

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

FISCAL YEAR 2022 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The [Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center](#) (NE-DBIC) announces the availability of funds through the Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant Program, which will provide grants for established value-added dairy processors and producer associations to access professional marketing and branding services to elevate value-added dairy businesses. Projects funded by this grant will increase the exposure and promotion of regionally produced dairy products guided by marketing/branding professionals. Funded projects will increase consumer awareness of products, develop market channels and distribution opportunities to increase product placement, support innovative strategies to increase consumption, and/or increase business revenues. Additionally, up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor. Grants are available to applicants in all Northeast states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

KEY DATES

RFA Release Date: April 28, 2022

Application Opens: May 12, 2022

Application Deadline: June 23, 2022 at 2:00 PM EST

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CONTACT

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Brockton Corbett
Grants Support
Brockton.Corbett@vermont.gov
(802) 498-5111

WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Rebecca Brockett
Grants & Contracts Administrator
Rebecca.Brockett@vermont.gov
(802) 636-7016

Support is available during business hours: Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM EST. Assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

RESOURCES FOR APPLYING

- Have questions about this grant? Visit our [Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant Q&A](#).
- WebGrants Guides and resources for registering and applying can be found on our [Resources for Applicants and Recipients webpage](#).

REGISTERING IN WEBGRANTS

Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1-2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant’s responsibility to adhere to all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this request for applications (RFA). The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM) will accept the last validated electronic submission through the grants management system, [WebGrants](#), prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

Submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances will not be accepted.

WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the cut-off time.

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, the applicant will receive a confirmation email from <agriculturegrants.vermont@mail.webgrantscloud.com>. Please add this email address to your “safe senders” list. If you do not receive this confirmation, please check your junk or spam folder.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

QUICK FACTS

THE NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM), is one of four USDA-AMS Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The NE-DBIC serves the 10-state Northeast region which includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont by supporting dairy businesses through projects that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. Projects target dairy farms and processors while providing additional support through market research and technical assistance. Since its inception in 2019, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center has received \$12.72 million to support projects in the Northeast region of the U.S.

ELIGIBILITY

Established value-added dairy processors headquartered in the Northeast region of the United States may apply for this grant if they transform raw milk into an edible product, source or produce milk within the Northeast, manufacture any value-added products within the Northeast, and are a licensed dairy processor in compliance with all required state and/federal standards.

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: \$50,000

Match Requirement: A 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment

Grant funds will be distributed to grantees over three payments throughout the course of the grant project.

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$450,000

PROJECT LENGTH

Between 8 and 15 months.

FUNDING SOURCE

Funds are available through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center which is made possible by funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) through award, 21DBIVT1004-00.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The NE-DBIC's Dairy Marketing and Branding Services grant program serves to elevate established value-added dairy processor businesses and producer associations across the Northeast region of the United States. Projects funded by this grant will increase the exposure and promotion of regionally produced dairy products guided by marketing/branding professionals. Funded projects will increase consumer awareness of products, develop market channels and distribution opportunities to increase product placement, support innovative strategies to increase consumption, and/or increase business revenues.

Grant funds will prioritize the grantee hiring a professional marketing/branding contractor to develop strategy and/or content. Up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor.

Applicants will be expected to use at least one Dairy Business Innovation initiative resource (webinar/report) related to marketing or distributing dairy products, detailed below.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants eligible for these funds must fall into at least one of the following categories:

1. Dairy processors that transform raw milk sourced from the Northeast region into an edible product and are:
 - licensed dairy processor in compliance with all required state and/or federal standards, as required for the sales outlets reached during the timeframe of this project; and
 - headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
 - if a value-added processor, products are manufactured within the Northeast.
2. Dairy producer association/dairy council¹ which represents and promotes dairy products and dairy businesses of the Northeast.

