

Dairy Business Viability and Technical Assistance Grant

FISCAL YEAR 2021 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The [Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center](#) (NE-DBIC) announces the availability of funds through the Dairy Business Viability and Technical Assistance Grant Program, which will provide grants for dairy processors, producer associations, supply chain businesses, and technical assistance providers to enhance dairy producer and processor operations and strengthen market opportunities. Projects funded through this program will coordinate technical assistance to benefit multiple dairy producers and/or processors with the goal of increasing consumption, sales, jobs, and diverse markets for regionally produced dairy products. Technical assistance services could include enhancing business plans, facility operations, marketing, distribution, processing, and product offerings. Grants are available to applicants in all Northeast states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

KEY DATES

RFA Release Date: October 12, 2021

Application Opens: October 26, 2021

Application Deadline: December 7, 2021 at 2:00 PM EST

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PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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

Guides and resources for registering and applying through WebGrants 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 log in 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 sole and final 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@webgrantsmail.com>](mailto:agriculturegrants.vermont@webgrantsmail.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

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)—hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM)—is one of three USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The Northeast DBIC serves all New England states, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania by supporting dairy businesses through projects that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products.

The NE-DBIC Dairy Business Viability and Technical Assistance Grant Program allows businesses to access technical assistance services to elevate dairy producer and/or processor operations across the Northeast region of the United States. Funds can be used to secure technical assistance for projects such as improving business operations, marketing, distribution, processing, or consumption of regionally produced dairy products. Projects must support multiple farmers, processors, and/or producers.

ELIGIBILITY

Dairy processors, producer associations, and retail or distribution businesses headquartered in the Northeast¹ region of the United States may apply. Additionally, technical service providers in any location can apply if the project supports dairy businesses in the Northeast region. Projects must directly benefit multiple dairy farmers and/or processors producing dairy products.

Retail or distribution partners seeking to apply must do so in collaboration with a direct dairy business (e.g., producer, processor, or producer association) and show how the project will positively impact both the primary applicant and the dairy business partner. A detailed explanation of roles, responsibilities, impact, and desired outcomes should be clearly identified within the application. In addition, a letter of support from the dairy business demonstrating clear alignment of the partnership objectives and intended outcomes must be included.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$500,000

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: \$100,000

Match: 25% cash or in-kind match commitment is required

¹ For the purposes of this grant and the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, the words “Northeast” or “Northeast region” refer to the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROJECT LENGTH

Approximately 18 months. All grant activities must be completed by September 30, 2023.

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 grant AM200100XXXXG003.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) selected three Dairy Business Innovation Initiative projects in the U.S. to support regional dairy businesses in the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. The Vermont-based NE-DBIC was selected and has since received \$6.59 million to support projects in the Northeast region of the U.S.

The Dairy Business Viability and Technical Assistance Grant Program is one of 15 current objectives under the NE-DBIC. This program seeks to elevate dairy-focused business development in the Northeast.

Projects granted through this program must support technical assistance activities that directly benefit multiple dairy farmers, processors, producer organizations, or supply chain partners in the Northeast.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

1. Dairy processor that transforms raw milk into an edible product with milk sourced from the Northeast region, is licensed in a way that their product can be sold across state lines, and:
 - Is headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
 - Sources or produces milk within the Northeast; and
 - If a value-added processor, produces products within the Northeast
2. Dairy producer association/dairy council² which represents and promotes dairy products of the Northeast region.
3. Supply chain business (e.g. distributor or retail operation) that supplies dairy products that:
 - Is headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
 - Sources dairy products within the Northeast; and
 - Purchases from and sells to businesses primarily in the Northeast

² For the purposes of this grant, 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.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

4. Technical assistance providers (e.g., university extension or viability organizations) are eligible to apply if:
 - The group of dairy businesses they will work with is clearly defined in the application; and
 - The businesses receiving services are located in the Northeast

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

- Provide a Certificate of Insurance including the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets as a listed insured
- Provide a current W-9
- Provide a DUNS number

Applicants who do not already have a DUNS number are encouraged to start this process during the application period to ensure a timely start to their grant, if awarded.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Project activities under these grants will bring technical assistance expertise to multiple dairy producers, processors, dairy producer organizations, and/or supply chain businesses that seek to enhance their business expertise, market access, or dairy product diversification. This work must positively impact multiple dairy farmers, producers, or processors. Examples of eligible technical assistance include, but are not limited to:

- Business consulting, including business plan development for processed dairy products, strategic planning assistance, and distribution and supply chain innovation
- Marketing and branding assistance, including market messaging, packaging innovation, consumer assessments, innovation in emerging market opportunities, and evaluation of regional, national, and international markets and trends
- Assistance in product innovation, including the development of value-added products, innovation in byproduct reprocessing and use maximization, and dairy product production training, including in new, rare, or innovative techniques
- Development or facilitation of websites, webinars, conferences, training, plant tours, field days

Projects may only include allowable costs/activities as outlined in the [2020 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities). For additional detail, reference [the Q&A document](#).

