

**VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS**

**MAPLE AGRICULTURE  
DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – FISCAL YEAR 2024**

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to announce funding for Maple Agricultural Development Grants (Maple ADG). This opportunity is part of a one-time appropriation, in part developed by the Governor’s Commission on the Future of Agriculture, focused on high need agricultural sectors of meat, maple, and produce.

These funds support maple producers and processors in implementing projects that improve their climate resilience, operational efficiency, and/or food safety and food quality practices.

**KEY DATES**

- PUBLICATION DATE:** October 10, 2023
- APPLICANT WEBINAR:** October 17, 2023
- APPLICATION OPENS:** October 17, 2023
- APPLICATION DEADLINE:** November 21, 2023 at 11:59 PM

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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

## WEBGRANTS

Applications for this program must be submitted through the [WebGrants](#) grants management system.

### REGISTRATION

If you're new to WebGrants, submit the [WebGrants Registration Form](#). It usually takes about two business days to process registrations. Make sure to register for an account well before the application deadline.

### SUBMISSION POLICY

Applicants must follow all instructions in this request for applications (RFA), including the dates and times for submitting applications. The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will only consider the last complete submission through WebGrants before the deadline as the official application. We cannot accept incomplete or late applications after the deadline (November 21, 2023 at 11:59 PM) barring exceptional circumstances. The WebGrants system will not accept applications after the deadline.

### SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

After you've submitted your application successfully, you'll be taken to a page confirming your submission. This page will have an Application ID number. You'll also get an email confirming your submission.

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

### **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

In 2022, the [Governor's Commission on the Future of Vermont Agriculture](#) identified maple, meat, and produce as Vermont agricultural sectors with critical need for investments. It was recommended to the Vermont Legislature that funds be made available to business operations for development, growth, and improvement. The Fiscal Year 2024 state budget included \$2,300,000 in funds for one-time Agriculture Development Grants in these sectors, with 25% allocated toward the maple industry.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets recognizes that one of the greatest barriers for agriculture operations in the state is access to capital to invest in infrastructure.

**Maple Agricultural Development Grants (Maple ADG)** will provide funding for projects that will develop, grow, and sustain Vermont maple operations. These grants will focus on three funding priorities: climate resilience, operational efficiency, and/or food safety and quality.

Projects may impact any area of an operation and should include objectives that address viability, growth, or safety.

### **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Applicants must own or operate a maple production or processing business that is active in the state of Vermont. This includes those who produce or sell maple syrup for wholesale, retail, or direct-to-consumer sales, or who produce value-added products.

Vermont-based maple processors and distributors are eligible.

#### **Ineligible applicants include:**

- Retail only operations, such as grocery stores.
- Technical service providers or researchers who do not produce or process their own maple product for sale.

Both start-up maple businesses and agricultural businesses looking to diversify by adding maple endeavors are invited to apply.

### **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

Projects must be related to maple production and processing. They should involve infrastructure, equipment, and/or training improvements.

This includes, but is not limited to, projects focused on:

- Enhancing or implementing maple tapping techniques.
- Upgrading collection, processing, or packaging equipment.
- Improving storage, transportation, and distribution systems.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

- Completing equipment, infrastructure, or technology upgrades.
- Implementing new sugarbush management practices.
- Improving food safety and/or maple quality.
- Replacing brass or lead equipment with food safe materials.
- Improving climate resiliency or sustainability.
- Contracting staff training or technical assistance.
- Enhancing the efficiency and quality of maple operations.

The following project types are not eligible for funding:

- Projects focused on marketing, such as marketing consultation, advertising campaigns, branding initiatives, label design, website updates, or funding agritourism materials or events.
- Projects focused on business management, such as accounting services or software, legal work, or business transfers.
- Project focused on research. Interested researchers may refer to the [Specialty Crop Block Grant Program](#) or [USDA Acer Grants](#).

## FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has identified three key funding priorities, informed by stakeholder input, that will guide the selection of projects. These priorities reflect the current highest needs identified in the maple sector.

