - Food Atlas – Sustainable Connections (eatlocalfirst.org/food-atlas)
 - Food and Farm Guide – Inland Northwest Food Network (inwfoodnetwork.org/food-farm-guide)
 - Gorge Grown Food Network (gorgegrown.com)
 - Local Food Guide – Rural Roots Inland NW (ruralroots.org)
 - Pierce County Fresh – (piercecountyfresh.org/)
 - South Spokane Farm Corridor - (southspokanefarmcorridor.com)
- Remember, your best customers are your best resource. Use your social medial presence and customer lists to reach out to them. With social distancing measures in place, households are eating at home and looking for alternatives to grocery store shopping
- “Building Farm Resilience in this Crisis,” publication from the Cornell Small Farms program offers advice for adapting marketing strategies (smallfarms.cornell.edu/2020/03/building-farm-resilience-in-this-crisis/)
- **WSDA Regional Markets Program** can provide direct marketing assistance and information to farms that are adapting marketing strategy or considering new marketing channels and can assist with farm to school connections (agr.wa.gov/farmfoodbiz)

Public Health and Food Safety Practices are Paramount

- Stay up-to-date and in communication with local health departments. Requirements and guidelines for social distancing and other public health provisions for your operation may continue to change in line with evolving state and local direction.
- Develop a “pandemic plan” for your business. Your plan can address ways to reduce or limit in-person contact among employees and customers, ensure excellent hygiene and food safety best practices for sanitizing surfaces, emphasize that sick individuals stay home, and address how to communicate with your customers about the measures you are taking to mitigate public health risks.
 - Seattle-King County Public Health - has published a helpful planning guide for businesses. Visit kingcounty.gov and search for “[Planning for a Coronavirus Pandemic, a guide for businesses and organizations.](#)”

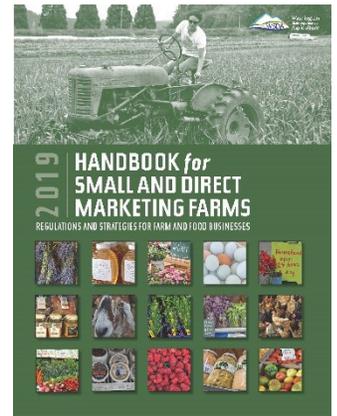
Small Farm Support in Washington State

Many local farm and food organizations are shifting their focus to support creative responses and farm resilience. Farmers are connecting with each other for farmer-to-farmer mutual aid. These efforts may take time to coalesce. Here is an initial list of some existing tools, organizations, and emerging efforts.

- **WSDA Regional Markets Program** provides support and resources for small and direct marketing farms at agr.wa.gov/farmfoodbiz, including the **WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing Handbook** with sets of fact sheets on topics that that may be particularly helpful now:
- Getting Connected: See *#1 Resources for Small Farms in Washington* (agr.wa.gov/departments/business-and-marketing-support/small-farm/the-green-book/getting-connected)

- Direct Marketing Strategies: See #11 *Direct Marketing in Washington State*, #12 *Selling to Individuals*, #13 *Selling Online*, #18 *Selling through Food Hubs*, #19 *Selling and Donating to Food Banks*
(agr.wa.gov/departments/business-and-marketing-support/small-farm/the-green-book/direct-marketing-strategies)
- Running a Successful Farm Business: See #6 *Financing Your Farm*, #9 *Insurance*, #10 *Labor on the Farm*
(agr.wa.gov/departments/business-and-marketing-support/small-farm/the-green-book/running-a-successful-farm-business)

If you need help accessing a factsheet, please contact us at smallfarms@agr.wa.gov.



Local Food Marketing and Small Farm Business Resource Provider COVID-19 Support

- **Farmers Market Organizations** are working creatively to maintain farmers markets as essential businesses for local food supply and as resources for their vendors
 - **Washington State Farmers Market Association** has information on COVID-19 public health measures that impact farmers markets, advocacy updates, and operational guidance for markets and vendors (wafarmersmarkets.org/sample-page/farmers-markets-covid-19/)
 - **Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance** in Seattle has a Good Farmer Fund to assist farms in crisis (seattlefarmersmarkets.org/programs-events/good-farmer-fund)
- **National Young Farmers Coalition and the Washington Chapter** are organizing with response, resources, and services (youngfarmers.org/young-farmers-covid-19-response/)
- **Sustainable Connections Food & Farming program** is offering free listings in the online Eat Local First Food Atlas for all locally owned food and farming businesses in Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan & Island counties. (sustainableconnections.org/programs/food-farming/)
- **Tilth Alliance** is offering webinars for food and farm businesses impacted by COVID-19 (tilthalliance.org/about/farmer-training-and-resources)
- **Seattle Good Business Network** (seattlegood.org/covid-19resources-eventupdates/)
- **Microenterprise and small business support organizations** like these can assist with COVID-Response plans for farm and food businesses.
 - **Business Impact NW** (businessimpactnw.org/resources/)
 - **Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE)** (cie-nw.org/blog/2020/3/15/responding-to-the-coronavirus)
 - **Enterprise for Equity** (www.enterpriseforequity.org)
 - **Ventures** (venturesnonprofit.org/daily-covid-update/)
- **County agricultural programs and Washington State University Extension Offices** are resources for small farms with information on specific local responses and farm assistance. This is a sampling:
 - **FARM King County** is a central point of information for farm information and assistance (farmkingcounty.org/)
 - **WSU Extension Thurston County**- (extension.wsu.edu/thurston/farm-covid/)
- **County Economic Development Councils and Associate Development Organizations** are local business resources. They are also venues for communicating COVID-19 impacts on your farm and food business and needs to policy makers and the Washington State Department of Commerce (commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/local-economic-partnerships/ and wedaonline.org/resource_directory/EDC_links.html)
 - **Pierce County Economic Development**- (piercecountywa.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=4560)
 - **Thurston County Economic Development**- (thurstonedc.com)