

Small Farm Diversification and Transition Grant

**Fiscal Year 2024
Grant Applicant Webinar
January 17, 2024**

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Welcome!



Please mute when not speaking.



Use the raise hand function to ask a question or share your ideas.



Or, type your question or comment in the chat.



Thank you for joining us today!



Related Grant Opportunities

Agriculture Development Grant for Meat & Produce

- The Agriculture Development Grant program will award up to \$1,600,000 in funds to meat and produce operations. The award range will be \$35,000 - \$300,000. Matching funds are not required.
- The Meat and Produce ADG application is open from January 19 - February 26, 2024. We anticipate award decisions to be made by the first week of April 2024. For more information about the Meat and Produce ADG grant, please contact Sarah McIlvennie at Sarah.Mcilvenine@vermont.gov or 802-261-5866.

[Water Quality Assistance Programs](#)





Funding Details

Available Funds & Source

- Up to \$150,000 from a Fiscal Year 2024 State of Vermont legislative appropriation

Minimum & Maximum Award

- \$5,000–\$15,000 per award

Matching Funds

- There is **no match requirement**. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they will fund project costs that exceed the amount of requested grant funds. Therefore, a total project budget must be included in the application. When necessary to complete the project, matching funds can come from any source, including but not limited to cash on hand, loans, additional grants, etc.

Project Length

- 12 months



Eligible Applicants

To qualify as a small farm for this grant:

- The farm must meet a minimum of ONE of the following criteria:
 - Operate 4 or more acres for farming; OR
 - Have filed a 1040(F) Tax Form once in the last 2 years; OR
 - Earn an annual gross income of more than \$2,000 from the sale of agricultural products
- The farm must NOT be registered as a [Permitted Medium Farm Operation \(MFO\) or Permitted Large Farm Operation \(LFO\)](#)

Farms within any agricultural sector (livestock for dairy, meat, and/or fiber; produce; viticulture; herbs; cannabis; mushrooms grown outdoors; flowers; tree fruit; berries; equine; maple; honey; hay and forage crops) are eligible. **Processing-only operations that do not farm are not eligible.**



Eligible Applicants

- All organizational 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 based in Vermont and registered with the 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.
- Farms that have not received Working Lands Enterprise Initiative grants in the last 5 years will be prioritized.



Eligible Projects

Equipment, supplies, infrastructure, marketing, research, and/or workforce development costs that relate to the following project categories are eligible:

- **Diversifying farm products**
 - May include continuing with a diversification project that began in the last five years
 - Investments might include equipment rental or purchase to prepare land for new crops or livestock; purchasing seeds, rootstock, or genetics; retrofitting or building storage space for new products; etc.
- **Transitioning from one form of farming to another**
 - May include continuing with a transition that began in the last five years
 - Investments might include retrofitting barn space to shift from livestock for dairy to livestock for meat, building new infrastructure for raising animals, purchasing equipment to transition to new or different crop farming; farmer training to transition to a different type of farming; marketing costs to transition farm brand; marketing study to prepare for possible transition, etc.
- **New processing or scaling of current processing of farm products**
 - Investments might include purchasing processing equipment; building or expanding kitchen or workshop space; etc.
- **Developing an [accessory on-farm business](#)**
 - Investments might include building a new farm store, building or expanding recreational or agritourism activities or programs at the farm, permitting or engineering fees associated with developing an accessory on-farm business; etc.



Eligible Projects

- Projects in any category should demonstrate a proposed plan for diversification or transition that includes potential markets identified for the proposed product.
- Applicants should also demonstrate that there is potential from the proposed diversification or transition to create additional income for the farm.
- Purchases of land or animals are not eligible.
- Grant funds cannot cover any expenses incurred prior to grant awards being made, which will occur in April 2024.



Application and Grant Timeline

- **January 12, 2024:** Request for Applications (RFA) released and application opened in WebGrants
- **January 17, 2024:** Applicant webinar with Q&A
- **March 4, 2024 at 11:59 pm:** Application closes
- **April 2024:** Applicants notified of decisions
- **April/May 2024:** Grantee documentation due
- **May 2024:** Estimated project start



Request for Applications (RFA) Document

- Key dates
- Program information
- Applicant eligibility
- Project eligibility
- Application in full
- Grant reporting requirements
- Review info/scoring criteria and weight



Scoring Criteria

- Business Viability and Financial Management: 20 points
- Project Impact: 20 points
- Demonstrated Project Need: 15 points
- Quality of Concept: 15 points
- Budget: 10 points
- Engagement, Equity, and Equality: 10 points
- Goals and Expected Measurable Outcomes: 10 points



Documents Required in Applications

State of Vermont:

- Act 154 Water Quality Compliance Form

Budget Section:

- If applicable, upload any quotes for equipment, supplies, or contractors for items or work valued at more than \$5,000.

Optional Documents:

- Letters of support to justify the current need for and importance of the project – *optional*
- Additional documentation to demonstrate project planning work completed to date (project plan, blueprints, etc.) – *optional*



Documents Required for Awarding

- Current W-9 form

- Certificate of Insurance
 - State of Vermont named as additional insured
 - See Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants for coverage requirements

- E-signed and fully executed grant agreement prior to beginning project work or incurring expenses

 Login

 Enter your user id and password

User ID

Password

SIGN IN

[Forgot User ID?](#)

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[Click here to Register](#)

 **Announcements**

Welcome to the WebGrants New User Interface (NUI). If you already have a WebGrants account, log in with the same User ID and password as before.

New Users: Register to create an account using the yellow registration button to the left. If you believe you have registered before, **do not** create a duplicate account.

Registrations are manually approved and are not processed during evenings or weekends. **Please anticipate up to 1-2 business days for your registration to be approved.** Once approved, you will have access to the system.

Contact Melissa Moon (melissa.moon@vermont.gov), Rebecca Brockett (rebecca.brockett@vermont.gov) or Diana Ferguson (diana.ferguson@vermont.gov) if you encounter any issues.



Applicant Resources

- [Working Lands funding opportunity Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets \(VAAFAM\) weekly newsletter](#)
- [VAAFAM Funding Opportunities Calendar](#)
- [Business planning resources](#)
- [Working Lands Business Development Directory](#): to help farm, food, forest, and wood products business owners find service providers for their unique needs

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Tips for Assembling a Successful Application

- Start early – compile documents, finalize project info, update business plan, contact partners re: letters of support
- Set up a stakeholder meeting (business advisor(s), identify project lead, lenders, etc.)
- Register in WebGrants ASAP (each person separately)
- Read the full Request for Applications (posted on website)
- Before beginning an application, read the WebGrants Application Guide
- Consider drafting responses in a separate document, then entering in WebGrants
- Set up a 1:1 call with program staff to confirm eligibility and/or discuss project scope, if helpful

When in doubt, reach out!

- **WLEI program info and project eligibility:**
Clare Salerno – Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
- **WebGrants and grant administration:**
Diana Ferguson – Diana.Ferguson@vermont.gov



Questions?

Picture Courtesy
Small Axe Farm