

2025

Guide to Assistance



For Agricultural Producers of Vermont

A Comprehensive Guide to Assistance Opportunities
for Agricultural Producers of Vermont

View the interactive version of this Guide:
FranklinCountyNRCD.org/AgProducersGuide

Introduction

This guide is a resource manual for aspiring, beginning, current, and transitioning agricultural producers operating in Vermont.

This guide includes local, state, and federal technical and financial assistance opportunities for individuals and entities working with crops, forestry products, livestock, nursery stock, and/or other land-based products.

Visit the website or contact information associated with each opportunity for the most up-to-date information.

If you are in need of assistance in regard to any opportunity, such as help applying to a program or grant, please feel free to contact your local Natural Resources Conservation District; the Contacts list is at the end of this guide.

This guide was created and continues to be updated by the Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District. However, this guide is applicable across the entire State of Vermont, not limited to Franklin County

We wish to thank all the organizations represented in this publication who have reviewed and provided feedback to support its improvement and have contributed up-to-date information.

Please let us know if anything could be improved by contacting us at:

info@FranklinCountyNRCD.org

Last updated: January 2025



FRANKLIN COUNTY
NATURAL RESOURCES
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Introduction

How is this publication structured?

This guide first provides an overview of current service providers in the agricultural sector. The Table of Contents is organized by scope of service. For example, tillage implement rentals and programs that support purchasing of reduced tillage implements can be found in the “Construction, Equipment, and Engineering” section. Each page will provide an overview of the service, compatible practices or projects, contact information, funding details, and deadline information.

How often is this publication updated?

Although we do our best to capture updates to current programs and newly available programs, please recognize that each organization operates on unique calendar cycles. This means that final details of programs may not be available while this publication is under review. We have attempted to capture the available programs traditionally offered on an annual basis. If you are interested in a program but the deadline has passed, please continue to inquire and reach out for support, as you may be able to apply for the next year or funding cycle.

Although this guide is a robust resource, please always refer to the website or personnel associated with each service for the most up-to-date and accurate information.

Expect an update to this Guide in fall of 2025.

Natural Resources Conservation Districts

Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRCs) are non-regulatory entities that work with private landowners, farms, state agencies, federal agencies, and other partner organizations to promote and implement conservation programs. In some parts of the United States, Conservation Districts may also be referred to as Water Conservation Districts, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Natural Resources Districts.

What services do Natural Resources Conservation Districts offer?

- Connect people, organizations, and resources to steward our land and water resources for the future. This includes training for young conservation leaders, developing comprehensive conservation plans, lake watershed action plans, and implementing projects.
- Assist agricultural producers with Nutrient Management Planning, water quality sampling, soil sampling, manure sampling, harvest and nutrient application record keeping, equipment rentals, and more.
- Host events, provide educational opportunities and assistance related to agricultural practices, water quality, invasive species, native species, tree planting, stormwater, lake shorelines, and dam removal projects.
- Work with community members to inform and create Local-Led Conservation initiatives and assist in administering Local-Led Funding Pools for prioritized conservation practices.
- Coordinate assistance and funding from all available sources—public, private, local, state, and federal—to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns. This can mean coordination with other organizations, communities, municipalities, homeowners, landowners, land stewards, agricultural and forest producers, as well as businesses.
- Collaborate with other organizations in program implementation including many of the organizations in this guide along with other local non-profits, conservation commissions, and local groups.
- Coordinate tree plantings through outreach, funding, plan and volunteer procurement, installation, and maintenance. Many Conservation Districts also offer annual tree, plant, and/or fish sales.
- Together, Vermont's 14 Conservation Districts serve the entire state. We are foundational to the state's agricultural and conservation communities.

Check with your local Conservation District to see what programs and opportunities they offer! See page 140 for contact information for your Conservation District.

Non-Profit and Educational Organizations

Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC): A trade association that works to facilitate the collection and recycling of rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic containers that previously held products utilized for agricultural crop protection, animal health, specialty pest control, micronutrient, biologicals, fertilizers, and/or adjuvant products for professional application.

American Farmland Trust (AFT): American Farmland Trust is a nation-wide non-profit organization with a mission to protect farmland, promote environmentally sound farming practices, and keep farmers on the land. AFT operates programs at the national, regional, and state levels.

Audubon Vermont: Audubon Vermont is a state program of the National Audubon Society. Audubon Vermont is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow.

Center for an Agricultural Economy: The Center for an Agricultural Economy envisions a future with thriving landscapes, healthy local food, and vital, equitable communities. CAE is a non-profit organization based in the Northeast Kingdom, offering programs that support food access, farm viability, and working landscapes.

Efficiency Vermont: Efficiency Vermont helps Vermonters invest in energy efficiency through rebates, workforce development, financing options, and technical advice which in turn lowers costs, helps the environment, and fosters resilience.

Environmental Mediation Center (EMC): EMC designs and administers environmental and agricultural dispute resolution programs.

Farm Stand Together: Farm Stand Together is a mutual aid food program offering gift cards to farm stands across Vermont, lowering the barrier to accessing fresh and locally produced food.

Food Animal Conservation Trust (FACT): FACT believes that all food-producing animals should be raised in a humane and healthy manner, and that everyone should have access to safe and humanely produced food. They provide critical resources to help farmers adopt humane practices, advocate for food safety, and guide consumers in making healthy food choices.

Interlace Commons: Interlace Commons works to connect people with information about the functionality and implementation of agroforestry practices. Through their work with farmers and technical service providers Interlace Commons aims to increase agroforestry practices and successes in the Northeastern US.

Land for Good: Land for Good works to get more farmers on more land in New England and beyond. They help farmers and landowners navigate the complex challenges of farmland access, tenure, and transfer to realize their family, business, and community goals.

Northeast Farmers of Color (NEFOC) Land Trust: NEFOC Land Trust strives for a future of food and land sovereignty in the Northeast region through permanent and secure land tenure for Indigenous, Black, Latinx, and Asian farmers. The organization connects more than 600 farmers and land stewards of color to envision, enact, and share ways to care for the land and one another.

Non-Profit and Educational Organizations

Northeast Organic Farmers Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT): NOFA-VT promotes organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things. They offer assistance, funding, and business planning services to farmers and producers, as well as operate programs supporting education, community building, and organic certification.

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE): The SARE program offers grants and education for farmers, educators, service providers, researchers, and others to address key issues affecting the sustainability of agriculture throughout our region. The program is administered by Northeast SARE's host institution, the University of Vermont.

Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA): OCIA offers organic certification and verification in certain states, as well as global market access. OCIA also offers microgrants, scholarships for graduate students, and a Farmer of the Year Award.

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF): OFRF works to cultivate organic research, education, and federal policies that bring more farmers and acreage into organic production through grants, educational resources, and advocacy.

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension: UVM Extension integrates higher education, research, and outreach to help individuals and communities put knowledge to work in their families and homes, farms, businesses, towns, and the natural environment.

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD): VACD conducts educational, scientific, and charitable work concerning conservation, maintenance, improvement, development, and use of land, soil, water, trees, vegetation, fish and wildlife and other natural resources in Vermont through 14 Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

Vermont Beekeepers Association: Vermont Beekeepers Association works to support Vermont's apiculture industry, supporting both hobbyists and those who raise bees for a living.

Vermont Farm to Plate Network: Vermont Farm to Plate Network is responsible for collectively implementing the 15 Strategic Goals of Vermont's 2021-2030 food system plan, as well as advancing organizational goals of members. The network encompasses farms, food production businesses, nonprofit organizations, capital providers, and government.

Vermont Farm to School Network: VT Farm to School Network is a statewide network providing leadership, coordination, and advocacy to advance new and existing farm to school efforts in Vermont classrooms, cafeterias, and communities.

Vermont Land Trust (VLT): Rooted in Vermont since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust unites land and lives for the enduring benefit of people and the place we share. The nonprofit has protected more than 640,000 acres of land and fosters life-long connections to farms, forests, and community spaces that define Vermont.

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund: Vermont Sustainable Jobs partners with state government, private sector businesses, and nonprofit organizations to build and support a thriving economic, social, and ecological future of Vermont. They provide business assistance, value chain facilitation, network development, and strategic planning in agriculture and food systems, forest products, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology.

State Organizations

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM): VAAFM facilitates, supports, and encourages the growth and viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers, and the environment. VAAFM hosts the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), publishes Agriview, and administers multiple agricultural programs.

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD): ACCD encompasses multiple state departments and many programs that serve the Vermont public by enhancing the Vermont business climate, marketing Vermont to tourists and others, and strengthening our communities in a wide variety of ways. Departments include Economic Development, Housing, Community Development, Historic Preservation, and Tourism & Marketing.

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC): While the DEC issues most of the state environmental permits, the Department does more than just set forth regulations and assure compliance. Through its programs, the DEC manages water and air quality, regulates solid and hazardous wastes, and administers a number of voluntary pollution and waste reduction programs.

Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, & Recreation (FPR): FPR is responsible for the conservation and management of Vermont's forest resources, the operation and maintenance of the State Park system, and promotion and support of outdoor recreation for Vermonters and our visitors. In addition, FPR is responsible for the acquisition, planning coordination and administration of all Agency of Natural Resources lands.

Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA): VEDA is Vermont's economic development finance authority, staffed by a seasoned group of Vermont professionals. With over 300 years in combined lending experience, the VEDA team is dedicated to meeting the financing needs of Vermont businesses and farms. Since 1974, VEDA has provided \$2.6 billion in low interest financing to Vermonters. Since inception, VEDA has helped businesses and farms create jobs for Vermonters and enhance Vermont's working landscape.

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB): The Vermont Legislature passed the Vermont Housing & Conservation Trust Act in 1987, establishing VHCB. VHCB assesses and provides guidelines for population growth, finances affordable housing projects and funds conservation and preservation of agriculture lands, forestland, historic properties, and natural areas.

Federal Organizations

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS): AMS administers programs that create marketing opportunities for producers of food, fiber, and specialty crops. AMS also provides services to ensure quality and availability of wholesale food for consumer.

Farm Production & Conservation (FPAC): FPAC delivers programs and services to farmers and ranchers. FPAC consists of USDA agencies: Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Risk Management Agency, and the FPAC Business Center.

Farm Service Agency (FSA): FSA offers disaster assistance, insurance, price support, loans, and conservation programs to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners, which help producers invest in, improve, and expand their operations. FSA is an agency of the USDA.

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS): FNS works to end hunger and improve food and nutrition security through a suite of more than 15 nutrition assistance programs, which serve 1 in 4 Americans over the course of a year.

National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA): NIFA provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture related sciences through research, education and extension activities, such as Sustainable Agriculture Research and Innovation (SARE).

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for planning and conservation practice implementation based on the producer's stewardship goals. NRCS may provide financial assistance for conservation and easements. NRCS is an agency of the USDA.

Risk Management Agency (RMA): RMA provides market-based tools, such as federal crop insurance, to manage risk and strengthen economic stability of producers' operations and rural communities. RMA is an agency of the USDA.

Rural Development (RD): RD offers loans grants, and loan guarantees. RD offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their operations. RD helps communities undertake empowerment programs and rural residents buy or rent safe, affordable housing and make healthy and safe home repairs. RD is an agency of the USDA.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS): FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program leverages resources available through Farm Bill conservation programs to expand the conservation footprint and help landowners adopt land use practices that serve their needs while benefiting fish and wildlife.

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Flood & Natural Disaster Recovery

On the heels of two consecutive years of historic flooding in Vermont, agencies and organizations have endeavored to compile resources and develop programs to assist with flood recovery. These programs, tools, and resources listed on these two pages are geared towards flood recovery, though many programs listed throughout this guide may support long-term flood resiliency.

If you are a farmer, forester, or land steward who has been adversely affected by flooding or other natural disasters and need assistance in identifying programs to help your business and land recover, do not hesitate to reach out to your local Natural Resources Conservation District. NRCD staff can work with you to connect with the appropriate organizations, agencies, and programs to help you repair damages, navigate losses, and recover and rehab impacted land.

Federal Resources

Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool: If you have experienced damages or losses due to a natural disaster The Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool can help match you with USDA disaster assistance programs. Simply fill out a quick survey.

<https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool>

FSA Disaster Assistance Programs: USDA offers a variety of program to help farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses that have been hard hit by natural disaster events. Learn more about FSA Disaster Assistance Programs on page 55 or by visiting: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>

FEMA Disaster Assistance: <https://www.fema.gov/>

Following a disaster declaration, individuals and businesses may qualify for recovery assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Be sure to document all damages to your land and property following natural disaster to support your claim.

NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): NRCS EQIP can help producers plan and implement conservation practices on land impacted by natural disasters, including flooding. Contact your local NRCS office to start working with a planner. A guide to NRCS field offices in Vermont is provided on page 139 or visit <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>.

Flood & Natural Disaster Recovery

State Resources

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) Flooding Disaster Response and Recovery Resources: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/flood>

On the heels of two years of historic flooding in Vermont, VAAFAM has compiled resources and guidance for producers affected by flooding. Resources include guidance on documenting and reporting damage, relevant information and resources for crop farmers, producer growers, meat and poultry processors, and dairy operations, unemployment resources, and more.

VAAFAM Post Flooding- Technical Assistance Toolkit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/post-flooding-technical-assistance-toolkit>

This toolkit contains guidance, resources, and contact information to support agricultural recovery from flooding.

For agriculture related questions on flooding, email agr.floodresponse@vermont.gov or call **802-828-2430**

Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program (BEGAP) for Agricultural Operations: BEGAP is a grant program for businesses and nonprofits that suffered physical damages from flooding events. Visit <https://accd.vermont.gov/BEGAP> to learn more.

Community Resources

NOFA VT Flood Response Resources for Farmers: <https://www.nofavt.org/about/blog/flood-response-resources-farmers>

Resources for farmers including federal, state government, and community funding opportunities, post flood food safety guidance, technical assistance intake forms,

UVM Extension Disaster & Flood Recovery Resources: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/disaster-resources>

Resources for producers on farming and agriculture, emergency information, health & safety, home gardening, recovery resources, emergency management, and weather updates.

NOFA-VT's Farmer Emergency Fund: <https://www.nofavt.org/farmer-emergency-fund>

Grants of up to \$5,000 available to assist Vermont certified organic and NOFA-VT member commercial farms adversely affected by disaster.

VT Farm Fund Emergency Loans: <https://www.vtfarmfund.org/emergency-loan>

Zero-interest loans of \$10,000-\$15,000, available to Vermont producers facing damage and loss due to natural disasters. Learn more about VT Farm Funds on page 69.

Farm First: <https://www.farmfirst.org/>

Farm First is a free, confidential resource to help farmers and their families reduce stress through counseling and connection to other resources. Learn more on page 123.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) facilitates, supports, and encourages the growth and the viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers, and the environment. VAAFM works with Vermont producers, land stewards, and communities across a wide array of landscapes, production models, and programs. Their programs encompass education, financial assistance, producer regulations and compliance, and food safety, among many other topics.

While some grant programs are funded consistently year-to-year, others may only be available during one fiscal year. This guide may include some grants in their pilot year, as well as grants that may not be funded in the future.

To review the most up-to-date information on open grants, application schedules, and announcements on VAAFM funding opportunities, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/grants.

VAAFM Programs listed in this guide:

- Best Management Practices (BMP) Program
- Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP)
- Farm to Institution Market Development Grant
- Organic Certification Cost Share Program
- Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant
- Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program
- Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program
- Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (AgCWIP)
- Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) Program
- Pasture & Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program
- Vermont Pay for Performance (VPFP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Trade Show Assistance Grant
- Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) Business Enhancement Grant

View VAAFM program calendar:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar>

Subscribe to receive news from VAAFM:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news>

WebGrants is the grants management platform used by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center for many of their grant programs.

Visit <https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov/index.do> to create an account.

Best Management Practice (BMP) Program & Engineering Services

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMT)

The Best Management Practice (BMP) Program provides technical and financial assistance to identify and assess farmstead water quality concerns, and to assist farmers with the implementation of structural improvements designed to abate agricultural waste discharges to Vermont waters. The BMP Program is also available to boost payments on practices associated with the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts.

EQIP-Assist BMP



Apply Year-Round



NRCS EQIP-Assist BMP offers additional cost-share on EQIP practices.

State cost share shall not exceed \$200,000, and state cost-share funding and state-only BMP funding shall not exceed \$400,000 within five calendar years.



Apply after you have an approved EQIP contract in place.

Technical Assistance



Apply Year-Round, when a water quality concern is identified, or when a permitting variance is needed.



No Cost to Farmer

Services Include:

- Engineering consultations
- Design services for BMP projects
- Water Quality Compliance Consultation
- State Permitting and State Variance

BMP Program



Deadline is April 1st, applications after this deadline are rolled to the next year.



\$100,000 per year cap for a State-Only funded practice (not EQIP-Assist) and no more than \$200,000 for 3 years.