While the following are ***not required to apply***, if applicant is awarded, they will need to provide:

- Certificate of Insurance listing the VAAFMM as an additional insured
- Current IRS Form W-9
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number acquired via SAM.gov

¹ For the purposes of this grant a producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association or industry body, is an organization that: 1) was founded, 2) is funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry related to the dairy industry. Associations receiving the majority of their funds from producer check-off dollars are not eligible.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The NE-DBIC seeks to support value-added dairy businesses to professionalize their marketing and/or branding approach to new or expanded markets, either individually or through a producer association marketing on the behalf of a group of value-added dairy businesses. All projects must meet the following requirements:

BACKGROUND RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

All applications must demonstrate that the applicant has used at least one Dairy Business Innovation initiative (DBII) technical assistance resource in the development of the proposed project. Applicants are required to have integrated information from at least one of the following DBII resources in the development of this project:

- [Strengthening Regional Dairy Distribution Report](#)
- [Goat & Sheep Dairy Market Research and Interactive Dashboard](#)
- [Market Intelligence](#): Dairy Export Opportunities and Import Displacement webinars
- [Webinars](#) through the Wisconsin Dairy Innovation Center. Selection to choose from includes: Fine Tuning your Marketing Strategy, Social Media Marketing, Developing E-Commerce, Developing and Export Program, etc.

CONTRACTOR VS. IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Grant funds must prioritize professional marketing/branding services. Up to 25% of total grant fund may be used to implement those services.

1. **Professional Services:** At least 75% of the total grant amount must be used to contract for professional marketing/branding services that will develop or improve the dairy product position in the market. The selected professional service provider must be an individual or firm that specializes in marketing and/or branding services.
 - a. No contractor should be selected ahead of notification of funding, although a Request for Proposal (RFP) may be released by the applicant and sent to at least three potential contractors. However, preliminary discussions with potential contractors to help develop the project scope is expected of applicants.
 - b. If applicant is awarded, any individual(s) or firms(s) hired by the applicant must adhere to AMS 2021 Terms & Conditions, including alignment with contractor selection process.
2. **Implementation of Contractor's Deliverables:** If the applicant chooses to include expenses directly related to the implementation of the content or strategies developed by the professional, they may claim up to 25% of the total requested grant funds for this. Match contributions to cover additional implementation may be used to reach match requirements.

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PROJECT SCOPE REQUIREMENTS

Effective applications will address the following:

1. Applicant demonstrates they have conducted research and communicated with at least one potential contractor. Utilizing the input from potential professional marketing/branding contractor(s), they have developed a comprehensive understanding of the scale, focus, costs, and impacts that the proposed project will encompass.
2. If funds will be used for the other promotion of a single business's image, logo, or brand name (such as a rebrand, branding of packaging, logo development, etc.) there must be a reference to state or regional benefit for the duration of the grant period. (E.g., language on packaging that states, "benefitting New England farmers")
3. If funds will be used for market research, applicant should demonstrate a plan for sharing the results with other relevant businesses.
4. Project increases marketability of dairy product lines
5. Project develops market channels and distribution opportunities to:
 - a. increase product placement; and/or
 - b. support innovative strategies to increase consumption; and/or
 - c. increase business revenues.
6. Applicant can sustain the changes/improvements past the grant period.
7. Dairy Processor applicants (only) must:
 - a. demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the market positioning of their current product range covered by this grant project (e.g., how many units they sell in a given month, market outlets, flexibility of price points);
 - b. demonstrate that the applicant is prepared to meet increased product demand that may arise from the services they utilize through this grant. They have the tools, staffing and resources necessary to quickly meet changes in demand.
8. Producer Association applicants (only) must:
 - a. demonstrate how they will positively impact multiple dairy businesses and supply chain partners.

The NE-DBIC recognizes that scope of the contractor as well as actual implementation costs may change over the course of the project. Changes to the use of grant funds for implementation costs should be discussed with the grant manager as they develop and before funds are spent to ensure alignment with USDA-AMS allowed costs.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Project approaches should address at least one of the following funding priority areas:

- Application demonstrates engagement with multiple potential contractors ahead of submission
- Project shows innovation in packaging type or market channels
- Project will show or support substantial online/digital engagement
- Project builds on or enhances previous marketing and branding efforts

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- Application demonstrates their strategic and sustainable approach to business growth and positioning with clear long-term vision
- Projects that will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
- Projects that will elevate regional dairy businesses

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Eligible grant activities and costs may include, but are not limited to:

ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Eligible marketing services may include, but are not limited to, activities related to the following:

