

VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

FARM TO SCHOOL & EARLY CHILDHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) – FISCAL YEAR 2025

This grant is intended to help Vermont-based early childhood providers and Vermont schools build and strengthen farm to school or farm to early childhood programs. Specifically, the grant is designed to support programs that are integrated throughout the classroom, the cafeteria, and the community – the 3 C’s of Farm to School and Early Childhood. This grant is made possible by the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act of 2006 ([6 V.S.A. § 4721](#)).

KEY DATES

RFA PUBLICATION DATE AND APPLICATION OPENING: OCTOBER 3, 2024

GRANT APPLICATION WEBINAR: October 17, 2024 at 11:00 AM – [Register for Webinar](#)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 14, 2024 at 1:59 PM

AWARD NOTIFICATION: DECEMBER 2024

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CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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

WEBGRANTS

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

REGISTRATION

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

SUBMISSION POLICY

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

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

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

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

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of this grant is to help schools and early childhood education providers build and enhance farm to school and early childhood programs that will enrich the educational experiences of students, sustain relationships with agricultural producers, improve the health of Vermont children, and enhance Vermont’s agricultural economy.

Farm to school and early childhood is a broad term that refers to a variety of initiatives that help address issues related to nutrition, agriculture and community engagement. Each farm to school and early childhood program is unique. This grant is intended to help build programs that reflect the values and respond to the needs of the grantee organization.

ELIGIBILITY

The following entities are eligible to apply for this competitive grant:

- Vermont licensed early childhood education centers
- A group of three or more registered family childcare home (FCCH) providers (the group can include a mix of FCCH and center-based programs)
- Independent schools participating in any federal child nutrition programs
- Individual public schools
- Supervisory unions (SU) or educational districts on behalf of a public school or consortium of schools

Groups of early childhood programs should consider working with their Early Childhood Professional Network.

Other organizations, such as non-profits or community groups, can be named as co-applicants and included in grant activities.

Organizations that have an active FY24 Farm to School and Early Childhood Capacity Building Grant are ineligible to apply to this funding opportunity.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

The total amount of funds available for this grant cycle is \$150,000.

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Award amounts are determined by the total student/child population of all organizations involved in the application. Award ranges are as follows:

<u>Total # of Students/Children</u>	<u>Award Amount</u>
0 – 30	\$5,000

31 – 100	\$7,000
101 – 300	\$10,000
301 +	\$15,000

Applicants have the option to request additional funding. The maximum possible award for this grant is \$20,000. Applicants must demonstrate clear justification for requesting additional funds, and requests are not guaranteed to be fulfilled.

In addition to grant funds, each grantee will receive an array of comprehensive technical assistance and professional development support at no additional cost.

PROJECT PERIOD

February 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

FUNDING SOURCE

This grant is made possible by the Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act of 2006 ([6 V.S.A. § 4721](#)). Grants are funded through a State of Vermont legislative appropriation.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Grant provides a combination of **financial support** and **technical assistance** to help schools and early care providers develop robust farm to school programs that:

1. Increase the use of local foods
2. Help teachers, administrators, and staff promote healthy eating habits
3. Strengthen connections between schools/early childhood education providers and the Vermont agricultural community
4. Increase the number of Vermont children participating in child nutrition programs
5. Advance a school's Local Wellness Policy goals (applicable to K-12 only)

Project Team

As part of the grant requirements, each grantee will establish a project team made up of diverse stakeholders within the organization or consortium. The project team is responsible for growing the Farm to School program within the school/provider community and meeting grant objectives and requirements. Examples of stakeholders include educators, administrators, food service staff, students, and community members. Engaging multiple stakeholders across an organization has proven to be the most effective method of building and embedding lasting programs.

Financial Support

Grant funding is disbursed in three payments. Payments will be made upon the grantee's completion of specific deliverables. See "Section 5: Grant Management & Reporting" in this document, for more information about deliverables and timelines.

