



# TRADE SHOW ASSISTANCE GRANTS

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## FISCAL YEAR 2022 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) Trade Show Assistance Grants (TSAG) provide Vermont agriculture and forestry businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual shows targeting out of state buyers during 2022. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide opportunities to network with wholesale buyers.

## KEY DATES

Release Date: January 3, 2022

Application Opens: January 17, 2022 at 12:00 PM

Application Deadline: March 2, 2022 at 11:59 PM

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| A. I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW.....              | 3  |
| B. II. HOW TO APPLY .....                | 5  |
| C. III. FULL APPLICATION .....           | 8  |
| D. IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA .....         | 9  |
| E. V. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING ..... | 10 |

# CONTACT

## PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

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Agency of Agriculture staff are available to assist you during State of Vermont business hours, Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM. Assistance may not be available shortly before deadline.

## 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 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.

VAAFAM will not 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 application closes.**

## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### I.I PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM) Trade Show Assistance Grants (TSAG) provide Vermont agriculture and forestry businesses with funds to identify, plan, exhibit and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual trade shows that target out-of-state buyers between 4/1/2022 and 3/31/2023. These matching grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers. Applicants are encouraged to apply for up to 5 trade shows and/or up to \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements and may also apply for trade show costs incurred pre-award, back to 1/1/2022.

*Please note that there are some changes to the TSAG program from past years. Highlights of those changes include:*

- *Trade show grants will be awarded through a competitive process and will be reviewed by a full committee after the closure of the application period; these funds will no longer be available on a first-come, first-served basis*
- *Reimbursement for up to 5 tradeshow during the grant period are permitted*
- *Trade shows may be virtual, but must target out-of-state buyers*
- *Trade shows covered by Food Export's Branded program will **no longer** be eligible for these grant dollars*
- *Trade shows must be either be:*
  - *business-to business (B2B) or*
  - *packaging focused (e.g., private label, value-packs, raw materials sourcing, cooperative sourcing)*
- *All receipts must be submitted in order to be reimbursed*

### I.II ELIGIBILITY

Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds through this grant:

1. Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one (1) year with an address indicating that they perform substantial functions in Vermont
2. Business has three or more wholesale accounts
3. Business meets one of the following two criteria:
  - i. 50% or more of their product ingredients/components are from Vermont
  - ii. The product, if substantially transformed, was transformed in Vermont

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### I.III AVAILABLE FUNDS

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has set aside \$30,000 to be distributed through a competitive process and will support Vermont businesses to execute their yearly marketing plans through financial assistance with tradeshow expenses. Applicant may include up to 5 trade shows in their yearly marketing plan for a total of up to \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements.

#### Wood/Forestry Focused Funding

For this funding round, VAAFM has a special interest in supporting wood and forestry businesses in their trade show marketing efforts.

### I.IV MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Reimbursement provided directly to Vermont businesses for marketing materials and exhibiting at eligible events.

- Minimum grant amount: \$2,000
- Maximum grant amount: \$5,000

### I.V PROJECT LENGTH

Grant will be awarded for up to 12 months from the date the grant is executed. Grants may be amended if grantee changes their anticipated marketing plan. If the marketing plan has changed and grantee has not sought an amendment, the changes may not be approved, and claims may be denied.

### I.VI FUNDING SOURCE

Funding for Trade Show Assistance Grants is allocated on a yearly basis from the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative.

## II. HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted via the [WebGrants](https://webgrants.vermont.gov) system at [agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). Applications will be accepted from January 17, 2022 – March 2, 2022 at 11:59 PM.

Be advised that technical assistance with [WebGrants](https://webgrants.vermont.gov) may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

### II.I ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Vermont based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds through this grant:

1. Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one (1) year with an address indicating that they perform substantial functions in Vermont
2. Business has three or more wholesale accounts
3. Business meets one of the following two criteria:
  - i. 50% or more of their product ingredients/components are from Vermont
  - ii. The product, if substantially transformed, was transformed in Vermont

### II.II ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Trade Show Assistance Grant (TSAG) grants can mitigate the financial risks associated with exhibiting at trade shows and provide an excellent opportunity to network with wholesale buyers. Applicants should outline all marketing activities for the upcoming year for which they seek reimbursement. The following criteria must be met for a successful application.