Required Project Criteria

The following criteria must be addressed:

1. Project promotes the visibility, consumer awareness, and consumption of dairy products produced in the Northeast.
2. Project has direct and/or indirect impacts (reasonably foreseeable and occurs because of the project activities) to multiple dairy businesses.
3. Businesses/organizations that are receiving the technical assistance can sustain the changes/improvements past the grant period.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects submitted directly by a dairy farmer(s); although dairy farms may be recipients of technical assistance from projects submitted by other businesses
- Projects not primarily located within the Northeast
- Projects that benefit only one business
- Projects submitted by supply chain partners that are not partnering directly with a dairy business or producer association
- Projects that use grant funds for:
 - Construction
 - Purchase or lease-to-own of land/building/facilities
 - Purchase of general equipment (specialized equipment is allowed)
 - Purchase of vehicles (rental vehicles for the duration of the project are allowable)
- While not ineligible, projects that solely focus on ownership transition planning or financial management skills will not score as highly as those projects that take a whole business approach.

EXAMPLE PROJECTS

Examples of eligible projects:

1. A technical service provider applies to assist a defined group of dairy farmers as a response to changing market conditions, including business planning, long-term forecasting, and shifting production strategies.
2. A dairy co-op uses funding for a technical assistance provider to offer training to all members around increasing their financial literacy, business acumen, and understanding of how to best plan for business needs.
3. A regional distributor is looking to expand market access to a new Northeastern metropolitan area and collaborates with two local dairy producers to pay a service provider to research market demand and create a business plan based on the shared needs and interests of the distributor and producers.
4. A cheese council wants to train its members on a new e-commerce platform that would support direct-to-consumer sales and utilizes grant funding for the training and implementation.
5. A producer association uses grant funds to pay a research consultant to explore the market opportunity for sugar-free Greek yogurt and to develop a plan for product development.
6. Three dairy processors in different states apply in partnership and use grant funds to hire a consultant to help them manage the process of working with a distributor to sell their product to larger regional retail outlets in the Northeast.
7. An organic farming association uses grant funds to pay for a service provider to train multiple farms on transition to and implementation of organic practices.
8. A technical service provider uses grant funds to support dairy farmers who are seeking to develop a new cooperative or other collaborative venture.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Examples of ineligible projects:

1. A technical service provider requests payment for supporting a single dairy operation with crafting their business plan.
2. A regional distributor requests funds to hire a business planner to increase market access for local cheese but has not secured any partnership or collaboration with a dairy producer to support the project.
3. A single dairy business requests funding to train their workers on a new piece of equipment.
4. A retail outlet requests funds to hire a consultant to make their cheese display more appealing to shoppers.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to projects which show one or more of the following priorities:

- Responds to emergent circumstances in the Northeast dairy sector
- Shows innovation in aggregation, distribution, packaging, market channels, or business development
- Increases sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
- Expands business beyond what is currently offered and readily available (e.g., jobs, market access, production efficiency)
- Supports new or underserved businesses, e.g., beginning farmers, migrant workers, diverse operations (management styles or dairy species), or business owners who have been historically marginalized

MATCHING FUNDS

All proposals must show matching funds which represent at least 25% of the grant request. For instance, for a grant request of \$10,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least \$2,500 in match. Matching funds may be contributed by the applicant or by another organization. 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, 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.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Example of an eligible budget:

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

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).
- **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.
- Supply chain (distribution or retail) business applicants must provide a Letter of Commitment from a dairy business.

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 October 26, 2021 – December 7, 2021 at 2:00 PM EST.

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 log in 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.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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.

AWARD INFORMATION

All applicants will be notified of the NE-DBIC decision of whether to award funds to their project. Awards will be approximately 18 months in length.

KEY DATES

DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

October 12, 2021	Request for Application (RFA) released
October 26, 2021	Application opens
December 7, 2021 at 2:00 PM EST	Application closes
February 2022	Applicants notified of award status
April 2022	Estimated project start date
October 2022	Interim report due
September 2023	Project end date
October 2023	Final report and survey due

II. FULL APPLICATION

The application content will include, but is not limited to, the following. Please reference the [WebGrants Application Guide](#) for guidance.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

- Project Title
- Business/organization name, legal entity (e.g. LLC, sole proprietor, etc.), primary contact information
- Describe your business/organization in terms of size (gross sales, number of employees, production volume), markets, and number of years in business.
- What marketing outlet(s) do you use to promote your business/organization? (*Select from list*)
- Grant funds requested
- Match contributions (must be at least 25% of grant funds)

