

Trade Show Assistance Grant: Request for Applications

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMT) Trade Show Assistance Grant is designed to provide Vermont food and forestry businesses at different stages of growth and with varying levels of trade show experience with funds to help identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at National trade shows. By offering matching grants, businesses can mitigate the financial risks associated with presenting at national trade shows.

1. Timeline

1. Applications are to be submitted online and are due February 6, 2015 no later than 4:00PM
2. Applicants will be notified of decision no later than February 27, 2015
3. All trade shows that occur in the time period March 1, 2015 through March 1, 2016 are eligible for funding assistance through this program.

2. 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's company 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:

http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/market_access_development/domestic_export/trade_show

Applicants may be eligible to apply to the Food Export-Northeast Branded Program (www.foodexport.org). All questions should be directed to Reg Godin, 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@state.vt.us for details.*

3. Evaluation Criteria

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

- **Economic Impact to Vermont** – Application should demonstrate the applicant’s 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

4. Participation Levels & Award Amounts

Awards are based on a company’s eligibility level. Eligibility levels, noted below, will be used by VAAFAM in determining applicants’ level of participation. Trade Show Assistance Grants have a minimum required 50% cash match for funds received from the state of Vermont. Eligible costs for each level are listed in detail in the budget template form.

<u>Level of Participation</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>
Market Exploration	Up to \$1,000	A new Company who 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.
Market Entry	Up to \$2,000	Company is exhibiting at a specific trade show for the first time or for the first time since 2011. 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.
Market Expansion	Up to \$1,000	Company has exhibited at a specific trade show within the last 3 years and will exhibit an additional year through the Trade Show Assistance Grant so as to continue to build new accounts and follow-up with previous year buyers. Grants of up to \$1,000 are available for the purchase of trade show accessories, participation in discount clubs, and/or to perform general trade show marketing.

5. 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

6. Goals, Performance Measures and Outcomes

All grantees must have specific goals, performance measures and outcomes. Applicants must develop three goals with associated performance measures and expected outcomes as part of their application. *Three examples are given below.*

Goals	Performance Measure	Outcome
<i>Example: Increase awareness of product in the marketplace</i>	<i>Number of trade show leads</i>	<i><u>xx</u> trade show leads gathered through trade show attendance.</i>
<i>Example: Increase product sales</i>	<i>Anticipated sales increase over 12 month period</i>	<i>% increase in sales over 12 month period</i>
<i>Example: Establish a new market channel</i>	<i>Number of new buyers Number of new distributors</i>	<i><u>xx</u> new buyers <u>xx</u> new distributors</i>