Eligibility:

- Farm must meet Required Agricultural Practices
- Design must meet NRCS standards or designed and certified by an engineer licensed in VT & design is equivalent to federal performance standards and specifications
- Must receive the grant agreement prior to construction
- Farmer receives reimbursement upon project completion and must finance the cost of the project during construction
- Payment rates are determined by invoices
- Applicant's equipment and labor costs can be reimbursed

Practices Eligible for Funding Include:

Manure storage, composting stack pads, bedded pack, barnyard runoff collection, gutters, ditches, laneways, stream crossings, exclusion fencing, watering facilities, milk house waste collection and treatment, silage leachate collection.



Apply Online
www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov/bmp

Emma Redel, VAAFMT (802) 261-5628
Emma.Redel@vermont.gov

Ellen Friedrich, VAAFMT (802) 261-5629
Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov

Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP) Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)

Financial assistance is available for new or used innovative equipment that will aid in the reduction of surface runoff of agricultural wastes to state waters, improve water quality of state waters, reduce odors from manure application, separate phosphorus from manure, mitigate greenhouse gases, and reduce costs to farmers when they apply manure.



Application Deadline in November



Cost-share reimbursement up to 90% or funding cap for equipment category.



Apply Online
www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov/ceap

Eligibility

- Vermont Farms required to comply with the Required Agricultural Practices, Custom Operators, Non-Profit Organizations, Phosphorus Extraction Equipment Providers.
- Recipient must be able to finance equipment as program is reimbursement based.
- Individual project eligibility varies year to year.
- Farmers must commit to using the equipment for at least 5 years.
- Farmers must report equipment usage for the first three years of the grant.

Equipment Categories & Funding Rates

Precision Agriculture: 90% cost-share up to \$25,000

Conservation Tillage: 90% cost-share up to \$40,000

Cover Crop Equipment: 90% cost-share up to \$40,000

Waste Management: 90% cost share up to \$60,000 per applicant, 90% cost share up to \$100,000 per custom applicator, group of farmers, or nonprofit organization

Feed Management: 90% cost share up to \$50,000



AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov
802-522-4655
www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov/ceap

Application Materials

- **Quotes:** Provide official quotes for requested equipment that detail equipment provider, make, model, cost, and installation cost.
- **Project Questionnaire:** Description of farming operation, requested equipment, and acreage that you intend to use the equipment on.
- **Financial Backing:** As a reimbursement grant, applicants pay for 100% of the cost of equipment, then are reimbursed up to 90% or the cap for the funding category. Freight/shipping is not included.
- **Letter (Optional):** An unbiased letter of support

Farm to Institution Market Development Grant

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Farm to Institution Market Development Grant is intended to support market development opportunities for local food producers and processors, with a focus on Vermont institutional markets. Funding is provided to help local producers to access and engage with schools, hospitals, colleges, correctional facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, and other local institutions.



Application Deadline in October



Grants ranging from \$10,000-30,000, with 25% cash or in-kind match requirement



View Application at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/farm-to-institution-market-development>

Eligibility

- Vermont farm or food businesses
- Vermont producer groups and associations
- Supply chain facilitators (non-profits, economic development authorities, food hubs, etc.)

Application must clearly demonstrate improvements in local farmer access to Vermont institutional markets to be considered.

Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- Increase sales for at least one Vermont farm, and
- Increase the amount of local food served in Vermont institutions institutional market

Project Expenses

Eligible Expenses:

- Personnel costs
- Supply costs
- Equipment costs
- Stipends

Ineligible Expenses:

- Vehicle purchases
- Land purchases
- Purchases made prior to award notification

Contact

Gina Clithero
Farm to Institution Program Manager
Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov
(802) 585-6225



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/farm-to-institution-market-development>

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM) offers funding assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to organic producers and handlers of agricultural products who have received organic certification through a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement of up to 75% of their direct certification costs paid between October 1 and September 30 annually, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. There are up to four eligible certification scopes (crops, livestock, wild crops, and handling), which must be individually inspected for organic certification to be eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursement is available on a first come, first served basis.



Application Deadline in October



Up to 75% reimbursement of direct certification costs, up to \$750



Contact NOFA-VOF or apply online at [Agriculture.Vermont.gov/grants](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants)

Eligibility

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees to become newly certified or re-certified.

Reimbursement for organic transition is not currently available. Operations with suspended, revoked, or withdrawn certifications are not eligible.

Contact

Terry Smith, Executive Assistant
Terry.Smith@Vermont.gov
(802) 828-5667



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organiccostshare>

Learn more about organic certification:

Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF)
<https://www.vermontorganic.org/>
info@vermontorganic.org
(802) 434-3821

Allowable Costs

- Application fees
- Inspection fees, including travel costs and per diem for organic inspectors
- USDA organic certification costs, including fees necessary to access international markets with which AMS has equivalency agreements or arrangements
- User fees/sale assessments
- Postage
- State Organic Program fees (NOCCSP only)

Vermont Specialty Crop Block Grant

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Specialty Crop Block Grants are available to enhance the competitiveness of Vermont specialty crops including fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, herbs and spices, medicinal plants, honey, hops, maple syrup, mushrooms, and nursery crops including Christmas trees, and floriculture. Projects funded through this grant program must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization.



Pre-Application Deadline in January.
Application Deadline in March (Invite Only, applicants must complete a pre-application to be considered)



For FY 2025 awards can range from \$15,000 to \$45,000.



View Application at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop>

Program Purpose

- Leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops
- Assisting producers with research and development relevant to specialty crops
- Expanding availability and access special crops
- Addressing local, regional, and national challenges confronting specialty crop producers
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) supports projects that address the needs of U.S specialty crop growers and strengthen local and regional food systems

Eligibility & Funding Priorities

Any entity may apply, given the project benefits Vermont's specialty crops industries and aligns with program requirements and benefits more than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Funding Priorities:

- Research, development, and dissemination of innovation production practices
- Pest and disease management
- Enhanced food safety and capacity to comply with Food Safety Modernization Act
- Value chain enhancement
- Technical assistance to address efficiency, conservation, climate change, business viability, workforce development, labor issues, succession planning, and challenges facing beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers
- Market access, marketing, branding, and consumer education
- Climate resilience and adaptation

Contact

Madison Berry
AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov
(802) 622-4626



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop>

Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

The Vermont Farmers Ecosystem Stewardship Program is a state-sponsored program providing supplemental payments for farmers enrolled in the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) (page 50). This program aims to recognize and compensate farmers for their whole-farm stewardship, and to provide pathways for the planning and implementation of additional conservation enhancement practices.

Assistance



Submit CSP application with NRCS

Following CSP application, apply online at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/CSP-Assist>



Applicants receive an initial \$2,000 incentive payment, and eligible grantees who are awarded and sign a CSP contract receive an additional \$7,500 payment.

One-time incentive payments include:

- \$2,000 Planning payment to compensate for the planning and assessment phase of CSP applications
- \$7,500 Implementation payment for farmers awarded a CSP contract
- Payments are in addition to funds provided through the NRCS CSP contract

Eligibility

- Farms must comply with the Required Agricultural Practices
- Farmers applying or renewing a CSP contract
- Must meet NRCS eligibility criteria, including up-to-date Farm Services Agency records

Contact

Noah Gilbert-Fuller, Water Quality Program
Coordinator
Noah.Gilbert-Fuller@vermont.gov
(802) 505-3407



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/CSP-Assist>

Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program utilizes state funding to help Vermont farms implement soil-based agronomic practices that improve soil quality, increase crop production, and reduce erosion and agricultural waste discharges. The FAP program also provides education and instructional activity grants to support outreach regarding the impacts of agricultural practices on water quality and current state agricultural water quality regulations.



See following page for application deadlines



Up to \$10,000 per farm per year



Apply online at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/fap>

Eligibility

- Vermont farms required to comply with the Required Agricultural Practices
- Organizations and businesses providing educational events for Vermont farms are eligible to apply for education instruction activity assistance

Practices



Cover Crop: \$30 per acre (broadcast or interseed) by October 1st.
\$45 per acre (drilled) by October 10th.
Must be seeded at highest recommended rate.

Crop to Hay: \$35 per acre, or \$45 per acre with nurse crop.
1-time payment for perennial species only.
Planting method and seeding rate must be appropriate for the seed type and provide full soil coverage.

No Till Crop Planting: \$15 per acre. Cover crop must be drilled. A minimum 30% of soil surface must be covered by uniformly distributed plant residue immediately following cover crop planting. No burning of previous crop is allowed. No full-width soil disturbance between crop harvests. No harrowing, chisel plowing, cultivating, tandem disking, or vertical tillage.

No Till Pasture & Hayland Renovation: \$30 per acre. No-till drill and/or frost seeding. Reasonable expectation of seed to soil contact. Rates must provide full soil coverage. Frost seeding from March-April on non-snow-covered ground and must include legume(s).

Rotational Grazing: \$30 per acre. Must be rotated at least twice per week and excluded from surface water. 3" of vegetation must be maintained. No-till Pasture Renovation: \$30 per acre. No-till drill only. Seeding rate must provide full coverage.

Manure Injection: \$25 per acre. Subsurface injection. No aeration. Must follow RAPs. Can include disk, shank, grassland injection below soil surface with a single implement.

Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program (continued)

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Educational & Instructional Activity Grants

The Farm Agronomic Practices Program educational and instructional activities grants are available to farmers, farmworkers, agricultural service providers, non-profits, and other organizations to attend events to inform Vermont farmers and citizens of Vermont of:



- The impact of agricultural waste discharges on Vermont waters
 - Federal and State agricultural water quality regulations and requirements
 - Best practices to reduce agricultural impacts to water quality
- Funds up to \$2,000 per person per state fiscal year.

Individuals representing organizations with active agreements to support education and outreach through the Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (AgCWIP) may be considered ineligible for funding under FAP.

Application Deadlines

Applications are due at least one month (30 days) prior to practice implementation



Final Application Deadlines:

- Spring and Yearlong practices by April 1
- Fall Practices Only by August 1
- For multiple practices, submit one application for all practices planned from January 1 to December 31

Grant recipients are required to submit a Claim Form to receive payment. Claim forms should be submitted within 30 days of file practice implementation, and no later than January 15th for fall practices, and July 15th for spring practices.



AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/fap>

Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (AgCWIP)

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets offers the Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Program (AgCWIP) grant funding opportunity to businesses, organizations, and individuals who work with farms to support the improvement of water quality across Vermont through education and outreach, technical assistance, organizational capacity, and conservation practices.



Application deadline in December



Funding varies, and is based on scope of work, organizational capacity, and agreed deliverables



Submit applications to
AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov

View application instructions and RFP at:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agricultural-clean-water-initiative-program>

Assistance

Funding may support, but is not limited to:

- Supporting farms with grant applications and reporting
- Nutrient Management Planning
- Project identification
- Consultation and design
- Workshops
- Sampling services (water, soil, manure)
- Educational materials
- Farmer participation stipends
- Precision Agriculture
- Equipment rental programs
- Project management for farms
- Conservation practice surveys

Eligibility

- Vermont businesses such as farm operations or agricultural associations
- Local government entities
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions
- Non-profit organizations working with farms
- Agricultural service providers including Technical Service Providers, agricultural engineering and/or consulting firms, agricultural organizations, and trade associations

Grantee Requirements:

- Recipients are required to meet with an Agency Grant Manager quarterly to review accomplishments and progress towards meeting outcomes and outputs and developing a timeline to meet the grantee's scope of work
- Deliverables and documentation of associated costs
- Final narrative report documenting outcomes and outputs.

Contact

Mary Montour, Agricultural Water Quality Program
Coordinator
(802) 461-6087
Mary.Montour@Vermont.gov



[Agriculture.vermont.gov/agricultural-clean-water-initiative-program](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agricultural-clean-water-initiative-program)

Seeding & Filter Strip Program (GWFS)

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM)

The Seeding & Filter Strip (SFS) grant program provides technical and financial assistance to support the long-term installation of perennial vegetation to help reduce soil erosion & agricultural runoff and prevent it from reaching waterbodies. Eligible practices include harvestable filter strips, pasture/hay plantings, and grassed waterways.



Apply Year-Round. Applications are due at least 60 days prior to planting



Flat rate, per-acre payments. Rates vary with practice and maintenance agreement length.



Apply online at Agriculture.Vermont.gov/sfs

Eligibility

- Annual cropping history within 5 years
- Land is in active use and adjacent to surface waters and/or ditches.
- Operator must have ownership or control of the land for the term of the agreement (10 years).

Practices

- Grassed waterway
- Filter strip
- Pasture/Hayland Planting

A primary difference between the FSF program and similar existing financial assistance programs is that all SFS practices can be harvested.

Definitions

Grassed Waterway: A shaped or graded channel which has a broad and shallow cross sections and suitable perennial vegetation designed to convey surface water at a nonerosive velocity to a stable outlet.

Filter Strip: A strip or area of herbaceous vegetation that removes contaminants from overland flow.

Pasture /Hayland Planting: An area of herbaceous, perennial vegetation that will be regularly harvested for hay or grazed by ruminant livestock according to a VAAFAM-approved grazing plan

Contact

Ellen Friedrich, 802-261-5629
Ellen.Friedrich@Vermont.gov

Ben Gabos, 802-461-3814
Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sfs>

Pasture & Surface Water Fencing Program (PSWF) Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM)

The Pasture & Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program provides pasture management technical assistance and financial assistance to Vermont farmers to improve water quality and on-farm livestock exclusion from surface waters statewide.

Eligibility



Apply Year-Round



\$15,000 maximum award for projects that include livestock exclusion from surface waters

\$10,000 maximum award where there is no livestock exclusion, but where rotational grazing will be implemented or improved



Apply Online
[Agriculture.Vermont.gov/pswf](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/pswf)

- Must be a Vermont farm as defined by the Required Agricultural Practices
- Water quality will benefit from implementation of improved pasture management and eligible and/or necessary conservation practices
- Operator must have ownership or control of land for the lifespan of the practice (10 years)
- Applicant must have an insurance policy that allows the State and its employees and officers to be listed as additional insured
- Priority will be given to farms that have at least 4 acres

Contact

Connor Steckel, Agricultural Water Quality Program Coordinator & Grazing Specialist
802-522-0065
Connor.Steckel@Vermont.gov



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/pswf>

Practices & Assistance

Practice	Maximum Cost Share
Fence	4.00 per foot
Livestock Pipeline	No Cost Share Cap
Water Source Development	\$8,000
Watering Facility	No Cost Share Cap
Improved Permanent Water Area	\$8,000
Stream Crossing	\$8,000
Electric Fence Chargers	\$2,000
Trails & Walkways	\$10,000

Vermont Pay for Performance (PFP)

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

This program provides performance-based payments to Vermont farmers for reductions in phosphorus (P) losses from their agricultural fields. Reductions represent improvements in farm management from the management assumed in the Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (LCB TMDL). Enrolled farms will receive payment for annual net reductions from these historic base loading assumptions, above a threshold set by the program. Most current payment programs pay cost-share for practices. The VPFP is unique because it pays for the outcomes of those practices: it recognizes that the conservation of soil and water generates value to the public and directly compensates farms for that value. In this approach, farmers have the flexibility to implement whichever conservation practices they know will work for their own operations each year.



Application Deadline in January



Assistance varies based on practices used and acreage enrolled, up to \$50,000



Apply Online:
[Agriculture.Vermont.gov/VPFP](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/VPFP)

Practices

- Crop Rotation
- Manure Injections
- Cover Crops
- Buffers
- Grassed Waterways
- No-till and Reduced-till

Eligibility

- Be a Farm as defined in the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) operating within Vermont
- Manage crop land, hay land, or pasture
- Farm business is registered with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and all managed land is mapped and in compliance with federal Highly Erodible Land and Wetland regulations.
- Have an up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) that meets the RAPs for their farm size, including recent soil and manure tests.
- If you are not registered with FSA, do not have soil or manure tests, or do not have an up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan that meets the RAPs for your farm size, you must work to obtain meet those requirements PRIOR to application. Your local Conservation District and/or FSA office can help you with this process.

Contact

Sumner LeBaron-Brien, Agricultural Water Quality Program Coordinator
(802) 636-7852
Sumner.lebaron-brien@vermont.gov



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/VPFP>

Payments

One time data entry into FarmPREP. Planned rate: \$15/acre, max \$4000. If Selected for Program: \$100 per pound of phosphorus reduced beyond a 40% reduction threshold up to an annual cap of \$50,000 per farm. Additional Stewardship Payments for farms with less than 1lb/ acre and 0.5 lbs/acre average P loss may also be available.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAF)

Vermont's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary program designed to reduce sediment runoff and improve water quality by removing land from agricultural production and establishing vegetative buffers. State and federal funds are used to compensate landowners for the loss of productive agricultural land through upfront incentive payments and annual rental payments based on the total acreage dedicated to vegetated filter strips, forested buffers, or grassed waterways.



