

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

FISCAL YEAR 2021 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The [Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center](#) (NE-DBIC) announces the availability of funds through the Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant program, which will provide grants for dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to take actionable steps to improve the safety of dairy products. Projects funded through this program will support increased production safety standards with the goal of accessing new markets. Projects that increase marketability of dairy products will be prioritized. Activities covered by this grant include accessing technical assistance, audits, food safety plan development, training, testing fees, and certain infrastructure upgrades.

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: February 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET

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CONTACT

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Kathryn Donovan
Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov
(802) 585-4571

WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Rebecca Brockett
Rebecca.Brockett@vermont.gov
(802) 636-7016

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

RESOURCES FOR APPLYING

- Have questions about this grant? Visit our [Dairy Food Safety & Certification 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 (VAAFAM) 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@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

THE NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAF), is one of three USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The NE-DBIC serves a 10-state Northeast region which includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, 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.

ELIGIBILITY SUMMARY

Dairy producers, dairy processors, and dairy producer associations that are headquartered in the Northeast region of the U.S. may apply for this grant.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

\$250,000

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: \$40,000

Match: A 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment is required.

PROJECT LENGTH

Approximately 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, AM200100XXXXG003.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - 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 Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) was selected and has since received \$6.59 million to support projects in the Northeast region of the U.S.

Projects funded by this grant will allow dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to take actionable steps to improve the safety of dairy products and improve marketability. Technical assistance providers or supply chain partners including distributors, co-packers and cross-dockers that would also benefit from grant activities should be listed as partners. Projects that demonstrate that grant activities will increase or expand access to market channels will be prioritized. Food safety activities under this grant should build upon baseline state and federal compliance requirements to further improve product consistency, safety, and quality of dairy products.

ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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

- 1) Dairy farmer (producer) that is:
 - a. headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
 - b. sources or produces milk within the Northeast; and
 - c. is a licensed dairy operation in compliance with all required state and/federal standards.
- 2) Dairy processors that transform raw milk into an edible product with milk sourced from the Northeast region, are licensed in a way that their product can be sold across state lines, and are:
 - a. headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
 - b. sources or produces milk within the Northeast; and
 - c. if a value-added processor, products must be manufactured within the Northeast; and
 - d. is a licensed dairy processor in compliance with all required state and/federal standards.
- 3) Dairy producer association/dairy council¹ which represents and promotes dairy products dairy businesses of the Northeast.

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

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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

- Certificate of Insurance listing the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets as an additional insured
- Current W-9
- [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 this grant will reduce or eliminate food safety risks in the production, storage, transport, or handling of dairy products. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Pre-audit consultations
- Audits and resulting activities needed to meet audit requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Food safety audit
 - Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) audit: in-plant and/or record-review
 - Animal welfare audit
- Technical assistance in the development, implementation, or review of plans, monitoring programs, trainings, and/or certification of:
 - FSMA-compliant preventative control food safety plan
 - Food safety program
 - Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)
 - Preventative Controls Qualified Individual (PCQI) certification
 - Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
 - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
 - Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP)
 - Dairy Process Authority to validate products for safety and stability
 - Safety Quality Food (SQF) Code
 - Record keeping/traceability systems
 - Food safety and related certifications
- Testing costs:
 - Food safety product tests
 - Environmental monitoring sample collection, testing/lab fees, sample shipping
 - Floor pathogen testing
- Infrastructure upgrades:
 - Parts, materials/supplies (not construction) including:
 - Boot wash stations
 - Door foamers
 - Tools with hygienic design

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Cleaning/sanitation supplies
- Fans/standalone ventilation systems
- Replacement parts for tools or equipment for improved cleanability
- Purchase (or rental) of specialized equipment²
- Technical assistance, trainings, or workshops that contribute to, or result in, certificates or certifications in food safety improvements in areas such as:
 - Dairy food safety
 - Food handling
 - Milk and dairy product quality and safety
 - Microbiology
 - Fluid milk production
 - Dairy product production
 - Membrane filtration and separation
 - Recipe or process improvement to achieve increased shelf life or stability of product
- Costs associated with:
 - Contaminant management
 - Standalone toilet facilities/handwashing stations
 - Worker clothing/PPE
 - Waste disposal
 - Wages associated with the time for staff to perform grant activities including trainings, development of food safety plan/protocols, and implementation of food safety improvements.