Grant Coaching

Each grantee will be assigned a coach who will work with them throughout the duration of the grant. Coaches are experts from within the Vermont farm to school and farm to early childhood community. Coaches will participate in online or in-person project team meetings, conduct research and planning offline on behalf of the team, and share useful documents, tools, and communications materials over email. Through site visits (if appropriate), email communication, and phone calls, coaches will provide direct support in the following areas:

- Creating a farm to school or farm to early childhood Action Plan and timeline
- Completing the Farm to School and Early Childhood Rubric
- Developing and maintaining a project budget
- Connecting and coordinating with technical assistance service providers
- Growing relationships between the organization and the local community to enhance project success
- Consulting on topics such as organizing farm visits, classroom activities, curriculum development, and connecting organizations with the greater farming community

Technical Assistance

The technical assistance component of the grant includes customizable trainings in four key areas of farm to school and early childhood: meal programs, local purchasing, curriculum, and school gardens. These services are provided at no cost to grantees.

Each of the four technical assistance offerings will be customized based on the needs and goals of individual grantees. Technical assistance trainings and consultations will be scheduled to meet the availability of the grantee and the relevant members of their project team. Participation in technical assistance activities by at least some of the project team members is a requirement of the grant.

Meal Program Support

Training is provided by a meal program expert. Examples of training topics include, but are not limited to:

- Starting or expanding federal child nutrition programs,
- Increasing student meal program participation,
- Long-term planning and forecasting,
- Implementing meal service best practices to make meals more accessible for kids,

- Implementation or expansion of free summer and afterschool meal programs,
- Identifying alternative methods for providing meals and snack when federal nutrition programs are not viable, and
- Exploring creative partnerships to support meal programs and food access programs including 3SquaresVT and WIC.

Northern Lights-approved professional development credits are available for some workshops.

Local Food Procurement

Technical assistance is provided through training and professional development with a local food procurement expert. Trainings are designed for the members of the farm to school project team who are food service managers and food service staff.

Areas of support include, but are not limited to:

- identifying local farmers and producers,
- navigating procurement regulations,
- tracking local purchases, etc.
- utilizing CSA shares,
- applying to the Vermont Local Foods Incentive Grant (K-12 only),
- forward contracting.

Curriculum Integration

Farm to School curriculum integration support for early childhood educators and K-12 educators and support staff in individual schools and/or at the district level. Topics covered by curriculum support include, but are not limited to:

- Food and food systems, agriculture & environment, and nutrition
- Offer connections to resources, tools, partners, organizations, etc. to grantee schools based on grantee identified needs and specific work
- Provide virtual assistance and consultation to individual grantee schools on an as-needed basis
- Educator support around specific farm to school and early childhood topics or initiatives

School Gardens

Trainings will cover critical aspects of successful garden projects as well as information on how to integrate gardens into a comprehensive farm to school or early childhood program. On-site technical assistance visits can include nutritional programming or hands-on workshops related to gardening topics such as general garden planning, seed starting, creating pollinator habitat, on-site composting, and more.

Alternative Professional Development Opportunities

Grantees can substitute different professional development opportunities if desired. The alternative activity will not be funded through the support services component of this grant but can be paid for using grant funds. Alternative activities must be pre-approved by the VAAFAM grant program manager.

