

VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

FAIRS AND FIELD DAYS STIPEND

AND CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM

FISCAL YEAR 2025 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Administered by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, this funding is appropriated annually to assist fairs throughout the state with 20-year capital improvements to their facilities and operational costs. Approved Capital Grant proposals must be completed within 24 months, budgets must include a 15% cash match, and projects must have a 20-year lifespan. Emphasis is placed on leveraging other funds and generating community support for the fair through improvements to the infrastructure. Stipends are distributed according to the Stipend Distribution Fund Formula as provided in state statute.

KEY DATES

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) RELEASE DATE: October 21, 2024

APPLICATION OPENS: November 1, 2024 at 12:00 PM

APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 15, 2024 at 11:59 PM

AWARD NOTIFICATIONS: February 3, 2025

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CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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VAAFAM 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 RFA, including the dates and times for submitting applications. VAAFAM 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, 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

Competitive Capital Grants are available to assist nonprofit organizations and municipalities to improve community facilities providing cultural activities to the public. Fairs and events offer opportunities for the agricultural community to highlight the practices, products, skills, and livelihood that are part of maintaining Vermont's working landscape. Annual stipends are available to support operating costs, plant improvements, and premiums for agricultural fairs or field days events.

CAPITAL GRANTS ELIGIBILITY

Grants shall be competitively awarded to capital projects that relate to Vermont agricultural fairs and field days operating a minimum of three consecutive, eight-hour days per year.

Eligible Projects:

- A project for which a grant is awarded shall have a minimum useful life of 20 years and shall be completed within two years of the execution of a contract to perform work authorized by the grant.
- A grant recipient shall contribute cash match in an amount equal to 15 percent or more of the value of the grant.
- A grant recipient is required to show all quotes as proof of project costs.
- Project must be completed in 24 months.

Ineligible Projects:

- Proposals from applicants that do not meet the definition of an eligible fair as outlined by the Vermont statute.
- Proposals from applicants who are out of compliance with any federal, state, or local laws or regulations.
- Proposals for projects which will not have a useful 20-year lifespan.
- Proposals for projects that have already been completed for which the applicant seeks reimbursement.
- Proposals from applicants failing to meet requirements for previous Agency grants and/or assistance programs, or from individuals or groups unable to perform or having performance issues with previous Agency grant obligations.

STIPEND ELIGIBILITY

Funds shall be distributed annually to Vermont Agricultural Fairs Associations as defined in H.472 to support operating costs, plant improvements, and premiums for agricultural fairs or field days events held at least annually at which premiums are offered for competitive exhibits in at least five competitive categories. New applicants must operate their fair or field day for a minimum of three consecutive days, with a minimum of eight hours operating per day. Each stipend application shall be accompanied by both narrative and financial data and indicate the nature of the award

sought for the fund, broken down by plant improvement and general operation, with premiums identified as a separate part of general operations.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

A total of \$410,000; \$300,000 available for Capital Grants and \$110,000 for stipends. For more information regarding the two funding opportunities, please take a moment to review the state statutes regarding [Capital Projects Competitive Grant Program](#) and the [Stipend Fund Distribution Formula](#).

FUNDING SOURCE

Funding is appropriated yearly to assist our fairs throughout the state with capital improvements and operational costs.

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Up to \$35,000 to be distributed per applicant for Capital Grants. Stipends are distributed according to the Stipend Distribution Fund Formula as provided in state statute.

PROJECT LENGTH

Maximum of 24 months from grant start date. Should the project change, grants may be amended once the grant application has been approved.

MATCHING FUNDS

A grant recipient shall contribute cash match in an amount equal to 15 percent or more of the value of the grant. Paid labor is allowable, but volunteer labor is not.

SECTION 2: APPLICATION

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets has administered the Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grants program and the stipend fund for over ten years. These two grant opportunities have been combined into one application, which can be accessed using our online grants portal, WebGrants.

