

# VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

## Vermont Building at the Big E

### REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) is pleased to invite Vermont businesses to apply to vend inside the Vermont Building at the 2023 Big E. The Vermont Building is one of six New England buildings on the Avenue of the States at the Big E, a 17-day fair and exposition which takes place each September in West Springfield, MA. During this event, which brings in approximately 1.6 million people each year, the Vermont Building hosts a variety of Vermont food and retail businesses which showcase the best of what our state has to offer.

### KEY DATES

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS RELEASE DATE:** January 3, 2023

**APPLICATION OPENS:** January 17, 2023 at 12:00 PM

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** March 3, 2023 at 11:59 PM

**VENDOR INVITATIONS:** March 20, 2023

**2023 BIG E:** September 15 – October 1, 2023

### CONTENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION.....	2
WEBGRANTS .....	2
SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY.....	3
SECTION 2: APPLICATION.....	6
SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA .....	9
SECTION 4: CONTRACT MANAGEMENT.....	10
APPENDIX.....	12



AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Kristen Brassard

[Kristen.Brassard@vermont.gov](mailto:Kristen.Brassard@vermont.gov)

(802) 522-3742

### WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Melissa Moon

[Melissa.Moon@vermont.gov](mailto:Melissa.Moon@vermont.gov)

(802) 828-3828

Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets staff are available to assist applicants during State of Vermont business hours, Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note that immediate assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

## WEBGRANTS

Applications for this program are accepted through the [WebGrants](#) grants management system.

### REGISTRATION

New users must complete the [WebGrants Registration Form](#). Registrations are typically processed within two business days. Please register for an account well in advance of the application deadline.

### SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant's responsibility to follow all application instructions, including the submission dates and times included in this Request for Applications. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will accept the last validated submission through the grants management system, WebGrants, prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

We cannot accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances. WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the posted deadline.

### SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When you have successfully submitted your application, you will be redirected to an **Application Submitted Confirmation** page with an Application ID number. You will also receive a confirmation email.

For more information on how to apply, please see the [WebGrants Application Guide](#).

## **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY**

### **I.I PROGRAM PURPOSE**

This annual event provides a unique regional marketing opportunity to Vermont businesses, helps to elevate the Vermont brand, and supports the Vermont economy.

### **I.II ELIGIBILITY**

Any business or organization will be considered that is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State, has been in business for over one year, and is in good standing with the State of Vermont.

### **I.III PRODUCT PRIORITIES**

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has identified the following product priorities for the Vermont Building for 2023:

1. Products that use Vermont-sourced ingredients and/or materials
2. Vermont-made cosmetics/beauty products
3. Vermont-made pottery
4. Children's toys and games
5. Glass products
6. Producer associations interested in representing a variety of producers from their industry
7. Products that align with regional/national trends

### **I.IV COST TO PARTICIPATE**

Vendors will owe a standard commission on all sales made at the Big E, payable to Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. The typical commission rate is 12%.

### **I.V BOOTH INFORMATION**

There are booth spaces for the entirety of the 17-day fair, for 8-9 day rotating spots, and occasionally for 5-7 days. While most booths are inside, there are additional spaces on the grounds for products deemed an appropriate fit. Booths vary in size, shape, and access to utilities. New this year, we will also be accepting applications from food trucks who would like to set up outside of the Vermont Building.

#### **Harvest New England Day**

Businesses interested in trying their product out at the Big E without a multi-day commitment are encouraged to first participate by vending at Harvest New England Day, a single day, farmers' market-style event on the lawn of the Vermont Building. There is no fee to participate at this level.

The application process is separate from this multi-day vendor application and will open in Spring 2023. Please subscribe to our [Agricultural Development Newsletter](#) for

updates. Contact Kristen Brassard at [Kristen.brassard@vermont.gov](mailto:Kristen.brassard@vermont.gov) for more information.

Event Date: September 29, 2023

Application Period: April 3 – June 30, 2023

## **I.VI BOOTH DESIGN**

Vendors are responsible for programming and decorating their own space. Each booth space is different and should be treated as a retail space rather than a tradeshow space. VAAFM will provide design parameters, layout information, and photos of the booth space for new vendors to plan ahead of time. Any existing components of the booth shall remain within the booth space during the Big E (counters, shelving, etc.). New vendors (without a multi-year contract) should abide by a “pack in, pack out” policy (no painting walls, affixing shelves to walls, etc.). Returning vendors will need to gain approval for any booth alterations.