Apply Year-Round



Upfront payments of \$415 per acre for pasture and hayland, and \$795 to \$1,905 per acre for annual cropland

Implementation cost-share up to 100%. Annual payments \$80 - \$300 per acre per year



Apply Online
Agriculture.Vermont.gov/crep

Eligibility

- Applicants must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to enrollment (may be waived by County Committee)
- Land must be in agricultural use
- Land adjacent to a perennial stream, river, lake, or pond that lacks vegetative buffers and has water quality impacts.
- Minimum buffer width of 35 ft
- Contracts are for 15 or 30 years

Practices

- Forested Buffer
- Wetland Restoration
- Livestock Exclusion and Alternate Watering
- Filter Strips
- Grassed Waterway

Why CREP?

Perennial vegetation along streams and rivers:

- Provides shade which reduces water temperature and increases oxygen, promoting aquatic life.
- Provides wildlife and pollinator habitat.
- Promotes water infiltration, reduces soil loss and fertilizer/amendment runoff.
- Increases stability of stream banks, improving flood resilience.

Contact

Ben Gabos, Program Coordinator
802-461-3814
ben.gabos@vermont.gov

Phillip Wilson, Program Coordinator
802-505-5378
Phillip.Wilson@Vermont.gov



<https://Agriculture.Vermont.gov/crep>

Fantastic Farmer Award

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM)

In collaboration with the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund, VAAFMM launched the Fantastic Farmer Award in 2021 to recognize Vermont farmers who work to grow, cultivate, and deliver products to consumers in a way that respects heritage, culture, and environmental stewardship. Farmers may apply to the award or can be nominated. The award includes a \$5,000 grant from the Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund.



Application Deadline in September



\$5,000 Award



View Application & Nomination Process at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>

Eligibility

- Must be a Vermont Resident
- Must actively own, work on, or manage a commercial farm operation in Vermont

Application Materials

To be considered for the Fantastic Farmer Award applicants or nominees will be asked to:

- Describe their farming operation
- Describe the applicant or nominee's role on the farm
- Describe land stewardship goals, soil health, water quality, and nutrient management practices
- Describe the farm or applicant's involvement with the community and with other farmers
- Describe changes made on the farm to improve business structure and operational efficiency

Contact

Scott Waterman, Communications Director
Scott.Waterman@vermont.gov



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>

Farm Feed-Finder Marketplace Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)

In response to severe flooding and constant rain through the 2023 and 2024 growing season, which negatively impacted feed yield and quality on affected farmland, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and Agency of Digital Services created the Farm Feed-Finder Marketplace. This platform allows farmers looking to purchase or to sell feed in Vermont and the surrounding region to connect. Those selling hay, alfalfa, corn, soy, silage, and haylage can advertise their feed on the directory, and can include details like whether the feed is organic or if the seller can deliver. Those looking to purchase feed can navigate the directory, viewing availability, location, and pricing.

View the Feed Finder at: <https://cloud.agriculture.vermont.gov/FeedFinder/FindHay.aspx>

Disclaimer: VAAFM does not monitor the online marketplace or its users. All potential buyers are strongly encouraged to perform their due diligence before purchase.

If you are aware of any misuse of the marketplace or any other concerns, please contact VAAFM at AGR.Helpdesk@vermont.gov

Meat Handler Facility Search Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM)

The Meat Handler Facility Search Tool allows you to search for local meat handlers, including distributors, packers, processors, and slaughterhouses.

View the Meat Handler Facility search at:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/food-safety/vermont-meat-poultry-inspection/meat-handlers-facility-search>

Learn more about Vermont Meat and Poultry Inspection, vender licensing, labeling requirements, humane handling, livestock and poultry inspection exemptions, and more at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/food-safety/vermont-meat-poultry-inspection>

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

Vision: Our shared working landscape is the foundation of Vermont’s evolving culture, vibrant economies, healthy ecosystems, and sense of place.

Mission: To make strategic investments and develop policy recommendations that support a resilient and sustainable farm, food, and forest economy in Vermont.

The “working landscape” consists of agriculture, food system, forestry, and forest products-based businesses. The legislature created the Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF) and the Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) in 2012. The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) manages and invests roughly \$1 million annually into agricultural and forestry-based businesses, depending on the appropriation for the program. Usually, about 30% of the funds go to service provider organizations and producer associations, and about 70% goes directly to businesses through grants that are usually capped around \$50,000. Sometimes, WLEF receives special one-time funds. Those funds usually mean that grants up to \$250,000 may be offered to businesses.

Program Leadership: The WLEB is made up of 20 private sector members throughout the supply chains of agriculture and forestry, and staff from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets; Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation; Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Vermont Economic Development Authority, and Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

FY 2025 Funding

View The Working Lands Funding Opportunity Cycle Calendar: <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/overview>

Grant applications typically open in the late summer through early winter each year.

Funding Opportunity	Award Size	Match	Eligible Projects/Expenses	Eligible Applicants
Service Provider Grant	\$10,000-\$25,000	100% (One-to-One Match Required)	Market development, financial planning and accounting, business succession planning, manufacturing efficiencies or process flow, business research and development, workforce development	Organizations that provide services to farm and forest businesses
Producer Association Grant	\$10,000-\$25,000		Market research and development, leadership and staff development, board training, refreshing by-laws, committee work, strategic planning	Non-profit association of farm, forest, and local food businesses
Business Enhancement Grant	\$15,000-\$50,000		Market development, research and development, infrastructure, equipment and supplies, workforce development	Farm, forest, or local food businesses
Trade Show Assistance Grant	\$2,000-\$5,000	50% Match Required	Planning, exhibiting, and selling Vermont products at trade shows targeting out-of-state buyers	Farm, forest, or local food businesses with 3+ wholesale accounts

Trade Show Assistance Grant

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) Trade Show Assistance Grants, funded through the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, provide Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses with funds to exhibit and sell their Vermont products at trade shows targeting out-of-state wholesale buyers. These matching grants can partially offset the expenses associated with exhibiting at trade shows, which provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers and expand into new domestic and international markets.



Minimum \$2,000-\$5,000
50% match required



Applications open December -
January



View Application at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshow>

Assistance

- 50% reimbursement for trade shows targeting out-of-state wholesale buyers
- Covers travel expenses, marketing assets, booth design, registration fees, booth fees, furnishings, utilities, shipping/freight, printing, & samples
- Yearly trade show marketing plan may include up to five shows

Contact

Jennifer Porter, Agricultural Resources
Navigator
Jennifer.Porter@Vermont.gov
(802) 261-7395



<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshow>

Eligibility

Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible to receive funds through this grant:

- Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State (unless a sole proprietor) and has been in business for over one year
- Business or its headquarters are located within Vermont
- Business has three or more wholesale accounts
- Business products meet the Vermont Local Definition as defined in Act 129.
View definition at:
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/development/act-129-local-definition>

Business Enhancement Grants

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

The Business Enhancement Grant Program administered by the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative provides funding opportunities for a wide array of businesses or entities which produce or use Vermont-based farm and forest products. Grant awards through this program may support market development, research and development, infrastructure development, and workforce training and development.



Applications Deadline
in November



\$15,000-\$50,000. One-to-one cash or in-kind match required



View Application at:
<https://workinglands.vermont.gov/businessgrants>

Eligibility

- Applicant organizations/businesses must be based in Vermont
- All structures are eligible: Partnerships, LLCs, 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, etc.
- All legally incorporated enterprises must be registered with the VT Secretary of State

Eligible Projects

Market Development

Professionalizing a marketing and/or branding approach to new or expanded markets; hiring a professional marketing/branding contractor; implementing a marketing strategy; and/or developing content

Research & Development

Testing new systems or technologies

Workforce Training & Development

Technical skills training for staff, business management training, and/or succession planning, including hiring a consultant

Infrastructure Development

Project-specific planning, permitting, engineering or architectural plans; building and equipment costs, including for labor and/or energy efficiency enhancements. May include equipment installation and/or technical assistance costs.

Contact

Clare Salerno, Agriculture Development Specialist
Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov
(802) 917-2637



<https://workinglands.vermont.gov/businessgrants>

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, is one of four USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The NE-DBIC serves an 11-state region which includes all New England states, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The NE-DBIC provides support to dairy businesses through projects that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products.

Projects target dairy farms and processors while providing additional support through market research and technical assistance. The Center's investment and project strategy promotes innovation and resiliency for regional production of dairy products. As of December 2024, \$10.45 million has been awarded to Vermont dairy producers and processors.

Visit the website:

<https://nedairyinnovation.com/> to view:

- Grants
- Events
- Educational opportunities
- Dairy consumer preferences
- Dairy market appeal
- Grazing practices
- Health and safety projects
- Supply chain opportunities
- Technical assistance and research for dairy farmers and processors
- And sign up for newsletters

Contacts

Northeast DBIC Staff

Laura Ginsburg, Dairy Strategy & Innovation Manager
laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov
(802) 522-2252

Kathryn Donovan, Regional Programs Manager
kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov
(802) 585-4571

Katie Spring, Communications Manager
katie.spring@vermont.gov
(802) 522-3186

Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant program provides funds to support a wide range of projects that support long-term farm viability and climate/economic resilience. Project areas may include upgrades to outdated farm production practices and equipment, development of green technologies, creating new models of collaborative/cooperative milk production, and alternative business ownership models.



Application Deadline in February



\$15,000-\$100,000 with 25% cash or in-kind match commitment



Apply Online

<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/farm-improvement-modernization/>

Funding Priorities

- Project will support adoption of new farm practices that enhance ecological outcomes, improve animal health, and support farmer well-being
- Project will enhance collaboration and learning between farmers and encourage young/beginning farmer participation
- Project includes direct involvement of a service provider, business planner, farm succession planner, or technical assistance provider
- Project reduces energy inputs and/or climate impacts
- Project includes plan to participate and/or lead educational opportunities to share information about the applicant's project to benefit the broader dairy community

Eligibility

- Dairy farmers
- Producer associations that represent, support, or promote dairy products originating in the Northeast
- Milk Buyers/processors located in the Northeast
- Technical service providers
 - Application must clearly specify the group of dairy businesses they will work with
 - The businesses receiving services must be based in the Northeast

Contact

Ben Eldredge, Grant Program Manager
Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
(802) 522-9478



<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/farm-improvement-modernization/>

Eligible Projects

- Utilization of modern technologies to improve animal health, enhance labor efficiencies, reduce energy costs, and/or increase utilization of the farm's land base
- Adoption of innovative or non-traditional farming practices
- Modernization of farm infrastructure and systems

Dairy Co-Packing Grant

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Dairy Co-Packing Grant provides funds to existing Northeast dairy processors to initiate new co-packing arrangements or expand existing co-packing capabilities. Processors who have not previously co-packed will be eligible for funds to add co-packing capabilities to their current business, and processors that currently co-pack will be eligible for funds for activities that will add new co-packing partnerships, scale up existing co-packing relationships, or add additional co-packing product lines.



RFA to be released in early 2025.
Application Deadline in March



\$15,000-\$150,000, with 25% cash or
in-kind match commitment required



Apply in Online
<https://nedairyinnovation.com/process-or-copacking-startup-grant/>

Eligibility

Licensed dairy processors based in the Northeast that:

- Transform raw milk or dairy components into an edible product meant for human consumption
- Is licensed in a way that their dairy products can be sold across state lines
- Sources or produces milk or dairy components from within the Northeast
- Manufactures products within the Northeast

Contact

Ali Boochever, Grant Program Manager
Ali.boochever@vermont.gov
(802) 261-5740



<https://nedairyinnovation.com/processor-copacking-startup-grant/>

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant program provides funding for dairy farmers, processors, and /or producer associations to take actionable steps to improve the safety of dairy products. Funded projects should support increased production safety standards with the goal of accessing new markets. Activities covered by this grant include accessing technical assistance, audits, food safety plan development, training, testing fees, and certain infrastructure upgrades.



Application Deadline in April



\$10,000-\$50,000 with 25% cash or in-kind match commitment



Apply in Online

<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-food-safety-certification/>

Eligibility

- Dairy farmers that are headquartered or based in the Northeast
- Dairy processors that are headquartered in the Northeast and use milk sourced from the Northeast
- Dairy producer association/dairy council which represents and promotes dairy products/dairy businesses of the Northeast

Funding Priorities

- Food safety improvements and/or certification activities that will benefit multiple businesses
- Projects that reduce barriers to improving food safety
- Projects that improve the perception of food safety practices
- Builds on or enhances previous food safety efforts
- Food safety improvements or certification that will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
- Innovation in incorporating food safety messaging in marketing messaging
- Digital marketing and or social media messaging to consumers on food safety

Contact

Ben Eldredge, Grant Program Manager
Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
(802) 522-9478



<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-food-safety-certification/>

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant Program provides grants for established value-added dairy processors and producer associations to access professional marketing and branding services to elevate value-added businesses. Projects funded through this grant will increase consumer awareness to products, develop market channels and distribution opportunities to increase product placement, support innovative strategies to increase consumption, and/or increase business revenues.



Application Deadline in June



10,000-\$50,000 with 25% cash or in-kind match commitment



Apply Online
<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-marketing-branding-services/>

Eligibility

- Dairy processors making edible products produced from milk sourced from the Northeast region, and licensed in a way that their dairy products can be sold across state lines
- Dairy producer association/dairy councils which represents and promotes dairy products and businesses of the Northeast

Funding Priorities

Project approaches should address 1-3 of the following funding priority areas:

- Project shows innovation in packaging type or market channels
- Project will show or support substantial online/digital engagement
- Project shows innovation in use of/training artificial intelligence (AI) for marketing
- Project builds or enhances previous marketing and branding efforts
- Application demonstrates a strategic and sustainable approach to business growth and positioning with clear long-term vision
- Projects will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumers reached
- Projects will elevate regional dairy businesses

Contact

Ali Boochever, Grant Program Manager
Ali.Boochever@vermont.gov
(802) 261-5740



<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-marketing-branding-services/>

Catalyzing the Regional Workforce Grant Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Catalyzing the Regional Workforce Grant addresses the significant need to expand dairy workforce development programming in the Northeast. Funds will support the development, expansion, and operations of existing and shovel-ready workforce programs that focus on existing and potential employees of dairy farms and dairy processors. Projects funded through this grant will focus primarily on program operations, program expansion, and participant support.



Application likely closing in April



\$20,000-\$100,000



Apply Online
<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/>

Eligible Applicants

Registered organizations or businesses that currently provides workforce programming in the Northeast or available to Northeast participants, which may take one of the following forms.

1. University, college, technical career center, or other institutions of higher education
2. Producer or trade association
3. Nonprofit entity
4. Manufacturing extension, process improvement, and other manufacturing training center
5. Dairy processor

Eligible Projects

Projects will focus primarily on program operations, program expansion, and participant support, with a focus on expansion of current programming, addition of new programs, participant support, and regional convening.

Project approaches should address at least two of the following funding priority areas:

- Project increases workforce safety
- Project increases regional or multi-state collaboration across multiple entities
- Project leads to a federally registered apprenticeship program
- Project impacts individuals who do not have an agricultural background
- Project offers training in a language other than English or teaches primarily English speakers how to engage with and support staff who are not fluent in English.

Contact

Laura Ginsburg, Dairy Strategy & Innovation Manager
Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov
(802) 522-2252

Dairy Processor Modernization Grant

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC)

The Dairy Processor Modernization Grant funds projects that focus primarily on upgrading or adding specialized dairy processing or packaging equipment that is necessary for business growth and viability. Funds can be used to expand processing capacity, increase facility efficiencies, and implement packaging improvements.



Application Deadline likely in August



Apply Online

<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-processor-modernization-grant/>

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be based in the Northeast and must:

- Transform dairy products or components into edible products meant for human consumption
- Is licensed in a way that their dairy products can be sold across state lines
- Sources or produces milk or dairy components from within the Northeast
- Manufactures products within the Northeast

Eligible Projects & Funding Priorities

Applicants must show how the project aligns with at least one of the following goals:

- Expanding processing capacity
- Increased facility efficiencies
- Implementation of packaging improvements

Funding Priorities:

- Increased worker safety, advances in workforce skills
- Increased value or marketability of products
- Increased value of milk for farmers
- Increased sales, revenues, and/or consumers reached
- Increased consumer access to goat, sheep, and/or mixed milk products
- New partnerships across the dairy supply chain

Contact

Ben Eldredge, Grant Program Manager
Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
(802) 522-9478



<https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/dairy-processor-modernization-grant/>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS provides agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers with potential financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls “conservation practices”. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil, and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily implement conservation practices and NRCS can assist you with implementation of these practices.

Process

Apply at your local Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office. There is a list of these offices toward the end of this guide. After applying, you (Client) will be assigned a Planner, who will look at natural resource conditions, problems, and concerns, as well as opportunities. The Planner will determine the objectives of the Client and perform an inventory and analysis of resources. Next, the Planner will formulate and evaluate alternatives to achieve Client objectives and solve natural resource concerns, implementing a variety of economic and technical strategies. The Client selects their preferred alternatives. The Client's application is ranked, and a contract may be offered. The Client implements the plan. The Planner provides detailed information related to design, layout, inspection, and certification. The plan's effectiveness is evaluated, and adjustments are made as needed.