GRANT OUTCOMES

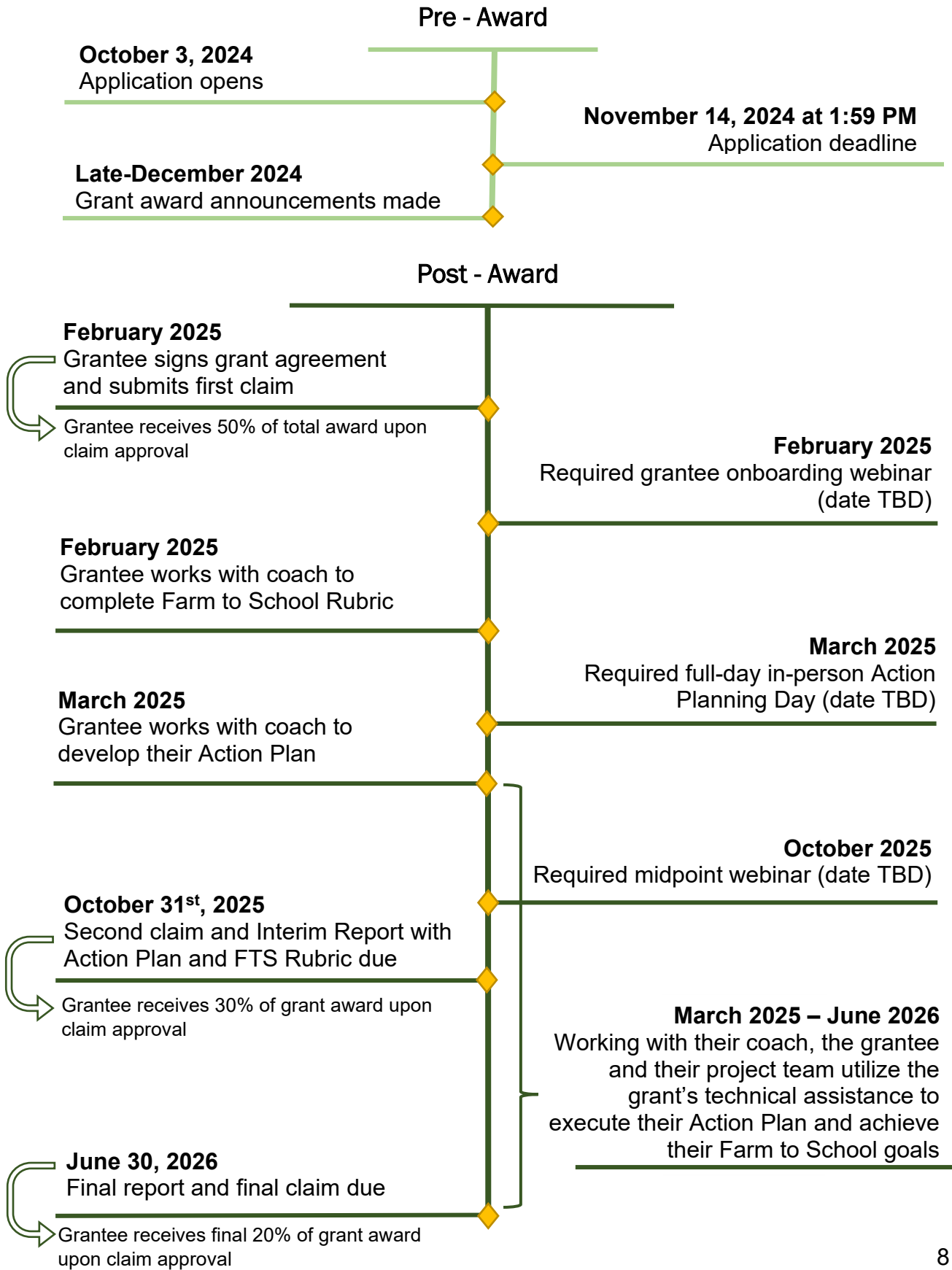
By the end of the grant period, each grantee will have:

- a) Formally established a functional project team
- b) Developed an action plan to guide the project team's work
- c) Fully utilized the grant-funded financial and technical assistance to implement their action plan

OPTIONAL APPLICANT WEBINAR

An optional applicant webinar will be offered for this funding opportunity on Thursday, October 17 at 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ([webinar registration](#)). The webinar will provide an overview of the grant, walk through key components of the application, and a tutorial on how to access and apply for the grant in WebGrants. There will be time for audience Q&A and the webinar will be recorded and posted on the grant webpage.

Grant Timeline



SECTION 2: HOW TO APPLY

Applications will only be accepted through VAAFM's online grants management system, WebGrants, at <https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov>.

Applicants that do not have a WebGrants account will need to request one by completing and submitting the [WebGrants Registration Form](#). Registration requests are processed in 1-2 business days. **It is critical that new WebGrants users allow enough time for their registration request to be processed, as they will not be able to edit or submit an application until their account is created.** Applicants that fail to meet the submission deadline because they did not submit their registration request in time will not be considered for funding.

For full instructions on submitting an application, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply>.

A copy of the full application as it appears in WebGrants is provided in the next section of this document. The following documents and information are needed to complete the online application:

- If applicable, the percentage of children at each organization that qualify for free or reduced-price meals
- The total number of children served
- The names, job titles, and email addresses of every member of the project team
- The name, job title, phone number, and email address for the organization's fiscal agent and the designated grant contact person
- For K-12 applicants, familiarity with a school's [Local Wellness Policy](#) goals
- Four letters of support from different stakeholders within the organization and/or community

Applications must be submitted by the fiscal agent. For public schools, the fiscal agent is the supervisory union or educational district. For early childhood providers, the fiscal agent is typically the owner, director or business manager.