- Strategy and Planning:
 - Development of a marketing plan which may include market research, strategy and tactics, message development, market positioning, media, and/or paid advertising plan.
- Branding, Creative, and/or Design Services:
 - Design of logo, signage, advertisements, collateral design
 - Design of market-compliant labels, packaging
 - Brand style guide, templates
 - Data visualization or infographics
 - Tradeshow or event materials
 - Multimedia production such as video, radio, podcasts, PSAs
 - Development of marketing or branding for third-party e-commerce platforms.
- Digital Marketing and Web Development:
 - Digital content strategy
 - Web design, user experience and design
 - Digital creative including interactive or display advertising
 - Digital marketing plan including tactics, content, templates, and channels
 - Social media content including development of copy, messaging, and creative
 - Development of an e-commerce strategy and platform
- Public Relations: Strategic communications and earned media outreach which may include working with a public relations organization on story pitching to reputable news sources or other strategic public relations events.
- Access to New Markets: Sales strategy for accessing new markets or securing new customers such as institutional, export, or wholesale market expansion.
- Analytics & Reporting: Digital analytics including monitoring, reporting, and search optimization.

ELIGIBLE IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Implementation costs must be directly associated with the implementation of the strategies or content developed by the professional services paid for by the grant funds, with some exclusions.

Examples of covered implementation costs include, but are not limited to:

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- Trade show display construction for the purpose of temporary exhibition
- Production and distribution costs of sell sheets, brochures, catalogs, shelf-talkers, banners, posters, recipe cards, and related materials
- Production and distribution of press releases, press kits, and other materials and information directed at the media, trade, and consumers
- The cost of production and placement of advertisements in magazines, newspapers, posters, billboards, direct mail, transit, television, radio, and third-party websites
- Online marketing such as advertisements on Facebook, Google, WeChat, etc. and search engine optimization (SEO)
- Costs associated with developing, servicing, and updating websites that clearly target consumers
- In-store and food service promotions, consumer and trade demonstrations, shipment of promotional samples, temporary displays, and rental of temporary space for displays, such as end-of-aisle and gondola displays
- Costs associated with the production and printing of market-compliant labels to be used by December 31, 2023 and labor costs to attach or sticker
- Production and distribution of promotional/giveaway items
- Production of company uniforms
- Sample/initial packaging or label runs up to \$1000 per SKU

Please note that projects may only include allowable costs/activities as outlined in the [2021 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

EXAMPLES: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- *Example #1: A new generation has recently transitioned into the ownership of a creamery which sources milk from several farms in their region. Branding and marketing were not a focus for the previous owners. The new owners would like to make a statement with a rebrand and create momentum to engage in new markets, targeting higher end specialty markets. They hire a professional to rebrand their materials (logo, printed promotional materials, and signage), develop new packaging, and design a marketing plan for entering the specialty cheese market. They utilize implementation costs for the printing of the signage, new promo materials, and a sample run of new packaging.*
- *Example #2: A processor with an established and successful regional brand is looking to expand their presence to a broader national market. They hire a firm to develop a third-party e-commerce platform strategy and related advertisement strategy and design.*
- *Example #3: A long-time creamery has a loyal following but has seen newer processors in the area creating increased competition. They struggle to know where and how to start a marketing plan for their business. They hire professional services to help them create a marketing strategy and develop some basic promotional materials to increase their competitiveness. They use implementation costs to pay for the production and distribution of a catalog and other promo materials.*
- *Example #4: A processor is quickly expanding their production to meet their demand but has not had the cash flow to invest in an update of their promotional materials to align with their new logo and packaging to round out the level of professionalism they would like to convey. They hire for the design of a style guide and the design and purchase of a new trade show exhibit. They use implementation expenses for some of the production costs to build their new exhibit.*

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- *Example #5: A business owner had a friend build an e-commerce site to adapt to changing market channels during the pandemic. It worked for the short term, but they would like it to be a permanent e-commerce site, so they want to better align it with the rest of their website and brand. They hire a professional to conduct an assessment of their website and e-commerce site which focus on an evaluation of their website content, search engine optimization, structure and flow and for services to build out the website to improve user experience and functionality.*
- *Example #6: A business owner has found success selling their product on-site and sees an opportunity to increase sales at grocery stores and other retailers. Business hires a professional to plan and implement marketing, social media, and newsletter development. Another contractor is hired to do a re-design of their product containers, shipping boxes, and marketing materials to reflect the business' image. The business uses implementation funds to print the first run of packaging, cards, brochures, sell sheets, and to place online, print, and radio ads.*