Eligibility

Land: Cropland, hayland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, other farm and ranch lands, urban/suburban, specialty crop operations, subsistence operations, environmentally sensitive areas

Applicants: Agricultural producers, owners of non-industrial private forestland, Indian Tribes, those with an interest in agriculture or forestry operations, and water management entities

Other Requirements: Records should be current for proposed land and indicate the applicant controls the eligible land. The applicant should meet adjusted gross income (AGI) and payment limitation provisions. The land should be in compliance with wetland requirements.

FAQ

- Multiple NRCS conservation initiatives are incorporated into the NRCS General EQIP Program
- Historically underserved producers are eligible for advanced payments
- Priority practices and their corresponding payments are determined on an annual basis

Example Practices

Nutrient management, waste storage facility, heavy use area protection, livestock pipeline, pumping plant, stream crossing, fence, access roads, diversion, and forest stand improvement

Ready to Apply?

Contact your local NRCS Office. Field Offices can be found at the end of this Guide, or at <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>

Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Conservation Innovation Grants are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds are used to award competitive grants to non-Federal entities. CIG enables NRCS to work with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG will benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations. NRCS administers the CIG program which requires a 50-50 match between the agency and the applicant. CIG is offered as both a nationwide and a state program. The CIG National Component offers eligible entities the opportunity to apply for grants. The CIG State Component offers eligible entities the opportunity to apply for grants up to \$175,000. This competition is limited to single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years, for projects with a direct nexus to the state of Vermont. Applicants can apply to the National program, the State program, or both. Applicants may apply year-round.

Projects or activities under CIG

- Comply with all applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws and regulations throughout the duration of the project; and use a technology or approach that was studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success
- Demonstrate, evaluate, and verify the effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of natural resource conservation technologies and approaches in the field
- Adapt and transfer conservation technologies, management, practices, systems, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption
- Introduce proven conservation technologies and approaches to a geographic area or agricultural sector where that technology or approach is not currently in use

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area using an EQIP contract for an established conservation practice standard are ineligible for CIG funding, except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation. Farms interested in research may want to explore partnering with a business or university. The Table of Contents of this guide contains Directories for organizations.

Ready to Apply?

Contact your local NRCS office to apply. Field Offices can be found at the end of this Guide, or at:

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>



<https://nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farm operations. NRCS administers the AMA conservation provisions, while the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Risk Management Agency implement other provisions under AMA.



Up to 75% cost-share, with funding cap at \$50,000 per year



To Apply, Contact Your Local NRCS Field Office. You can find your local field office at:

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>



View the NRCS Agricultural Management Assistance Website

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/ama/>

Find your local NRCS Field Office at the end of this guide or

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>

Eligibility

Applicant must:

- Be an agricultural producer
- Have an interest in the farming operation associated with the land being offered for AMA enrollment
- Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract
- Be in compliance with the provisions for protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers, including the provisions for sharing AMA payments on a fair and equitable basis within appropriate payment limitation requirements

Eligible land includes:

- Land on which agricultural commodities or livestock are produced, such as cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, and grassland
- Land used for subsistence purposes, private non-industrial forestland, or other land on which agricultural products, livestock, or forest-related goods are produced
- Land on which risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, NRCS can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. NRCS can help you identify natural resource problems in your operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. For example, NRCS can look at ways to address the amount of soil lost; mitigate the impact of excess water; reduce the contribution of agricultural operations to airborne soil particles and greenhouse gas emissions; improve the cover, food, and water available for domestic and wildlife species; or promote energy efficiencies for on-farm activities.



Apply Year-Round



Financial Assistance Varies



Apply through Your
Local NRCS
Service Center

Grasslands Conservation Initiative

This new initiative assists producers in protecting grazing land uses; conserving and improving soil, water and wildlife resources; and achieving related conservation values by conserving eligible land through grassland conservation contracts. Eligible lands are limited to cropland for which base acres have been maintained under FSA's ARC/PLC and were planted to grass or pasture, including idle or fallow, during a specific period. Enrolled acreage must be managed consistently with a grassland conservation plan. Producers will have a single opportunity to enroll eligible land in a five-year contract.

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The 2018 Farm Bill includes a new conservation activity for producers to develop a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) as part of their CSP contract. A CCP is a conservation plan that meets or exceeds the stewardship threshold for each priority resource concern identified by NRCS across all land uses included in the operation. NRCS will administer CCPs similar to the conservation activity plans (CAPs) under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and require producers to use a technical service provider (TSP) to develop the plan. NRCS may provide a minimum annual payment of \$1,500 in any year the total contract amount is below a rate NRCS determines equitable based upon the effort required by a participant to meet contract requirements.

Enhancements & Bundles

Through CSP, producers have the opportunity to further improve their conservation efforts with conservation activities called "enhancements." Enhancements allow a producer to address additional levels of conservation beyond what the minimum conservation practice standard requires. Select from about 140 enhancements to address resource concerns. Some enhancements work together to provide increased conservation benefits when they are implemented as a group. Producers may consider adopting these enhancement groups or "bundles" on their operation. Bundles receive a higher level of financial assistance to encourage the holistic approach to generate additional conservation benefits.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, working farms, and ranches through conservation easements. Under the Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) component, NRCS helps private and tribal landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land through conservation easements that prevent the conversion of productive working landscapes to non-agricultural uses.



Up to 50% of appraised conservation easement value for permanent easement



Contact the NRCS State office or an eligible ALE entity to apply

Applications must be submitted through an eligible entity, such as a land trust, and are not submitted directly to NRCS.

Land eligible for agricultural easements includes private or Tribal land that is agricultural land, cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and nonindustrial private forest land. Eligible land types must also meet one of the four following land eligibility criteria:

1. Parcels enrolled to protect Prime, Unique, or Other productive soil.
2. Parcels enrolled to provide protection of grazing uses and related conservation values.
3. Parcels containing historical or archeological resources.
4. Land that furthers a state or local policy consistent with the purposes of ACEP-ALE.

ALE Contact

Julia Grey
ALE Program Analyst
Julia.Grey@usda.gov
(802) 951-6796 x 257

Vermont Land Trust
8 Bailey Avenue Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: (802) 223-5234
Email: info@vlt.org
Website: vlt.org

View the NRCS Vermont Agricultural Conservation Easement Website:
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/acep-agricultural-conservation-easement-program/vermont/vermont-agricultural>

View the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets Farmland Conservation Website
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/land-use-renewable-energy/farmland-conservation>

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements. Under the Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE) component, NRCS helps to restore, protect, and enhance enrolled wetlands which have been previously degraded. NRCS enters a purchase agreement with eligible private landowners and Indian tribes that include the right for NRCS to develop and implement a Wetland Reserve Plan of Operations. WREs provide habitat for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity, provide resilience to climate change, and provide opportunities for educational scientific, and limited recreation activities.



Apply through Your Local NRCS Service Center

For all Wetland Reserve Easement options, NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, changes for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees and title insurance. Compensation for proposed WRE enrollments will be valued based on the approved Geographic Area Rate Caps for FY25 (pending approval), or based on an individual fair market appraisal, if applicable. The final map and rates will be posted to NRCS-VT ACEP webpage when approved.

- WRE is a real estate transaction and complex process that can take more than a year to complete
- Applications are ranked competitively, and funding is not guaranteed
- Land enrolled in WRE is ineligible for other USDA program payments for the life of the easement
- The landowner will continue to control access to the land and retain the right to convey the property to a future landowner
- Important and specific documentation must be provided when applying, such as a clear title and written, recordable access rights to the proposed easement. (See NRCS-VT ACEP Webpage)

Permanent Easements:

Permanent easements are conservation easements in perpetuity. NRCS pays 100% of the easement value for the purchase of the easement and NRCS pays between 75-100% of the restoration costs.

30-Year Easements: For 30-year term easements NRCS pays 50-75% of the easement value, and an additional cost of 50-75% of the restoration costs.

WRE Contacts

Jim Eikenberry
NRCS Wetlands Specialist
James.Eikenberry@usda.gov
(802) 449-7255

Julia Grey
Realty Specialist
Julia.Grey@usda.gov
(802) 951-6796 x 257

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General Enrollment Farm Service Agency (FSA)

In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are from 10 to 15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to reestablish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat. Signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. Thanks to voluntary participation by farmers and landowners, CRP has improved water quality, reduced soil erosion, and increased habitat for endangered and threatened species.



Enroll in late Winter. View website for specific dates

General Enrollment

Rental payments for conservation cover, with cost-share up to 50% for cover establishment. There is a climate-smart incentive payment of 3%, 5%, or 10% for CRP practices increasing carbon sequestration and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to enrollment, unless land was acquired upon the death of the original landowner, ownership change occurred due to foreclosure, or circumstance presents adequate assurance to FSA that the new owner did not acquire the land for the purpose of enrollment into CRP.
- Land must be in cropland in agricultural commodity for at least 4 years between 2012 and 2017 and be capable of being planted. Perennial grasses and legumes in a rotation not to exceed 12 years are also eligible.
- Land must have a weighted erosion index of 8 or higher, be expiring, or be located in a priority area.
- Through CRP General Enrollment, applications are ranked based on the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI), determined by FSA. EBI considers locations, soils information, and selected conservation practice. Only entries that meet the EBI threshold are eligible for CRP enrollments and payment.

Find your local FSA Service Center:

<https://offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View the Program Website:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve->

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Continuous Enrollment

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Under CRP Continuous Enrollment, environmentally sensitive land devoted to certain conservation practices can be enrolled in CRP at any time. Unlike CRP General Enrollment, CRP Continuous Enrollment applications are not competitively ranked against each other and are automatically accepted provided that the land and producer meet certain eligibility criteria. Acres that are currently enrolled under General CRP, and meet the eligibility criteria, are eligible for CRP Continuous Enrollment contracts.



Continuous Enrollment, Apply Year-Round

Signup Incentive Payment of 32.5% of the first full year annual rental payment is paid at contract approval on all newly enrolled Continuous CRP contract acreage. A Practice Incentive Payment of up to 50% is paid for installing the practice.

Annual rental payments at a rate of 90% of the existing rate to eligible CRP continuous participants based on per acre cropland and marginal pastureland rental rates, plus a 10% “inflationary” adjustment, determined by FSA. The per-acre annual rental rate may not exceed the calculated rate or \$300/acre. Producers may elect to receive a rental rate amount less than the maximum payment rate.

Climate-Smart Practice Incentive: FSA provides an incentive of 3%, 5%, or 10% for CRP practices that will increase carbon sequestration, reduce GHG emissions, and otherwise are climate smart practices. The incentive amount is based on the estimated benefits of each practice.

Water Quality Incentive: FSA provides a 20% rental rate incentive for CRP water quality practices that will improve water quality by reducing sediment loading, nutrient loading, and harmful algae blooms.

Cost-Share Assistance: Cost-share of up to 50% of the reimbursable cost of installing the practice is provided by FSA. Cost-share assistance is not available for any management activity.

Eligible Practices: Grass Waterways, Shallow Water Area for Wildlife, Contour Grass Strip, Filter Strip, Riparian Buffer, Wetland Restoration on Floodplain and Non-floodplain, Pollinator Habitat, Duck Nesting Habitat, Windbreaks, and Marginal Pastureland Wetland Buffer and Wildlife Habitat Buffers. View the factsheet on the Conservation Reserve Program site or talk with your local FSA Service Center for a full list of eligible practices.

Find your local FSA Service Center:

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View the Program Website:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/>

Disaster Assistance Programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

USDA offers a variety of programs to help farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses that have been hit by natural disaster events. View their website or contact your local FSA Service Center to learn more about program information, eligibility, and enrollment. Vermont FSA Service Center locations and contact information can be found on page 136 in this document.

Federal Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool can help match producers with federal programs they might be eligible for. <https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool>

Livestock Assistance

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or that is planted specifically for grazing.

Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government. LIP payments are equal to 75% of the average fair market value of livestock.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees, and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease, adverse weather or conditions such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by the Livestock Forage Disaster Program or Livestock Indemnity Program.

Farm Loans

Emergency Loan Program provides loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine by animal quarantine laws or imposed by the Secretary under the Plant Protection Act. Loan assistance may be used to restore or replace property, cover production costs associated with the disaster year, pay farmer living expenses, refinance debts, and reorganized the farming operation.

Disaster Set-Aside Program provides producers who have existing direct loans with the FSA who are unable to make the scheduled payments to move up to one full year's payment to the end of the loan.

Find your local FSA Service Center:
<https://offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View Details on FSA Disaster Assistance Programs at:
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>

Disaster Assistance Programs

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Farmland Damage

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) helps farmers and ranchers repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters and helps put in place water conservation methods during severe drought. See more about ECP on page 57.

Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) helps owners of non-industrial private forestlands restore forest health damaged by natural disasters. Cost-share payments are available up to 75% of the cost to implement approved restoration practices, up to \$500,000 per disaster. Restoration practices include debris removal, site preparation, planting materials and labor, fencing and tree protection, and wildlife enhancement.

Crop Losses

Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) pays covered producers of covered non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters (includes native grass for grazing). Eligible producers must have purchased NAP coverage for the current crop year. Eligible causes of loss include damaging weather, flooding, and conditions related to damaging weather including excessive heat, plant disease, and insect infestation. See more about NAP on page 58.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters. TAP provides assistance when a stand, orchard, or nursery of eligible trees, bushes, or vines has suffered more than 15% mortality loss as a result of an eligible natural disaster event.

Find your local FSA Service Center:

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View Details on FSA Disaster Assistance Programs at:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index>

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), administered by FSA helps farmers and ranchers to repair damage to farmlands caused by natural disasters and to help put in place methods for water conservation during severe drought. The ECP does this by giving ranchers and farmers funding and assistance to repair the damaged farmland or to install methods for water conservation.

Payment



Cost share payments are:

- Up to 75% of the cost to implement approved restoration practices
- Up to 90% of the cost to implement approved restoration practices for those who certify as limited resource, socially-disadvantaged or beginning farmers/ranchers
- Limited to \$500,000 per person or legal entity per disaster
- Available as an advance payment of up to 25% of expected cost-share, for only the replacement or restoration of fencing

Eligibility

FSA County Committees determine land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damaged land. Eligible land includes land used for:

- Commercial farming, ranching, and orchard operations
- Growing nursery stock and Christmas tree plantations
- Grazing for commercial livestock production
- Conservation structures such as, waterways, terraces, diversions, and windbreaks
- Conservation problems existing before the applicable disaster event are ineligible for ECP assistance

Practices

- Removing debris from farmland: cleanup of wind- or water-deposited debris, such as woody material, sand, rock, and trash on cropland or pastureland
- Grading, shaping or leveling land: filling gullies, re-leveling irrigated farmland, and incorporating sand and silt
- Restoring fences: livestock cross fences, boundary fences, cattle gates, or wildlife exclusion fence on agricultural land
- Restoring conservation structures: waterways, terraces, diversion ditches, and permanently installed ditching system
- Providing emergency water during periods of severe drought

Find your local FSA Service Center:

<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View the Program Website:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/emergency-conservation/index>

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Eligibility

An eligible producer is a landowner, tenant, or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop and is entitled to an ownership share of that crop. An individual's or entity's average adjusted gross income (AGI) cannot exceed \$900,000 to be eligible for NAP payments. Also, NAP payments received directly or indirectly will be attributed to the applicable individual or entity and limited to \$125,000 per crop year, per individual or entity for crops with basic (catastrophic) coverage. Any NAP payments received directly or indirectly for crops with additional (buy-up) coverage will be attributed to the applicable individual or entity and limited to \$300,000 per crop year, per individual or entity. To learn more, visit fsa.usda.gov/limits.

Eligible crops must be commercially produced agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available and be any of the following:

- Crops grown for food
- Crops planted and grown for livestock consumption, such as grain and forage crops, including native forage
- Crops grown for fiber, such as cotton and flax (except trees)
- Crops grown in a controlled environment, such as mushrooms and floriculture
- Specialty crops, such as honey and maple sap
- Sea oats and sea grass
- Sweet sorghum and biomass sorghum
- Industrial crops, including crops used in manufacturing or grown as a feedstock for renewable biofuel, renewable electricity, or biobased products
- Value loss crops, such as aquaculture, Christmas trees, ginseng, ornamental nursery, and turf-grass sod; and
- Seed crops where the propagation stock is produced for sale as seed stock for other eligible NAP crop production

Find your local FSA Service Center:
<https://offices.sc.gov.usda.gov/locator/app?=vt&agency=fsa>

View the Program Website:
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/noninsured-crop-disaster-assistance/index>

Dairy Margin Coverage Program (DMC) Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The Dairy Margin Coverage Program is a voluntary program that provides dairy operations with risk management coverage that will pay producers when the difference (the margin) between the national price of milk and the average cost of feed falls below a certain level selected by the program producer.



Pay annual coverage fee of \$100 and receive catastrophic coverage. For greater coverage premiums vary per hundredweight.



