



VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE ARPA FUNDED PRIMARY PRODUCER IMPACT GRANT

FISCAL YEAR 2024 PRE-APPLICATION GUIDE

KEY DATES

Publication Date: December 8, 2023

Pre-application Opens: December 8, 2023

Optional Grant Applicant Webinar: December 13, 2023 12:00–1:00 PM
[Register for the webinar.](#)

Pre-application Closes: January 19, 2024 at 11:59 PM

Pre-application Notification of Acceptance/Denial: Early February 2024

Final Round Application Closes: March 25, 2024

Final Round Award Notification: May 2024

Estimated Project Start: June 2024

CONTENTS

Contact Information	2
Section 1: Overview & Eligibility.....	3
Section 2: Application Process & Content	6
Section 3: Application Review & Scoring.....	13
Section 4: Grant Management & Reporting.....	14

CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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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 grants management system, WebGrants, at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov.

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, barring exceptional circumstances. The WebGrants system will not allow application submission 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

Approximately 20% of Vermont's working landscape is used for agricultural purposes, and 80% is forested. Vermont prospers and its unique sense of place thrives because of intelligent investments in the people and enterprises that comprise its farm, food, and forest-based systems. Strong community engagement and support for the farm and forest sectors leads to enhanced quality of life for Vermont citizens and working lands business owners.

[Vermont Act 142](#) of 2011, An act relating to preserving Vermont's working landscape, created the Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF) and the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB). The WLEB is made up of:

- Private sector members throughout the agriculture and forest supply chains
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets staff
- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation staff
- Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development staff
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board staff
- Vermont Economic Development Authority staff
- Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund staff

HISTORY OF SUCCESS TO DATE

Since its formation in August 2012, the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) has awarded over \$15 million in grant funds to over 400 grantees, leveraging more than \$26 million in matching funds. For lists of previous awards, visit the [Funded Projects](#) page.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants for this Grant Opportunity Must be Primary Producers

Primary producers of farm and forest products are eligible to apply for the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Impact Grant. Examples of eligible primary production activities are growing crops and fruit, raising animals, harvesting timber, sugaring, and operating dairies. Applicants will need to provide a narrative description of their primary production activities and submit **one** of the following documents to confirm their status as a primary producer:

- Profit and loss statement from 2021 showing revenue from primary production activity
- Filed 2021 Schedule F Profit or Loss from Farming tax return form (applicable to farmers)

And, if available, submit one of the following:

- State issued registration or license that captures primary producer status, e.g., farm registration; produce program registration; water quality designations for Medium Farm Operation (MFO), Large Farm Operation (LFO), or Certified Small Farm Operation (CSFO)
- Registration with the Secretary of State that shows NAICS Code 11

While typically the forest industry considers sawmills and other primary wood manufacturing as primary producers, from the forestry sector only businesses involved in harvesting timber are eligible for this grant.

Primary producers can use grant funds to invest in market development, infrastructure, and workforce development initiatives that advance their usage of primary products they have produced. Grant funds can be used for investments in processing primary products.

Eligible businesses must have been operational prior to January 2020. Applicants will need to demonstrate how their business experienced a negative economic impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic, even if that impact was not sustained, e.g., experienced increased cost of operation, decreased revenue or gross receipts, challenges covering payroll, or other harm that can be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Grant funds must be used to support businesses recovery from the economic harm experienced, but the project does not need to be a direct response to the economic harm experienced (e.g., a business that was harmed due to a sharp increase in the cost of inputs **does not** need to focus their grant activities on sourcing inputs). Additionally, a business that received funds from the Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program (VCAAP) must use these grant funds for a different scope of work.

Applicant organizations/businesses must be based in Vermont. All structures are eligible (e.g., Partnerships, Limited Liability Corporations, Sole Proprietorships, Cooperatives, Corporations, S Corporations, L3Cs, B Corporations, and/or non-profits that are involved in the support of production of agriculture and/or forest products). All legally incorporated enterprises must be registered with the VT Secretary of State. Sole proprietors using a business name other than their own name must have their assumed business name (formerly known as a trade name) registered with the Secretary of State. Applicants must be in compliance with all state regulations (including but not limited to water quality, taxes, and child support) and in good standing with the State of Vermont at the time of applying and must remain so during the entire grant period.

Previous Working Lands Business Enhancement Grant and COVID-19 Response Business Development Grant recipients are eligible to re-apply for funding during Fiscal Year 2024. Previous recipients of a Working Lands ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant, Supply Chain Impact or Market Level Infrastructure Grant, or Meat Slaughter and Processing Development Grant are eligible to apply for further Working Lands funding

after three years, meaning that Fiscal Year 2021 and earlier grantees are eligible to apply this year.