Projects may only include allowable costs/activities as outlined in the [2020 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

Required Project Criteria

The following criteria must be addressed:

1. Must build upon dairy business' existing baseline compliance with food safety requirements.

² Specialized equipment is allowable when provided in the approved budget or with prior written approval for acquisition costs and rental costs provided the following criteria is met: 1) Necessary for the research, scientific, or other technical activities of the grant agreement; 2) Not otherwise reasonably available and accessible; 3) The type of equipment is normally charged as a direct cost by the organization; 4) Acquired in accordance with organizational practices; 5) Must be used solely to meet the legislative purpose of the grant program and objectives of the grant agreement; 6) More than one single commercial organization, commercial product, or individual must benefit from the use of the equipment; 7) Must not use special purpose equipment acquired with grant funds to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies that provide equivalent services; and 8) Equipment is subject to the full range of acquisition, use, management, and disposition requirements under [2 CFR § 200.313](#) as applicable. See Section 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities of the [2020 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) for full details. Contact [Kathryn Donovan](#) with question about specific equipment.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2. Project increases the safety of dairy products produced in the Northeast.
3. Business/organization can sustain the changes/improvements past the grant period.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects not primarily located within the Northeast
- Projects that solely support the production/sales of raw fluid milk meant for human consumption
- Projects that use grant funds for:
 - Construction
 - Purchase or lease-to-own of land/building/facilities
 - Purchase of general equipment (specialized equipment is allowable)
 - Purchase of vehicles (rental vehicles for the duration of the project are allowable)

EXAMPLE PROJECTS

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. *A dairy processor has already undergone a food safety audit and uses funds to correct/improve aspects of their business that were flagged in the audit and to develop a food safety plan, including floor pathogen testing and the installation of door foamers.*
2. *A state's cheese guild (producer association) identifies 5 cheesemakers that are interested in selling to a chain retailer. They coordinate technical assistance for each to receive audits, make changes and upgrades to their facilities, and acquire specific certifications required by the retailer.*
3. *A processor wants to offer co-packing opportunities to three organic producers and uses grant funds for a food safety plan revision, environmental monitoring updates, and liability insurance review to accommodate additional milk sources, processors, and potential cross-contamination in their facility.*
4. *A processor works with a technical service provider to develop a validation process for their environmental monitoring program that includes a sampling schedule, identifies where samples should be taken, and creates a plan for if there is a positive test result.*
5. *A raw milk cheesemaker identifies a need in the Northeast raw milk cheesemaking community for food safety technical assistance for raw milk cheese, specifically. They receive funds to work with a technical assistance provider to develop a virtual conference focused on reducing risk in raw milk cheesemaking production.*
6. *A processor sees a marketing opportunity in getting Animal Welfare Certification. They use funds to pay for an animal welfare audit, technical assistance to achieve a certification, and the certification fees for each of their milk suppliers.*
7. *An ice cream maker has identified a challenge in getting frozen product to retailers without compromising quality and consistency. The processor partners with a distributor to develop improved Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for frozen dairy products. They hire a contractor to provide professional services for the distributor, which includes an audit on their storage and handling practices, the development of a specific food handling training for their staff to handle frozen dairy products.*

EXAMPLES OF INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- *A dairy farm wants to become a processor and seeks to purchase equipment and pay for initial inspections and compliance related fees.*

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- *A cheesemaker wants to develop a new product line and pay for a food scientist to develop their recipe into a shelf stable product.*
- *A processor wants to pay for the construction of a new ventilation system and plumbing in sinks.*

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to projects which address some or all the following priorities:

- Food safety improvements and/or certification activities that will benefit multiple businesses
- Projects that reduce real or perceived barriers to improving food safety
- Builds on or enhances previous food safety improvement efforts
- Will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
- Shows innovation in leveraging food safety messaging in marketing messaging
- Employs digital marketing and social media messaging to consumers on food safety

MATCHING FUNDS

All proposals must show matching funds which represent at least 25% of the grant request. For instance, for a grant request of \$20,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least \$5,000 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	\$15,000		\$4,500
Personnel		\$1,000	
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Equipment			
Supplies			
Other	\$5,000		
Total	\$20,000	\$1,000	\$4,500

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.

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 – February 3, 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.

We strongly advise that you submit your application ahead of the deadline. 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 of whether to award funds to their project. Awards will be approximately 15 months in length.

SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

KEY DATES

DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

October 12, 2021	Request for Application (RFA) released
October 26, 2021	Application released
February 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET	Application closes
March 2022	Applicants notified of award status
April 2022	Estimated grant project start date
November 15, 2022	Interim report due
June 15, 2023	Project end date
July 15, 2023	Final report and survey due

II. FULL APPLICATION

The application content is listed below but may be subject to change. Please reference the [WebGrants Application Guide](#) for guidance on completing your application in the WebGrants system.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

- Business/organization name, legal entity (e.g., LLC, sole proprietor, etc.), primary contact information

Applicant Eligibility

- Is the applicant a dairy farmer/producer? If yes:
 - Is the applicant headquartered or based in a Northeast state (CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RH, or VT)?
 - Does the applicant source or produce milk that originates within the Northeast?
 - Is the applicant a licensed dairy operation in compliance with all required state and/federal standards?
- Is the applicant an established processor that transforms raw milk into an edible product and is licensed in a way that their product can be sold across state lines? If yes:
 - Is the applicant headquartered or based in a Northeast state (CT, DE, MA, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RH, or VT)?
 - Does the applicant source or produce milk that originates within the Northeast?
 - Does the applicant manufacture dairy products in the Northeast?
- Is the applicant a dairy producer association that represents and promotes dairy products originating from the Northeast? *For the purpose 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 founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific 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.
 - If your association encompasses products other than dairies, describe how you will ensure that the project will benefit dairy only.
 - Does this association receive funds from producer check-off dollars? If yes:
 - 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, and number of years in business.
- Describe your business's strategy or approach to sustainable business growth and positioning. What is your long-term vision?

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

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 food safety improvements. (*Select from dropdown: significant experience, some experience, no experience*)
- Have you received technical assistance related to food safety in preparation of the project, or do you plan to receive related technical assistance during this grant project?

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Details

- Summarize the proposed project in a couple of sentences.
- What are the applicant's 1) current food safety measures and 2) food safety goals?
- Provide a comprehensive project description which includes how this project will improve 1) dairy product safety, 2) workplace conditions, and/or 3) marketability of dairy product.
- Provide a projected workplan/timeline of your project activities.
- 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:
 - Food safety improvements and/or certification activities that will benefit multiple businesses
 - Projects that reduce real or perceived barriers to improving food safety
 - Builds on or enhances previous food safety improvement efforts
 - Will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
 - Shows innovation in leveraging food safety messaging in marketing messaging
 - Employs digital marketing and social media messaging to consumers on food safety

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

Supporting Documentation

- To increase the competitiveness of your application, upload any 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 (audits, existing food safety plans), evidence of marketplace demand for increased safety measures, bids, or documentation that provides further context for your proposed project.*

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.

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 ask. (For example, a grant request of \$7,000 in supplies and \$5,000 in personnel could be matched with \$6,000 of equipment.)*

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

FINANCIALS & OUTCOMES

Budget Narrative

- Total funds requested and amount of matching funds.
- 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, which should be detailed in questions above). Please thoroughly describe each category for which you are requesting grant funds, answering all parts of each question.*

- Are 'Personnel' 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. 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 'Training' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? If yes:
 - 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 'Contractual/Consultant' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? If yes:
 - 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 'Supply' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above 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
- Are 'Equipment' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above 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 above budget?
 - Travel: For each trip: 1) list expense 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.

SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- Are 'Travel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
 - Travel: For each trip: 1) list expense 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 is necessary for the success of this project. (*E.g. meetings/conferences, communications, rental expenses, ads, publication costs, data collection.*)

Anticipated Program 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? If yes:
 - List any anticipated sources of incomes generated by the 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, promotion, or consumption of Northeast-regionally produced dairy products:

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 (60 points)

Project overview and workplan illustrates an impactful and realistic project that will improve food safety, workplace safety, and/or marketability of Northeast dairy products. 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.	30 points
Applicant demonstrates that their project is well-aligned with funding priorities and provides details to support that.	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 food safety goals.	10 points
Applicant's narrative responses and letters of commitment/support collectively demonstrate the potential for project success. Any match contributors have written letters of commitment outlining their match contribution and value.	10 points

Budget and Expected Outcomes (40 points)

Budget and narrative are 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, and 2. Fund requests are detailed thoroughly in the budget narrative. 	15 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. 	10 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 and 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:

SECTION IV: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

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
 - d. Documentation of any marketing/promotion of project
 - e. Photos/documentation that demonstrates grant activities.
 - 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. Results of grantees measurements of success
 - ii. New and existing outlets
 - iii. Sales increases
 - iv. Increases in revenue
 - v. 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:

SECTION IV: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

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.