



# **FARM TO SCHOOL COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE GRANT**

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## **FISCAL YEAR 2021 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) is seeking applications from Vermont early childcare providers who want to purchase community supported agriculture (CSA) shares to help them incorporate more local food into their operations. The food provided through CSA shares can be incorporated into meals, distributed to families, or used in other farm to school related activities.

### **KEY DATES**

Request for Applications Release Date: January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Application Deadline: February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Award Notification: Beginning of March, 2021

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## **CONTACT**

### **PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS**

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### **WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

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

## **I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

This purpose of this funding opportunity is to support Vermont farmers and help early childcare providers access more Vermont grown and produced food. The grant provides partial reimbursement to Vermont licensed and registered early childcare providers who have purchased community supported agriculture (CSA) shares from a Vermont farm, or farm collaborative.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Vermont registered or licensed early childcare providers are eligible to apply for this competitive grant.

### **AVAILABLE FUNDS & AWARD AMOUNT**

Grants will cover eighty percent of total CSA share costs. The maximum grant award for this funding opportunity is \$1,000.

### **PROJECT LENGTH**

March 2021 – November 2021

### **FUNDING SOURCE**

Grants are funded through a State of Vermont legislative appropriation.

## **FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

This funding opportunity will partially reimburse childcare providers for CSA shares purchased from Vermont farms, or farm/producer collaboratives. Applicants must identify the farm or collaborative from whom they plan to purchase their CSA share(s) in their application and provide a description of how they will utilize the CSA produce to support their farm to school goals. Successful applicants will receive a grant to cover eighty percent of the cost of their CSA share(s).

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND ELIGIBILITY

### GRANT TIMELINE

#### DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

JANUARY 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Application opens
FEBRUARY 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2021 – 11:59 PM	Applications due by midnight in WebGrants
BEGINNING of MARCH 2021	Applicants notified of awards
APRIL 2021	Grant agreements finalized
MARCH 2021 – JUNE 2021	Grantees purchase CSA share(s)
MARCH 2021 – NOVEMBER 2021	Grantee Can Submit Claim for Reimbursement
NOVEMBER 2021	Final Report Due, Last opportunity to claim funds

## II. HOW TO APPLY

Applications will only be accepted through VAAFV'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 filling out 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 fill out 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 a full guide to submitting an application, visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply>.

**Applications must be submitted by the fiscal agent. For most organizations the fiscal agent is the business owner, executive 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 not submitted by the entity bearing fiscal responsibility will not be accepted.

Please see the [Vermont Farm to School Grant website](#) for more information about this grant opportunity. Any additional questions about the grant Request for Applications must be submitted to [trevor.lowell@vermont.gov](mailto:trevor.lowell@vermont.gov).

## SECTION II: HOW TO APPLY

### SUBMISSION POLICY

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

WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the cut-off time.

VAAFAM will not accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances.

### SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, the applicant will receive a confirmation email, such as below:

\*\*\*\* Do Not Respond to This Email \*\*\*\*

The following Application has been submitted:

Number: 25320

Name: The Test

Program Area: Farm to School

Grantee Organization: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Grantee: Vermont Tester1

You may now log into the WebGrants system at the following location:

<https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov/>

## III. FULL APPLICATION

Estimated time to complete application: 20 Minutes

Documents needed to complete the application:

- Proof of CSA availability (see question 4 under “Community Supported Agriculture Share Information”)

Below is a complete copy of the application questions you will need to answer to submit your online application. **Applications must be completed in WebGrants by midnight on Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Applicants without an existing WebGrants account will need to account for the two-day registration process when planning to fill out and submit their application.**

### Applicant Information

1. Applicant/Fiscal Agent Information:
  - a. Name
  - b. Title
  - c. Email
  - d. Phone Number
2. Additional Grant Contact (if desired) *\*Grantees may add secondary grant contacts if/when funds are awarded.*
  - a. Name
  - b. Title
  - c. Email
  - d. Phone Number (personal or business)
3. Business name (as it appears on your IRS tax documents)
4. Business Physical Address
5. Business Mailing Address (if different from above)
6. Business Website (if available)
7. Years in Business
8. Hours of Operation
9. Ages Served
10. Number of Children Served
11. Are you a Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) provider? If yes:
  - a. What level is your program?
12. Has your organization ever received a grant from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets? If yes:
  - a. Please list all grants and the years in which they were received

