



VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant Application Guide

FISCAL YEAR 2023 FULL APPLICATION GUIDE

KEY DATES

Full Application Opens: February 6, 2023 at 12:00 PM

Optional online Q&A: February 9, 2023 at 9 AM: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Contact Mariah North (mariah@vhcb.org) to learn more about grant writing assistance services by noon on February 13, 2023

Full Application Closes: March 17, 2023 at 12:00 PM

Notification of Acceptance/Denial: Mid-April 2023

Grantee Documentation Due: Early May 2023

Estimated Project Start: May-June 2023

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PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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WEBGRANTS ASSISTANCE

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Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets staff are available 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 are accepted through the [WebGrants](#) grants management system.

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 (VAAFMM) 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 from agriculturegrants.vermont@mail.webgrantscloud.com. Please add this email address to your "safe senders" list. If you do not receive this confirmation, please check your junk or spam folder.

At the time of successful submission, your application status will show as "Submitted" in WebGrants. Any applications that remain in "Editing" status will not be reviewed.

Please verify that your application was submitted successfully. Staff are not available to assist with submissions after 4:30 PM on the closing day of the application period.

Section 1: Overview

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Approximately 20% of Vermont’s working landscape is used for agricultural purposes, and 75% 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.

The mission of the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative is to grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont’s working landscape. The Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) achieves this by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy and facilitating policy development to optimize the agricultural and forest use of Vermont lands. [The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, Act 142](#), created the Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF) and the 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 & Recreation staff
- Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development staff
- Vermont Housing & 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 \$12 million in grant funds to over 300 grantees, leveraging more than \$22 million in matching funds. Since 2013, the WLEB has also invested over \$3 million to 41 distinct service provider organizations in the form of grants and contracts. For a list of previously funded projects, visit workinglands.vermont.gov/history-initiative/funded-projects.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Primary producers of farm and forest products that were approved during the pre-application round are eligible to submit a final application for the ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Impact Grant.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Up to \$1,150,000

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative anticipates releasing a second ARPA-Funded Primary Producer Grant opportunity in Fall of 2023, with available funds of up to \$1,000,000.

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

\$50,000–\$250,000

MATCHING REQUIREMENT

Grant recipients must provide matching funds at a 100% (one-to-one) rate using **cash** (e.g., funds in the bank, paid staff labor hours) or a combination of cash and **in-kind** items (e.g., businesses time contributed to the project, use of equipment, 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 (estimated May 2023). Matching funds may be sourced from other State of Vermont funding opportunities but 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

FUNDING SOURCE

Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds appropriated by the Vermont legislature to the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative.

Section 2: Application Process and Content

HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted via the online grants management system, WebGrants, at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov between Monday, February 6th, 2023 at 12:00 PM (noon) and Friday, March 17, 2023 at 11:59 PM. Paper applications will not be accepted. Application components are outlined below as they will appear in WebGrants.

Please note, the content you submitted in your pre-application will automatically appear in your full application. You will need to review (edit if needed) and save all content for your full application to be completed.

To begin your full application, follow the steps below:

- Log in to [WebGrants](#) with your username and password.
- Click **Funding Opportunities** on the left sidebar.
- Select **FY23 ARPA Funded Primary Producer Impact Grant**.
- Next to the name of your approved pre-application, click the orange button, **Create Final Application**.
- Complete and submit the application in the same manner as you did for the pre-application.
- For complete technical instructions on the application submission process, please see the guide on the AAFM website at agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/howtoapply.

FINAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Questions that are new in the full application (i.e., did not appear in the pre-application) are indicated by an asterisk (*). You can edit all question fields. Please do review and update responses that are carried over from your pre-application.