Applicant Eligibility

- Is the applicant a dairy producer, processor/manufacturer, or value-added producer?
 - If so, does the applicant source, produce, and/or process milk in the Northeast region?
 - If so, is the applicant headquartered or based in a New England state, Delaware, New Jersey, New York or Pennsylvania?
 - Is the applicant a licensed dairy operation in compliance with all required state and federal standards?
- Is the applicant a dairy producer association that represents and promotes dairy products originating from the Northeast?
 - If so, does it receive funds from producer check-off dollars? What percent of annual operating budget comes from those dollars?
 - If so, describe your producer association, addressing 1) founding members, 2) how association is funded, 3) industry scope covered by the association, and 4) association activities.
 - If so, does your association encompasses products other than dairies, describe how you will ensure that the project will benefit dairy only.
- Is the applicant a supply chain business?
 - If so, does the applicant source/produce/process milk or dairy products in the Northeast region?
 - If so, is there a stated partnership with at least one direct dairy business? The partnership explanation should outline the roles, responsibilities, positive impact, and desired outcomes.
 - If so, is the applicant headquartered or based in a New England state, Delaware, New Jersey, New York or Pennsylvania?

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- Is the applicant a technical assistance provider (e.g., university extension or viability organizations)?
 - If so, are the businesses receiving services dairy operation located primarily in the Northeast?

Project Details and Eligibility

- Focus area
 - Provide a comprehensive project description which includes scope of work proposed, including focus area(s), partner(s), and location(s). Provide specific examples of what technical assistance will be provided and how it will be delivered most effectively.
 - How did you determine a need for the proposed services? What evidence do you have that the services are needed – challenges experienced, patterns observed, etc?
 - Articulate who would be served by these funds, both directly and indirectly.
 - To increase the competitiveness of your application, describe any or all of the funding priorities addressed in your proposed project.
 - Provide a projected workplan/timeline of your project activities.
 - Explain why your project is being proposed and what makes it timely and important.
 - Show how requested and matching funds would be used.
 - Describe how the project would or would not move forward without grant funds.
- Expansion of services
 - Elaborate on how this funding will expand dairy business capacity, allow for innovation, and increase consumption of Northeast-regionally produced milk and/or value-added products.
- To increase the competitiveness of your application, upload any documentation that shows the development of the project idea, partnerships, and funding received (e.g. business plan, financials, partnership agreement).

Entity History

- Has your business/organization received any federal or state grants 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 so:
 - List the grants received.
 - Describe the work done under these grants.
 - Explain how the work in this grant will differ?
- Have you or your project partners applied for - or do you plan to apply for - other grant(s) in conjunction with this grant?
 - If so, list the other grants you or your project partners will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

Expected Outcomes

- Define how you will evaluate the success of your project, including goals, metrics, and outcomes.
- Explain the economic impact of utilization of grant funds.
 - What is the percent increase in sales that you anticipate from these grant activities broken down by each participating business?
 - How many new or existing outlets do you expect consumers to use to buy dairy products for each of the categories below? If not applicable to your project, enter zero (0).
 - Number of grocery stores
 - Number of wholesale markets
 - Other outlets
 - Describe “other outlets”
 - As a result of this grant, do you expect an increase in revenue for any of the participating dairy businesses?
 - Please estimate the increase in revenue (in \$) for all participating dairy businesses combined.
 - Please estimate the increase in revenue (in \$), listed per participating business.
 - How many jobs are expected to be maintained and/or created because of this grant project?
- Describe the positive impact on business owner satisfaction.
 - What percentage of participants receiving the TA do you expect will have increased business satisfaction and positive outlook for the future of their business as a direct result of participating in this grant?
 - What percentage of participants receiving the TA do you expect to have learned new management strategies that reduced the cost of production, increased lifestyle satisfaction, and improved water quality and/or increased soil health?
- How will you ensure the impact of these activities implemented through this project extend beyond the grant period?

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 [2020 AMS Terms and Conditions \(8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities\)](#).

Match contributions: Projects must demonstrate matching funds of at least 25% as cash and/or in-kind sources. (e.g. \$20,000 of requested funds requires at least \$5,000 in match contributions.)

- Do not need to adhere to AMS allowable costs
- Match contributions are not required to reflect 25% per expense line, but they must make up 25% of the total grant funds requested. (For example, a grant request of \$7,000 in supplies and \$5,000 in personnel could be matched with \$3,000 of equipment.)