Apply through your local FSA Service Center

To participate in DMC, dairy producers:

- Select a coverage level ranging from costs of \$4.00 to \$9.50 per cwt, in \$0.50 increments
- Select a coverage percentage of the dairy operation's production history ranging from 5 percent to 95%, in 5% increments

The DMC decision tool helps producers determine the level of coverage under a variety of conditions that will provide them with the strongest financial safety net.

Access the tool at:
<https://dmc.dairymarkets.org/#/>



Find your local FSA Service Center:
<https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=vt&agency=fsa>

View the Program Website:
<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/dairy-margin-coverage-program/index>

Farmland Conservation Program

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Established in 1987, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board remains the forerunner in the nation in pioneering a comprehensive approach to affordable housing and community development linked with land conservation and historic preservation. Since 1987 more than 173,000 acres of agricultural land on 808 farms have been conserved with VHCB funds matched with federal funds provided through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Proceeds from the sale of development rights has contributed to renewed vitality in agriculture, enabling young farmers to purchase farms at an affordable price and helping established farmers reduce long-term debt, to invest in infrastructure, to make operations more profitable and efficient, or to retire.

Overview

The Board evaluates farmland applications in a two-step process: Pre-applications are submitted by an eligible entity (typically a land trust) and reviewed by a committee comprised of staff from VHCB, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, and land trust partners.

If the project meets VHCB's eligibility criteria, it is approved for VHCB cost-share of an appraisal to determine the value of the conservation easement. Applications for funding are developed for those projects that have been approved as pre-applications and submitted for consideration at one of the Board's regularly scheduled meetings. Board evaluation is based upon soil quality, location, farm infrastructure, management, and other resources brought to the project.

There is a funding cap of \$550,000 per application, and \$4,200 per acre.

Contact

Karen Freeman, Associate Director of Conservation Programs
karen.freeman@vhcb.org
(802) 828-5067



<https://vhcb.org/our-programs/conservation/apply-for-funding>

Land Trusts active in Vermont include:

- Vermont Land Trust
- American Farmland Trust
- Charlotte Land Trust
- Duxbury Land Trust
- Greensboro Land Trust
- Stowe Land Trust
- Lake Champlain Land Trust
- Jericho Underhill Land Trust
- South Hero Land Trust
- Upper Valley Land Trust
- Vermont River Conservancy
- Richmond Land Trust
- Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association
- Middlebury Area Land Trust

Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB)

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), offers business planning, technical assistance, and grant opportunities to Vermont's commercial-scale farm, food, and forest products enterprises to help them achieve long-term success. Through the Farm & Forest Viability Program, participating owners and operators are partnered with advisors from a network of service providers throughout Vermont, including VHCB, NOFA-VT, the Intervale Center, UVM Extension, and the Center for an Agricultural Economy, among others.

Farm and Forest Business Coaching

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program offers business planning, technical assistance, and grant opportunities to Vermont's commercial-scale farm, food, and forest products enterprises to help them achieve long-term success.

Businesses enrolled in the Viability Program can work with a professional advisor on a variety of topics, including:

- Business Planning
- Enterprise & Feasibility Analysis
- Management Coaching
- Financial Record-Keeping & Cash Flow Management
- Marketing & Sales
- Human Resources Management
- Retirement & Ownership Succession Planning
- Planning Capital Improvements & Accessing Financing
- Land Access & Conservation Assistance

Eligibility

- Business must be based in Vermont.
- Applicant must have at least 2 years managing their current or related business.
- Forest business applicants must be primarily involved in the harvesting, production, processing, storage, marketing and/or distribution of local forest products
- Farm business applicants must have grossed at least \$15,000 in the most recent tax year

Contact

Calley Hastings, VHCB Program Manager
calley@vhcb.org
(802) 828-3370



<https://www.vhcb.org/viability>

Water Quality Grants

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB)

The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Farm and Forest Viability Program provides grants of up to \$50,000 to help Vermont farmers invest in water quality-related on-farm infrastructure and improve water quality over a long period of time. Funding will prioritize projects that have both a direct and substantial water quality benefit and have other significant benefits to the farm and/or community, such as long-term farm viability, improved soil health, improved working conditions, climate adaptation or mitigation, etc.



Application Deadline in January



\$5,000 - \$50,000, with a 1 to 1 match.

Match can be in the form of state or federal awards in the form of cash, loan, or in-kind labor from applicant



View Application at:

<https://vhcb.org/viability/grants/water-quality-grants>

Eligibility

- Any farm that is required to meet the Required Agricultural Practices and has gross sales of at least \$15,000 per year
- Custom operators and non-profits that play an integral role in water quality management on farms may be eligible
- Dairy and livestock farms are more competitive for this grant

Projects

Construction: Construction, renovation, upgrades, or expansions to farm facilities. Examples include manure pits, barn or barnyard construction that will reduce runoff.

Equipment: Eligible equipment will serve as a long-lived capital asset, essential to the business, is frequently used, and cannot be easily rented. Examples include no-till seeders and manure injectors.

Conservation-related Improvements: May include long-term infrastructure to improve grazing and soil health, such as fencing and laneways.

Engineering or other Professional Costs: Examples include design of a barn or new structure, and some consulting fees for larger projects.

Contact

Betsy McGavisk, Viability Program Coordinator
Betsy@vhcb.org
(802) 828-5562



<https://vhcb.org/viability/grants/water-quality-grants>

Vermont Farmer Emergency Fund Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

The NOFA Vermont Farmer Emergency Fund is available to assist Vermont certified organic and NOFA-VT member commercial farmers who are in financial need after having been adversely affected by natural and unnatural disasters such as crop failure, field flooding, fire, barn collapse, etc. Farmers may request up to \$5,000 in grants that do not need to be repaid.



Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis



Up to \$2,500 for commercial farmers who are NOFA-VT members

Up to \$5,000 for VOF certified organic farmers



To apply, contact Bill Cavanaugh
Bill@nofavt.org
(802) 434-7154

Grant Details

The fund is available to assist Vermont certified organic and NOFA-VT member commercial farmers who are in need of assistance after having been adversely affected by natural and unnatural disasters.

The fund may be used to help replace infrastructure including greenhouses barns, fencing, seed equipment, feed equipment, livestock equipment, and other losses caused by the disaster.

The fund may be used to help pay outstanding farm-related bills and immediate needs (loan and mortgage repayment, etc.)

Ineligible Costs

The fund is not an alternative to insurance and does not cover losses that are covered by a successful insurance claim or losses covered by other sources.

The fund may not be used to cover projected income from crops lost from the disaster.

Contact

Bill Cavanaugh, Business Farm Advisor
Bill@nofavt.org
(802) 434-7154



<https://nofavt.org/farmer-emergency-fund>

Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

The Vermont Family Farmer of the Month Fund makes a financial award to a Vermont family farmer each month. Awards recognize farmers whose businesses are contributing to a resilient Vermont agricultural landscape and demonstrate environmental stewardship through sustainable practices. Funding for the Vermont Family Farmer of the Month comes from a generous, anonymous, charitable gift fund. It is administered by the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont in partnership with VHC Farm & Forest Viability Program, Shelburne Farms, and the Vermont Grass Farmers Association.



Apply Online

<https://www.vermontfamilyfarmeraward.org/apply>



\$10,000 - \$12,000

Eligibility

Funds support innovative projects that will improve the viability of the recipient's enterprise. An example of an eligible project could be an upgrade or construction of a farm stand or wash and pack station, improvements in on-farm energy efficiency or integration of renewable energy, infrastructure design or construction for a new farm product, or an investment in soil or animal health. In order to apply, you must meet the following conditions:

- You are a NOFA Vermont Member or a certified Vermont Organic Farm
- You have not received this award in the past
- You are a resident of Vermont

Award Timeline



Twelve grants will be awarded annually - one award for each month. Applications are reviewed three times a year and announced each month.

November through February Awards
Applications due by: October 15th

March through June Awards
Applications due by: January 13th

July through October Awards
Applications due mid-May

NOFA Vermont
PO Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477

Phone: (802) 434-4122

Fax: 802-329-3033

Email: info@nofavt.org

<https://nofavt.org>

<https://www.vermontfamilyfarmeraward.org/about>



Farmer Resilience Grants

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

NOFA-VT's Farmer Resilience Grant program aims to fund projects that will improve longer-term resilience on farms. NOFA-VT definition of 'resilience' is framed broadly around their mission: to promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.



Up to \$2,500 per farm, or \$10,000 for multi-farm collaborative projects



Review application instructions and updates at:

<https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/grant-opportunities/farmer-resilience-grants>

Eligibility

- Farm business is located in Vermont and has been in business for a minimum of one year
- Must be able to meet the timeline for project completion
- Cannot have received a Vermont Family Farmer of the Month award in the previous 2 years.

Applications will be ranked using the following criteria and factors:

- Whether the farm uses organic practices, is certified organic, or in the process of achieving certification
- How the project will improve at least one form of 'resilience' as defined by NOFA-VT
 - NOFA-VT's definition of resilience is framed around their mission: to promote organic practices to build an **economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just** Vermont agricultural system
- Long-term impact of project
- Community Impact
- Barriers that the farmer or farm has faced that has prevented them from receiving funding. This may include social barriers such as access to farming network, discrimination faced in accessing support, long term land access barriers, financial and education program barriers
- Whether the proposed project reflects a realistic budget and timeline

Contact

Eric Boatti, Farm Resilience Specialist
Ericb@nofavt.org
(802) 434-7192



<https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/grant-opportunities/farmer-resilience-grants>

Farmer Cohorts & Mentorships

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

NOFA-VT facilitates long-term learning cohorts and mentorship pairings for farmers to assist in their growth and development through knowledge sharing, hands-on experience, and network building. Learn more about the different peer-learning opportunities below.

Farm Beginnings

Farm Beginnings is a year-long program for aspiring and beginning farmers that is designed to help participants launch or grow their farm business. The course is focused on sustainable agriculture and is led by Vermont-based farmers and service providers. Topics include goal setting, financing, recordkeeping, marketing, land access, business planning, and farm management.

This is a hybrid virtual and in-person program, and includes online learning modules, video lectures, live virtual meetings, assignments, and in-person, on-farm workshops.

Enrollment costs \$500 per farm. Full and partial scholarships are available.

Learn more at: <https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/farmer-cohorts-and-mentorships/farm-beginnings>

Journey Farmer

The Journey Farmer Program is a year-long program for farmers who are in the first few years of running their own farm business in Vermont. The program is shaped by the farming interests and goals of the Journey Farmer participants, and enables new farmers to advance their farming skills and experiences while being a part of a cohort learning community of other beginning farmers and farmer mentors. This program is designed as the next step for graduates of the Farm Beginnings program.

Learn more at: <https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/farmer-cohorts-and-mentorships/journey-farmer>

Jack Lazor Memorial Soil Stewards

The Jack Lazor Memorial Soil Stewards program is a cohort-based program that promotes farmer-to-farmer education and relationship building in an effort to address both short-term soil health improvement strategies and long-term systems change. These cohorts allow farmers to learn together through soil testing and analysis, peer-to-peer discussion, on-farm visits, and more.

Learn more at: <https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/farmer-cohorts-and-mentorships/jack-lazor-memorial-soil-stewards>

Peer-to-Peer Organic Mentorship

Learn more about Peer-to-Peer Organic Mentorship and the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) on the following page, or visit <https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/farmer-cohorts-and-mentorships/peer-peer-organic-mentorship>

Peer-to-Peer Organic Mentorship

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

As Core Partners in the USDA's Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Region Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP), NOFA-VT and Vermont Organic Farmers, the organic certifying agency owned by NOFA-VT, support transition to organic farming through peer-to-peer mentorship. This program allows experienced organic farmers to work with producers transitioning to organic production.

Transitioning Mentees

Farmers interested in transitioning their production with the end goal of becoming certified organic are paired with a mentor. This mentor is an experienced organic producer who can offer guidance and serve as a resource during the organic transition.

Mentorships are:

- Available free of cost
- Open to any type of producer (vegetable, berry, crops, flower, maple dairy, livestock, etc.)

Mentees also receive a stipend to help cover the costs of attending an educational events and mileage to mentor operation.

Organic Mentors

Organic mentors are farmers/producers who have operated a certified organic operation for at least 3 years, and are interested in working with transitioning producers as they adopt organic practices

Responsibilities include:

- Mentor at least on producer transitioning to organic for one year
- Complete 5 hours of mentor training annually
- Provide at least 40 hours of mentorship each year, including: onboarding, site visits, meeting and check-ins, program evaluations, answering emails and calls, and attending educational events with mentee.

Benefits include:

- \$3,000 stipend for each mentorship year. Additional stipends available to mentors with more than one mentee
- Professional development opportunities

Learn more about the Transition to Organic Partnership Program, including participating regional organizations.

<https://www.organictransition.org/#mentorship-program>

Contact

Zea Luce, NOFA-VT TOPP Coordinator
Zea@nofavt.org



<https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/farmer-cohorts-and-mentorships/peer-peer-organic-mentorship>

One-on-One Services

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

NOFA-VT offers services and technical assistance that support farmers at all stages of development to reach their business and quality of life goals. Farmers interested in the following services are encouraged to fill out the NOFA-VT Farmer Services Enrollment Questionnaire so NOFA-VT can learn more about the operation and goals.

Business Development & Transfer Planning

NOFA-VT offers a la carte business coaching services, as well as in-depth business planning assistance through the Farm and Forest Viability Program (learn more on page 61). This coaching may include topics such as business planning, succession and transfer planning, cash flow projections, enterprise analysis, and land access.

Marketing Technical Assistance

NOFA-VT can support farmers with their marketing efforts by helping them identify and overall marketing strategy, determine prices using cost of production analyses, determine appropriate sales channels, develop branding, develop outreach strategy, and more. Farmers can work one-on-one with NOFA-VT staff, and can access online marketing resources through the NOFA-VT website.

Organic Dairy Technical Assistance Services

Services are available to certified organic dairy farmers, as well as those considering transition to organic production. Technical assistance services may relate to pasture and grazing management, conversion to 100% grass fed, organic transition, animal health and nutrition, farm diversification, and cost of production analysis.

Organic Practices Technical Assistance Services

Organic practices improve soil health, water quality, and climate resilience while supporting healthy ecosystems and farm viability. NOFA-VT offers production technical assistance, resources, and educational opportunities for farmers interested in implementing organic and climate-resilient practices. These services may include enrollment in programs such as the Climate Smart Commodities Project, and Transition to Organic Partnership Program (page 67).

Contact

Jen Miller, Farmer Services Director
Jen@nofavt.org, (802) 434-7159

Learn more about NOFA-VT One-on-One Services at:

<https://www.nofavt.org/services-resources/farmers/one-one-services>

To request support, fill out NOFA-VT's Farmer Services Enrollment Questionnaire:
<https://airtable.com/appy2QFQOErOl17jl/shrtBJYFHC1TKzwr>

Vegetable & Berry Technical Assistance

NOFA-VT offers a range of production technical assistance services for fruit and vegetable farmers who are certified organic or considering the transition to organic production. Service topics include crop planning, cost of production and enterprise analysis, HR & labor management, and farm diversification.

Vermont Farm Fund

Center for an Agricultural Economy

The Vermont Farm Fund is a program of The Center for an Agricultural Economy. The program provides no-hassle, friendly-term loans to local farmers and food producers. A true revolving loan fund, as the community of recipients pays back their loans, funds are replenished for the next cycle of borrowers. Emergency loans can assist farmers recovering from natural disasters, while Business Builder and New Producers Loans can fund projects for producers to develop, improve, diversify, and expand their farming for food processing business.

Business Builder Loan

The Business Builder Loan Program provides \$5,000-\$30,000 loans with 3% amortized interest, for periods of 24 to 48 months. This loan program is intended for small to midscale producers that are trying to build their businesses, and larger enterprises that are working on smaller, innovative projects and pilot business ventures.

Example projects include development of new crop, process, or market, business and/or financial planning, and equipment and infrastructure investments.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Review application and further details at:
<https://www.vtfarmfund.org/business-builder>

New Producer Loan

The New Producer Loan Program supports new farmers and food producers who need funding for infrastructure on new property or equipment for launching a value-added food business. Loans range from \$5,000-\$20,000 at 3% amortized interest for terms of 24-60 months.

Applicants are required to submit a written business plan prepared with outside support from a technical assistance provider. The basic business planning process can between 5-15 hours.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Review application and further details at:
<https://www.vtfarmfund.org/new-producer-loan>

Emergency Loan

Emergency loans of up to \$15,000 are available to support farmers to recover from natural disasters, including damage and loss caused by floods, droughts, fire, wind, and/or hail. These are zero-interest loans payable over 36-48 months, with an option to defer payments for up to 12 months.

Applications are reviewed within 10 business days, and loan funds are granted within 14 business days. Businesses should be in otherwise good financial health, save for the unexpected natural disaster.