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects not benefitting Northeast dairy businesses
- Projects that seek to use funds to expand production, increase production efficiencies
- Projects that seek to hire in-house marketing, branding or sales positions
- Projects exclusively focused on export
- Costs associated with implementation of activities unrelated to those developed by the professional services paid for by this grant
- Implementation costs which include:
 - Travel expenses
 - Costs associated with attending a specific trade show or event
 - Salaries, fringe benefits, indirect costs
 - Branded items solely to be used as giveaways

Expenses that include unallowable costs/activities as outlined in the [2021 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

EXAMPLES: INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- *An on-farm processor applies for grant funds to cover personnel costs for solely in-house marketing and branding activities.*
 - *What would make this eligible? The business must engage marketing/branding professionals in a contract relationship. Any staff time can be captured in implementation costs or match commitment.*
- *A cheesemaker plans to use grant funds to contract a graphic designer to design a trade show display, sell sheets, and other marketing materials for attendance at SIAL Paris. However, the display will not fit for other trade shows they plan to attend.*
 - *What would make this eligible? The designer contracted to design materials that could be used in multiple trade shows or for other events and printing costs associated with the designed materials.*
- *A dairy processor that sources milk from several farms in the Northeast is switching to a new, innovative packaging material and wants to pay for the design of a new label for their brand.*

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- *What would make this eligible? The processor would be able to use funds for developing the label design if it incorporated messaging that shows it supports multiple area dairy businesses.*

MATCHING FUNDS

All proposals must show matching funds which represent at least 25% of the grant request to go toward the grant project. For instance, for a grant request of \$100,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least \$25,000 in match. Matching funds may be contributed by the applicant or by another organization and must take place during the grant period. The 25% required match may be any combination of cash and in-kind funds in any expense category.

Examples of cash match include funds in the bank, funds contributed by another organization, bank loans, applicant labor, and compensation of employees. Labor rates should be in line with current market rates.

Examples of in-kind match include goods or services provided during the grant period for which no expenditure is made (e.g., contractors, consultants, supplies, or equipment provided pro bono for the project; volunteer labor; and/or donated supplies that are not part of the normal cost of doing business). In-kind contributions must be made during the grant agreement period and be directly related to the project.

Example of an eligible budget:

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match
Contractual/ Consultant	\$23,000		
Personnel		\$7,000	
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Equipment			
Supplies	\$5,000		\$1,000
Other	\$2,000		
Total	\$30,000	\$7,000	\$1,000

LETTERS OF COMMITMENT/SUPPORT

At least one letter of commitment or support is required for this application. Letters should be provided from all match contributors. Additional letters will increase the competitiveness of the application.

- **Letters of Commitment** should articulate project partners' involvement and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success. Match contributors should describe and assign value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support).

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- **Letters of Support** should articulate general support from other organizations/businesses and should describe the benefits of the project both for the applicant business and the greater dairy sector.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted via the WebGrants system at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov. No paper applications will be accepted. Applications will be accepted from May 12, 2022 – June 23, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET.

Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1-2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a multi-state NE-DBIC advisory committee comprised of representatives from Northeast state agriculture agencies/departments, agriculture extension agencies, and dairy-industry stakeholders. See Section III: Scoring Criteria.

AWARD INFORMATION

All applicants will be notified of the NE-DBIC decision regardless of whether they have been selected to receive funds. Awards will be up to 15 months in length.

KEY DATES

DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

April 28, 2022	Request for Application (RFA) released
May 12, 2022	Application period opens
June 23, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET	Application closes
Mid-July 2022	Applicants notified
Mid-August 2022	Estimated grant start date & first grant payment
April 15, 2023	Interim report due. Second payment will be made upon approval of interim report.
November 15, 2023	Project end date
December 15, 2023	Final report and survey due. Final payment will be made upon approval of final report.