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

Budget Table (example)

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match
Business Viability and TA Training	\$15,000		\$4,000
Personnel		\$1,000	
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Equipment			
Supplies			
Contractor			
Other	\$5,000		
Total	\$20,000	\$1,000	\$4,000

Budget Narrative

- 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 and timeline/plan for securing these commitments:

*Complete the following questions **only for expenses that are covered by grant funds** (not matching funds). Please thoroughly describe each category for which you are requesting grant funds, answering all parts of each question.*

- For Business Viability and TA training expenses, list each anticipated training provider. For each, provide: 1) hourly/flat rate, 2) grant funds requested, 3) detailed description of services, and 4) 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 Benefits: for each of the project's salaried employees, provide the 1) fringe benefit rate and 2) grant funds requested.
- Are 'Travel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- 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 '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. *(Includes rental equipment or purchase of specialized equipment needed for grant activities.)*
- 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 is necessary for the success of this project. *(Supplies include materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit.)*
- Are 'Contractual/Consultant' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget?
 - Contractual/Consultant: List each anticipated contractor/consultant. For each, provide: 1) hourly/flat rate, 2) grant funds requested, 3) detailed description of services, and 4) justification for why the services are 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 is necessary for the success of this project. *(E.g. meetings/conferences, communications, rental expenses, ads, publication costs, data collection.)*

Anticipated Project Income

Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the grant project. Program income includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); and registration fees for conferences, workshops, events, etc. Recipients are not required to report program income earned after the grant period.

- Do you anticipate having any program income? (E.g. event tickets, registration, etc.)
- List any anticipated sources of income generated by the technical assistance activities covered by this grant.
- How much income is expected to be earned by those activities (in \$)?
- Describe how you will reinvest the program income into the project to enhance the education regarding, promotion for, or consumption of Northeast-regionally produced dairy products.

III. SCORING CRITERIA

REVIEWER SCORING CRITERIA

Project Proposal (50 points)

Project overview illustrates an impactful, innovative, and realistic project that will engage and elevate multiple dairy businesses in the Northeast region.	15 points
Project, as it is outlined, will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the visibility, consumer awareness, and consumption of dairy products produced in the Northeast. 2. Have a direct and/or indirect impact (reasonably foreseeable and occurs because of the project activities) to multiple dairy businesses. 3. Include changes/improvements that the businesses/organizations receiving the technical assistance can sustain past the grant period. 	10 points
Applicant submitted supporting documentation that clearly and comprehensively illustrates that the grant funds will be a sound investment and will help the entity meet its future goals.	10 points
Applicant demonstrates an awareness of what technical assistance is needed for the business and outlines an effective strategy to acquire that support and put it into action.	5 points
Applicant describes activities and provides a proposal that strongly aligns with one (1) or more of the following funding priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responds to emergent circumstances in the regional dairy sector 2. Offers technical assistance support that will be impactful past the grant period 3. Shows innovation in aggregation, distribution, packaging, market channels, or business development 4. Increases sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached 5. Expands business beyond what is currently offered and readily available (e.g., jobs, market access, production efficiency) 6. Supports new or underserved businesses, e.g., beginning farmers, migrant workers, diverse operations (management styles or dairy species), or business owners who have been historically marginalized 	5 points
The quality of the proposal is comprehensible and clear.	5 points

Budget (25 points)

Budget summary is realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed. 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 2. Fund requests are detailed thoroughly in the budget narrative. 	10 points

SECTION III: SCORING CRITERIA

Letters of Support/Commitment (15 points)

Applicant's narrative responses and letters of commitment/support collectively demonstrate the potential for project success (e.g., local support of project, impacts on dairy community, etc.).	10 points
There are letters of commitment from all project partners described in the application.	5 points

Expected Outcomes (10 points)

The proposal includes at least one expected outcome showing an increase in sales or revenue for at least one participating business.	5 points
The proposal includes at least one expected outcome showing one or more of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Job creation and/or retention2. New/existing outlets for consumer access to participating business' dairy products3. Improved business owner satisfaction or confidence	5 points

IV. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing NE-DBIC/VAAFAM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants](#) (12/15/2017 Revised).

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. [DUNS Number](#)
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

GRANTEE PAYMENT 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 (October 2022) which may include:

SECTION IV: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

- a. Summary of status of grant activities
 - b. Description of successes and challenges
 - c. Discussion of any modifications deemed necessary and justification for changes
 - d. Documentation of any technical assistance received, including photos if applicable
 - e. Expenditures to date
 - f. Program income to date and description of how that income will be invested back into the objectives of the project to enhance the education, promotion, or consumption of Northeast-regionally produced dairy products.
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 how the award contributed to the growth and viability of the dairy industry
 - 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 of the activities under this grant
 - g. Final expenditures
 - h. Project outcomes:
 - i. New and existing outlets
 - ii. Increases in sales per business that received technical assistance
 - iii. Increases in revenue per business that received technical assistance
 - iv. Jobs maintained/created
 - i. Program income and description of how that income will be invested back into the objectives of the project to enhance the viability and consumption of Northeast-regionally produced dairy products.
 - j. Positive impact felt to business owner, in terms of owner satisfaction, increased positive outlook on business operations, new strategies learned, or partnerships 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
 - e. Farmer or business owner satisfaction and confidence

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 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.