Eligible proposals must assert that:

- Proposed trade shows are located outside of Vermont; or if virtual, must target out-of-state buyers.
- Applicant has previously attended trade show no more than 4 times. This grant will fund up to 5 years of attendance at a trade show.
- The proposed budget demonstrates a minimum of a 1:1 cash match contribution. This grant will reimburse each line item 50%.
- Funding will be used for the following approved expenses:
  - Travel and accommodation expenses
  - Marketing assets and booth design
  - Registration fees (including booth space and educational sessions)
  - Booth fees including furnishings and utilities
  - Shipping/freight
  - Other marketing costs (samples, printing, etc.)
  - Proposed trade show is in the business to business (wholesale) format. Direct to consumer shows will only be eligible on a case-by-case basis.

## SECTION II: HOW TO APPLY

### II.III INELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

- Any shows already covered by the Food Export Branded Program
- Proposals from applicants who are out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations
- Proposals from applicants failing to meet requirements for previous VAAFM grants and/or assistance programs or from individuals or groups that were unable to perform or had performance issues with previous grant obligations with VAAFM
- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the threshold of 50% Vermont agricultural and forest content/ingredients
- Reimbursement requests that include labor, food, and/or beverage
- Proposals for trade shows that have been completed prior to 1/1/2022

### II.IV MATCHING FUNDS

Applicant is required to contribute 50% of each item included in the reimbursement request. For example, if the applicant paid \$3,000 for a booth space at a trade show, their contribution would be \$1,500.

### II.V APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of State of Vermont employees and industry professionals.

### II.VI KEY DATES

Key dates are subject to change.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>January 3, 2022</b>            | <b>Request for Applications (RFA) released</b> |
| <b>January 17 – March 2, 2022</b> | Application submission period                  |
| <b>March 2, 2022 at 11:59 PM</b>  | Application closes                             |
| <b>March 31, 2022</b>             | Notification of awards                         |

### RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

#### **The Food Export Northeast Branded Program**

Through Exporter Education, Market Entry, and Market Promotion strategies, Food Export–Midwest and Food Export–Northeast can help your company understand and discover new exporting opportunities by providing 50% reimbursement for costs incurred to execute eligible marketing and promotional activities. These services are made possible through funding from the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) of the USDA.

Food Export Northeast Branded Program: [foodexport.org/programs-services/increase-market-share/branded-program](https://foodexport.org/programs-services/increase-market-share/branded-program)

#### **AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE 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: [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants)
- Business Planning & Assistance: [agriculture.vermont.gov/businessdevelopment/planning](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/businessdevelopment/planning)

### III. FULL APPLICATION

For more information on how to apply, please see the [WebGrants Application Guide: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply)

#### SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, the applicant will be redirected to an **Application Submitted Confirmation** page with an Application ID number (see example below) and receive a confirmation email.

##### Application Submitted Confirmation

You have successfully submitted your Pre-Application for Testing Process Application with Application ID [40504].  
Grantor has received your application for evaluation.



## **IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applicants shall include up to 5 trade shows and/or up to \$5,000 in requests for eligible reimbursements. Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The business, trade show(s), products, and expected costs fall within the eligibility requirements listed in this RFA
- Demonstrated readiness to market product, secure leads, and follow up with wholesale buyers
- The overall potential impact of the trade show(s) to the business

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

## **V. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING**

### **V.I GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT**

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing 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) at [bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms](https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms) for the most recent State of Vermont provisions.

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee must submit:

- F. 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.].
- G. 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].
- H. If grant is state-funded, completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#). Find this form at [finance.vermont.gov/vendors-and-grantees](https://finance.vermont.gov/vendors-and-grantees).
- I. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

### **V.II GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Grantees are eligible for up to 70% reimbursement after the completion of the first show and approval of the first report. Grantees attending multiple shows may request an alternative payment schedule. The final 30% of payment for all grantees will be disbursed after the final report submission and approval.

### **V.III REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Grantees are required to submit two reports for each trade show for which they seek reimbursement. The first is to be completed within 30 days of the trade show end date and the second report will be due by January 31, 2023.

Reports should be submitted online in the WebGrants system and must include verification that the marketing activities have been completed, photo documentation showing proof of activities, and relevant data associated with attendance at the various marketing activities such as number and value of both leads and sales. The Agency of Agriculture may request receipts, proof of purchases, or other documents showing that grant funds have been used to participate in the marketing activities.

Information submitted in any report to the Agency will be a public record. Financial information may only be reported in aggregate.

## SECTION V: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

### V.IV PUBLIC INFORMATION

Except for grantee proprietary and personal identifying data, as provided under 1 V.S.A. § 317(c), grantee names, projects, the amount of grant awards, and all other information regarding Trade Show Assistance Grants are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

### V.V 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.*