This is a legal requirement, as the prospective grant agreement (a legal agreement with the State of Vermont) must be held with the organization bearing fiscal responsibility. Therefore, the fiscal agent is responsible for submitting the grant application, signing the grant agreement, and ensuring all terms of the grant agreement are met. Applications submitted by an organization other than the entity with fiscal responsibility will not be accepted.

Additional information about applying can be found on the [Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Capacity Building Grant website](#). Questions about the grant Request for Applications can be submitted to Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION

Below are the required components needed to complete a grant application.

Applications must be completed and submitted online in [WebGrants](#) by November 14, 2024 at 1:59 PM. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

STANDARD APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Questions in the following five sections are asked of all applicants seeking grant funding through VAAFMs Agricultural Development Division. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Applicant Information

- Which of the following categories best describes the person/people completing this application? Please select all that apply*
 - Owner of applicant organization
 - Employee of applicant organization
 - Technical service provider
 - Business advisor
 - Grant writer
 - Family/friend
 - Other (specify)
- Name*
- Email address*
- Phone number*
- Preferred method of communication*
- Job title*
- How did you hear about this funding opportunity?*

Grant Request Information

- Amount of grant funds requested (\$)
Note: Refer to the Request for Applications (RFA) for the allowable funding request range.

Applicant's Business/Organization Information

Some questions in this section may not apply to the business/organization and are optional.

- Legal name of the organization*
- Organizational structure (legal structure for tax purposes)
 - 501(c)(3)
 - B Corporation
 - Cooperative

- Corporation
- L3C
- LLC
- Non-profit
- Partnership
- S Corporation
- Sole Proprietorship
- Other
- Primary operation type
 - Farm, forestry, or other land-based operation
 - Processing operation
 - Distribution operation
 - College/university
 - Early childhood education program
 - Governmental entity
 - Independent business advisor
 - Independent contractor (other)
 - Manufacturer
 - Other non-profit
 - Political/advocacy organization
 - Private foundation
 - Producer/trade association
 - Religious organization
 - Retail operation
 - School – private/independent
 - School – public
 - Technical assistance provider
 - Other
- If the business/organization is a farm, forestry or other land-based operation:
 - Estimated number of owned acres currently in production
 - Estimated number of leased or rented acres currently in production
 - Estimated number of acres, if any, currently in conservation
 - What is the business/organization's primary product category?
 - Apiary
 - Cannabis
 - Dairy
 - Grains and Legumes
 - Hay & Forage Crops
 - Hemp
 - Livestock/Poultry (including equine, meat, and fiber animals)
 - Logging, Sawmill, & Firewood
 - Maple
 - Nursery Crops & Christmas Trees

- Produce (Fruit, Vegetables, Mushrooms, Nuts, Flowers, Herbs)
 - Other (specify)
- Street address*
- Town/City*
- State
- County*
- Number of full-time employees, including owner(s)*
- Number of part-time and seasonal employees
- Estimated number of volunteer hours that benefit the business/organization in a typical year
- Years in operation*
- Business/organization's website URL, if one exists
- Social media handles the business/organization uses, if any
- Has the business/organization applied for any grants through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) in the past five years?*
 - Did you receive any of the grants from VAAFAM that you applied for?
 - Please specify the VAAFAM grant(s) you received.

Optional Business/Organization Information

- What is the business/organization's most recent annual operating budget?
 - Less than \$50,000
 - \$50,000-\$100,000
 - \$100,000-\$250,000
 - \$250,000-\$500,000
 - \$500,000-\$1,000,000
 - \$1,000,000-\$3,000,000
 - \$3,000,000-\$5,000,000
 - \$5,000,000-\$10,000,000
 - More than \$10,000,000
- What is the estimated median hourly wage for all employees?
- Which of the following benefits does the business/organization provide to employees and/or volunteers?
 - Dental Insurance
 - Health Insurance
 - Health Savings Contribution
 - Vision Insurance
 - Paid Vacation
 - Sick Time
 - Paid Parental Leave
 - Childcare Support
 - Physical Transportation
 - Subsidized Transportation
 - Free Housing

- Subsidized Housing
- Product Discounts
- Product Donations
- Retirement Plan
- Other
- Does the business/organization employ H-2A farmworkers?
 - If so, how many H-2A farmworkers does the business/organization employ in a typical year?

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/g/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.

FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

a) Applicant Information

1. Grant Management Contacts: Name, title, e-mail, and phone number for the following individuals:
 - Grant Authorizing/Financial Management Contact – the main point of contact for legal and financial grant communications, including submitting claims for grant payments **This must be the fiscal agent*
 - Grant Management Contact – the main point of contact for all grant related communications and project management, including submitting status reports **Awarded grantees may add additional grant contacts*
2. For each school/early care provider applying
 - Name of school/early care provider
 - Public or private
 - County of organization
 - Grades/ages served
 - Total number of children served

- Percentage of children served that qualify for free or reduced-price meals
 - Federal child nutrition programs offered
3. Organization Partners
- Are there other organizations, non-profits, local businesses etc., that will be partnering on this grant? (Yes/No)
 - If Yes, list them and describe their role in the grant
 - Have any of the schools or early childhood providers named in this application attended the Farm to School Institute at Shelburne Farms?
 - If Yes, indicate which ones and the year they attended

b) Project Team

The project team is responsible for growing the Farm to School program within the school/provider community and meeting grant objectives and requirements. A diverse selection of team members from across the school/provider community is highly encouraged in order to promote project success. As support from administration and food service personnel is critical to the success of farm to school and early childhood programs, the team must include key administrators (superintendent, principal, or early care director) and an administrator responsible for the meal program. Strong teams will include at least one representative from each the categories below. If applying as a district, supervisory union, or a consortium of schools and/or early care providers, the team must include at least one representative from each site involved in the grant project.

We highly encourage diverse stakeholder representation. Examples of team members are listed below; however, you are not limited to this list. Some schools may already have established a Health and/or Wellness Team that they choose to use as their Project Team for this grant.

All project team members are required to attend the in-person Action Planning Day in March (date TBD), attend routine project team meetings, and help the team achieve its Farm to School goals.

Educator	Community Members	Health & Wellness	Other
Teachers	School board members	Health educators	Food Service staff
Para-educators	Parents	Nurse/ health services	Students
Afterschool educators	Farmers and local producers	Physical educators	Farm to School Coordinators
	Local chefs/ food stores	Community health agencies	Garden Supervisors
	Local non-profits/ businesses		

1. For each project team member, provide the following information

- Project team member name
- Title
- Organizational affiliation
- Email address

c) Narrative Questions

In answering the following questions, keep in mind that “farm to school” and “farm to early childhood” are broad terms for which there is no set definition. Project stakeholders may identify activities that qualify as farm to school and early childhood for their own communities. *(2,000-character limit per question, unless otherwise noted)*

Vermont Farm to School and Early Childhood Program Goals and Experience

1. Explain why farm to school or farm to early childhood is important to your organization. How does it benefit children, staff, parents, the community etc.?
2. What does your team hope to accomplish with this grant? Be as detailed as possible.
3. If awarded this grant, how will your organization continue to support your farm to school/early childhood efforts after the grant period ends?
4. Within the following categories, describe any farm to school or farm to early childhood related efforts, past or present, your school/organization has undertaken (1,000-character limit per area).
 - a. Nutrition
 - b. Curriculum
 - c. Meal Program/Cafeteria
 - d. Farmer Engagement
 - e. Food Purchases
 - f. Other
5. Are you currently involving, or do you plan to involve, the broader community in your grant/and/or farm to school/early childhood activities? (Yes/No)
 - a. If Yes, describe current and/or future community involvement in your farm to school/early childhood activities and/or grant activities
6. Describe any current and/or future efforts to increase student participation in child nutrition programs.
7. For K-12 Applicants: How will this grant help your school advance your [Local Wellness Policy](#) goals?

Team Engagement

8. Describe your organization's greatest strengths and challenges (current and/or anticipated) in building and sustaining a comprehensive Farm to School program and/or improving the viability of your program.

9. Describe how your organization's leadership will be participating in and supporting your team's work under this grant.
10. What is your project team's communication plan to ensure timely and consistent information sharing among team members and others in the organization and community?

Technical Assistance

Each grantee is provided free professional support in four subject areas related to farm to school and early childhood. Support is customizable to each grantee's needs, interests, and availability. Review this [FTSEC Capacity Building Grant Technical Assistance Overview](#) document for more information about the types of services available to grantees. Within each of the following subject areas, describe projects or initiatives for which your organization could benefit from professional support from farm to school experts.

