

# Working Lands Enterprise FY25 Symposium Part 1

## Funding Prioritization Decisions

June 25th, 2024, 9:30am to 3:00pm

Green Mountain Girls Farm  
923 Loop Rd, Northfield, VT 05663

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### Desired Outcomes:

- Agree on a FY25 Budget to enable staff to complete timely operations.
- Engage in strategic conversations to clarify priorities and budget implications.

### Central Strategic Question:

- How best can the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative impact the viability of Vermont working lands enterprises favorably in the next three years?

### Advance Packet

- Day 1 Agenda (print and email)
  - May 2024 WLEB draft meeting minutes (email only)
  - FY25 Proposed Funding Strategy and Budget (print and email)
  - FY24 Data Summary (print and email)
  - Resume of FY25 funding gaps and priorities (print and email)
  - Notes, presentations, and FY25 funding table from the May 2024 WLEB meeting focused on sector priorities (email only)
  - FY24 Business Enhancement RFA (print and email)
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### Agenda

9:30-10:00am: Welcome breakfast and coffee

10:00-10:30am: Introduction to the Green Mountain Girls Farm

10:30-10:40am: Welcome and Agenda Review / Intended Outcomes - WLEB Chair Alyson Eastman

10:40-10:45am: Approve May Meeting Minutes—**Board Vote** - WLEB Chair Alyson Eastman

10:45-11:00am: Presentation of the Proposed FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget – Clare Salerno

11:00 – 12:00pm: Discuss Proposed FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget – small group conversations facilitated by Charlie, Liz, Chris, and Ellen (Clare as a floater)

\* Identify a notetaker and someone to share out the group's reflections in the afternoon.

Key Questions for Small Group Discussions:

- Is there agreement within the group on the proposed maximum and minimum award amounts for business grants and service provider grants? What are the concerns, if any?
- Are there specific ineligibilities the WLEB wants to highlight for Businesses Enhancement Grant applicants, TSAG applicants, or Service Provider applicants? Conversely, are there specific funding priorities the WLEB wants to highlight?
- Does the WLEB want to eliminate match requirements? Or reduce the match to 25% or 50% of grant requests? Or make changes to the match waiver process? For example, eliminate wording around match being required since it is actually not required as long as the business can provide a clear rationale for not providing match. Instead frame it as 'XX% match is recommended by the WLEB'.
- In FY25 does the WLEB want to highlight that 'cost of doing business' projects will not be competitive in the application guide? And if yes, how would 'cost of doing business' projects best be defined? Please develop a list of examples of 'cost of doing business' projects per sector. Examples are very helpful to applicants.

Noon – 1:00pm: Lunch

1:00 – 2:00pm: Full group discussion on Proposed FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget – Abbey Willard

- Each small group presents their input on the Proposed FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget
  - Capture and project proposed changes live – Clare Salerno
- Informal yay or nay vote on the changes proposed.

2:00 – 2:45pm: Project Eligibility vs Competitiveness – WLEB Vice Chair Charlie Hancock

- Reflections on maintaining nonprescriptive project eligibility vs identifying more prescriptive eligibility requirements based on funding priorities.
- Make further refinements as needed to the Proposed FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget.

2:45 – 3:00pm: Update on Equity, Engagement, and Equality Impact – Clare Salerno

- In FY25 we will provide clearer guidance to reviewers that if this question is blank the score should be a zero.
- The question will shift from asking applicants to describe how the specific grant funded project will reach or impact historically underserved and/or marginalized communities to how the business reaches or impacts historically underserved and/or marginalized communities.
- Business owners will be invited to self-identify as being part of one of the Federally protected communities (Examples of historically underserved and/or marginalized communities are people living below the poverty threshold and/or facing food insecurity or homelessness, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, and women).

3:00-3:05pm: Vote on FY25 Funding Strategy and Budget — **Board Vote**- WLEB Chair Alyson Eastman

3:05-3:20: Agency Updates from FPR, ACCD, and VAAFM

3:20-3:30pm: Symposium evaluation (+/-) and closing reflections – Ellen Kahler

3:30pm: *Adjourn*

3:30-4:00pm: Board members who have not yet signed up for grantee site visits do so with Clare