Previous grantees who apply again must explain how the proposed project either builds on previous work or is a separate project as well as demonstrate how continued funding will be used to improve the project or business.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects eligible for funding may relate to one or more of the following categories:

- **Market development** – professionalizing a marketing and/or branding approach to new or expanded markets; hiring a professional marketing/branding contractor to develop strategy and/or content; implementing the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor (e.g., branding, website, or social media development)
- **Research and development** – testing new systems or technology
- **Infrastructure development** – project-specific planning, permitting, engineering or architectural plans; building and equipment costs, including for labor and/or energy efficiency enhancements, such as lighting, refrigeration/cooling, heat pumps, solar panels, low-energy water management, ventilation systems, and/or energy generation; may include equipment installation and/or technical assistance costs
- **Workforce training and development** – technical skill training for staff, business management training, and/or business succession planning, including hiring a consultant to support any of these processes

Purchases of land or animals are not eligible under this grant.

AVAILABLE FUNDS & SOURCE

Up to \$913,000 from Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds appropriated by the Vermont legislature to the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

\$50,000–\$250,000 per award

MATCHING REQUIREMENT

Grant recipients must provide matching funds equal to 100% of the grant award (one-to-one) using **cash** (e.g., funds in the bank, paid staff labor hours toward the project) or **in-kind** items (e.g., donated goods, pro bono services, volunteer labor) that the grantee organization has received from other sources.

Match sources must be identified by the time of application submission and commitments in place by the time of grant agreement signing. Matching funds may not be sourced from other Federal funding opportunities. Under limited circumstances, the

matching requirement may be reduced or waived for applicants who demonstrate a clear need for this accommodation.

PROJECT LENGTH

24 months

RELATED FISCAL YEAR 2024 (FY24) FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FY24 Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Grant Opportunities

To learn more about and decide which of the Fiscal Year 2024 WLEI funding opportunities is most appropriate for your business or organization, please visit the [funding opportunities overview and calendar](#). A business or organization can only apply to one WLEI grant opportunity this year. A business or organization can only receive one WLEI grant during FY24.

FY24 Agriculture Development Grants (ADG) for Meat, Produce & Maple

We recommend meat and produce producers consider applying for Agriculture Development Grants (ADG) offered in Fall and Winter 2023/24. Businesses may accept either a Working Lands or ADG award, but not both, during Fiscal Year 2024.

The funding range will be from \$35,000 - \$300,000. There is no match requirement, although applicants will need to show sufficient funds to complete the project if total costs exceed the grant request. Projects will run from April 2024 to April 2026. Eligible applicants must be Vermont businesses (nonprofits are not eligible) who meet or are diversifying into at least one of the following activity groups:

- Growing produce for consumption
- Produce growing operation performing on-farm processing
- Raising meat for consumption
- Performing slaughter and directly adjacent processing

Applicants must demonstrate alignment with one of three funding priorities: 1) climate resiliency; 2) infrastructure, efficiency, and capacity; and 3) worker and food safety and product quality. Projects may include infrastructure or construction improvements, climate-smart investments, storage and distribution infrastructure, harvest/wash/pack systems, irrigation or heating/cooling systems, employee training and/or safety plan writing, on-farm processing infrastructure, and staff time related to project oversight. Retail-only operations, technical service providers, marketing, and research are ineligible. Hydroponic, fiber, hemp, cannabis, and grain projects are also ineligible.

The Meat and Produce ADG Request for Applications (RFA) will be published on January 5, 2024 with full details of this grant opportunity. Applications will be open from

January 19, 2024 – February 26, 2024. Award notifications will be made in April 2024. For more information about the Meat and Produce ADG grant or to confirm eligibility, please contact Sarah McIlvennie at Sarah.Mcilvenine@vermont.gov or 802-261-5866.

Water Quality Projects

WLEB will not fund water quality or soil health equipment and infrastructure projects that are eligible for funding under existing programs of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. For example, the Best Management Practices program funds manure management structures such as manure pits and bedded packs; the Pasture and Surface Water Funding program funds fencing, water systems and laneways for rotational grazing; and the Capital Equipment Assistance Program funds innovative conservation equipment such as manure injection toolbars, grain drills, and no-till planters. For more information on Water Quality grants and eligibility, please see [Water Quality Assistance Programs](#) or contact Sonia Howlett at Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov.