1. Meal Program Viability: Professional support to enhance meal programs, improve child nutrition, increase food and nutrition access, and/or increase meal program participation
2. Local Food Procurement: Professional support to help grantee food service programs increase procurement of local and regional food
3. Curriculum: Professional support to help grantees integrate food systems, agriculture & environment, and nutrition education into their classrooms and broader educational experiences
4. School Gardens: Professional support to increase grantee capacity to grow, utilize and maintain gardens

d) Stages of Development

Using the chart in Appendix B, select the stage of development which best identifies the level of development your Farm to School program is currently in for each of the following areas:

1. School/provider staff, administration, and faculty engagement
2. Infrastructure
3. Cafeteria
4. Classroom
5. Community

e) Letters of Support

Letters of support are used to demonstrate commitment from key stakeholders within the applicant organization. Strong letters will describe how the author will

be an active participant in grant activities. Letters of support from key personnel are required, and letters from other stakeholders are also encouraged.

If one of the required categories does not apply, either upload a letter from another member of the school or early childhood organization who fulfills a similar role, or upload the same letter twice to accommodate the required field.

Applications that do not have all required letters of support will not be considered. Letters of support must be uploaded in PDF format.

Letters of support are required from the following people:

1. Superintendent or Child Care Program Director
2. Principal/Director or other administrative leader- if applying as a consortium, submit one letter from at least two schools/early childhood organizations involved
3. Food Program Director/Manager
4. Your organization's fiscal agent, if different from the above individuals.

f) Project Budget

Funding Request

Funding amounts are determined by the total student/child population of all organizations involved in the application, according to the numbers below. All grantees receive the same level of professional support.

Total Students/ Children	Award Amount
0-30	\$5,000
30-100	\$7,000
100-300	\$10,000
300+	\$15,000

Applicants have the option to request additional funding and must justify the need for this request. The maximum possible award for this grant is \$20,000. Requests for additional funding are not guaranteed to be fulfilled.

1. What is the total population of students/children across all organizations involved in this application?

2. Based on student/child population, what is the award amount your organization is eligible for?
3. Are you requesting additional funding?
 - a. How much additional funding are you requesting?
 - b. Total grant request (eligible award amount + additional funding)?
 - c. If so, please provide a detailed explanation for why additional funding is necessary.

For each budget category, estimate the grant funds that you plan to expend within the category and a short description of anticipated expenses, i.e., type of items for purchase, paid staff position titles. If you select "Other", please identify the budget category in the description. Note: This information is intended for your application only and will serve as a guide to frame your project for application reviewers. If awarded a grant, your Project Team will heavily revise the budget during the Action Planning process, with support from your grant coach.

Expense Category	Grant Request	Anticipated Expenses
Personnel		
Supplies		
Locally Sourced Food		
Transportation		
Communications & Marketing		
Events		
Technical Assistance/Professional Development		
Equipment		
Other		

SECTION 4: APPLICATION REVIEW & SCORING

APPLICATION REVIEW

Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee, which will include representatives from Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the Vermont Agency of Education, the Vermont Department of Health, and the Vermont Farm to School & Early Childhood Network. Applicants will be notified by email of application approval or denial, with specific feedback, in December 2024.

APPLICATION SCORING

Organizational Commitment

- Applicant demonstrates a clear, thorough and honest understanding of their organization's strengths and challenges regarding the development or expansion of a farm to school/early childhood program. (10 points)
- The application demonstrates that there is a strong commitment from the organization, its leadership, staff, project team members, and/or community partners to engaging fully with the grant, including the technical assistance. (10 points)
- The applicant demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement of their farm to school/early childhood program. It is likely that that the applicant will continue to support and build upon their farm to school/early childhood efforts beyond the grant period. (10 points)
- The applicant demonstrates a commitment to increasing child nutrition program participation. (5 points)
- The applicant demonstrates a commitment to advancing their Local Wellness Policy goals (applicable to K-12 applicants only, early childhood providers automatically receive full credit). (5 points)

Project Purpose and Clarity

- The applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the opportunities provided through this grant. They articulate a realistic and compelling plan for fully utilizing all the grant resources, both the financial award and the technical assistance, in an integrated way to advance their farm to school/early childhood goals. (20 points)
- The applicant has provided complete, specific and thoughtful responses to the application questions. Responses directly address the application questions and sufficient details are provided in each response. (10 points)