II. FULL APPLICATION

The full application content is listed below. Please reference the [WebGrants Application Guide](#) for guidance.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

- Business/organization name, legal entity (e.g., LLC, sole proprietor, etc.), primary contact information
- Provide any social media handles your business has
- How did you learn about this grant opportunity?
- Are you completing this application on behalf of the grant contact person listed? If yes:
 - What is your relation to the grant contact person?
 - Name of person completing this application
 - Your organization/business

Applicant Eligibility

- Is the applicant representing a licensed dairy processor that transforms raw milk into an edible product and is in compliance with all required state and/or federal standards? If yes:
 - Is the applicant headquartered or based in a Northeast state (CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, or VT)?
 - Does the applicant source or produce milk that originates within the Northeast?
 - Does the applicant manufacture dairy products within the Northeast?
 - Describe your business's strategy or approach to sustainable business growth and positioning. What is your long-term vision?
 - Provide a comprehensive overview of your current business marketing/branding strategy, marketing position, and sales outlets.
 - Describe how you are prepared to meet increases in product demand that may arise from services utilized through this grant.
- Is the applicant from a dairy producer association that represents and promotes dairy products and dairy businesses of the Northeast? *For the purpose of this grant, a dairy producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in the dairy industry.* If yes:
 - Describe your producer association, addressing: 1) founding members, 2) how association is funded, 3) industry scope covered by the association, and 4) association activities
 - Describe who will benefit from this project and how they will benefit
 - If your association encompasses products other than dairy, describe how you will ensure that the project will benefit dairy only
 - Does this association receive funds from producer check-off dollars? If yes,

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- What percent of the association's annual operating budget comes from producer check-off dollars?
- Describe your business/organization in terms of size (gross sales, number of employees, production volume), markets, membership, and number of years in business, as applicable.
- What actions have you taken to improve your business/organization's branding or marketing in the past 3-5 years? If you have not, why not?

Entity History

- Has your business/organization received any federal or state grant in the past 5 years?
- Have you or your project partners received any (federal, state, or other) grants *for this specific project* in the past 5 years? If yes:
 - List the grants received.
 - Describe the work done under these grants.
 - How will the work in this grant differ from and/or build upon that work?
- Have you applied for, or do you plan to apply for, other grant(s) in conjunction with this grant? If yes:
 - Please list the other grants you will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant
- Has your business ever been unable to complete or adhere to granting requirements for a grant you were awarded? If yes:
 - Describe the circumstances that prevented you from completing/adhering to the requirements of your grant(s)
- Describe why you and your staff are qualified to complete this project, as proposed.
- Rate your business's experience in implementing similar past work/projects related to strategic branding/marketing improvements.
- Have you received technical assistance in preparation of the project, or do you plan to receive related technical assistance during the course of this grant project? If yes:
 - List name/organization providing relevant technical assistance

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Details

- Summarize the proposed project in a couple of sentences:
- Provide a project description which comprehensively describes your vision of this project. Describe the 1) issues you plan to address and why they are relevant and important, 2) goals for the project, and 3) desired outcomes. Include any background or context, as needed
- Provide a projected workplan/timeline of your project activities (*Identify at least 5 key activities that will show the progress of your grant project.*)
- Identify one or more Dairy Business Innovation initiative technical assistance resource you referenced in the development of the proposed project. (*Refer to Project Requirements section of this RFA for links to relevant technical resources.*)

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- Describe what you learned from this resource and how it shaped the development of your proposed project
- Provide an explanation of 1) why these grant funds are needed and 2) how the project would or would not move forward without these funds.
- How do you plan to sustain the activities implemented through this project beyond the grant period?
- To increase the competitiveness of your application, select any or all of the funding priorities addressed in your proposed project:
 - a) Application demonstrates engagement with multiple potential contractors ahead of submission
 - b) Project shows innovation in packaging type or market channels
 - c) Project will show or support substantial online/digital engagement
 - d) Project builds on or enhances previous marketing and branding efforts
 - e) Application demonstrates strategic and sustainable approach to business growth and positioning with clear long-term vision
 - f) Project will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
 - g) Project will elevate regional dairy businesses
- For each funding priority you identified above, explain how your project addresses the priority

Letters of Commitment or Support

- At least one letter of commitment or support is required for this application. Additional letters will increase the competitiveness of the application. Letters should be provided for ALL match contributors.
 - Letters of Commitment should articulate project partners' involvement and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success. Match contributors should describe and assign value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support).
 - Letters of Support should articulate general support from other organizations/businesses and should describe the benefits of the project both for the applicant business and the greater dairy sector

Supporting Documentation

- Upload at least one piece of documentation that shows the development of the project idea, partnerships, funding received, and/or the viability of your business. Examples can include but are not limited to: previous work that this project will build upon, evidence of marketplace demand, bids, or documentation that provides further context for your proposed project.