All applications must explain how their project directly impacts their business in **at least one** of the following ways:

### 1) Climate Resilience

Climate change, including shifting weather patterns, unpredictable seasons, and major natural events, has impacted the entire agricultural sector. Through Maple ADG funds, VAAFMM will invest in projects that allow producers to remain productive and sustainable even in the changing nature of our landscape.

Projects can address climate resilience in several ways, and many projects may fit this focus. Applicants should consider how their project may help them mitigate the effects of climate change, remain productive and efficient during difficult seasonal patterns, or improve their maple operation's energy use and greenhouse gas output.

#### **Examples of climate resilience projects include but are not limited to:**

- Infrastructure improvements to combat extreme or unusual weather, such as new or improved roads.
- Switching to renewable or longer-lasting energy sources such as solar.
- Improving an operation's power grid to be more efficient or sustainable.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

- Upgrades to previous damage from natural disasters that result in infrastructure that is more resilient.  
*Please note that VAAFMM cannot duplicate funds already granted by another state or federal entity. Project components for disaster-related improvements must be new, uncovered expenses. Funds cannot be used for anything that has already been purchased.*
- Implementation of climate-informed sugarbush management.
- Expansion of taps into red maple sugarbush.
- Equipment improvement that leads to fewer greenhouse gas emissions, such as a reverse osmosis machine or a more efficient boiler.
- Storage and processing upgrades to ensure safety and quality of product during disruptions.

### 2) Operational Efficiency

The viability of an operation often depends on its ability to remain efficient with both time and funds. Many things can hurt efficiency, from labor shortages, to aging equipment, to damaged tubing, and more. Some efficiencies can also be found from adding new technologies to the operation. This funding priority focuses on lasting efficiency improvements.

Projects may choose to address operational efficiency through improving infrastructure, upgrading equipment, reorganizing product flow, implementing technology solutions, and more.

#### **Examples of operational efficiency projects include but are not limited to:**

- Improved maple processing equipment, such as reverse osmosis machines or upgraded boilers.
- Addition of refrigerated storage tanks to allow batch maple processing or storage.
- Upgraded tubing or vacuum systems for better sap flow.
- Installation of remote vacuum system monitoring software.
- Upgrades to buildings, roads, or other infrastructure to improve the flow of product, people, or vehicles.
- Improvements to distribution or storage infrastructure and equipment.

### 3) Food Safety & Quality

For maple products, safety and quality pose unique challenges not found in other agricultural sectors. Older equipment may introduce contaminants that are not safe for human consumption, while even new equipment may be difficult to

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

sanitize. Quality, or adherence to maple grading, can also be an ongoing barrier to customer retention or market access.

Food safety and quality projects may choose to focus on equipment, supplies, or training. Outcomes should focus on producing maple products that meet food safety standards and/or quality guidelines. Projects related to [Sugarhouse Certification](#) through the Vermont Maple Sugar Maker's Association are encouraged; please note VAAFMM cannot duplicate funding for costs already covered another other grant.

### **Examples of food safety & quality projects include but are not limited to:**

- Replacing or upgrading equipment that contains lead or brass components.
- Expansion or renovation of sugarhouses to separate outside food and drink from processing areas.
- Construction of upgraded sugarhouses or boiling areas.
- Investment in potable water, electricity, or other resources to sugarhouses.
- Replacing tubing, storage totes, or other sap collection components that are not food safe due to age, material, or damage.
- Training of management or staff in maple syrup grading and quality.
- Investments in storage, packaging, and distribution that maintain the quality and safety of maple products.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

In keeping with the goals and strategies set forward by the Governor's Commission on the Future of Agriculture, all applicants must address how their project will achieve one of three broad outcome objectives. These objectives may be measured quantitatively, such as a "15% increase in \_\_\_\_\_", or qualitatively, such as with a narrative explanation of how this project will make a business more viable.

The Agriculture Development Grant program aims to improve the Vermont agricultural economy in the following ways:

### **1) Increase sustainability and viability of Vermont-based maple businesses.**

These funds aim to make it easier to start and keep agricultural businesses in Vermont. Applicants may choose to focus their objectives on keeping their business based in Vermont or developing opportunities for workers to remain in the state.

