Request for Applications

**Project Title:** Vermont Farm to School & Child Nutrition Grant

**Grant Period:** January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019

**Date RFA Issued:** October 2, 2017

**Application Due Date:** November 14, 2017

**Grant Award Announcement Date:** December 13, 2017

**Award Amount:** $15,000

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Request for Applications (RFA)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) is pleased to announce a new two-year grant opportunity beginning during the 2017-2018 academic school year. The VAAFM Farm to School Team is seeking applications from eligible Vermont-based childcare providers and schools to expand and improve food programs and/or to create or expand farm to school programs by integrating the classroom, cafeteria, and community (the 3 C’s of farm to school). Up to six applications will be awarded at $15,000 each, made possible by legislative appropriation and a financial investment of a dedicated partner. The anticipated grant period will be January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019.

1.2 Eligibility

Any Vermont registered or licensed childcare provider or consortium of childcare providers, independent school, or a supervisory union (SU) on behalf of a public school or consortium of schools in the same School Food Authority (SFA) may apply for these competitive grants.

1.3 Background

The purpose of the Vermont Farm to School Program, established by the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act, is to:

1. encourage Vermont residents in developing healthy and lifelong habits of eating nutritious local foods;
2. maximize use by Vermont schools and childcare providers of fresh and locally grown, produced or processed food;
3. work with partners to establish a food, farm, and nutrition education program that educates Vermont children regarding healthy eating habits through the use of educational materials, classes, and hands-on techniques that inform children of the connections between farming and the foods that they consume;
4. increase the size and stability of direct sales markets available to Vermont producers;
5. increase participation of Vermont children in child nutrition programs by increasing the selection of available foods; and
6. expand and improve food programs in schools and early childcare.

Schools and childcare providers are best able to achieve these goals when they take a holistic approach and incorporate the 3 C’s of farm to school: cafeteria (food program), classroom and community. Together, the 3 C’s support healthy children, healthy agriculture, and healthy communities.

1.4 Objectives of the Grant

The overall objective of the Vermont Farm to School & Child Nutrition Grant is to help Vermont schools and childcare providers develop farm to school programs that will sustain relationships with local producers, enrich the educational experience of children, improve the health of Vermont children, and enhance Vermont’s agricultural economy. This is best accomplished through comprehensive team approach.
All schools and childcare providers come to the Vermont Farm to School Program with a different level of experience and familiarity with farm to school. The goal of this grant opportunity is to meet schools and childcare providers where they are and provide individualized coaching, technical assistance, professional development, and financial assistance to help them move forward in the development of their own, unique farm to school program. In many cases, schools or childcare providers jumpstart their farm to school program by first expanding and improving their food programs.

By the end of the grant period, each grantee will have:

1. Formally established a functional and holistic Project Team.
2. Developed an Action Plan and budget to guide the Project Team’s work. The Action Plan will integrate the 3C’s of farm to school, thereby ensuring progress towards an integrated and sustaining farm to school program.
3. Implemented their Action Plan and utilized their financial assistance.
4. Progressed at least one step in some categories of the Farm to School Phases of Development (see Appendix A).

2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

2.1 Grant Terms

The selected grantee will sign a grant agreement with VAAFM to meet the outcomes outlined in Section 2.4. VAAFM will consider cancellation upon discovery that a grantee is in violation of any portion of the grant agreement. Grant recipients are required to submit a W9 (childcare providers only) and a Certificate of Insurance (see State of Vermont insurance requirements in Attachment C on our website) before a grant agreement can be signed. Funds may not be disbursed until a grant agreement is signed.

2.2 Grant Award

VAAFM may award up to six grants in the 2017-2018 school year. Each grantee will receive $15,000 to accomplish the objectives of this grant (section 1.4), as discussed further in section 2.4. In addition to a financial award of $15,000, each grantee will be provided with customized coaching, technical assistance support, and professional development to support the development and implementation of their Action Plan and integration of the 3 C’s (cafeteria, classroom, community), as described below.

2.2.1 Coaching

Each grantee team will be assigned a Coach by VAAFM to guide them through the grant period and successfully complete the deliverables described in section 2.4 below. Coaches will directly support grantees in the development and implementation of goals, an Action Plan, and a project budget.
% 2.2.2 Technical Assistance & Professional Development

Each grantee team will receive individualized technical assistance and professional development, based on their goals and needs, from an organization selected by VAAFM to improve their food program and delivery of food, farm, and nutrition education.

