

## **FY2016 Trade Show Assistance Grant Request for Applications**

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) Trade Show Assistance Grant (TSAG) provides Vermont food and forestry businesses with funds to help identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows.

### **1. Timeline**

1. Applications are to be submitted online and are due by no later than Tuesday December 8, 2015 no later than 4:00PM
2. Applicants will be notified of decision no later than Friday January 15, 2016
3. All trade shows that occur between February 1, 2016 and March 1, 2017 are eligible for funding assistance through this program.

### **2. History of Success to Date**

The TSAG began in FY2015 and awarded \$25,500 to 25 companies to attend 15 different trade shows in 10 different states. These grants leveraged an estimated \$93,000 in company investment towards trade show participation. Early results show businesses gathered over 1,000 sales leads with a projected \$1 million in sales. In addition, 50% of grantees reported sales outside of New England.

*"We had great success at the show and landed a deal with a major distributor as well as many smaller accounts. All just walking the floor. In addition, I gained a lot of relevant experience and am looking forward to participating again. Here's to a prosperous future for all Vermont specialty food producers. Thanks for your help.*

-Rob "Sugar Bob" Hausselin  
2015 Trade Show Grantee, Summer Fancy Food Show

*"A trade show is much more than a venue for sales. It is an opportunity to learn from more experienced retailers and wholesalers on product placement, price point, etc., to gain input for possible future products, to collaborate with other companies, and to gain significant amounts of exposure to both small retailers and some of the largest chains in the United States. Well worth attending!"*

-Hilary Hoffman  
2015 Trade Show Grantee, Natural Products Expo East

### 3. FY 2016 Program Year

This year, the Working Lands Enterprise Fund has allocated \$25,000 to continue the TSAG program. VAAFAM will disburse funds in two areas: Trade Show Attendee and Trade Show Exhibitor

### 4. Eligibility

To be considered eligible for the Trade Show Assistance Grant, the following criteria must be met:

1. Application is received during the open application period.
2. Applicant is a Vermont company and is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State;
3. Applicant has 3 or more retail/wholesale accounts
4. Applicant has been in business for more than 1 year
5. Trade Show is outside the state of Vermont
6. Trade Show is for business to business (wholesale) customers\*

The Grant Application must be submitted online:

<https://vermontworkinglands.wufoo.com/forms/zf01q7q1v1n1uj/>

Applicants may also be eligible to apply to the Food Export-Northeast Branded Program for additional funds ([www.foodexport.org](http://www.foodexport.org)). All questions should be directed to Reg Godin, [reg.godin@state.vt.us](mailto:reg.godin@state.vt.us) and 802.522.3648.

*\*Direct to consumer shows will be eligible on a case by case basis depending on type of product. Please contact [reg.godin@vermont.gov](mailto:reg.godin@vermont.gov) for details.*

### 5. Evaluation Criteria

Trade Show Assistance Grant applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Need** – The Applicant demonstrates a clear need for the funding assistance to attend the trade show. The requested funds leverage other funds, and the Applicant would not be able to successfully exhibit or attend the trade show without these funds. Without this grant, the Applicant will miss out on a significant opportunity to connect with buyers in out-of-state markets and/or an urgent window of opportunity would be missed.
- **Economic Impact to Vermont** – Application should demonstrate the businesses economic impact to Vermont. The economic impact can be through increased sales, increased utilization of Vermont agricultural or forest product inputs, employment retention and/or addition or other identified value.

- **Marketing Strategy** – Applicants should offer reasons why the proposed trade show is consistent with their marketing plan and growth strategy.
- **Sales Approach** – The Applicant provides a comprehensive sales approach that focuses on writing orders while at the show.
- **Potential for Success** – Applicant’s goals should reflect careful consideration and realistic expectations for the trade show and should be specific, measurable, and attainable with deadlines for achieving objectives.
- **Budget** – The company has completed the budget form with realistic estimates

## 5. Grant Types & Award Amounts

Grants are awarded in two categories. Applicants may only apply for one type of grant, listed below:

- Trade Show Attendee
- Trade Show Exhibitor

A minimum 50% cash match is required. Eligible costs for each level are listed in detail in the budget template.

<u>Grant Type</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>
Trade Show Attendee	Up to \$1,000	A new Company which has not exhibited at a trade show before and would like the opportunity to attend (but not exhibit), to gauge exhibiting opportunities, and partake in educational programs. Maximum grant will be \$500 per attendee, with no more than 2 attendees per company.
Trade Show Exhibitor	Up to \$2,000	Company is exhibiting at a specific trade show for the first time (or first time in 5 years). Grants of up to \$2,000 are available to assist grantees with expenses related to: booth space, travel expenses, accessories and trade show related marketing.

## 6. Reporting Requirements

Trade Show Assistance Grants are reimbursement grants and will be payable after trade show attendance. The following will be required of all Trade show grantees:

1. Receipts demonstrating utilization of matching funds
2. Present a budgeted vs. actual reconciliation
3. Complete an online trade show report and exit survey(s)
4. Complete a one-year follow up survey