Example project objectives:

- Number of jobs created
- Percentage increase in take-home profit

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- Narrative on the increase in efficiency, or how the projects strengthens business sustainability and viability

### **2) Increase the production or sales of Vermont-based maple businesses.**

Increasing the impact of Vermont maple, both for the state and the producers themselves, is another goal of these funds. Applicants may choose to focus their objectives on growth metrics, whether that is sales or production based. Objectives may be focused on in-state or out-of-state sales.

Example project objectives include:

- Percentage increase in annual revenue
- Percentage increase in annual production
- Number of new points of sale
- Narrative around out-of-state presence and/or how the project helps to expand business reach

### **3) Increase the safety and quality of maple produced in Vermont.**

Food safety and quality is a growing focus across consumers, producers, and regulators. These funds aim to make food safety an achievable goal for operations of all sizes.

Example project objectives include:

- Achievement of safety certifications
- Replacement of old or unsafe equipment
- Narrative around how project improves food safety or food quality

## **AVAILABLE FUNDS**

\$543,750

## **MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD**

\$15,000–\$100,000

## **MATCHING FUNDS**

There is **no match requirement** for Maple Agriculture Development Grants. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they will fund projects where the total project cost exceeds requested grant funds. Therefore, a total project budget must be included in the application. When necessary to complete the project, matching funds can come from any source, including but not limited to cash on hand, loans, additional grants, etc.

## **PROJECT LENGTH**

Grants will be awarded for up to 24 months.

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

### FUNDING SOURCE

Agricultural Development Grants are funded by the State of Vermont [Act 78 \(H.494\) of 2023, FY 2024 Appropriations Act](#).

### RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

#### Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) offers funding opportunities to a variety of business structures encompassing forest, farm, and food enterprises. \$3,000,000 in funding is available in FY24. WLEI focuses on projects addressing market development; research and development; infrastructure; equipment; and energy. WLEI opportunities are available for all Vermont farm, food and forestry businesses.

[Get more information about WLEI opportunities.](#)

Please note that applicants may apply to both Maple ADG and Working Lands but may only receive **one award** between these two programs in state fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024).

#### Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal program providing technical assistance services, funding opportunities, and resources that help conserve our nation's natural landscape. Of interest to maple producers, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) On-Farm Energy Initiative helps farmers and ranchers make voluntary improvements that can boost energy efficiency on the farm.

[Find out more information about NRCS and EQIP opportunities.](#)

#### Vermont Maple Sugar Maker's Sugarhouse Certification Grants

The Vermont Maple Sugar Maker's Association (VMSMA) offers grants to maple producers and processors as part of their Sugarhouse Certification Program. This program aims to improve the safety of sugarhouses and sugaring throughout the state. Vermont sugar makers who participate in the Sugarhouse Certification Program are eligible to apply for grant funding in order to meet the requirements of their specific Certification, up to \$15,000.

[Find out more information about the VMSMA and this grant program.](#)

#### NOFA-VT Farmer Fund

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) provides a Farmer Emergency Fund, which provides grants up to \$5,000 for emergency response, repairs, and resilience. Maple businesses impacted by the July 2023 floods may be eligible for funding.



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

[Find out more information about the NOFA-VT Farmer Emergency Fund.](#)

### **USDA Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP)**

The USDA REAP program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing.

[Find out more information about USDA REAP opportunities.](#)

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

### SECTION 2: APPLICATION

Applications must be submitted through the Agency's grant management system, WebGrants, at [agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](http://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). Below is a guide to the information requested in the online application. You may find it helpful to draft your answers in a Word document first, and then copy and paste into the WebGrants forms.

We encourage you to register as a new user in WebGrants in advance of applying to gain familiarity with the system. After registering, add [agriculturegrants.vermont@webgrantsmail.com](mailto:agriculturegrants.vermont@webgrantsmail.com) to your email contacts or "safe senders" list to ensure you receive messages and alerts from the system.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

The following four sections are included in all Agricultural Development Division grant applications. Questions marked with \* are required.