2.3 Invoicing

All invoices are to be submitted as a ‘claim’ by the grantee through WebGrants, an online grants management system. The grantee will receive payments based on the following terms:

1. $6,000 upon submission of a fully executed grant agreement and claim;
2. $6,000 upon submission of an approved Action Plan and claim no later than December 31, 2018;
3. $3,000 upon completion of the deliverables, as detailed in Section 2.4, and submission of a final report and claim.

Payments are not contingent upon costs incurred to complete the deliverables detailed in Section 2.4. Grantees will receive the full $15,000 (in three payments) if all grant agreement deliverables have been completed, regardless of the costs incurred to complete them.

2.4 Grantee Performance Guidance

All grantees will be evaluated using the specific performance review criteria outlined below over the life of the grant to ensure that project objectives, as outlined in section 1.4, are met. Review of project deliverables will occur halfway through the grant period and upon completion of the grant period. Grant payments are solely contingent upon completion or attainment of the deliverables listed below, not the costs incurred to complete the deliverables. If the scope of work outlined in the table on page 6 does not seem feasible for your team, please contact Ali Zipparo (see page 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Grantee develops a well-rounded Action Plan that integrates the classroom, community, and food program.</td>
<td>a. Project Team completes Farm to School Rubric (a self-assessment tool) with Coach&lt;br&gt;b. Project Team attends Action Planning Day (date TBD) and develops/amends an Action Plan and budget</td>
<td>a. Project Team attends Action Planning Day (date TBD)&lt;br&gt;b. Submission of Action Plan by December 31, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grantee progresses the development of a holistic farm to school program</td>
<td>a. Project Team addresses the components of the Phases of Development (see Appendix A) in their Action Plan&lt;br&gt;b. Grantee executes their Action Plan</td>
<td>a. Grantee completes a majority of their Action Plan during the grant period&lt;br&gt;b. Grantee advances at least one step in some categories of the Phases of Development (to be assessed by Coach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Grantee integrates farm to school curriculum and activities into classrooms</td>
<td>a. Teachers attend Curriculum Workshop (date TBD) or training to learn how to integrate farm to school curriculum and activities into the classroom</td>
<td>a. Teachers attend a curriculum workshop/training (date TBD)&lt;br&gt;b. Integration of farm to school curriculum and activities into some classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Grantee improves the financial viability of their food program</td>
<td>a. Project Team learns how to improve the financial viability of their food program from a designated technical service provider</td>
<td>a. Project Team meets with designated technical service provider regarding food program&lt;br&gt;b. Development of a plan for improving the financial viability of food program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Grantee provides students with hands-on/ experiential FTS education</td>
<td>a. Project Team attends Garden Workshop or other approved FTS experiential education professional development opportunity</td>
<td>a. At least one representative from Project Team attends Garden Workshop (date TBD) or other approved experiential education professional development opportunity&lt;br&gt;b. At least one experiential education opportunity is implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Grantee utilizes as many child nutrition programs as are viable for them</td>
<td>a. Project Team researches all possible child nutrition programs their school/center is eligible for with assistance from a designated technical service provider</td>
<td>a. Project Team meets with designated technical service provider regarding child nutrition programs&lt;br&gt;b. Grantee pursues any viable options for expanding or improving child nutrition programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. GRANT TIMELINE

Grantees should expect to complete their activities by December 31, 2019.

- **October 11, 2017**: Informational webinar for school applicants (3:00-4:30pm)
- **October 12, 2017**: Informational webinar for childcare provider applicants (1:00-2:30pm)
- **November 14, 2017**: Applications due by 12:00pm on WebGrants
- **December 13, 2017**: Applicants notified of awards
- **December 2017**: Informational webinars for grant recipients
- **January 2018**: Grantees sign grant agreements
- **February 7, 2018**: Project Teams attend Farm to School Awareness Day at the Statehouse for official grant award ceremony (4:00-6:00pm) *Required*
- **Spring 2018**: Action Planning Workshop (date TBD)
- **December 31, 2018**: Action Plan and second claim due
- **December 31, 2019**: Project completion date
- **January 30, 2020**: Final report and claim due

4. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

All applications must be submitted online at [https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). You can find detailed instructions for doing so in Appendix B.