VAAFM offers a few opportunities for vendors to visit the Vermont Building and work on their booth design ahead of the event.

## **I.VII IMPORTANT VENDOR INFORMATION**

- The Vermont Building is open to the public from 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM each day of the fair. Vendors are contractually obligated to remain open and adequately staffed for the entirety of each day for the duration of the event.
- For vendors participating during the first part of the fair, the building is open for load in and set up the week prior. For those vending at the end of the fair, the building is open for load out on Monday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Tuesday 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM following the fair.
- Deliveries may be made each morning and evening at designated times only.
- Daily gross sales reports are to be submitted via an online form provided by VAAFM by 11:00 AM the following day.
- New vendors are required to have an electronic point of sales system.
- Vendors are responsible for providing their own equipment, with the exception of sinks and hoods. Vendors will be responsible for outlining all necessary cooking equipment to be approved by the state. Equipment should use gas and not electric whenever possible.

## **I.VIII AMENITIES PROVIDED TO VENDORS**

- Limited free tickets and parking for booth staff, within reason and according to parameters set by Eastern States Exposition.
- Power
  - The electrical system for the Vermont Building is currently undergoing upgrades. Vendors offering prepared foods may be affected by this and

will need to work with building managers to discuss the power limitations of the booth space and determine the equipment that will work within the available electrical parameters.

- Potable water is available in some booth locations, but not all.
- Access to staff kitchen and break area
- Storage
  - Dry Storage: Limited space is available within the Vermont Building for dry storage. Space is allocated based on how many vendors request it each year and will be assigned ahead of the fair. This storage is not secure.
  - Refrigeration/Freezer: VAAFV provides a service to vendors by offering freezer and cooler space at no cost. Space is allocated based on how many vendors request it, projected sales of business, and size/type of products sold. Space is at a premium and is not meant to hold all products for vendors for the duration of their stay. Additional off-site options are available nearby.
  - Dead storage may be available through the Eastern States Exposition for on-grounds, long-term parking of larger vehicles. No electrical access is available.

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

All applications must be submitted via the [WebGrants](#) system. Applications will be accepted from January 17, 2023 at 12:00 PM through March 3, 2023 at 11:59 PM.

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

### II.I ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any business or organization will be considered that is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State, has been in business for over one year, and is in good standing with the State of Vermont.

### II.II APPLICATION REVIEW

All applications will be reviewed by a committee made up of Vermont Building staff and representatives of multiple Vermont state agencies.

### II.III INVITATIONS

Invitations will be extended to applicants chosen through the review process. VAAFM building managers will negotiate any specific conditions or alterations to products/menus, equipment, etc. directly with the vendor. Following any negotiations, contracts between VAAFM and the vendor will be drafted.

### II.IV KEY DATES

Key dates are subject to change.

<b>January 3, 2023</b>	Request for Applications released
<b>January 17 – March 3, 2023</b>	Application submission period
<b>March 3, 2023 at 11:59 PM</b>	Application closes
<b>March 20, 2023</b>	Vendor invitations
<b>August 9 – 10, 2023</b>	On-site booth design/construction days
<b>September 11 – 14, 2023</b>	Vermont Building open for vendor set up
<b>September 14, 2023 at 12:00 PM</b>	Mandatory on-site vendor meeting
<b>September 15 – October 1, 2023</b>	Big E open to the public
<b>September 29, 2023</b>	Harvest New England Day
<b>October 2 – 3, 2023</b>	Vermont Building open for vendor pack out and clean up

## II.V FULL APPLICATION

### Business Information

1. Legal Name of Business
2. Is your legal business name different from your public facing business name?
  - a. Enter your DBA name
3. Business Website
4. Is your business registered with the Vermont Secretary of State?
  - a. Enter the Vermont Secretary of State Business ID for your business.
5. Is your business headquartered in Vermont?
6. Does your business perform substantial business functions in Vermont?
7. Do you self-certify that you are in compliance with state regulations and in good standing with the State of Vermont?
8. Have you been in business for more than one (1) year?
9. Describe your business in 3 to 5 sentences.
10. How many FTE's does your business employ in Vermont?

### Ingredient Sourcing

1. Please list all ingredients sourced from Vermont businesses, including any ingredients that you grow or harvest yourself. Include the total dollar value of these products.