Review application and further details at:
<https://www.vtfarmfund.org/emergency-loan>



The Center for an Agricultural Economy
PO Box 422, 140 Junction Road,
Hardwick, Vermont 05843

802-560-3099
info@vermontfarmfund.org
<https://www.vtfarmfund.org/>

Farm Viability Program

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

Through the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board Farm and Forest Viability Program, UVM Extension provides farm owners with business education resources, skills development, financial and transition planning through and one-on-one services and peer discussion groups.

One-On-One Business Planning

Get help from a business provider for a variety of business models, including:

- Full Business Plan: Develop a comprehensive business plan that covers all aspects of the business for 1-3 years. Includes short and long-term goals, marketing plans, management plans, risk analysis and financial statements
- Cash Flow Plan: Develop budgets and update the financial statements needed to make key decisions or apply for financing
- Enterprise Analysis Plan: Single-out and analyze one enterprise within your business or test the feasibility of a new idea
- Transition Plan: Develop a plan to phase out of one ag product and begin or expand production of another. Could include enterprise analysis, goal setting, cash flow analysis, etc.
- Transfer Plan: Planning focused on the unique relational, tax, and legal considerations of transferring ownership and management of the farm.

*Farms must meet VHCB eligibility to participate, meaning the participant is a Vermont resident, has 3 years of experience working in and managing farm operations and the farm business generated at least \$15,000 of gross sales in the previous year.

Pre-Viability One-On-One Business Planning

For individuals not meeting the experience and income requirements outlined above, services are still available, including:

- Budget assistance and preparation
- Business entity guidance
- Help navigating legal, technical and regulatory requirements
- Goal setting and financial planning

Business Clinics

Short, one-on-one meetings planned for a specific purpose such as a check-up to review progress with a business plan, a brief cash flow analysis or budget review, preparation for a loan application, or a job-level cost analysis. Find out more & register at:
www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/agbizcoaching

Contact

Elisa Clancy, Farm Viability Program Coordinator
Elisa.Clancy@uvm.edu
(802) 917-4020



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/farm-viability>

Forest Business Education & Planning Assistance University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

One-On-One Business Planning Assistance Business

Over the course of a year, participants can focus on projects including development and implementation of in-depth business plans, honing of finances, enterprise analysis planning, and creation of new marketing plans.

Business Clinics

Short, one-on-one meetings planned for a specific purpose such as a check-up to review progress with a business plan, a brief cash flow analysis or budget review, preparation for a loan application, or a job-level cost analysis. Find out more & register here:

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/agbizcoaching>

UVM Extension Forest Business Roundtable

Monthly meetings with 10-12 business owners and managers providing opportunity to discuss challenges and opportunities, and develop skills related to business management, leadership, financial management, operational efficiencies, market analysis, relationship building, and succession planning. The cohort is open forest and wood product businesses including timber harvest, mills, wood manufacturers, foresters, artisans, value added producers, and maple businesses.

Business Planning Tools

Steven Bick of Northeast Forests, LLC and Chris Lindgren of UVM Extension developed the Small Business Planning for Loggers Business Plan Template, which provides a structured approach for timber harvesters to prepare essential elements of a business plan. To access the template, download the Excel file in the PDF file, which can be found at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/forest-business>.

Contact

Corrine Cooper, Administrative Assistant
Corrine.Cooper@uvm.edu
(802) 476-2003



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/forest-business>

Dairy Herd Management Technical Assistance (DHMTA) University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

UVM's team of technical service providers assists dairy farmers throughout the state, targeting specific areas of dairy management with the goal of making improvements to their operations and improving economic viability. The team offers support with all aspects of dairy management, including nutrition, records analysis, herd health, milk quality, and grazing plans and pasture improvement. The Dairy Team also conducts on-farm research, and can connect you with other experts, resources, and grant opportunities to assist with making improvements to your farm operations.

Opportunities

- Support for dairies of all sizes, conventional and organic, and including farms raising sheep and goats
- Direct consultations, workshops, and educational programs on topics including:
 - Herd health
 - Milk quality
 - Nutrition
 - Grazing
 - Pasture Management
 - Records Analysis
 - On-farm processing
 - Grant assistance
- Assist with on-farm research

UVM Extension Dairy Team

Whitney Hull
Dairy Herd Management Educator, UVM Extension
(802) 656-7563
Whitney.hull@uvm.edu

Kelsie Braam
Dairy & Grazing Specialist, Center for Sustainable
Agriculture, UVM Extension
(802) 656-4829
Kelsie.Braam@uvm.edu

Amber Machia, Dairy & Research Outreach
Specialist, Northwest Crops & Soils, UVM Extension
(802) 656-7615
Amber.Machia@uvm.edu



UVM Extension Dairy Herd
Management
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/dairy-herd-management-technical-assistance>

Grazing & Livestock Program

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

UVM Extension Grazing & Livestock Programming teams help new farmers who are seeking to get started on grass farming right and experienced farmers looking to convert or improve their grass-based operations. Technical support, educational outreach, and research collaboration is provided through coordination with technical assistance providers with a wide range of expertise.

New and Beginning Producers

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/grazing-new-beginning-producers>

Opportunities for learning from other farmers: Connecting with established farmers through farm tours, pasture walks, workshops, conferences, and through local farming organizations provides opportunity for new farmers to learn about different management strategies and inform their developing operation. Find a Farm Calendar to stay informed on events, and a list of local farming organizations at: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/grazing-new-beginning-producers>

Business Planning: Grazing and Livestock Program staff can support new farmers developing business and farm management plans.

Introductory Resources: Find resources related to grazing and livestock, including those specific to Vermont.

Grazing Technical Assistance Resources

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/grazing-technical-assistance-resources>

UVM Grazing and Livestock Program staff have compiled a comprehensive list of resources for new and established farmers.

Topics include:

- Grazing Planning
- Improved Grazing
- Contract Grazing and Leasing Land
- Livestock Management
- Land Management
- Soil, Manure & Forage Testing
- Business Planning and Profitability
- Infrastructure
- Identifying Your Support System

Grazing Technical Assistance Resources

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/grazing-farmer-funding-and-grant-resources>

State, regional, and federal funding and grant opportunities relevant to livestock and pasture-based farms. Funding opportunities may support infrastructure, fencing, manure management, pasture improvement, water quality, soil health, and on-farm research.

Submit Contact form to inquire about assistance or ask questions to the Livestock & Grazing team:

<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/forms/grazing-and-livestock-contact-form>



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/grazing>

Agronomy Programs

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

Ensuring a high quality and healthy harvest requires education and planning. UVM Extension supports farmers through research, workshops and in-person assistance in the areas of forage, pasture and grazing; hay and haylage; corn silage and grain; hops; soil and nutrient management; and more.

Northwest Crops & Soils Program

The UVM Extension Northwest Crops and Soils Program (NWCS) aims to provide the best and most relevant cropping information, both research-based and experiential, delivered in the most practical and understandable ways to Vermont farmers. Most trials are conducted at Borderview Research Farm in Alburgh, Vermont.

Find field trial and research results, as well as resources on crops, nutrient management planning, soil health, flood recovery, integrated pest management and pathogens, events, educational opportunities, and more at: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops>

Champlain Valley Crop, Soil, & Pasture

The Champlain Valley Crop, Soil and Pasture Team (CVCROPS) is a group of UVM Extension professionals and partners working to provide technical assistance to Vermont Farmers in the Lake Champlain Watershed. The CVCROPS teams strives to provide producers with research-based knowledge that has practical applications on your farm, and address many production-related issues associated with water quality and farm profitability.

Find publications, resources on crops, pasture management, nutrient management, soil health, events, educational opportunities, and more at: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/champlain-valley-crop-soil-and-pasture-team>

Agronomy & Conservation Assistance Program

The Agronomy & Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) provides direct technical assistance to animal agriculture operations in order to improve water quality in Lake Champlain and its tributaries. Administered by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAF), through the Clean Water Fund, with direct assistance provided by UVM Extension, and the Poultney-Mettowee Conservation District.

Learn more about the program and on-farm technical assistance offerings at: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agronomy-and-conservation-assistance-program-acap>

Nutrient Management Planning Resources

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

Nutrient Management Planning is the management of the amount (rate), source, placement (method of application), and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments. Nutrient Management Planning allows farmers to budget, supply, and conserve nutrients for plant productions, minimized agricultural nonpoint source pollution to surface and groundwater, protect air quality, properly utilized manure and organic byproducts as a plant nutrient source, and support soil health.

Nutrient Management Planning Class

The six-week Nutrient Management classes are offered every year, usually starting in January, by agronomists from the Champlain Valley Crop, Soil and Pasture Team and the Northwest Crops and Soils Team. These classes give an overview of nutrient management and help you develop your own farm plan, created to the NRCS 590 Standard. The course utilizes the online software tool goCrop™ to create your nutrient management plan.

Farmers participating in the course, and who are developing their Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) will need a current manure analysis, current soil analysis (no older than 3 years) for all fields on the farm, and a completed Land Treatment Plan (field maps, RUSLE2 values, etc.). Natural Resources Conservation District staff can help to complete all course requirements, and work alongside farmers to create their NMP.

NRCD's may also be able to cover the cost for participating farmers to enroll in the course (\$800), as well as cover the costs of soil sampling. Farmers may also receive financial assistance to write their NMP's through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

If you are interested in signing up for the Nutrient Management Planning Class, contact Susan Brouillette at susan.brouillette@uvm.edu, or contact your Natural Resources Conservation District.

Nutrient Management Planning Tools & Resources

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has developed record keeping booklets for nutrient applications and crop yields. Thorough record keeping is essential to informed farm management, and may be required to be eligible or maintain some certifications, and to be in compliance with the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPS) depending on your farm type and size. View the record keeping resources at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/nmp>

The UVM Extension also provides numerous resources for Nutrient Management, including:

- Nutrient Recommendations for Field Crops in Vermont
- Record Keeping Worksheets
- Manure Sampling Factsheets

View these resources by visiting: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops/soil-health-and-nutrient-management> & <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/cvcrops-nutrient-management-and-water-quality>

Farmworker Resources

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

Migrant workers and their families often live in geographic, linguistic, and cultural isolation, which can create barriers to education, wellness, and other public services. UVM Extension provides assistance with a focus on improving access to healthcare and education, food access and security, and overall social wellbeing.

Programs

Vermont Migrant Education Program

- Provides free educational support services to eligible children and youth who relocate independently or with their families in order to obtain seasonal or temporary employment in agriculture.

Migrant Health Programs

- UVM Extension Migrant Health Programs address individual and systemic barriers faced by migrant workers and their families which prevent them from attaining their full potential for health and well-being. Services include Bridges to Health Community Health Worker Program, The Huertas Project, and the Vermont Migrant Health Immunization Program.

Farming Across Cultures Communication Resources

- Resources for producers, managers, and Latino employees to support improved communication and mutual understanding, well-being, safety, transparency, and workforce integrity.

The Huertas Project

- Huertas is a community-based food security project that enables Latino/a migrant farmworkers and families living on Vermont's dairies to access culturally familiar and local foods through cultivating kitchen gardens.

Spanish Online Dairy Worker Training

- This self-paced Spanish dairy worker training certificate program is designed to develop the workforce skills needed on a modern dairy farm. This program was created as a partnership through Cornell Pro-Dairy and UVM Extension's Farmworker Programming. Each module focuses on common dairy worker areas of responsibility. All materials are presented and written in Spanish. There is no charge for this certification.

Farmworker Education Hub

- The Hub is a center for educational opportunities for Vermont's Spanish-speaking farmworker community, with classes focused on dairy technical training, computers and technology, English language learning, and general education. Classes are online, and UVM Extension professionals are available to offer ongoing support.

[https://www.uvm.edu/extension/
agriculture/farmwork](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/farmwork)

New Farmer Project

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

The New Farmer Project brings together information and resources from Extension and the broader Vermont agriculture community to assist new farmers in creating successful agricultural businesses.

Resources

Toolshed resources include articles, factsheets, online tools and workbooks, books, guidebooks, trainings, regulations, and other websites.

Business Management Toolshed:

Resources on business planning, financial management, and employment and labor.

Land Access Toolshed:

Resources on farmland access and tenure for both prospective buyers and renters.

Marketing Toolshed:

Resources on market assessment, pricing, promotion, and food safety.

Production Toolshed:

Resources to build production skills and know-how. Topics include farm safety, forages and grains, livestock production and grazing, produce, and infrastructure resources.

Education

Growing Places Course

The audience for this course includes those who are considering starting an agriculture or natural resource-based business but aren't sure where to start. Participants define goals, explore, and evaluate opportunities and resources, and become familiar with state and federal agricultural programs. Co-sponsored by the Women's Agricultural Network.

Building a Sustainable Business Course

This course guides participants through developing a farm business plan, firmly rooted in personal, community, economic, and environmental values. This course is geared towards those who have completed the Growing Places Course, or producers who have at least one year's commercial farm operation experience and production/financial records of their own.

Technical Assistance

Farm Management Team Program (FMT) helps farmers with planning and problem solving. Participating producers select their own team of advisors, and working with a trained facilitator the group collectively develops recommendations and potential solutions to address management priorities identified by the farmer. This program is offered free of charge to Vermont farms.



Vermont New Farmer Project
c/o UVM Extension
327 US Route 301, Barre, VT 05602

newfarmer@uvm.edu
or 802-656-4820

www.uvm.edu/extension/newfarmerproject

Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN) University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

The Women's Agricultural Network (WAgN) provides education and technical assistance and networking opportunities geared to the needs of women farmers since 1995. Their vision is to increase the number of women owning and operating profitable farms and ag-related businesses and their profile in leadership positions throughout the agricultural sectors of business, government, and community. WAgN works with established, beginning, and aspiring farmers.

Assistance & Education

Coaching for Farmer and Food System Workers:

Farm and business coaching is offered to aspiring, beginning, and established farmers, farm employees, food business owners and employees, landowners, service providers, and educators, among others.

Courses:

In collaboration with UVM Extension, WAgN offers the Growing Places Course for aspiring producers, *Building a Sustainable Business Course* for producers looking to refine and develop comprehensive business plans, and *Taking Stock* course for experienced producers interested in changing the scale, scope, and/or design of their farm.

Pricing Resources:

WAgN provides resources on product pricing, competition analysis, and cost estimation on their website.



Learn more about this program at:

[https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/
womens-agricultural-network](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/womens-agricultural-network)

Office Location:
The Women's Ag Network
327 US Route 302
Berlin, VT 05641

UVM Extension Maple Program

University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

The UVM Extension Maple Program supports maple producers by providing research-based educational solutions for maintaining sustainable operations with above-average yields of high-quality syrup. Resources can support new and aspiring maple producers as well as established producers interested in improving their business and operation.

Vermont Maple Minute

The Vermont Maple Minute is a podcast hosted by Mark Isselhardt, University of Vermont Maple Specialist, Proctor Maple Research Center. Listen to the podcast at:
<https://www.youtube.com/@UVMExtension/playlists>

Maple Career Education

Find educational resources geared towards introducing students to maple careers at:
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple-career-education>

Annual Maple Statistics

See the statistics from the North American Syrup Council, Canadian Maple Industry and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) at:
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple-statistics>

Maple Regulations

Stay up-to-date on USDA Grade Standards, Canadian Regulations, Vermont Regulations, Vermont Laws and Inspection Procedures at:
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple-regulations>

Business Resources

Find resources related to annual production and yield forecast, multi-year production yield, pricing and sales forecast, annual budget and cost analysis, business planning, sugarbush management rental rates, sap pricing, and hauling costs at:
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/business/maple>

Maple Publications & Media

View compiled resources for sap and maple producers and sugarbush managers at:
https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple_publications_media
& <https://mapleresearch.org/>

Contact

For Maple Business Education and Economic Research projects: Mark Cannella
Mark.Cannella@uvm.edu (802) 656-4822

Mark Isselhardt, UVM Extension Maple Specialist
Mark.Isselhardt@uvm.edu (802) 656-7564

For Maple Sap Business Promotion: Chris Lindgren
Christopher.Lindgren@uvm.edu (802) 733-3349



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/maple>

Bird Friendly Maple Project

Audubon Vermont

The Bird-Friendly Maple Project is ready to give you and maple-lovers everywhere a way to support and promote sugarbush management that's good for Vermont's birds, forests, and forest-based economy. The project builds on the national award-winning Foresters for the Birds partnership between Audubon Vermont biologists and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation foresters, and collaboration with Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association as well. Through the Bird-Friendly Maple certification maple producers demonstrate that their sugarbush management also supports wildlife and bird habitat.

**Participating
Producer**
vt.audubon.org/maple



Enrollment & Assessment

To participate in the Bird-Friendly Maple program, producers must have a current (within the past 10 years) Forest Management Plan, which must specifically mention enhancing and/or protecting songbird habitat as a management objective. The Forest Management Plan will be reviewed by an Audubon Biologist.

A forest bird habitat assessment, conducted by an Audubon Vermont biologist or consulting forester.