It is highly encouraged to consult the [Vermont School Wellness Policy Guidelines](https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov), which were established by the Agency of Education, the Department of Health and the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, before developing an application for this grant.

Applications submitted after noon on November 14, 2017 will not be considered.

4.1 Applicant Webinar

VAAFM will host two webinars for potential applicants. We strongly encourage someone from your team to join the appropriate webinar, as it will cover details of this RFA and tips and tricks for navigating our online grants management system. These interactive webinars will provide the opportunity to ask questions. The webinars will be recorded and posted on our website afterwards.

- **FOR SCHOOLS**: Wednesday, October 11th from 3:00-4:30pm. Register here: [https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8754777058825983235](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8754777058825983235).

- **FOR CHILDCARE PROVIDERS**: Thursday, October 12th from 1:00-2:30pm. Register here: [https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1381799529095298051](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1381799529095298051).

4.2 Required Application Components

Below you will find the required application components you will need to submit online. **Applications must be completed in WebGrants by noon on November 14, 2017.**

1. Applicant Info
a) Primary contact information—this will be the primary point of contact for all application and grant related communications. For childcare providers, this must be the Director or business owner if a fiscal agent (see below) is not being used.
   i. Name, title, telephone, email address
b) Secondary contact information (optional)—this will be another point of contact for all application and grant related communications.
   i. Name, title, telephone, email address
b) Name of Supervisory Union (for public schools)
c) County
d) For each school/childcare provider applying:
   a. the grades/ages they serve
   b. the number of children they serve
   c. the percentage of children that qualify for free or reduced-price meals

2. Fiscal Agent

This information is required if an organization OTHER THAN THE APPLICANT will be the recipient of grant funds. Supervisory Unions are always the fiscal agent for public schools.

Applications must be submitted by supervisory unions or an organization’s fiscal agent.

Applications from individual public schools, or, child care centers/consortia requiring a fiscal agent will not be considered.

When a Fiscal Agent is utilized, the grant agreement (a legal agreement with the state of Vermont) is WITH THE FISCAL AGENT, not the applicant organization or business. This means that the fiscal agent (i.e. supervisory union) bears full responsibility for the grant and for all grant requirements. W9 (childcare providers only) and Certificates of Insurance are submitted by the fiscal agent organization, and the grant agreement must be signed and submitted by the fiscal agent.

   a) Fiscal Agent & Federal ID #
   b) Contact name and title, telephone, email—this person will be included on pertinent grant communications. For schools, this must be the superintendent.

3. Grant Contributors

List all individuals who contributed to writing this grant application, including their title(s) and organizational association(s).

4. Project Team

The Project Team is responsible for leading the project and making necessary changes within the school/center community, and should, therefore, include the individuals needed to do so. It is up to the Project Team to determine roles and responsibilities within the team, though all members should be engaged in meeting the objectives of the grant, as outlined in section 1.4.
Identify all proposed members of your Project Team along with their title, and email address. As support from administration and foodservice personnel is critical to the success of farm to school programs, your team **must include** an administrator (Superintendent, Principal, or Director) and the Food Service Director/Manager. Additionally, your team will ideally include at least one representative from each of the following categories (see list below for examples): educator, community member, health and wellness. If a team member does not fit into any of these categories, you may select the ‘other’ option.

If you are applying as a district, supervisory union, or a consortium of schools and/or childcare providers, your team must include at least one representative from each site involved in the project.