SECTION 2: APPLICATION PROCESS & CONTENT

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the online grants management system, [WebGrants](#), at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov between Friday, December 8, 2023 and **Friday, January 19, 2023 at 11:59 PM**. Paper applications will not be accepted. Application components are outlined below as they will appear in WebGrants.

For technical instructions on the application submission process, please see the [WebGrants Application Guide](#) at agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply.

STANDARD VAAFM APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Questions in the following four sections are asked of everyone who applies for a grant offered by VAAFM's Agriculture Development Division. Some questions in these sections are optional and may not apply to all applicants. 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*
- 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 are optional and may not apply to all applicants.

- 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?*
- 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 five 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?
- Which of the following benefits does your organization provide 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/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.

WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Project Information

- Project title that briefly summarizes proposal (150-character limit)
- General sector(s) of business (agriculture, forestry, both)
- Primary product category (dropdown menu)
- Secondary product category (dropdown menu)
- Project category (dropdown menu)
- Amount of Working Lands grant funds requested (\$)
 - **Please note:** Applicants should base the grant request on detailed, reasonable quotes/cost estimates available at the time of application. Applicants who move to the final application round will be allowed to submit updated quotes/cost estimates and change the grant request amount to reflect any changes in price. Matching funds can also be adjusted based on price changes during the final application round. Other

changes to the grant request amount outside of quoted price changes will not be allowed.

- Amount of matching funds committed (\$)
 - **Please note:** Matching funds should be equal to or greater than the amount of grant funds requested, through either cash or a combination of cash and in-kind sources. If unable to meet the 1-to-1 match, enter your match commitment amount here and complete the Match Waiver question in the Budget section of this application.
- **Project Summary** (3000-character limit): Provide a brief overview of your project, including how requested and matching funds will be used. Explain why your project is being proposed and reference key anticipated outcomes.
- Did you receive a grant from the Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program (VCAAP)?
 - If so, please check the box to attest that the project proposed in this application is different from the VCAAP project.
- Does this project involve expanding and/or developing processing operations?
 - Please state the percentage (%) of the raw product being processed that the applicant will produce.

Business Information

- **Business Description** (3000-character limit): Describe your business in terms of activities and products. Describe your efforts to build financial viability (such as building diverse and/or reliable markets, partnerships, internal management systems, etc.) and promote overall business sustainability beyond the grant period. Please include the approximate percentage (%) of your staff time that is spent on primary production and the percentage (%) of your business's revenue that comes from primary production activities.
- **Stage of Business Development:** Review the [definitions for the different stages of business development](#) and select the one that applies most to your business.
- **COVID Impact** (2000-character limit): Provide an overview of how your business was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., experienced increased cost of operation, decreased revenue or gross receipts, challenges covering payroll, or other harm that can be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic). Explain how this project will support your business in recovering from the economic harm experienced, even if it is an indirect link.
- **Primary Producer Status:** Upload one of the following documents:
 - Profit and loss statement from 2022 showing revenue from primary production activity
 - Filed 2022 Schedule F Profit and Loss from Farming tax return form with SSN redacted or fully blacked out

If available, please submit one of the following:

- State issued registration or license that captures primary producer status, e.g., farm registration; produce program registration; water quality

- designations for Medium Farm Operation (MFO), Large Farm Operation (LFO), or Certified Small Farm Operations (CSFO)
 - Registration with the Secretary of State that shows NAICS Code 11
- Upload the cover page of your 2019 tax return to demonstrate business operations before January 2020, with SSN redacted or fully blacked out.

Budget Information

Budget Template: Enter the dollar amount for each line item of your budget into the appropriate field. Your budget should include any other funding sources supporting the proposed project as matching funds. Up to 10% of requested grant funds may be used for indirect costs (i.e., facilities/administrative costs).

Example Budget Calculations:

- \$20,000 Working Lands grant request x 10% = \$2,000 eligible as indirect costs
- \$20,000 grant request x 100% = \$20,000 minimum cash and/or in-kind match
- \$20,000 request + \$20,000 match amount = \$40,000 total project cost

Identify the source(s) for all matching funds with a timeline for securing these commitments:

- Examples of **cash match** include funds in the bank, third party funds, and applicant labor directly associated with the proposed project
- Examples of **in-kind match** include goods or services provided during the grant period for which no expenditure is made (e.g., contractors, consultants, or equipment provided pro bono, volunteer labor)

Expense Category	Grant Request (\$)	Matching (\$)		Match Source	Details/Purpose	Total
		Cash	In-Kind			
Salaries/Wages (Personnel)						
Benefits						
Travel						
Supplies						
Contractual						
Other Direct Costs						
Indirect Costs						
TOTAL						