Applicant Information

- Organization Name
- Type of Legal Entity (e.g., sole proprietorship, LLC, cooperative, 501(c)(3) nonprofit)
- Contact Name
- Job Title/Position
- Phone Number
- Email
- Physical Address
- County
- Primary product category
- Secondary product category
- **Business Narrative** (2000-character limit): Please provide a brief overview of your businesses' primary production activities. Please include approximately what % of your time is spent on primary production and the % of your business's revenue that comes from primary production activities.
- **COVID Impact** (2000-character limit): Please provide an overview of how your business was impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic (e.g., experienced an increased operational cost, decreased revenue or gross receipts, increased costs, challenges covering payroll, or other harm that can be linked to the COVID-19 pandemic). Explain how this project will support your businesses in recovering from the economic harm experienced, even if it is an indirect link.
- Please upload one of the following documents:
 - Profit and loss statement from 2021 showing revenue from primary production activity.
 - Filed 2021 Schedule F Profit of 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.
- Please upload the cover page of your 2019 tax return to demonstrate business operations before January 2020, with SSN redacted or fully blacked out.
- Demonstration of applicant compliance with state regulations and good standing with the State of Vermont – e-signature and date
 - Completed Water Quality Compliance Form upload

- How did you learn about this grant opportunity?
- Interest in receiving Working Lands related e-news/events/funding opportunity updates by email (Yes/No)
- Willingness to share contact information with other state and federal funders (Yes/No)

Project Information

- Project title that briefly summarizes proposal (150 character limit)
- Project category (drop down menu)
- Does this project involve expanding and/or developing processing operations?
- Amount of Working Lands grant funds requested (\$)
- Amount of matching funds committed (\$) **Please note: must be a minimum of 100% of the amount of grant funds requested, through either cash or a combination of cash and in-kind sources.*
- **Project Summary** (2000 character limit): Provide a brief overview of your project, including how requested and matching funds would be used. Explain why your project is being proposed and how it relates to the overall development of your business.
- **Permitting** (if applicable): What permits will you need for this project, if any? What is your estimated timeline for receiving each permit?

While having permits in hand isn't required to receive WLEI grants, applicants are encouraged to consider permitting needs at this time to ensure potential permitting costs and timelines are included in the Project Budget and Work Plan, if applicable. Please visit the following link for guidance around common permitting questions: [Act 250 Resources for Working Lands Enterprise Fund Projects](#).

- ***Marketing Plan** (2000 character limit): If applicable, explain how this project will advance the marketing efforts of your business.
- ***Project Pitch:** Applicants requesting \$150,000 and above may be expected to present a project pitch to members of the Working Lands Enterprise Board. Please check the box to indicate that you are able to fulfill this requirement, if applicable.

Pitches will be no more than five minutes in length and should include an explanation of the roles of key project team members (including business assistance providers), project feasibility, and anticipated outcomes on the business and the supply chain and/or market sector, if applicable. Pitches will be held virtually in April.

Previous Funding

- List additional grants received for this project (not for your organization as a whole) in the past five years, if any.
- List other grants/loans applied for in conjunction with this project application, if any.
- Has your organization received a grant from the State of Vermont or from the Federal government in the past?
 - If so, were these grants successfully completed? If not, please indicate why.
 - Did you receive a grant from the Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program (VCAAP)? If yes, please indicate specific outcomes achieved through the VCAAP project (up to 1800 characters).
 - If your previous funding includes a Working Lands grant, please indicate specific outcomes achieved through your past project (up to 1800 characters).

- Please provide any additional comments on your previous State of Vermont and/or Federal government grants (optional).