All applications must be submitted via the WebGrants system at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov. Applications will be accepted November 1, 2024 at 12:00 PM – December 15, 2024 at 11:59 PM.

Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

VAAFMM 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 cut-off time.

APPLICATION REVIEW

There is an established Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Program Advisory Committee to administer and coordinate grants made pursuant to this section. The Committee shall include:

1. two members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets;
2. one member appointed by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation;
3. two members appointed by the Vermont Fair and Field Days Association;
4. one member appointed by the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing;
5. one member of the Vermont Senate appointed by the Committee on Committees; and
6. one member of the Vermont House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House.

KEY DATES

Key dates are subject to change.

October 21, 2024	Request for Applications released
November 1 – December 15, 2024	Application submission period
December 15, 2024 at 11:59 PM	Application closes
February 3, 2025	Notification of awards

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 (VAAF) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing VAAF 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 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. If grant is state-funded, completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#). Find this form at finance.vermont.gov/vendors-and-grantees.
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Following execution of the grant contract, grant recipients may submit an initial claim for 100% of Stipend funds and 90% of Capital Grant funds. The remaining 10% of Capital Grant funds will be disbursed upon completion of the infrastructure improvement project after the final claim and all required documentation is submitted and with approval from the Program Manager.

Grant recipients must track and report all paid and unpaid event attendance, as well as the value of all premium categories, plant improvements, general operations, and associated expenditures, and must also provide project updates from previous years when applying for Stipend and Capital Grant funds the following year.

Upon completion of the infrastructure improvement project, grant recipients must submit expense documentation including an itemized list of expenses related to the proposed budget and actuals from the completed project, copies of related receipts and invoices, and project photos along with the final claim for Program Manager approval.

APPENDIX

RELATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

VAAFAM offers a menu of [funding opportunities](#) as well as [business planning and assistance](#) resources available to the Vermont agricultural community:

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations receiving state funds; 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 current or 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.

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 Fairs and Field Days Grants are considered public information and may be subject to disclosure.

VERMONT FAIRS AND FIELD DAYS STATUTE AND RULES

CAPITAL PROJECTS

§ 5608. AGRICULTURAL FAIRS AND FIELD DAYS CAPITAL PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

(a) Grant guidelines. The following guidelines shall apply to capital grants made for Vermont agricultural fairs and field days projects pursuant to this section:

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(1) Grants shall be competitively awarded to capital projects that relate to Vermont agricultural fairs and field days operating a minimum of three consecutive, eight-hour days per year.

(2) A project for which a grant is awarded shall have a minimum useful life of 20 years and shall be completed within two years of the execution of a contract to perform work authorized by the grant.

(3) A grant recipient shall contribute matching funds or in-kind services in an amount equal to 15 percent or more of the value of the grant.

(b) There is established an Agricultural Fairs and Field Days Capital Program Advisory Committee to administer and coordinate grants made pursuant to this section. The Committee shall include:

(1) two members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets;

(2) one member appointed by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation;

(3) two members appointed by the Vermont Fair and Field Days Association;

(4) one member appointed by the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing;

(5) one member of the Vermont Senate appointed by the Committee on Committees;
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(6) one member of the Vermont House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(c) Administration.

(1) The Advisory Committee created in subsection (b) of this section shall have the authority to award grants in its sole discretion; provided, however, that the Committee may consider whether to award partial awards to all applicants that meet Program criteria established by the Committee.

(2) The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall provide administrative and technical support to the Committee for purposes of administering grants awarded under this section.

STIPEND FUNDS

Vermont Agricultural Fairs Stipend Fund Distribution Formula

H.472 Effective July 1st, 2023

Section 1. Definitions.

(1) "Agricultural Fair" or "field days" means an exhibition held at least annually by an agricultural fair association at which premiums are offered for competitive exhibits in at least five competitive categories.