BUDGET

Please complete the following budget table, listing all grant requests and match contributions. Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the 2021 AMS Terms and Conditions (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

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At least 75% of requested grant funds must be for a contractor/consultant.

Budget Table (example)

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match
Contractual/ Consultant	\$15,000		\$4,500
Personnel		\$1,000	
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Equipment			
Supplies			
Other	\$5,000		
Total	\$20,000	\$1,000	\$4,500

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Budget Narrative

Budget narrative should reflect what you have outlined in your budget table. Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the 2021 AMS Terms and Conditions (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

- Total funds requested for this grant
- Amount of matching funds. (Projects must demonstrate matching funds of at least 25% as cash and/or in-kind sources.)
- List each 1) match source, 2) each contribution amount (and specify if it is cash or in-kind), and 3) describe how the contribution will be used to accomplish your project activities
- Are all matching funds/contributions committed at this time?
 - If not, provide the sources that are uncommitted and timeline/plan for securing these commitments
- Contractual/Consultant: List each anticipated contractor/consultant service. For each, provide: 1) grant funds requested, 2) description of services, and 3) justification for why the services are necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Personnel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Personnel: for each individual whose time can be directly attributed to grant activities, provide 1) individual's title and role, 2) hourly rate, 3) expected number of hours, 4) grant funds requested
- Are 'Fringe Benefit' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Fringe Benefit: for each of the project's salaried employees, provide the 1) fringe benefit rate and 2) grant funds requested
- Are 'Training' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:

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- Training: for each training, provide 1) description, 2) estimated cost, and 3) justification for how the expense is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Supply' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Supplies: List each supply (with a description if needed). For each, provide: 1) per unit cost, 2) # units purchased, 3) grant funds requested, and 4) justification for how this supply will be used to implement the strategy or content developed by the marketing/branding contractor. (*Supplies include materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit.*)
- Are 'Equipment' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Equipment: List each piece of equipment (with description if needed) and for each, indicate: 1) whether it is a rental or purchase, 2) grant funds requested per piece, and 3) justification for how this equipment is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Travel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Travel: For each trip: 1) list expenses types (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.) and associated grant funds requested, 2) number of travelers, and 3) justification for how this travel is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Other' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Other: Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit and provide justification for how the expense will be used to implement the strategy or content developed by the marketing/branding contractor. (*E.g. communications/marketing, rental expenses, ads, publication costs, meetings/conferences, etc.*)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Describe how you will evaluate the success of your project, including metrics you will track to show your progress
- What is the percent increase in sales that you anticipate from these grant activities for your business? (*E.g. If your sales were \$50,000 before & \$60,000 after: $(\$60,000 - \$50,000) / \$50,000 \times 100 = 20\%$*)
- How many new or existing outlets do you expect consumers to use to buy your business's dairy products for each of the categories below? If not applicable to your business/organization, enter zero (0).
 - Number of farmers markets
 - Number of grocery stores
 - Number of wholesale markets
 - Other outlets
 - If other outlets, please list.
- As a result of this grant, do you expect an increase in revenue for your businesses? If yes:
 - Please estimate the increase in revenue (in \$)
- How many jobs are expected to be maintained and/or created because of this grant project?

III. SCORING CRITERIA

REVIEWER SCORING CRITERIA

Project Proposal (70 points)

Applicant demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of their businesses/organization’s marketing and branding limitations and has a clear vision for a trajectory forward.	10 points
Project overview clearly illustrates an impactful, innovative, and realistic project that will improve marketability of Northeast dairy products. Applicant shows that they have worked with at least one potential contractor to develop their project concept.	20 points
Project timeline/workplan is clear and identifies a set of key activities that aligns with the project overview.	10 points
Applicant demonstrates that their project is well-aligned with funding priorities and provides details to support that.	5 points
Applicant provides clear and relevant reasoning for timely need for funding and can show that they have a reasonable plan for sustaining the activities implemented in this project past the grant period.	10 points
Letters of commitment/support and additional documentation that collectively demonstrate the potential for project success. Any match contributors have written letters of commitment outlining their match contribution and value.	15 points