Contact

Steve Hagenbuch, Audubon Conservation Biologist
steve.hagenbuch@audubon.org



<https://vt.audubon.org/conservation/working-lands/landing/bird-friendly-maple-project>

Management

- Harvesting of trees in the sugarbush during the bird nesting season (May to mid-July) may reduce nest success and survivorship. In order to reduce negative impact on nesting birds, any one area of the sugarbush must not be worked in during the nesting season more than once every ten years.
- The sugarbush must be part of a contiguous forest block of greater than or equal to 100 acres. This ensures the availability of interior forest conditions. The maple producer does not need to own or manage the entire forest block.
- Considerate management and tapping in natural communities where maple is an associate species.
- The sugarbush must have a diversity of tree species, with non-maples accounting for greater than 25% of the sugarbush as measured by percent basal area.
- Control or eradication for non-native or invasive species must be described in the forest management plan.
- Forests must be managed for diverse structure and regeneration, with a diversity of tree sizes and ages, and a diversity of vegetative layers (understory, midstory, grounder) as well as standing dead trees (snags) and downed woody debris.

Sugarhouse Certification

Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA)

VMSMA's Sugarhouse Certification is a program created by sugar makers that interprets the current food safety rules for maple operations. While participating in the Certification Program is voluntary, following the food safety rules is required for sugar makers. Through this program VMSMA pairs your sugaring operation with a certifier, who will visit your sugarhouse and review operational procedures and food safety requirements. This certification allows producers to demonstrate they are meeting food safety requirements, which may enable them to enter new markets.

Enrollment & Assessment

To enroll in the Sugarhouse Certification Program first fill out and submit the application. Application can be found at: <https://vermontmaple.org/sugarhouse-certification-program>

To participate in this program you must be a current VMSMA member.

VMSMA will coordinate a certifier to visit your sugarhouse. During the certification inspection, the certifier will complete a checklist referencing sections of Title 21 (Food and Drugs), Part 117 of the Code of Federal Regulations that define current good manufacturing practices, hazard analysis, and risk-based preventative controls for human food.

Program Details

What maple products are covered in the program?

The VMSMA Sugarhouse Certification Program only covers pure maple products.

How often are inspections?

Bi-annual inspections are required to maintain certification. More frequent inspections are required if there are significant changes in ownership or management, changes in the production process, or changes in the process to gather and collect sap.

When do certification inspections occur?

Certification inspections may occur year-round.

What does the certification cost?

Certification cost ranges from \$100 to \$950, depending on the size of the sugaring operation.

Sugarhouse Grant Program

Vermont sugar makers who participate in the VMSMA Sugarhouse Certification Program are eligible to apply for grant funding in order to meet the requirements of their specific certification. Grant funds can either cover the cost of certification, or may be used towards upgrades needed to meet certification standards. Grants available for up to \$15,000. For grant requests between \$1,500 and \$15,000, a 25% match is required.

Learn more at:

<https://vermontmaple.org/sugarhouse-grant-program>

Contact

Ellie Palmer, Sugarhouse Certification Manager
(802) 222-6071 Ellie@Vermontmaple.org

Farm Labor Housing Rural Development

This program provides affordable financing to develop or rehabilitate housing for very-low to moderate income domestic, migrant, and seasonal farm laborers. This program assists qualified applicants who cannot obtain commercial credit and provide housing to eligible tenants.



Loan term is 33 years at a fixed rate of 1%. There is no loan minimum. Maximum loan amounts up to 100% of the allowable total development cost.



Refer to notice of solicitation for applications (NOSA) in federal register

Eligible Projects

- Construction, improvement, repair and purchase of housing for domestic farm laborers
- Purchase and improvement of land
- Purchasing of household furnishings
- Paying construction loan interest
- **Grants are not available for on-farm housing**

Who are eligible tenants?

- Domestic farm laborers, individuals who earn a substantial portion of their income from farm labor, retired farm laborers
- Families of eligible tenants
- Occupant must be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or those legally admitted to this country and authorized to perform work in agriculture

Who May Apply

This program is available to eligible borrowers who are not otherwise able to get commercial credit. Eligible applicants include:

- Farmers, associations of farmers, and family farm corporations
- Associations of farmworkers and non-profit organizations
- Most state and local government entities
- Federally Recognized tribes

Contact

Multifamily Housing office toll-free at 800-292-8293 or email MFHprocessing1@usda.gov



<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multifamily-housing-programs/farm-labor-housing-loans>

Value-Added Producer Grant Rural Development

The USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income.



Planning Grants up to \$75,000,
Working Capital Grants up to \$250,000,
both with 1-to-1 match requirement



Review Application Instructions at:
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants>

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- Agricultural producers
- Agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures, as defined in the program regulation, are eligible to apply for this program.

Eligible Projects

Grant and matching funds can be used for planning activities or for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural product. Examples of planning activities include conducting feasibility studies and developing business plans for processing and marketing the proposed value-added product. Examples of work capital expenses include:

- Processing costs
- Marketing and advertising expenses
- Some inventory and salary expenses

Contact

Ken Yearman, Business Program Director
(802) 488-0118
Kenneth.Yearman@usda.gov
BPVTNH.Inquiry@usda.gov



<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/value-added-producer-grants/vt-nh>

Rural Energy for America Program

Rural Development

The USDA Rural Development Rural Energy for America (REAP) program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing.



Application Deadlines are Typically Quarterly



\$1,500 Minimum
\$500,000 Maximum for Energy Efficiency Projects
\$1 Million for Renewable Energy Systems Projects



View application instructions and application submission deadlines at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency-improvement-guaranteed-loans#overview>

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include:

- Renewable energy systems including biomass, geothermal, hydropower below 30 megawatts, hydrogen, small to large scale wind, and small to large scale solar.
- Energy Efficiency Improvements including high efficiency heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC), insulation, lighting, cooling and refrigeration, doors and windows, switching from a diesel to electric motor, and replacement of energy-inefficient equipment

Funding

Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Guaranteed Loans & Grants

- Loan guaranteed up to 75% or grants up to 50% of total eligible project costs
- Combined loan and grant funding up to 75% of total eligible project costs
- Renewable Energy Grants from \$2,500-\$1 million
- Energy Efficiency Grants from \$1,500-\$500,000

Eligibility

- Agricultural producers grossing at least 50% of their income from agricultural operations
- Small businesses
- Private for-profit entities
- Cooperatives
- Electric utilities
- Tribal corporations or other Tribal businesses

Tracy Rexford, Vermont Rural Development Energy Coordinator
Tracy.Rexford@usda.gov (802) 828-6070



<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/ruralenergy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energyefficiency-improvement-guaranteed-loans>

Agricultural Loans & Rebates

Efficiency Vermont

Agricultural producers interested in improving energy efficiency in their operation can receive financial and technical assistance through Efficiency Vermont. Efficiency Vermont offers rebates on qualified equipment, provides low-interest loans to agricultural producers, can provide energy audits, conduct cash-flow analyses on energy efficiency projects, and can assist with engineering services.

Loans

Secure a flexible, low-interest loan so you can make cost-effective energy improvement to your agricultural operation. Loans can be provided with \$0 down and 100% financing, with flexible terms of up to five years. Interested applicants first work with Efficiency Vermont to perform a cash-flow analysis of their project, then partner with EastRise Credit Union to structure the terms of the loan.

Eligibility:

- Financing must be for energy efficiency improvements
- Agricultural operations and farms must be located in Vermont
- Must be registered and in good standing with the Vermont Office of the Secretary of State

Equipment & Project Rebates

Agricultural producers interested in purchasing equipment or completing a construction project to improve the energy efficiency of their operation can receive rebates through Efficiency Vermont. Rebates may cover equipment and projects including:

- Reverse Osmosis
- HVAC
- Greenhouse and Indoor Growing Equipment
- Weatherization
- Lighting
- Coolers
- Vacuum pumps

Visit <https://www.encyvermont.com/rebates> to view the full list of rebate opportunities, or contact Efficiency Vermont for assistance on a custom project.



Visit their website to learn more about rebates, or reach out to Efficiency Vermont for project support and inquiries

info@efficiencyvermont.com
(888) 921-5990
<https://www.encyvermont.com>

Engineering & Project Support

- Work with Efficiency Vermont staff to understand which systems may be wasting energy
- Efficiency Vermont staff can conduct savings analyses to identify technology that appropriate for your producer needs
- Technology specific experts can answer questions and provide recommendations for equipment that meets your needs and goals while improving energy efficiency in your operation

Diesel Emissions Reduction Financial Assistance

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Vermont Diesel Emissions Reduction Financial Assistance was developed to provide technical assistance and incentive funding for projects that reduce diesel emissions from engines, vehicles, and equipment in Vermont with the goals of reducing public exposure to emissions from diesel-powered engines and the associated risks to public health and the environment. The DEC periodically solicits applications from potential project partners for projects that achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions from diesel powered engines, vehicles, and equipment operating in Vermont.

Eligibility

What vehicles and equipment are eligible?

Diesel-powered engines, vehicles, and equipment currently operating in Vermont. These may include: buses, locomotives, heavy-duty trucks, defined as Class 5 through Class 8; Class 5 (16,001 -19,500 lbs gross vehicle weight rating [GVWR]); Class 6 (19,501 - 26,000 lbs GVWR); Class 8b (60,001 lbs GVWR and over), marine engines, non-road engines, equipment or vehicles used in construction, handling of cargo, agriculture, mining or energy production (stationary generators and pumps).

What projects are eligible?

Certified vehicle or equipment replacement with all-electric (battery, grid, or fuel cell), alternative fuel, or newer diesel options; certified engine replacements; clean alternative fuel conversions; verified emission control technologies such as exhaust controls, cleaner fuels, and engine upgrades; verified idle reduction technologies such as auxiliary power units, fuel operated heaters, shore connection systems, transport refrigeration unit (TRU) electrified parking spaces, and truck stop electrification technologies; and/or verified aerodynamic technologies and low rolling resistance tires.

Who is eligible to apply?

All interested local, state, and regional agencies or departments as well as businesses, institutions, and nonprofit organizations operating in the State of Vermont.

Contact

Leigh Martin
(802) 261-0713
leigh.martin@vermont.gov



<https://dec.vermont.gov/air-quality/mobile-sources/diesel-emissions/vt-diesel-grant>

Cost Share

There are a number of eligibility and cost share requirements. Cost share requirements vary depending on the project. For example, the program can fund up to 45% of the cost of replacing a heavy-duty diesel truck with a new, zero tailpipe exhaust vehicle (grid, battery, or fuel cell), while up to 25% of the cost of the truck's replacement with a newer, cleaner diesel, hybrid, or alternative fuel vehicle can be funded under this program.

For more information, please review the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) State Program Guide.

Agricultural Energy Loan Program

Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)

The Vermont Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Energy Loan Program (AELP), created through Act 87 in 2013, is administered by the Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation (VACC). The AELP provides loans to agriculture- or forest product-based companies for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The maximum loan amount is \$2,000,000, and the percent of the project funded by VACC is negotiable. Loans are provided at variable rates, although fixed rates may be available in some circumstances. Loan terms are determined on a case-by-case basis. Fees associated with AELP loans include (1) a 1% commitment fee (\$5,000 maximum), (2) a \$30 credit report fee, (3) if applicable, appraisal fee, document recording fee, flood certificate fee, and other out-of-pocket fees.



\$350,000 maximum, though larger loans may be considered



View info and application at:
<https://www.veda.org/financing-options/vermont-agricultural-financing/agricultural-energy-loan-program/>

Eligibility

- A Vermont resident who is engaged in agriculture or forest products businesses within the state and will help expand the agricultural economy of the state
- An operator or proposed operator of an agricultural or forest-based business
- A current or prospective owner/purchaser or lessee of agricultural land in the state or of depreciable machinery, equipment, and/or livestock in Vermont.

Loan Purposes

- Funding must relate to a project undertaken by an agriculture or forest-based company for:
 - Renewable energy generation
 - Energy efficiency improvements
 - Purchase of land, buildings, new construction, or renovations for energy technology projects
- Purchase and installation of machinery and equipment
- Payment for design, engineering, and permit fees for eligible projects
- VACC can finance or refinance existing assets or debt relating to an eligible project

Contact

Vermont Economic Development Authority

Phone: (802) 828-5627

Email: info@veda.org

<https://www.veda.org>

<https://www.veda.org/financing-options/vermont-agricultural-financing/agricultural-energy-loan-program/>



Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation Loan Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)

The Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation is a program of the Vermont Economic Development Authority which provides credit to Vermont farmers, agricultural facilities, forestry, and forest-product-based businesses. Farm loans are available to strengthen existing farm operations, encourage diversification, support beginning farmers, and to encourage marketing and processing of Vermont agricultural and forestry products. Loans require a commitment fee of 0.5% (\$3,500 maximum). Variable interest rates subsidized for 2 years, or fixed interest rates subsidized for 5, 7, or 10 years.

Eligibility

- A Vermont resident who is engaged in agriculture or forest products businesses within the state and will help expand the agricultural economy of the state
- An operator or proposed operator of an agricultural or forest-based business
- A current or prospective owner/purchaser or lessee of agricultural land in the state or of depreciable machinery, equipment and/or livestock in Vermont.

Farm Operating Loans

May be used to:

- Purchase livestock, machinery, and equipment, or fixtures
- Pay annual operating expenses of a farm operation, forest products business, or agricultural facility
- Refinance indebtedness incurred for operating loan purposes
- Finance lines of credit

Farm Ownership Loans

May be used to:

- Acquire or enlarge a farm, agricultural facility, or forest products business
- Make capital improvements, including construction, purchase, and improvements of buildings
- Promote soil and water conservation and protection
- Refinance indebtedness incurred for farm/business purposes



<https://www.veda.org/financing-options/vermont-agricultural-financing/vermont-agricultural-credit-corporation/>

Farm Credit East Agricultural Loans & Grants

Farm Credit East

Farm Credit East is a financial cooperative providing credit and financial services to farmers, commercial fishermen forest product producers, and agribusiness across New England. Farm Credit East is part of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide agricultural network providing credit and affiliated services to those in agriculture and related industries throughout the U.S. Services and assistance include loans, financing, grant writing, estate planning, business consulting, crop insurance.

Loans

Farm Credit East offers a variety of loan and financing opportunities to assist producers start, expand, and maintain their agriculture or forest-product business. Loan opportunities include: land loans, operating loans, equipment financing, facility loans, leases, and rural home loans.

Learn more at: <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/>

Grants & Awards

The Lipinski Rural Initiatives Award aims to recognize innovative and transformational efforts to revitalize rural communities in Vermont, and reward programs, projects, individuals, businesses, organizations, and/or institutions that: create jobs in rural areas in the Northeast, contribute to the quality of life in rural communities, and enhance the infrastructure necessary for strong rural communities. View details and application at: <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/about/community-support/Grants-and-Awards/Lipinski-Rural-Initiatives-Award>

AgEnhancement Grants provide support for efforts intended to foster and grow all types of agriculture, forest production or commercial fishing, including both traditional and nontraditional production and marketing approaches. Grant awards range from \$500 to \$10,000, and are intended for organizations offering assistance to farms of all sizes, for initiatives that promote diversity and create opportunities for new entrants into agriculture. View details and application at: <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/about/community-support/Grants-and-Awards/AgEnhancement-Grants>

Farmers' Market Grants may be used to support participating farmers, market enhancements, marketing efforts, and/or programs to support disadvantaged communities or improve access to fresh, local food. Grants of up to \$500 for eligible applicants. View details and application at: <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/about/community-support/Grants-and-Awards/Farmers-Market-Grants>

Historic Barn Preservation Grant

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD)

Established in 1992, the State-funded Barn Preservation Grant program helps individuals, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to rehabilitate the historic agricultural buildings that are a symbol of Vermont's rural landscape. This is the oldest state-funded agricultural-based grant program in the United States. Since its inception, the program has provided over \$3 million towards the preservation of over 360 historic barns and agricultural outbuildings around the state.



Application deadline December



Reimbursement up to 50% of project cost, with maximum funds of \$20,000 with a one-to-one match



View Application details at <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/barn-grants>

Eligibility

- Individuals, businesses, municipalities, and non-profit organizations may apply.
- Property must be listed or determined eligible for listing in the State Register of Historic Places.
- Project cannot start until grant has been awarded.
- Barn does not have to be in use.
- Practices: historic barn preservation, repairs and/or restoration.
- Ineligible: New construction, additions, accessibility and code improvements, electrical, plumbing, heating, planning projects.

Criteria & Ranking

All applications must meet Criteria 1-4. Criteria 5-10 are used to rank applications and award funds.

1. Property must be listed or eligible for listing in the State Register of Historic Places.
2. Project buildings must be a historic agricultural building.
3. Applicant must match the grant on at least a one-to-one basis.
4. Projects must demonstrate compliance with preservation standards.
5. Projects that preserve historic features.
6. Active agricultural use or repair for agricultural purposes.
7. Public benefit and long-term use.
8. Architectural or historic significance.
9. Long term planning & budget.
10. Clear, concise, and well-written applications.