Organization and Financial Information

- **Organization information** (2000 character limit): Describe the business in terms of size (gross annual sales, number of employees, annual production volume), current markets, and number of years in business.
- **Stage of Business Development**: Review the [definitions](#) for the different stages of business development and select the one that applies to your business.
- **Business Viability** (2000 character limit): Describe your efforts to build financial viability and promote overall business sustainability beyond the grant period.
- *Describe the relevant experience of the business owner(s) and project management team that qualify them to complete the proposed work. (1500 character limit)
- *If applicable, describe the relationship and expertise of any partner organizations expected to participate in the project. (1500 character limit)
- *If applicable, describe technical assistance that you are currently receiving or planning to receive for the proposed project. Identify the service provider, time period, and type of assistance provided. (1000 character limit)
- *Please list any memberships in associations/trade organizations.
- Do you have an accounting system, such as QuickBooks or a formatted Excel spreadsheet, for tracking grant project expenses?
 - Will you use this system for tracking employee time associated with this grant, including both time paid by the grant and in-kind time used for matching purposes?
 - If not, please explain your system for time and expense tracking.
- ***Business Plan** (for applicants requesting more than \$75,000): Upload a PDF version of your current business plan (completed or revised in the past 12 months).
- ***Business Financial Statements**: Upload PDF versions of the following documents. Fiscal year refers to the 12-month financial year of your business.
 - Most recent fair market value **balance sheet** that demonstrates assets and liabilities
(No older than December 2022)
 - **Profit and loss statement** for business prior fiscal year
(If business fiscal year is the same as calendar year, this should be year-end actuals from 2022.)
 - Current **year-to-date profit and loss statement**, with projections through the end of the business' current fiscal year, if possible
(If business fiscal year is the same as the calendar year, this should be for Jan 2023-Dec 2023, with actuals and projections where applicable.)
 - **Projected monthly cash flow statement** for the next business fiscal year (12 months)
(If business fiscal year is the same as the calendar year, this should be an estimated cash flow statement from January 2024-December 2024.)

To see examples of financial documents for an agricultural business, please view this [sample farm business plan, including financial statements](#) provided by the Intervale Center. If you need fillable templates to create these documents, select the workbook applicable for your farm from the [Intervale](#)

[Center Farm Financial Tools section](#). Forestry/logging businesses looking for examples of financial documents can use the [UVM Extension Small Business Planning for Loggers tool](#). (Note: you will need to download the file and open in Adobe Acrobat to access the fillable template and the business plan samples.)

***Goals and Expected Measurable Outcomes**

- Enter your project goals into the appropriate field.
- Enter at least three and not more than five goals. For each goal, enter an indicator of your organization’s performance toward that goal (e.g., number of units sold per month).
- Finally, create a measurable outcome by adding anticipated numbers to your performance measure (e.g., sell 100 pounds per month by February 2024).
- Expected measurable outcomes must be discrete and attainable within the 12-month period of the grant. You are encouraged to include at least two indicators of growth and viability for businesses served, such as increases in employment goals, new markets accessed, businesses management skills acquired, etc.

For additional reference, view WLEI’s Goals and Expected Measurable Outcomes page at workinglands.vermont.gov/business-toolkit-resources/writing-goals-performance-measures-and-outcomes.

Goal	Performance Measure	Expected Measurable Outcome
Example: Increase early tomato production to help satisfy local demand	Example: Pounds of tomatoes harvested and sold in June and July	Example: Increase from 100 lbs. to 200 lbs. of “early” tomatoes harvested in June and July
Example: Offer 2-week lead time for furniture products.	Example: Average time between customer placing order and product shipping.	Example: Shorten average time between order placement and product shipping from 6 weeks to 2 weeks.

***Project Impact** (2000 character limit per question)

- ***Projected Impact on Product Output**
 - What units of measurement are used by your business for product output (e.g., jars, cases, pounds, board feet)?
 - What is the current annual product output of your business (number of units produced)?
 - Will this project result in increased product output for your business?
 - If so, by how much is product output anticipated to increase (in percent)?
- ***Projected Impact on Sales**
 - What were your annual gross sales in the past 12 months?
 - Will this project result in increased gross sales for your business?
 - If so, by how much are sales anticipated to increase?