Community Engagement and Communication

- Applicant is involving, or plans to involve, the greater community in their farm to school/early childhood activities in meaningful ways that broaden and deepen the impact of their program. (10 points)

- Applicant has a robust plan for communicating with organizational staff and community members. The communication plan is well structured, inclusive and consistent. (5 points)

Demonstrated Project Need & Budget

- The applicant's planned use of grant funds represents a thoughtful, realistic and balanced approach to supporting all three C's of farm to school/early childhood. The budget aligns well with their grant goals, includes clear descriptions of planned investments and supports sustainable activities. (5 points)

Letters of Support

- The letters of support included in the application demonstrate a strong commitment from multiple stakeholders to supporting and engaging with the grant activities. They articulate specific and meaningful ways in which the author will help support the development or expansion of the organization's farm to school/early childhood program. (10 points)

SECTION 5: GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

GRANT AGREEMENT

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](#) (12/7/2023 Revised) at bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms for the most recent State of Vermont provisions.

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

- A. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement (see "Certificate of Insurance" below for more details).
- B. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months.
- C. A completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#).

GRANT REPORTING

Grantees will submit status reports in [WebGrants](#), according to the schedule below. Status reports must be complete, accurate, and submitted on-time.

Interim Status Report – Due October 31, 2025

The Interim Report requires grantees to provide quantitative and qualitative answers to questions related to their grant activities. A copy of the questions will be provided to grantees with the award packet. The following documents will need to be completed and uploaded to the Interim Status Report:

Farm to School Rubric (PDF available [HERE](#))

The rubric is an assessment tool to be completed by the Project Team. It is used to measure the development stage of a grantee's farm to school program and is valuable in informing action planning.

Action Plan (PDF available [HERE](#))

The action plan is a tool that will be used to guide the planning and implementation of a grantee's farm to school goals. Grantees will work with their Project Teams and assigned coach to develop their action plan.

Final Report – Due June 30, 2026

The Final Report requires grantees to answer questions related to their grant experience and the impact of the grant on their organization. A copy of the questions will be shared with grantees ahead of time.

GRANT PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Grant funds will be disbursed in three payments. Each payment is initiated by submitting a claim (payment request) in [WebGrants](#). In order to be approved, each claim must be accompanied by the following deliverable(s):

Claim Number	% of Grant Award	Deliverables for Payment Approval
1	50%	Fully signed grant agreement
2	30%	Completed and approved Interim Report, due 10/31/25
3	20%	Completed and approved Final Report, due 6/30/26

Review the [WebGrants Claim Submission Guide](#) for a step-by-step guide to requesting grant payments.

Certificate Of Insurance

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common document for insured 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 from [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants](#) 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.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Program Basics

1. 3 C's Approach: The Three C's are Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community. A strong and long-lasting Farm to School program must have support in each of these areas of the school and farm community. This is a comprehensive approach coined in 2000 by Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day), which is a partnership formed by two Vermont nonprofits: Shelburne Farms and Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT).
2. Child Nutrition Programs: Federal nutrition programs administered by the Vermont Agency of Education's Child Nutrition Program, including, but not limited to: Community Eligibility Provision, Fresh Fruit & Veggie Program, the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program.
3. Farm to School Program: The Rozo McLaughlin Farm to School Act defines a Farm to School program as an integrated food, farm, and nutrition education program that utilizes community-based learning opportunities to connect schools with nearby farms so that child nutrition programs can provide students with locally produced foods; help children develop healthy eating habits; provide nutritional and agricultural education in the classroom, cafeteria, and school community; and improve farmers' incomes and direct access to markets.
4. Local Food: [Vermont local food](#) is defined in Act 129 of 2020.
5. Project Team: A comprehensive Farm to School team, who will work together during the grant period and beyond.

Grant Administration and Documents

1. Action Plan: A tool to help grantees plan goals, action steps, group members, roles, responsibilities, timelines, and their budget.
2. Certificate of Insurance (COI): A document used to verify insurance coverage, which provides information on types and limits of insurance, parties covered by insurance, and the policies' effective periods. A current COI listing VAAFm as an additional insured must be submitted prior to award execution and payment.
3. Claim: An official request for grant payment submitted online via WebGrants.
4. Federal W-9 Form: A Federal government form requesting taxpayer information, which must be submitted to VAAFm (if applicant has not previously received a State of Vermont grant) prior to award execution and payment.