Budget and Expected Outcomes (30 points)

Budget and budget narrative are realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed, including using at least 75% of funds to hire a marketing/branding professional. Applicant has leveraged the required percentage of match contribution.	15 points
Applicant has provided sufficient detail for budget categories: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Match sources and details are clear, and 2. Fund requests are detailed thoroughly in the budget narrative. 	10 points
Applicant provides reasonable expected outcomes via: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A useful plan for evaluating the success of their project including appropriate metrics to track. 2. Proposal includes at least two (2) of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in sales • Increase in revenue • Job creation and/or retention • New/existing outlets for consumer access to business's dairy products. 	5 points

IV. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee will be required to submit:

- A. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement. [Not required if grantee has a current certificate of insurance on file with the Agency of Agriculture.]
- B. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months
- C. A Unique Entity Identified number, acquired through SAM.gov
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Unless other arrangements are made with the grant manager, payments will be made on the following schedule:

- **Initial payment: 40%** of the total grant will be paid to the grantee upon receipt of certificate of insurance and Form W-9, confirmation of SAM.gov registration, and claim submission in WebGrants. Failure to submit all required documents and an executed copy of the grant agreement within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded funds.
- **Second payment: 40%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's interim performance report by the grant manager and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.
- **Final payment: 20%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's final performance report, the completion and submission of a survey provided by the grant manager, and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.

The final performance report is due no later than 30 days after the grant end date. Final invoices must be submitted to the State within 45 days of the grant expiration date. Invoices submitted before the completion of an interim or final report will not be paid until the report has been received, reviewed, and accepted by the grant manager. The State cannot reimburse the grantee for work performed after the expiration date of the grant.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following reporting is required under this grant program:

1. Grantees will submit an Interim Performance Report mid-project which may include:
 - a. Summary of status of grant activities
 - b. Description of successes and challenges
 - c. Discussion of any modifications deemed necessary and justification for changes

SECTION IV: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

- d. Documentation of any marketing/promotion of project
 - e. Photos/documentation that demonstrates grant activities. This must include a quote and portfolio from the selected contractor(s).
 - f. Expenditures to date
2. Grantees will submit a Final Performance Report and complete a survey no later than thirty (30) days from the grant end date. Final reports may include:
- a. Summary of achievements from this project including impacts on the community, public, and other businesses/organizations
 - b. Description of any challenges or changes to the project
 - c. Lessons learned from this project
 - d. Opportunities that arose from the completion of this project
 - e. Plans to build on the work completed under this grant
 - f. Representative documentation and photos representative of the full breadth of activities under this grant
 - g. Final expenditures
 - h. Project outcomes:
 - i. New and existing outlets
 - ii. Sales increases
 - iii. Increases in revenue
 - iv. Jobs maintained/created
3. A post-grant survey will include questions which pertain to metrics regarding the following:
- a. Increase in consumption of and access to dairy projects
 - b. Increase in sales of dairy products
 - c. Development of new market opportunities for dairy producers and processors
 - d. Dairy farmer/processor satisfaction of grant activities

The NE-DBIC/VAAFM reserves the right to utilize and/or summarize information and photos provided through these reports to use on publications/promotions.

NE-DBIC via VAAFM reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project. Information submitted in any report under this program will be a public record. Failure to adhere to reporting requirements and deadlines may disqualify the grantee from future grant opportunities through the NE-DBIC or State of Vermont.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations; most agents are familiar with it. The State of Vermont must be listed as an additional insured on the grantee's policy. We recommend forwarding the insurance requirements below to prospective insurers for accuracy:

Insurance: Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverages are in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the State through the term of this Agreement. No warranty is made that the coverages and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the

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interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.

Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary, to comply with Vermont law.

General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:

Premises - Operations

Products and Completed Operations

Personal Injury Liability

Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

\$1,000,000 Each Occurrence

\$2,000,000 General Aggregate

\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate

\$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury

Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

Additional Insured. The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.

Notice of Cancellation or Change. There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.