- ***Projected Impact on Employment**
 - How many full-time equivalent (FTE) positions are currently employed by your business?
 - Will this project increase the number of full-time employees and/or weekly employee hours?
 - If so, how many anticipated full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs will be added as a result of this project? (1.0 FTE = 40 hours/week; 0.25 = 10 hours/week, etc.)
- ***Projected Impact on Acreage in Production**
 - Within your business, what is the current total acreage in production?
 - Will this project result in increased acreage in active production?
 - If so, how many new acres will be used?
- If applicable, please identify the intended impact of your project on the market or supply chain within the industry. Please reference other working lands business involved and how they will benefit. (2000 character limit)

***Project Work Plan**

Enter at least five project activities into the Project Work Plan table (up to 1000 characters per field):

- **Project Activity** – Describe the activities (i.e., milestone tasks) that are necessary to accomplish your project objectives. Include your performance monitoring/data collection activities. If you request funds for travel, these activities must also be included.
- **Personnel/Responsible Parties** – Identify the project participants who will do the work involved in each activity, including yourself, employees, partners, and/or contractors. Any personnel or contractors referenced in your budget must be included in the work plan to demonstrate their role and justify associated funds.
- **Timeline/Completion Date** – Identify the estimated timeline, including the activity’s planned start date and projected completion date. Project activities must be completed within the grant period ending in June 2025.

Project Activity	Personnel/Responsible Parties	Estimated Timeline/Completion
<i>Example: Construct addition on storage building.</i>	<i>Example: XYZ Contractor</i>	<i>Example: June 2023 – September 2023</i>

Budget and Narrative

Budget Table: The budget table will auto-populate with the numbers from pre-application. Please update the table as needed and save. 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 x 100% = \$20,000 minimum cash and/or in-kind match
- \$20,000 grant 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						
Machinery/Equipment						
Supplies						
Contractual						
Permits						
Other Direct Costs						
Indirect Costs						
TOTAL						

Budget Narrative (1000 character limit for each question):

- Describe your intended use of Working Lands grant funds. Provide further detail on proposed amounts for all line items, as needed.

- Explain why Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Grant funds are needed, and how the project would or would not move forward without these funds. Be specific and describe efforts to fund this project with other sources and why those efforts have not been sufficient.
- Select all/any that apply:
 - Without this grant, this project wouldn't happen.
 - Without this grant, an urgent window of opportunity would be missed.
 - Without this grant, the project would have a lower probability of success.
 - Without this grant, this project would happen in a less desirable fashion.
 - This project would possibly happen, as planned, without these grant funds.
- 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 execution.
- Match Waiver: If a match waiver is requested, provide justification here.

***Letters of Support and Commitment**

Applicants must include at least two letters of commitment and at least one letter of support. Additional letters demonstrating project support will also be accepted.

- Letters of commitment demonstrate the project partners' involvement and identify the specific contributions they will make to ensure the project's success. Content could include:
 - Description of previous collaboration with applicant
 - The role the partner/stakeholder will play in the proposed project
 - Financial support they will contribute (if applicable)
 - Type and value of any in-kind support they will provide – labor, facility space, equipment
 - Estimated # of units to be supplied/purchased from applicant
- Letters of support articulate general support for the grant request. Support letters reference involvement with applicant and/or the community and/or explain how the funding will help address a need or solve a problem. Content could include:
 - Description of services or individuals that benefited from applicant's work
 - Expression of interest in how the funding will benefit the community

***Additional Attachments** – *space provided to upload up to five documents*

Additional documentation is encouraged but not required. Where applicable, cost estimates for contractor or equipment fees, a business marketing plan, project rendering/plans, or similar documents will offer a clearer picture of the project and demonstrate your business' readiness to receive grant funds.

Section 3: Application Review and Scoring

APPLICATION REVIEW

Working Lands ARPA Primary Producer Grant funds will be awarded to projects benefitting agriculture and forest-based businesses 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 or denial in mid-April 2023.