#### Applicant Information

- Which of the following categories best describes the person/people completing this application? Please select all that apply\*
- Name\*
- Email address\*
- Phone number\*
- Preferred method of communication\*
- Job title\*
- How did you hear about this funding opportunity?\*

#### Applicant's Business/Organization Information

Some questions in this section may not apply to your business or organization and are optional.

- Legal name of the organization\*
- Business or organization type\*
- Street address\*
- Town/City\*
- County\*
- Number of full-time employees, including owner(s)\*
- Number of part-time and seasonal employees
- Total number of volunteer hours that benefit your organizations in a typical year
- Years in operation\*
- Provide the organization's website if one exists
- Share any social media handles the organization uses
- Is the organization a farm, forestry or other land-based operation?\*

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

- If yes, how many acres are currently in production?
- How many acres, if any, are currently in conservation?
- How many acres of leased or rented land does the organization use for production and/or processing?
- Have you applied for or received a grant through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets in the past 5 years?\*

### Optional Business/Organization Information

- What is the applicant business/organization's most recent annual operating budget?
- What is the median hourly wage for all employees?
- Does the organization provide any of the following benefits to its employees and/or volunteers?
- Does the organization hire H-2A farmworkers?

### Voluntary Demographic Information

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is collecting voluntary demographic information to better serve our constituents and inform the development of future grant programs. Please click the link to be taken to complete this anonymous survey: <https://forms.office.com/q/dp8zqWrgxL>.

The demographic survey is hosted through a separate online platform to ensure that any information collected through the survey cannot be linked in any way to your WebGrants application. Funding decisions are based solely on the information provided in your WebGrants application. Any information collected through the demographic survey is anonymous and will only be used to help improve the programming and services offered by the Development Division of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

## MAPLE OPERATION INFORMATION

1. Does your operation produce sap for sale to other producers and/or processors?
    - a. If yes, how does your operation sell its sap? Choose all that apply.\*
      - i. Direct to small-scale processors (local producers, neighbors, etc.)
      - ii. Direct to large-scale processors (aggregators/distributors, etc.)
    - b. Total number of current taps.\*
    - c. Total collected gallons in 2022.\*
    - d. Total collected gallons in 2023.\*
  2. Does your operation produce maple syrup by tapping, storing, and boiling to create a graded maple product?\*
- a. If yes, how does your operation sell its syrup? Choose all that apply.\*
    - i. Direct-to-consumer (farmstand, mail order, etc.)
    - ii. Bulk wholesale (maple processors and distributors)
    - iii. Retail wholesale (packaged for grocery stores, gas stations, etc.)

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

- iv. Value-added goods (maple sugar, maple cream, maple candy, etc. made by your operation)
      - v. Other: please explain.
    - b. Total number of current taps.\*
    - c. Total produced gallons for 2022.\*
    - d. Total produced gallons for 2023.\*
  3. Does your operation process and distribute maple syrup that is purchased in bulk from other producers?\*
  - a. If yes, how many gallons of syrup did you purchase in 2022?\*
    - b. If yes, how many gallons of syrup did you purchase in 2023?\*
    - c. How many Vermont producers did you purchase from in 2022?\*
    - d. How many Vermont producers did you purchase from in 2023?\*
  4. Does your operation purchase and process sap that is purchased in bulk from other producers?\*
  - a. If yes, how many gallons of sap did you purchase in 2022?\*
    - b. If yes, how many gallons of sap did you purchase in 2023?\*
    - c. How many Vermont producers you purchase from in 2022?\*
    - d. How many Vermont producers you purchase from in 2023?\*

## WATER QUALITY DISCLOSURE

You will be asked to self-certify that you are in compliance with State regulations and in good standing in accordance with the State of Vermont Act 154. “Good standing” means that the applicant:

- Is not a named party in any administrative order, consent decree, or judicial order relating to Vermont water quality standards issued by the State or any of its agencies or departments; and
- Is in compliance with all federal and State water quality laws and regulations.