(2) "Agricultural Fair Association" means an organization or association incorporated under state law that is governed by an elected board of directors that operate fairs and agricultural shows that promote or exhibit the work of farmers and others who produce, process, market, or distribute farm and food products including livestock, poultry, fish,

fruits, vegetables, fiber, horticultural products, maple products, honey, Christmas trees, or other agricultural products.

(3) "Competitive Exhibits" means an open competition designed to demonstrate the quality, improvements, or benefits of grains, fruits, vegetables, cultivated flowers, livestock, poultry, fish, bees, maple products, honey, dairy products, agricultural practices, or other agricultural crops or products. To qualify as a competitive exhibit, there must be at least three entries per category.

(4) "General Operation" means the goods and services utilized to operate a fair in the ordinary course of business that generate ordinary expenses, excluding plant improvements.

(5) "Plant improvements" means an improvement of fixtures, machinery, apparatus, equipment, display facilities, buildings, or other infrastructure used for a fair.

Section 2. Time.

In order for any fair association to be eligible for an award from the State Stipend Fund for any calendar year, it shall make application to the Commissioner of Agriculture on or before February 1, of the succeeding year.

Section 3. Application.

Each application shall be accompanied by both narrative and financial data in a form to be prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture to support a claim for an award from the State Stipend Fund. Each application shall explain the basis for each request with an informative narrative and pertinent financial data;; explain how any awarded grant funds will be used, including whether funds will support general operations or plant improvement; provide accurate attendance numbers, the amount spent on premiums for competitive exhibits, the amount spent on general operations, and the amount spent on plant improvements for one or more of the most recent fairs or field days; indicate how the requested grant will support continued operations and promote agriculture in the state; explain how recently awarded program grants supported the purposes of this chapter; and explain its goals for the next five years, how it plans to achieve the goals, and the role of the requested grant funds in meeting its objectives.

Section 4. Criteria.

Since the State Stipend Fund is based upon competing needs of fair association throughout the state, the Secretary of Agriculture shall have the discretion to issue grant awards to eligible agricultural fair associations after the application deadline expires and the Secretary evaluates all timely applications.

The Secretary shall equitably distribute the appropriated funds to qualified applicants and strive to support fairs and field days in all areas of the State.

When equitably distributing available funds, the Secretary shall consider the following factors:

- 1) the importance of the requested grant to the applicant;
- 2) how the grant will help farmers, food producers, and promote agriculture;
- 3) how the grant will support the local community
- 4) each applicant's attendance numbers, the amount it spent on premiums for competitive exhibits, the amount it spent on general operations, and the amount it spent on plant improvements;
- 5) each applicant's past success in productively utilizing grant funds;
- 6) each applicant's plans to facilitate the purposes of this chapter;
- 7) and the relative needs of all applicants and how the distribution of available funds may best meet the purposes of the program.

The Secretary shall equitably distribute appropriated funds to eligible qualified applicants. The Secretary shall determine each applicant's percentage of total fair and field days activity through a formula that equally measures each applicant's respective percentage of the total applicant:

- A) attendance;
- B) premium expenditures;
- C) general operations expenditures; and
- D) plant improvement expenditures for the most recent calendar year

No applicant shall receive more than 10 percent of the total appropriated funds unless fewer than 10 fair associations apply. In the Secretary's sole discretion, the Secretary may consider the additional enumerated factors in this section and use an alternate method to equitably distribute available funds.

Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements of 6 V.S.A. § 5154, an agricultural fair association that received financial assistance awards under the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' previous State stipend shall be eligible for a grant under 6 V.S.A. chapter 219.

Section 5. Notification.

Each applicant will be notified on or before March 15, in any year of application whether it has been granted or denied an award from the State Stipend Fund. Any fair association denied or aggrieved by the amount of an award may within ten days from such denial request reconsideration with information and arguments indicating why the decision should be reconsidered. The fair association may request a hearing before the

Secretary in conjunction with any such reconsideration. A hearing will be set for a date within 15 days after receipt of the notice and shall be preceded by at least five days written notice.