5. Fiscal Agent: An organization or legal entity providing financial oversight and management. When an organization separate from the school/early care provider serves as the fiscal agent, this organization must be the official grant applicant and legal entity to enter into the grant agreement, if awarded. For public schools, this is the supervisory union or educational district.
6. Grant Agreement: The legal document between the grantee and the State of Vermont that outlines the provisions of the grant.
7. Deliverables: Expectations and requirements of the grantee, as outlined in the grant agreement. Payments to the grantee are contingent upon the completion of these expected outcomes.
8. Phases of Development (see Appendix B): Similar to a VT FEED Rubric, a tool that provides a basic overview of the developmental stages of a Farm to School program, which can serve as a quick reference to measure progress of a particular program.
9. Status Report – Interim and Final: Reports that grantees submit in WebGrants, to share the impact the grant has had on their community. The second and third payments are contingent upon submission and approval of these reports.
10. WebGrants: The web-based system used by VAAFM to manage all Farm to School Program grants. Applicants and grantees use this system to apply for grants and submit claims, reports, and other information related to the grant.

Project/Program Support

1. Meal Program Viability: A positive state of a school or early care meal program, where the allocated budget for food covers at least the full cost of the program, which is often achieved by serving as many meals as possible.
2. Support Service Provider: A service provider contracted by VAAFM to provide support to grantees through technical assistance and professional development.
3. Technical Assistance: support provided to a grantee by a subject matter expert contracted by VAAFM. TA may take the form of a one-time workshop and/or ongoing communication.

APPENDIX B: PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

PHASES OF FARM TO SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School (FTS) implementation is a process that deepens over time. This chart is meant to help you better understand where your school or district is in developing a FTS program, and to be a useful reference when working with FTS organizations. Please note that schools don't often grow in every area at the same pace.

	EMERGED Prepared to take action	DEVELOPED Have begun to take action	DEEPEMED Increased activities in depth, breadth, & frequency	THRIVED Well integrated in the school	SUSTAINED Embedded in the school culture & systems
School Staff, Administrators, & Faculty Engagement	A few staff and key school leaders are interested in beginning to organize their efforts. They're considering data about current meal program access, participation, and finances.	Some staff and school leaders are involved in FTS. They've explored ways to leverage the meal program to help fulfill FTS goals. Efforts to expand meal access and participation have begun.	There's growing engagement and commitment to coordinating FTS activities, with FTS leaders emerging in all staff sectors. A plan for continuing to expand the meal program to reach all students exists.	The majority of staff feel that they may easily and frequently be involved in FTS activities, and the meal program is understood to be an integral part of the FTS educational mission.	Engaging, recruiting and retaining involvement in FTS activities in the cafeteria, classroom and community is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Infrastructure <small>Kitchen equipment, school garden tools, etc..</small>	Infrastructure needs have been identified.	Some infrastructure upgrades have been completed, and others proposed, to plan/budget.	There is adequate infrastructure for some program elements, but not all.	There is adequate infrastructure for FTS programming.	Ongoing evaluation of infrastructure is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Cafeteria	Possibilities for local purchasing, expanding meal program participation, and increasing meal program finances have been identified.	Small amounts of local foods are occasionally purchased, mostly for special events. The meal program is starting to change to increase participation and improve program finances.	Local food is occasionally purchased and highlighted on menus. Meal program expansion and menu changes continue.	Local food is regularly purchased following proper procurement practices and has improved the school meal program menu. Participation in the meal program is strong.	Local food is purchased consistently, and students and staff are regularly engaged in the school meal program.
Classroom	A few teachers are interested and integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum.	Some teachers are integrating FTS into curriculum and others are interested in doing so.	A growing number of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. Some FTS professional learning opportunities are available to faculty.	The majority of teachers are integrating FTS into the classroom curriculum. FTS professional learning occurs on a continual basis.	All classrooms are offered opportunities and support for FTS activities. FTS is embedded in the school culture and systems.
Community	The larger community is interested in FTS activities and events, but aren't currently involved.	The larger community is involved a few times per year in FTS activities.	The larger community is frequently involved in FTS activities and events.	Community partners have made FTS a part of their agenda.	Engaging, recruiting, and retaining community involvement in FTS is embedded in the community culture.

Adapted from the VT FEED Farm to School Rubric and the VT Farm to School Network Growth Chart