A full copy of the Certification of Good Standing with Act 143 can be found at [finance.vermont.gov/sites/finance/files/documents/Forms/Grant\\_Recipients/FIN-Act154\\_Cert.pdf](https://finance.vermont.gov/sites/finance/files/documents/Forms/Grant_Recipients/FIN-Act154_Cert.pdf).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Answer the following questions about your project.

1. Title of Project\*
2. Please provide a one-sentence project summary.\*

*Example: Our Maple Farm will purchase and install a new reverse osmosis machine and boiler to improve food safety and production efficiency.*

3. Describe your project in further detail, including a basic scope of work and how the work will be completed. (max. 1000 words).\*

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

4. What current issues or concerns with your operation will this project address? (max. 500 words)\*
5. Describe how this project will help to improve, grow, or sustain your operation. (max. 500 words)\*
6. Which areas of your operation will this project impact? Select all that apply.\*
  - a. Tree tapping and sap collection
  - b. Sap storage and transportation
  - c. Equipment needs
  - d. Infrastructure (roads, buildings, etc.) needs
  - e. Maple processing
  - f. Food safety
  - g. Maple product quality
  - h. Product packaging
  - i. Product distribution
  - j. Product transportation
  - k. Market access/share
  - l. Efficiency of production
7. Describe any projects or work that you have already completed related to this project or its outcomes.\*
8. Provide a realistic timeline for completing your project from January 2024 to December 2025.\*
9. Are there any required permits, or contingencies that must be fulfilled for this improvement to be successfully completed? \*

If yes, list all permits and/or contingencies and the anticipated dates they will be obtained.
10. Once the project is complete, how will you maintain the improvement over time?\*

## FUNDING PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

11. Which of the following funding priorities does your project address? Choose all that apply.
  - a. Climate Resilience
  - b. Operational Efficiency
  - c. Food Safety & Quality
12. Describe how your project addresses your selected funding priority/priorities. (max. 500 words)\*
13. Provide one or more desired project objective.\*
14. Which of the following program outcomes does your objective align with? Choose all that apply.\*
  - a. Increase sustainability and viability of Vermont-based maple businesses.
  - b. Increase the production or sales of Vermont-based maple businesses.

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

- c. Increase the safety and quality of maple produced in Vermont.
15. Describe how your project aligns with your selected program outcome(s). (max. 500 words).\*

## BUDGET

### BUDGET DETAILS

**MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:** List the names, quantities, and estimated cost of any materials, supplies, and fabricated parts required for this project. Supplies are typically valued at less than \$5,000 per unit. *Examples: tubing, fasteners, pans, culvert piping, electrical wiring.*

**EQUIPMENT:** List the names, quantities, and estimated cost of each piece of equipment to be purchased. Equipment is typically valued at \$5,000 or more per unit. *Examples: reverse osmosis machines, evaporators, refrigerated bulk tank, fork lift.*

**SALARY/WAGES:** Estimate the labor costs associated with project execution, including an estimated hourly wage and hours worked. *Example: Total wage by hour for employee who will replace tubing.*

**CONTRACTUAL:** Estimate the cost of non-employee work that the project will involve. This category includes any costs to be paid to a contractor or consultant to procure specialized services. It may also include supplies or materials provided by the contractor. *Examples: Bill for Service from construction company or technical assistance provider.*

**OTHER:** Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Describe the purpose of each item listed and how it is necessary for completion of your project.

### MATCHING FUNDS

Matching funds are not required. However, if your project will cost more to complete than the amount requested, you must show that you can cover the full project costs.

1. Enter the total estimated costs of your project.
2. Enter the grant funds requested for your project.
3. If the total costs are greater than the funds requested, describe other funding sources that will be used to cover the remaining costs (such as bank funds, cash flow, another grant or loan, etc.).

## SECTION 2: APPLICATION

### BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget Summary				
Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Remaining Project Costs – If Applicable	Remaining Project Costs Source – If Applicable	Total Project Cost
Materials and Supplies	\$	\$	\$	\$
Equipment	\$	\$	\$	\$
Salary/Wages	\$	\$	\$	\$
Contractual	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$	\$	\$
Subtotal	\$	\$	\$	\$

<b>Total Grant Request</b>	\$
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*Total grant request must be between \$15,000 and \$100,000.*

### WEBGRANTS APPLICATION GUIDE

Visit the Agency of Agriculture website through the URL below to see a step-by-step guide to submitting a grant application: [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply).

## SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

# SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

## ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

Applications must meet the following criteria to be considered for funding:

1. Applicant is a Vermont-based maple producer or processor;
2. Project is an on-site improvement to a maple production or processing need;
3. Project is not primarily focused on marketing, agritourism, or research;
4. Application and project address at least one of three funding priorities; and
5. Application and project have at least one objective related to program outcomes.

## SCORING CRITERIA

Eligible applications will be scored according to the following criteria:

### FUNDING PRIORITIES

How well does this project address one or more of the Maple ADG funding priorities? Has the applicant fully thought through how their project will improve their operation through the lens of climate resilience, operational efficiency, and/or food safety/quality?

*Up to 25 points*

### PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Does this project have clear objectives that align with program outcomes of business viability, business growth, and food safety/quality? Has the applicant fully explained their objectives and goals with a clear plan of how they will be captured?

*Up to 20 points*

### QUALITY OF PROJECT PLAN

Is this project feasible within the budget, timeline, and expertise of the applicant?

*Up to 20 points*

### EFFICIENT USE OF FUNDS

Is this project scope reasonable and well thought out? Are the funds being applied thoughtfully for this project?

*Up to 15 points*

### TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Does this project address any needs for technical expertise? If the applicant does not have the necessary expertise, have they addressed how they will acquire it?

*Up to 10 points*



## **SECTION 3: APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA**

### **LONG TERM IMPACT**

Will this project have a lasting positive impact on the applicant's business? Is this a project that can be maintained or sustained for multiple years?

*Up to 10 points*

# SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

## 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:

- 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 *[Not required if grantee is already a state vendor.]*
- C. Complete [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#).
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

## GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Agency will provide **40% of funds** upon the receipt of 1) a signed grant agreement and related documents; 2) the submission and approval of a claim with associated invoice in the WebGrants system; and 3) proof that the applicant has obtained any permits that may be required for their project, if applicable.

A second payment of **40% of funds** will be delivered upon receipt and approval of 1) an interim project report, deadline to be outlined in the project's Grant Agreement, and 2) a claim and invoice submitted in the WebGrants system.

A final payment of up to **20% of funds** will be delivered upon the receipt and approval of 1) a final project report, deadline to be outlined in the project's Grant Agreement, and 2) a claim and invoice submitted in the WebGrants system.

Permits that are necessary for the successful completion of your project, such as a building permit, wastewater permit, etc. must be obtained prior to the disbursement of grant funds. The Agency reserves the right to deny your application if you fail to obtain the necessary permits within 90 days.

## SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

Only expenses incurred during the grant period are eligible for reimbursement. Project costs occurring prior to or after the end date of an executed grant are not eligible for reimbursement.

### **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.*

## **SECTION 4: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING**

*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.*

### **PERMITS**

Applicants who are awarded a grant must apply for and receive all required permits, licenses, and any other federal, state, or local approvals necessary for the project prior to any reimbursement from the Agency.

### **SITE VISITS & FOLLOW UP**

VAAFAM staff or partners may contact successful applicants to arrange a site visit or follow-up conversation regarding their project during or proceeding the grant agreement period. VAAFAM may produce case studies or articles based on funded projects.

### **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 Produce Safety Improvement Grant projects are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

### **DURATION**

All projects funded in this round must be completed no later than **December 31, 2025**. Final reports must be submitted no later than **January 31, 2026**.

### **REPORTING**

Grantees should submit a final report within 30 days of their project's completion, and but no later than January 31, 2026. Final reports should be submitted online in the WebGrants system and must include verification that the project has been completed, photo and/or video documentation of the completed project, and a description of how the grant has improved produce safety on the farm. The Agency of Agriculture may request receipts, proof of purchases, or other documents showing that grant funds have been used to complete the project.

Information submitted in any report to the Agency will be a public record.