We highly encourage diverse stakeholder representation, and you may have more than one representative for each category. Examples of team members are listed below, however, you are not limited to this list. Some schools may already have established Health and/or Wellness Team that they choose to use as their Project Team for this grant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator</th>
<th>Community Members</th>
<th>Health &amp; Wellness</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>School board members</td>
<td>Health educators</td>
<td>Food Service staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-educator</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Nurse/ health services</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool educator</td>
<td>Farmers and local producers</td>
<td>Physical educators</td>
<td>Farm to School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local chefs/ food store</td>
<td>Community health</td>
<td>Coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local non-profits/ businesses</td>
<td>agencies</td>
<td>Garden Supervisors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Narrative Questions** (each question has a character limit of 2,000)

a) What does your team hope to accomplish by applying for this grant?

b) For established teams, describe the history, structure, roles and responsibilities, and goals of your team. If your team is new, provide as much information as you can about your team. *Your application will not be penalized if your team is new.*

c) Describe how your organization’s leadership will be informed of your team’s work (this must include the superintendent for schools).

d) Describe your organization’s (school/SU/childcare provider) greatest strengths and challenges in building and sustaining a comprehensive farm to school program and/or improving the viability of your food program.

e) Describe any past farm to school activities your school/center has engaged in within the following areas (each section has a character limit of 1,000):

   I. Wellness Policy
   II. Curriculum
   III. Food Program
   IV. Farmer Engagement
   V. Local food procurement
6. Action Plan

If your team already has a Farm to School Action Plan please attach it to your application. Your application will not be penalized if you do not have an Action Plan.

7. Stages of Development

Using the chart in Appendix A, identify which stage of development your FTS program is currently in for each of the following areas. Your program will not be penalized for being in early stages of development.

- I. School staff, administration, and faculty engagement
- II. Infrastructure
- III. Cafeteria
- IV. Classroom
- V. Community

8. Letters of Support

Upload a separate letter of support from each of the following stakeholders:

- I. Superintendent (for public schools only)
- II. Principal/Director from each school/childcare provider involved
- III. Food Program Director/Manager

4.3 Application Evaluation

Applications will be reviewed by an advisory panel, which will include representatives from VAAFM, Vermont FEED, Vermont Farm to School Network, and other stakeholders. As VAAFM seeks to support schools at all levels of farm to school development, the advisory panel will award grants to schools and childcare providers that represent a range of levels of maturity with regards to farm to school programming and child nutrition.

Having an established and mature farm to school program or food program is not important in the application evaluation process. What is important is that an applicant has a committed Project Team, the support of their organization’s leadership, and a commitment to meeting the objectives of this grant, as outlined in section 1.4.

Applications will primarily be evaluated by the strength, diversity, and commitment of the Project Team and their ability to accomplish the objectives of the grant, as outlined in section 1.4. Furthermore, applications in the following categories will be prioritized:

- Project focused on child nutrition
- Childcare providers
- New farm to school programs
- Established farm to school program seeking long-term program sustainability

Notification of awards will be made by December 13, 2017.
5. FARM TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

In addition to this document, there are organizations around the state that may be valuable resources for your farm to school and/or food programs. Below is a list of organizations and the regions they support.

1. Center for Agricultural Economy (greater Hardwick area)
2. Food Connects (Southern Vermont)
3. Green Mountain Farm to School (Northeast Kingdom)
4. Healthy Roots (Franklin and Grand Isle Counties Vermont)
5. Hunger Free Vermont (statewide)
6. Marble Valley Grows (Rutland County)
7. Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (greater Rutland area)
8. Upper Valley Farm to School (Upper Valley region)
9. Vermont Community Garden Network (statewide)
10. Vermont FEED (statewide)
# APPENDIX A: FARM TO SCHOOL PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