## **Programming and Services**

1. In addition to childcare services, do you provide programs or services for families and/or guardians? If yes:
  - a. Please list all programs and provide a brief description of each. Include the number of participants if possible.
2. Does your business participate in a federal meal program? If Yes:
  - a. Is your meal program sponsored by an outside organization such as Capstone?
  - b. Which federal child nutrition programs (Child and Adult care Food Program, Summer Food Program, etc.) does your organization participate in? List all that apply.
3. Do any of the children you serve qualify for free or reduced-price meals? If yes:
  - a. What percentage qualify for free or reduced-price meals?
4. Do you provide any services designed to address food insecurity among the children and/or families you serve?
5. Describe the meals or snacks you currently provide. Include information about the frequency of meals and snacks served, examples of the types of foods commonly offered, and information about how food is prepared.
6. Provide a brief description of your kitchen infrastructure. Do you have access to an oven, range, microwave, refrigerated storage, etc.
7. Do you currently utilize local food in the meals and snacks you serve? If yes:
  - a. Provide a description of the common types of local food utilized, how frequently those foods are served, and how they are sourced (grocery store, farm stand, farmers market, etc.)
8. Have you previously used CSAs as a source of produce for your childcare business?

## **Community Supported Agriculture Share Information**

\*A list of statewide CSA providers is available on NOFA-VT's [website](#). Please note this is not a complete list of all CSA providers in the state.

1. What is the name of the farm or collaborative from which you would like to purchase the CSA share(s)?
2. Do you have an existing relationship with the business?
3. If they have one, provide a link to their website.
  - a. If they do not have a website, provide the following:
    - i. Address of farm/collaborative
    - ii. Name of person responsible for managing CSA shares
    - iii. Phone number of CSA contact
    - iv. Email of CSA contact
4. You must provide documentation to confirm that the farm or collaborative has CSA shares available for the upcoming season. Examples include a copy of an email exchange between you

## SECTION III: FULL APPLICATION

and the farm/collaborative, a screenshot/copy of promotional materials, or a link to their website or social media account that clearly shows the availability of shares for sale.

5. Grant funds will cover eighty percent of the total CSA share cost, up to \$1,000. Applicants are required to provide a cash match for the remaining twenty percent of the cost. Where will the funding come from to cover the twenty percent match? (Note, USDA prohibits the use of federal meal program funds from being used to purchase CSA shares).
6. Identify the number, type, and individual cost of the CSA share(s) you would like to purchase. Provide a description of how much produce is provided in each individual share type (i.e. average pounds per box, number of people it is designed to serve).
7. Describe how the farm/collaborative distributes its CSA shares? Are customers responsible for picking them up, and if so from where? Are they available on a certain day and at a certain time?
  - a. If CSA shares need to be picked up by the customer, how do you plan to collect your CSA without causing disruptions to your childcare business?

### Utilization, Impact, and Sustainability

1. How will the produce provided through your CSA be utilized in supporting the children and/or families you serve?
  - a. Served in meals and snacks
  - b. Sent home with children and/or families
  - c. Used In cooking activities with children and/or families
  - d. Other
2. How likely are you to continue to purchase CSA shares in future years without support from this funding opportunity?
3. Please describe any farm to school activities that you engage in with the children and/or families you serve. Examples include gardening, farm visits, cooking and nutrition based activities, etc.
4. List any farm to early childhood professional development opportunities in which you have engaged.
5. Are there farm to early childhood training topics or technical assistance from which you could benefit?

## **IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Applications will be reviewed by VAAFM and Farm to School and early care partners. Notification of awards will be made by the beginning of March 2021. Reviewers will be considering the following criteria when evaluating applications:

- The applicant's ability to leverage the food provided through the CSA to promote engagement and awareness of local food and agricultural systems.
- The likelihood that an applicant will fully utilize the food provided through the CSA in meaningful and impactful ways.
- The potential for this grant to help address food insecurity among children and families.
- The likelihood that this grant will help create and/or strengthen lasting connections between farmers and early childcare providers.

Evaluators will also be considerate of the need to disburse funds equitably throughout the state.



## V. 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 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.]
- B. A completed [Act 154 Good Standing Certification](#).

### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to the end of the grant period, grantees will be required to submit a final grant report detailing the impact of the grant. **These reports must be submitted through WebGrants and will be due November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The report will request the following information:**

#### **2021 Early Childhood CSA Grant Final Report**

1. Please provide your own definition of what you consider to be local food\*.
2. Please describe how your organization utilized the local food provided through your CSA share.
3. Have you incorporated more scratch cooking into your program since receiving the grant?
4. Have you incorporated more food, farm, and nutrition activities into your programming since receiving this grant?
5. Has the CSA share resulted in any new or improved relationships with local farmers and/or agricultural producers?
6. Are you likely to purchase CSA shares for next season?
7. Describe any challenges related to receiving and utilizing your CSA.
8. Please describe any farm to early childhood professional development activities you engage in or areas of interest for future training needs that have been highlighted through this grant opportunity and your use of local foods in your childcare program setting.
9. Please attach or provide links to any photos or videos that demonstrate the impact of the CSA share.
10. In an effort to continually improve this program, please share any other comments or feedback.

\*There is no standard definition for local food. Grantees are encouraged to create a definition that represents their values. Things to consider include types of food, geographic origin and production practices.