Budget and Narrative (1000-character limit for each question):

- Describe your intended use of Working Lands funds. Provide further detail on proposed amounts for all line items, as needed. Costs incurred prior to the signing of the grant agreement are not eligible.
- Match: Indicate whether all matching funds are committed (at the time of application submission). If not, provide your timeline for securing such commitments prior to grant agreement signing in
- Match Waiver: If a match waiver is requested, provide justification here.
- Describe your intended methods of tracking staff time and expenses associated with the grant.
- If Working Lands funds are not received, explain how this will impact your project, e.g., scope adjusted, lower probability of success, would not happen, and/or an urgent window of opportunity would be missed.
- Describe efforts to fund this project with other sources. Identify other grants/loans you are currently applying for, or plan to apply for, in conjunction with this one, if any.
- Quotes: If applicable, upload any quotes for equipment, supplies, or contractors for items greater than \$5,000.

Additional Attachments – space provided to upload up to five documents (must be in PDF format)

- Letter(s) of support are optional to justify the current need for and importance of this project. Support letters identify an external entity's relationship with your business and explain how grant funding will help address a need and/or benefit your community.

SECTION 3: APPLICATION REVIEW & SCORING

APPLICATION REVIEW

Working Lands grant funds will be awarded to applicants through a competitive review process. A committee of Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) members, State agency staff, and industry stakeholders will review submitted applications and make funding recommendations to the full WLEB for final awarding decisions. Applicants will be notified by email of application approval to move to the final application round or denial, with specific feedback, in early February 2024.

APPLICATION SCORING

Priority will be given to applicants that have not previously received a Working Lands grant. Past grantees, especially those currently implementing projects, should detail how the new project is or is not related to the previous project. Past grantees should make sure the new proposed project can move forward if there are delays or challenges with the past grant. An application can be strong without scoring highly in all scoring categories. Criteria that will inform scoring of application quality are as follows:

Quality of Concept: The proposed activities are a reasonable approach to addressing identified business needs. The proposed project can be conducted within the 24-month grant period. (30 points)

Budget: The proposed budget is clear and reflects realistic, well-planned components, including required matching funds or explanation of a match waiver. (30 points)

Demonstrated Project Need: The proposal demonstrates that there is a credible need for the specified project. (30 points)

Business Viability: The applicant possesses characteristics of a viable business appropriate to the age and stage of the business and the scale of the grant request, including diverse markets, partnerships, and strong internal management. (10 points)

Final Application Round Information

Applicants whose pre-application is approved for advancement will be able to begin editing their final application at any point after receiving their approval notification by email. The message will contain instructions and required final application content in detail. In addition to information required in the pre-application (e.g., project summary, budget, etc. – which will automatically populate from pre-application responses), the full application will require the following new information to be submitted:

- Project work plan including key activities, completion timeline, and responsible personnel
- Project goals and expected measurable outcomes
- Description of how the project will enhance Vermont's working landscape, with impacts that may include job creation, retention, and/or increased production efficiency; increased sales; increased product output; improved land management practices and/or increased (or retained) acres in active forestry or agricultural use; workforce development and/or increased worker or owner wellbeing; climate adaptation and/or mitigation initiatives
- Financial management data, including system used for accounting. Additional financial documentation:
 - Cash flow record
 - Profit and loss statement
 - Balance sheet
 - Projected income and expenses
- Experience and successes implementing similar past work
- Identification of project management team and business viability support team
- Letter(s) of support/commitment. The letter(s) of support should demonstrate the need for the work or a key partner's commitment to collaboration.
- Current business plan for requests of more than \$75,000 (uploaded in PDF format)
- If applicable, marketing plan description
- Optional additional attachments (project renderings or plans, equipment cost estimates, etc.)
- Potentially applicants requesting \$150,000 and above (optional for requests between \$75k - \$150k) will be expected to present a virtual project pitch to the reviewer team. Each pitch will be no more than 5 minutes in length and should include an explanation of intended participation of the management team (including business viability providers), project feasibility, and anticipated project impacts.

- Additional details regarding the final application will not be shared publicly and will be sent only to applicants whose pre-application has been approved for advancement. Final applications must be submitted in WebGrants by March 25, 2024. Applicants will receive final award notification via email in May 2024.

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 (VAAFMM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing VAAFMM to monitor 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 for Contracts and Grants** (revised 12/15/2017) at bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms for the most recent State provisions.

Prior to commencement of work and release of grant payment, grantees must submit:

1. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past twelve months;
2. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement;
3. Documentation that verifies pledged matching funds, as applicable.

GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Except for the first payment following grant agreement signing, grant payments are based upon project performance and completion of project activities. Progress will be communicated via status reports, which must be approved by the State grant program manager before claims (payment requests) are approved. All claims will be submitted and approved via WebGrants at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov.

24-month Working Lands Grant funds are typically distributed according to the following schedule:

1. Up to 40% of the grant award following signing of the grant agreement, and receipt and approval of an initial claim in WebGrants.
2. Up to an additional 30% of the grant award (70% total), following completion and approval of the first Interim Report demonstrating project progress, and the submission of a second claim. Typically, no later than six months after the grant start date. The first payment (of 40%) is an advance payment, but prior to receiving additional funds you must show proof of expenditures of all initial funds plus proof of expenditures for the funds requested in the second claim.
3. Up to an additional 20% of the grant award (90% total), following completion and approval of the second Interim Report demonstrating project progress, and the submission of a third claim. Typically, fifteen months after the grant start date.
4. Final 10% (or other remaining amount) of the grant award, following receipt and approval of the Final Report demonstrating completion of project and satisfactory achievement of expected measurable outcomes, and a final claim.

Grantees must maintain documentation of project costs, both those paid with grant funds and with matching funds, throughout the grant period. Accurate expense totals are a required component of status reporting.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to receipt of the second grant payment and the following payments according to the breakdown above, grant recipients must complete a project status report in [WebGrants](#). Reports will include a narrative of project accomplishments to date, progress toward meeting expected goals and outcomes, a budget table showing amounts of expended grant and matching funds, and high-resolution digital photos in .jpg format that demonstrate project work. Grantees will be expected to collaborate with VAAFAM staff to measure the impact of their project.

Grantees must be willing to share project details, including successes and challenges, with the public, the WLEB, and the media, which illustrate the impact of the grant within Vermont's working lands economies. This may occur through media inquiries, press events on location, and/or site visits from VAAFAM staff, WLEB members, and/or their stakeholder partners.

APPENDIX A: PROGRAM PROVISIONS

Working Lands Grant agreements are held between the State of Vermont and the business or, where applicable, the business entity. Should the business entity cease to exist, or if the business entity to which this grant is issued becomes inactive, the State may suspend or cancel this Grant immediately, and the State shall be under no obligation to pay or further pay grantee.

Ready to begin work: Grantee must be ready to begin project work immediately following execution of this grant agreement. If grantee anticipates a delay or experiences a delay of more than two months, grantee shall submit to the grant manager via email an explanation for the delay and note the extent to which the delay will/will not impact project completion. Similarly, grantees should submit their initial claim for funds reimbursement within two months of receipt of the grant agreement. An explanation must be sent to the grant administrator if no request for reimbursement is anticipated within the first two months of the grant.

Publicly known and open to inspection: Except for grantee proprietary and personal identifying data, as noted per 1V.S.A. § 317(c), grantee names, projects, the amount of grant awards, and all other information regarding Working Lands grant projects are considered public information and are open to inspection. Grantee can also anticipate communication from other Working Lands partners and stakeholders regarding project successes and accomplishments.

Grantee Confidential and/or Proprietary Information: Grantee is responsible for noting all information, data, project results and narrative text which it considers confidential and/or proprietary in its reports and communications with the state. Grantee financials are automatically classified as confidential by the state.

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, as a public instrumentality, is subject to the Vermont Public Records Law, 1 VSA § 315 - 320. The statute contains specific exemptions for tax-related information of persons, financial information of an individual or business, and trade secrets. This information will be held in confidential files by the Working Lands Enterprise Board and will not be available for public inspection under the Public Records Law.

The Working Lands Enterprise Board and the state of Vermont consider the following information about applicants to be subject to public record: contact information of applicants; names, description, and contact information of applying enterprise or organization; the purpose and amount of any Working Lands Enterprise Funds received; and grantee communications. Other information may be shared in aggregate form (without identifying individual business info).

Acknowledgement: All meetings and gatherings held because of this grant will recognize the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Working Lands Enterprise Board as a funder. Written and electronic materials produced shall

include text acknowledging the same and shall also feature a Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets graphic. Grantee may be required to reprint event flyers, posters, and/or brochures or repost meeting announcements if the State learns of grantee's failure to acknowledge the Working Lands Enterprise Board as a funder.

Tax Implications: We recommend that all entities consult with a tax accountant as needed regarding how to report grant awards for tax purposes, including advising on your tax return. State of Vermont staff and Working Lands partners are not authorized to advise or provide input on tax-related information, including the completion of federal forms.