## PHASES OF FARM TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School (FTS) implementation is a process that deepens over time. This chart is meant to help you better understand where your school or district is in developing a FTS program, and to be a useful reference when working with FTS organizations. Please note that schools don’t often grow in every area at the same pace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EMERGED</th>
<th>DEVELOPED</th>
<th>DEEPENED</th>
<th>THRIVED</th>
<th>SUSTAINED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Staff, Administrators, &amp; Faculty Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Prepared to take action</td>
<td>Have begun to take action</td>
<td>Increased activities in depth, breadth, &amp; frequency</td>
<td>Well integrated in the school</td>
<td>Embedded in the school culture &amp; systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Infrastructure needs have been identified.</td>
<td>Some infrastructure upgrades have been completed, and others proposed, to plan/budget.</td>
<td>There’s adequate infrastructure for some program elements, but not all.</td>
<td>There is adequate infrastructure for FTS programming.</td>
<td>Ongoing evaluation of infrastructure is embedded in the school culture and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cafeteria</strong></td>
<td>Possibilities for local purchasing, expanding meal program participation, and increasing meal program finances have been identified.</td>
<td>Small amounts of local foods are occasionally purchased, mostly for special events. The meal program is starting to change to increase participation and improve program finances.</td>
<td>Local foods are occasionally purchased and highlighted on menus. Meal program expansion and menu changes continue.</td>
<td>Local food is regularly purchased following proper procurement practices and has improved the school meal program menu. Participation in the meal program is strong.</td>
<td>Local food is purchased consistently, and students and staff are regularly engaged in the school meal program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom</strong></td>
<td>A few teachers are interested and integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum.</td>
<td>Some teachers are integrating FTS into curriculum and others are interested in doing so.</td>
<td>A growing number of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. Some FTS professional learning opportunities are available to faculty.</td>
<td>The majority of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. FTS professional learning occurs on a continual basis.</td>
<td>All classrooms are offered opportunities and support for FTS activities. FTS is embedded in the school culture and systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>The larger community is interested in FTS activities and events, but aren’t currently involved.</td>
<td>The larger community is involved a few times per year in FTS activities.</td>
<td>The larger community is frequently involved in FTS activities and events.</td>
<td>Community partners have made FTS a part of their agenda.</td>
<td>Engaging, recruiting, and retaining community involvement in FTS is embedded in the community culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the VT FEED Farm to School Rubric and the VT Farm to School Network Growth Chart.
APPENDIX B: WEBGRANTS APPLICATION GUIDE

Instructions for 2018 Farm to School & Child Nutrition Grant Program Applicants

1. Go to agriculturegrants.vermont.gov. From this page—
   a. Enter your User ID and password and click Log In
   b. If you do not have a User ID, click Register Here

   ![Login Page](image1)

2. From the Main Menu, click Funding Opportunities

   ![Main Menu](image2)

   **IMPORTANT:** Use the system’s Back button (see below) to navigate within the system. Do not use your browser’s back button.
3. From the Funding Opportunities page, select the appropriate **FY18 Farm to School & Child Nutrition Grant**.

4. Click **Start a New Application**.

5. Fill out the General Information form. Be sure to provide the information for the person who will be responsible for this grant application. This will be the primary point of contact for all grant related communication. Click **Save** in the upper right corner to save the General Information form.

6. **Save**
After clicking “Save,” your project will have an application number. **If you need to log out and log back in you can return to your application by clicking “My Applications” in the Main Menu, or by clicking Funding Opportunities, where you will see your application in the top section.**

*Do not click “Start a New Application.”*

7. A view will show the completed form. You have the option to click “Edit” and edit your information or select additional users to have access to help complete the application. Click [Go to Application Forms](#) to begin completing the forms designated for this funding opportunity.

8. This view is a complete listing of all application forms that you need to complete to submit your application. Continue to click on each form in the Application Forms listing.
9. Some forms will not allow you to enter information until you click Edit in the top right corner.

10. When you are finished with a form, or want to save information and return to it later, click Save. All forms can be edited and saved as often as necessary but the system will require that ALL fields marked as required (with an asterisk) MUST have entries before a form can be saved. The system also has a time limit, so do not walk away from an open form without saving it first, or you will lose your work. If you are not able to complete a form in one sitting we recommend using placeholders (i.e. “test”) in each of the required fields (denoted by an asterisk), so that you can save the form and return to it later. To edit forms that have already been saved click Edit in the top right corner.
11. When you are finished with a form, click **Mark as Complete** at the top of the page. EVERY form must be Marked as Complete before you can submit your application. You will receive a pop-up message notifying you of this if you try to submit without completing these steps. You can still edit forms that have been marked as complete, by clicking **Edit**.

![Image of a form with Mark as Complete button highlighted.](image)

12. When all forms have been marked as complete, you may return to your application page by either clicking “Go to Application Forms” or from the main menu. If each form has a check next to it and you are confident in your responses, click **Submit**. You cannot edit an application once it has been submitted. Upon submission, you will receive a Confirmation Page confirming that your application has been submitted.

![Image of a form with Submit button highlighted.](image)

Having trouble with WebGrants? Contact Victoria Mangan at **Victoria.Managan@vermont.gov** or (802) 622-4094