APPLICATION SCORING

Criteria that will inform scoring of application quality are as follows:

Business Viability: The applicant possesses characteristics of a viable business, including solid financial management, diverse markets, partnerships, and strong internal management. (15 points)

Budget: The applicant has prepared a clear budget reflecting realistic, well-planned components, including required matching funds. Budget narrative supports and further details items in budget table. (10 points)

Financial Need: The applicant demonstrates an evident need for Working Lands Enterprise Initiative funding. Project cannot be fully funded through other sources sought by the applicant. If Working Lands funds are not received, this project will have a lower probability of success, would not happen, and/or an urgent window of opportunity would be missed. (10 points)

Goals and Outcomes: The proposed goals and measurable outcomes are relevant to the project and significant according to the scale of the business. They are realistically achievable in the 24-month project period. (10 points)

Management Team: The project leaders demonstrate previous experience in the sector necessary to conduct the proposed activities. (10 points)

Project Impact: The applicant's project will enhance Vermont's working landscape, with performance outcomes that may include job creation and retention, increased sales, increased product output, and/or increased (or retained) acres in active forestry or agricultural use. (15 points)

Collaboration: The project is collaborative among or benefits other working-lands enterprises to maximize the benefits among the working landscape. (5 points)

Innovation: The proposed project suggests there will be new ideas or business models used which may include (but are not limited to) proposing a new solution to an old problem, creating a new product or crop, or commercializing a researched product or process. (5 points)

Letters of Commitment and Support: Letters of commitment demonstrate the project partners' involvement and identify the specific contributions they will make to ensure the project's success.

Letters of Support clearly articulate the author's support of the proposed project, including identifying their involvement with the applicant and/or the community, and/or explaining how the funding will help address a need or solve a problem. (10 points)

Supply Chain/Market Level Impact: The proposed project will have a supply chain and/or market level impact on its respective sector, such as in the examples below (5 points)

- Makes significant process and/or infrastructure improvements for medium to large scale production, producer-processing initiatives, or distribution of primary products in the forestry and agriculture sectors.
- Scale of the primary product being brought into supply chain has ability to strengthen the industry, address the sector on a market-wide scale, and/or address a market downturn.
- The technology or approach is innovative and will lead to new opportunities for multiple businesses and/or increases the scale of the enterprise in a way that enables it to meet a growing market demand.

Quality of Proposal: The proposal is comprehensible and clear, and the proposed project fits within the criteria outlined in the Request for Applications (5 points).

Section 4: Grant Management and Reporting

GRANT AGREEMENT & DOCUMENTATION

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 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 (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, grantees must submit:

1. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months;
2. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in [Attachment C](#) of State of Vermont grant agreements (not required if grantee already has a current certificate of insurance on file with VAAFAM);
3. Confirmation of grantee payment schedule.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to receipt of the second grant payment and all following payments, grant recipients must complete status reports in WebGrants. Reports will include a narrative of project accomplishments to date, progress on 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 on their business and on the respective sector, if applicable.

Grantees must be willing to share project details, including successes and challenges, with the public, the WLEB, and the media, which illustrate how the grant program is impacting 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.

GRANT PAYMENTS

Except for the first payment following grant agreement signing, approval of claims (grant payment requests) is based upon project performance, including completion of project activities and expenditure of grant funds. Project progress will be communicated via submission of interim and final status reports, which must be approved by the State grant program manager before claims are approved for grant payment processing.

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. No prior expenditure of funds required.
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 submission of a second claim. Must demonstrate expenditure of all initial funds plus funds requested in the second claim. Typically occurs no later than six months after the grant start date.
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 submission of a third claim. Must demonstrate expenditure of funds requested. Typically occurs 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. Must demonstrate complete project expenditures. Occurs within 30 days of the grant end date.

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 required components of status reporting.

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 1 V.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 Working Land Enterprise Initiative as a funder. Project-related communications shall include text acknowledging the same and shall also feature a Working Lands Enterprise Initiative logo. Grantee may be required to

recreate or re-send communications if the State learns of grantee's failure to uphold this acknowledgement.

Tax Implications: We recommend that all entities consult with a tax accountant as needed regarding grant income 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.