### Business Contact

1. Primary onsite person's name
2. Onsite person's email
3. Onsite person's cell phone
4. Is this the person who will sign your business' Big E contract?
  - a. Point person for contract
  - b. Contract person's email
  - c. Contract person's phone

### Products

1. Vendor type: Food/Retail
2. Briefly describe the products you intend to sell at the Big E.
3. Why will your products appeal to Big E attendees?
4. Do you intend to carry CBD products or do online sales of CBD products?
5. Are you applying as a food truck?
  - a. If you are applying as a food truck, please describe your energy needs and utility requirements. Do you require a water hookup and/or use of propane? How much electricity does your truck draw? Please provide as much detail as possible.

6. Please upload your full proposed menu/product list, highlighting any locally sourced products used.

### **Booth Preference**

1. VAAFM will offer booth space based on availability. Please rank your preference for the various booth spaces below.
  - Indoor 17 days
  - Indoor 8 - 9 days
  - Indoor 5 - 7 days
  - Outdoor Kiosk: 17 days
  - Outdoor Kiosk: 8 - 9 days

### **Food/Beverage Electrical Needs**

1. Do you wish to prepare food/beverages onsite at the Big E?
2. Please download the electrical equipment manifest to detail the specs of any equipment proposed for your booth.

### **Marketing and Vermont Brand**

1. Have you vended in the Vermont Building in the past three years?
  - a. Yes
    - i. Why are you interested in returning to the Big E?
    - ii. Please articulate how and why this opportunity has supported the growth of your business.
    - iii. What strategies do you employ to reach your Big E customers post-fair?
    - iv. How do you plan to improve the appeal of your booth and customer experience this year?
    - v. Please upload a photo of your booth space.
    - vi. Are you interested in a multi-year contract to vend in the Vermont Building?
    - vii. If granted a multi-year contract, what steps will you take to make your space more energy efficient, including replacement of older appliances?
  - b. No
    - i. Why are you interested in participating in the Big E?
    - ii. What similar event experience do you have to demonstrate capacity to exhibit at the Big E?
    - iii. How will you leverage the Big E as a marketing opportunity?
    - iv. How will you communicate with your Big E customers post-fair?
    - v. What strategies do you use to showcase your products?



## Market Channels

1. What tools do you use to communicate with your existing customers? Select all that apply.
  - a. Facebook
  - b. Instagram
  - c. Twitter
  - d. E-Newsletter
  - e. Print Newsletter
  - f. Other
2. Describe your business' marketing strategy.
3. How does the opportunity to vend at the Vermont Building fit in with your long-term business goals?

## SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed by a committee made up of Vermont Building staff and representatives of multiple Vermont state agencies. Reviewers will consider the following about each applicant:

- Do the proposed products compete with any vendors currently in the building?
- Do the proposed products meet the needs of the Vermont Building for the upcoming year?
- Is the company headquartered in Vermont?
- How many jobs/FTE's does the company support in Vermont?
- Does the product use Vermont-sourced ingredients where applicable?
- How well does this company represent the Vermont brand?
- Are similar products already sold at the Big E?
- Are the proposed products readily available in other retail locations in the area?
- How does vending at the Big E fit with the business' long term marketing strategy?
- Is there a clear plan for follow up with Big E consumers?
- Returning vendors will also be assessed on sales made in past years at the fair, interest in product from fairgoers, and their conduct with other vendors and Vermont building staff.

## SECTION 4: CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

### IV.I CONTRACT AND PAYMENT

Successful applicants must sign a contract with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets indicating their intent to vend under the specific terms negotiated with building managers. The contract will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any booth and/or vendor-specific requirements. Review [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants](#) (12/15/2017 Revised).

Prior to signing of contract, vendor must submit:

- A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement.
- A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months. [Not required if grantee is already a state vendor.] Please refer to the [W-9 Instructions](#) in order to accurately complete your W-9.

### IV.II COMMISSION PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Following the close of the fair for the season, VAAFM will generate a full sales report based on the daily gross sales reported by the vendor. Vendors will receive an invoice from VAAFM with commission due.

## II. 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 vendor'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 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.*

### **III. PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Except for vendor proprietary and personal identifying data, as provided under 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), vendor names, projects, the amount of contract payments, and all other information regarding Vermont Building Vendors are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

# APPENDIX

## I. RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### TRADE SHOW ASSISTANCE GRANTS

Grants provide Vermont food and forestry businesses with funds to help identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state tradeshows.

### WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

Grants and loans for investments in Vermont's farm, food, and forest economies.

### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES**

VAAFM offers a menu of funding opportunities as well as business planning and assistance resources available to the Vermont agricultural community:

- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Business Planning & Assistance](#)