Contact

Caitlin Corkins, Tax Credits and Grants Coordinator
Caitlin.Corkins@vermont.gov
(802) 828-3047



<https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/barn-grants>

Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) funds projects that develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products by developing, coordinating, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, on-line sales, or other direct producer-to-consumer (including direct producer-to-retail, direct producer-to-restaurant and direct producer-to-institutional marketing) market opportunities.



Application Deadline in May



\$50,000 - \$500,000 award with 25% cash or in-kind match



View Application Instructions at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>

Eligibility

Agricultural businesses and cooperatives, producer networks or associations, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) networks and associations, food councils, local governments, nonprofit and public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and tribal governments are eligible to apply.

Projects

FMPP offers four types of projects: 36-month Capacity Building, 36-month Community Development Training and Technical Assistance, 24-month Turnkey Marketing and Promotion, and 24-month Turnkey Recruitment and Training

Projects can include, but are not limited to:

- Organizational Capacity Building
- Market analysis and strategic planning
- Producer or market manager training and education
- Online sales operation or expansion
- Producer and consumer outreach

Contact

FMLFPPgrants@USDA.gov



<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) funds projects that develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer-to-consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. Grants can be used for the planning stages of establishing or expanding a local and regional food business enterprise, or to improve or expand a food business that supports locally and regionally produced agricultural products and food system infrastructure by performing feasibility studies, market research, training and technical assistance for the business enterprise and/or for producers working with the business enterprise. A 25% match is required.



Application Deadline in May



Minimum \$25,000
Maximum \$500,000
25% match required



View Application Instructions at
<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>

Eligibility

Agricultural businesses and cooperatives, producer networks or associations, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) networks and associations, food councils, local governments, nonprofit and public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and tribal governments are eligible to apply.

Contact

FMLFPPgrants@usda.gov



<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>

Projects

Planning

- Feasibility studies
- Hiring experts to provide training or technical assistance
- Business development plans

Implementation

- Development or expansion of food incubator programs or mid-tier value chains
- Provision of technical assistance or financial support for food safety measures producers may have to implement to expand marketing opportunities
- Adoption of new online technology or virtual marketplace

Farm to Institution

- Aggregation, processing, distribution, and storage of products
- Market development
- Business plan and strategy development
- Food safety certification and improvements

Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grants Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program is designed to increase the availability of local foods in schools and help connect students to the sources of their food through education, taste tests, school gardens, field trips, and local food sourcing for school meals. Grants can launch new farm to school programs or expand existing efforts.



Applications due January



Maximum \$500,000
25% match required



View Application Instructions at
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/grant>

Eligible Activities

- Training
- Supporting operations
- Planning
- Purchasing equipment
- Developing school gardens
- Developing partnerships
- Implementing farm to school programs

Grant Tracks

Action Planning Grant: Develop a Farm to School Action Plan to facilitate launching or scaling farm to school activities

Agricultural Education Grants: Plan, implement, and evaluate the integration of farm to school topics into CNP sites' curriculum

Edible Gardens Grants: Plan, implement, and evaluate a food production operation that produces food for CNP operator activities

Implementation Grants: Improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education

State Agency Grants: Improve access to local foods in eligible CNP sites through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local sourcing and agricultural education efforts.

Contact

SM.FN.FarmToSchool@usda.gov



<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-school-grant-program>

Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program

National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)

The primary goal of the Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is to help beginning farmers and ranchers in the U.S. and its territories enter and/or improve their successes in farming, ranching, and management of nonindustrial private forest lands through support for projects that provide education, mentoring, and technical assistance to give beginning farmers and ranchers the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations to enhance their sustainability.

Projects & Funding

Standard Grants: Simplified Standard Grants are intended to assist organizations:

- 1) To sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs
- 2) To initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education


Grants are available to support projects at different scales lasting one to three years. Large Standard Grants offer up to \$250,000 per year for three years, while the Simplified Standard Grant provides up to \$49,999 for projects lasting one year. Medium and Small Standard Grants are also available.

Educational Team Projects: The long-term goals of Educational Team (ET) Projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps.

Contact

Denis Ebodaghe, National Program Leader

Denis.ebodaghe@usda.gov
(202) 445-5460

 <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/beginning-farmer-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>

Eligible Activities

Eligible applicants include:

- Collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities
- State Cooperative Extension Services
- Federal, state, municipal or tribal agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Nongovernmental organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Private for-profit organizations

Small Business Innovation Research Program National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA)

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) offers competitively awarded grants to qualified small businesses to support high quality research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture that could lead to significant public benefits. The program stimulates technological innovations in the private sector and strengthens the role of federal research and development in support of small businesses. The SBIR program also fosters and encourages participation by women-owned and socially or economically disadvantaged small businesses.



Phase I Applications open in July
Phase II Applications open in December



Phase I maximum award: \$175,000
Phase II maximum award: \$600,000



View application instructions at
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/sbir-sttr>

Research Topic Areas

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Topics

- Forests and Related Resources
- Plant Production and Protection - Biology
- Animal Production and Protection
- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Food Science and Nutrition
- Rural Development
- Aquaculture
- Biofuels and Biobased Products
- Small and Mid-Size Farms
- Plant Production and Protection - Engineering

Contact

Melinda Coffman, Program Coordinator
Melinda.Coffman@usda.gov
816-854-0299



<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/sbir-sttr>

Participation by university faculty or government scientists in SBIR projects is strongly encouraged. Faculty or scientists can serve as consultants or can receive a subcontract (in both cases, payment is limited to no more than 1/3 of the Phase I award or 1/2 of the Phase II award) and continue to work full time at their institution. University faculty or government scientists can also reduce employment at their institution to 49% for the duration of the grant.

Farmer Grant Program Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Innovation (SARE)

The Farmer Grant Program administered by SARE offers funding for farmers and producers to explore new concepts in sustainable agriculture conducted through experiments, surveys, prototypes, on-farm demonstrations, or other research and education techniques. Funding may go towards a wide array of project topics, including marketing and business, crop production, raising livestock, aquaculture, social sustainability, climate smart agriculture and practices, urban and Indigenous agriculture, and more.



Grant Proposals due in
November



\$5,000 to \$30,000



View Application at:
<https://northeast.sare.org/grants/>

Funds can be used to conduct the research project including paying farmers for their time, for project-related materials, for project costs like consulting fees or soil tests, and any communications or outreach expenses associated with telling others about project results.

Projects

Farmer Grants are for commercial producers who have an innovative idea they want to test using a field trial, on-farm demonstration, marketing initiative, or other technique.

Farmer Grant projects should seek new knowledge other farmers can use and address questions that are directly linked to improved profits, better stewardship, and stronger communities.

A technical advisor—often an extension agent, crop consultant, other service professional or farmer with advanced expertise—must also be involved.

Projects should seek results other farmers can use, and all projects must have the potential to add to our knowledge about effective sustainable practices.

Average projects last 1 to 3 years.

Farmer Grant recipients are expected to collect and manage reliable data about their project and convey this information clearly through annual and final reports.

Contact

Candice Huber, Grants Coordinator
Candice.Huber@uvm.edu
802-656-7587



[https://northeast.sare.org/grants/
get-a-grant/farmer-grant-
program/](https://northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/farmer-grant-program/)

This grant program is not meant to help start or expand farm businesses. Farmer Grant funds cannot be used for capital costs associated with building a barn, greenhouse, or other major farm fixture, nor can funds be used to start a farm, purchase durable equipment like tractors or computers, or for any utility, telephone, or other costs that would be there in the absence of the project.

Brighter Future Fund American Farmland Trust

American Farmland Trust works to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting environmentally sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. Through their work AFT has led a movement to conserve over 6.8 million acres of farmland and rangeland in perpetuity, pioneered and promoted cutting-edge conservation practices, advanced agricultural policies, and conducted groundbreaking research

Brighter Future Fund

American Farmland Trust provides grants to farmers and ranchers to advance the mission of protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. These grants help drive new solutions for resolving key challenges facing our society by increasing resilience of farms to climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening local food systems, creating greater equity in opportunities for underserved farmers, ensuring the availability of sufficient clean water and habitat for threatened wildlife, and improving farm and community viability.

New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grants (RLF): Grants of up to \$10,000 intended to support field-based conservation practice projects that improve soil health, water quality, and pollinator habitat. Eligible projects include establishing pollinator habitat, cover cropping, reduce tillage equipment purchase, irrigation and watering systems, fencing infrastructure, and more. Applications open in October.

National Grant for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers: Grants of up to \$5,000 for beginning, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, women, and veteran farmers and ranchers to support greater equity and opportunities for all in agriculture. Funding is allocated to two primary categories: professional services and equipment or infrastructure costs. Grants are intended to 1) improve farm viability, 2) access, transfer, or permanently protect farmland, and 3) allow farmers to adopt regenerative farming practices to increase resilience to climate change. Applications open in July.



To view open funding opportunities, and to learn more about American Farmland Trust's Brighter Future Fund and grant programs visit:

<https://farmland.org/brighterfuture/>

Climate Smart Agriculture Pasa Sustainable Agriculture

Pasa is a nonprofit based in Pennsylvania and working across the mid-Atlantic and Northeast, which supports sustainable farms and equitable food systems through farmer-driven education, research, and community. Their mission is to cultivate environmentally sound, economically viable, and community-focused farms and food systems. To support this mission, Pasa coordinates programs providing farmer training and education, technical assistance, supporting sustainable agriculture policy, and farm-based research.

Program Overview



Applications Accepted on a rolling basis



Financial Support Available



Visit the Carbon Smart program website to fill out the online application:
<https://climatesmart.org/>

Through the Climate Smart Agriculture Program, Pasa supports farmers in implementing conservation practices on their farm by matching farmers to technical service providers, providing financial support, and coordinating peer-to-peer community learning opportunities.

In addition, this program also provides marketing support.

Through this program farmers are expected to collect data to gain insights about their farm's soil health, water quality, carbon resilience, and other metrics.

To learn more about the Climate Smart Program visit:
<https://climatesmart.org/>

To learn more about Pasa, their programs, resources, and initiatives visit:
<https://pasafarming.org/>

Supported Practices

The Climate Smart Agriculture Program supports farmers in adopting a wide range of NRCS practices that support water quality, soil health, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and diversification.

Some of the practices supported by the program include:

- Conservation Crop
- Grassed Waterways
- Forest Farming
- Silvopasture
- Strip Cropping
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Watering Facility
- Nutrient Management

To view a full list of practices supported by the Climate Smart Program visit: <https://climatesmart.org/#climate-smart-farming-practices>

Contact

NOFA-VT serves as the regional partner in the Pasa's Climate Smart Agriculture Program in Vermont. The program contact is:

Eric Boatti, Farm Resilience Specialist
Ericb@nofavt.org
(802) 434-7192

Microgrants for Research & Education Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA)

OCIA Research and Education (R&E), Inc. was incorporated in 2002 and is a 501(c)(3) organization with the mission to support farmer driven research, on farms at research institutions through exploratory and demonstration projects. In addition to supporting farm research and education, OCIA facilitates connections between farmers, researchers, consumers and decision-makers, and educates organic producers and local and global communities regarding organic farming and foods.



2 deadlines per year: March 15th & November 15th



Minimum \$500
Maximum \$3,000



Apply by email: info@ocia.org

The OCIA Research and Education Microgrants have a very simple application and are ideal for producers interested in small-scale research and education projects.

Eligible Projects

- Educational resources related to organic agriculture for school-aged children
- Research pertaining to organic agriculture

Examples include:

- Developing internship programs with in-class and in the field learning opportunities
- Establishing demonstration gardens
- Trials of certified organic buckwheat varieties
- Tomato grafting trials
- Trials comparing various beehives, assessing production, pest and disease control, and ease of use

Does not include:

- Equipment
- Infrastructure
- Labor costs
- Community gardens



Organic Crop Improvement Association International

info@ocia.org
(402) 477-2323

<https://ocia.org/research-education/micro-grants/>

Farmer Led Trials (FLT) Program

Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)

Since its founding in 1990, OFRF supported farmers and ranchers conducting practical, on-farm research that can address their farming challenges and to support farmer-led innovations in organic farming, by providing technical and financial support. Through the FLT Program, the Organic Farming Research Foundation will provide technical assistance to help farmer-researchers refine their research questions, design their experiments, identify data collection protocols, analyze data, and present their findings.



Application Deadline in December



\$1,500 stipend



View Application instructions at:
<https://ofrf.org/research/farmer-led-research-trials/>

Eligibility

- Project must be conducted on certified organic land or land in transition to organic certification
- Must be located in the U.S. or its territories
- Participants must have management abilities, and must lease or own the farm where the trials are to occur
- Priority will be given to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), veteran, and beginning farmers

Assistance

OFRF supports farmers and ranchers conducting research by:

- Hosting trainings and workshops and providing resources on research design and conducting on-farm trials
- Working one-on-one with farmers to refine research question, design, protocol, and timeline
- Assisting famers in data organization, cleaning, analysis, and interpretation
- Providing a \$1,500 stipend, to be used for research supplies, materials, and equipment, labor related to the research, and stipend for farmer/rancher cooperators



Organic Farming Research Foundation

<https://ofrf.org>
(831) 426-6606

grants@ofrf.org
<https://ofrf.org/research/farmer-led-research-trials/>

Community Fund

The FruitGuys

Founded in 2012, The FruitGuys Community Fund is a nonprofit fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, and provides small grants for small farms to further their support of environmental and economic health, community engagement, and advocacy that supports sustainable agriculture.



Application Deadline in January



\$5,000



View application instructions at:
<https://fruitguyscommunityfund.org/apply/>

Eligibility

- Applicant is an owner/operator of the farm or has long-term, legal access to the land. If farming on leased land, a letter of support from the landowner specifying length of the lease agreement must be provided with the grant application.
- The applicant farm must be an established working farm with at least 2 years in operation.
- Farm is small to medium-sized as determined by acreage in agricultural production. Farms with more than 250 acres in agricultural production are ineligible to apply.

Ineligible Costs

- Non soil-based farming operations (i.e. hydroponic/aquaponic growing systems)
- Land purchases
- Costs associated with labor (your budget should only include materials and supplies)
- Projects that require a percentage of the award be used for consultants or administration
- Requests that are dependent upon receiving funding from a separate, larger grant

Funding Priorities

- Water Conservation
- Natural Pest Control
- Pollination
- Soil Health
- Energy Efficiency
- Heirlooms
- Increase Low-Income Consumers' Access to Food
- Equity, Community Building & Education
- Support Beginning and Under-Represented Farmers including BIPOC and Women



[FruitGuysCommunityFund.org](https://fruitguyscommunityfund.org)
info@fruitguyscommunityfund.org
<https://fruitguyscommunityfund.org/apply/>

Fund-A-Farmer Welfare Improvement Grant Food Animals Concerns Trust (FACT)

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) believes that all food-producing animals should be raised in a humane and healthy manner and that everyone should have access to safe and humanely produced food. To support this goal, FACT awards Welfare Improvement grants of up to \$3,000 to working, independent farms located in the U.S. and U.S. territories. In 2024, FACT has awarded more than \$251,000 in Fund-a-Farmer grants for projects that improve animal welfare.



Application Deadline in December



Up to \$3,000



View application instructions at:
<https://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants>

Eligibility

Applicant must be a United States-based farm or an independently owned or recognized Tribal-Entity

Proposed projects must impact at least one of these species: beef cattle, bison, broiler chickens, dairy cows, ducks, geese, goats, laying hens, pigs, sheep, and/or turkeys. Farms must already raise animals. Only 1 application per year.

Projects

Projects aiming to improve the lives of their farm animals, including:

- Transition to pasture-based systems
- Expanding animals' access to well-managed pasture

Projects to pursue or maintain animal welfare certification including:

- Certified Animal Welfare Approved (AWA) and affiliated certification by A Greener World
- Certified Humane
- Global Animal Partnership (GAP) Animal Welfare Certified

Projects related to marketing, sales and distribution

Contact

Samantha Gasson, Humane Farming Program Manager

Samantha@foodanimalconcerns.org
grants@foodanimalconcerns.org



<https://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants>

Fund-A-Farmer Systems Change & Innovation Grant Food Animals Concerns Trust (FACT)

In 2024 the Food Animal Concerns Trust introduced the Systems Change and Innovation Grant to support farmers in transitioning to farming systems to improve animal welfare.



Application Deadline in December



Up to \$10,000



View application instructions at:
<https://www.foodanimalconcernstrust.org/grants>

Eligibility

Applicant must be a United States-based farm or an independently owned or recognized Tribal-Entity

Proposed projects must impact at least one of these species: beef cattle, bison, broiler chickens, dairy cows, ducks, geese, goats, laying hens, pigs, sheep, and/or turkeys. Farms must already raise animals. Only 1 application per year.

Projects

Eligible Projects include:

- Developing business plans/feasibility studies for significant changes to an operation including conversion to pasture or adoption of alternative breeds
- Install infrastructure necessary to convert from non-pasture to pasture-based operations
- Adoption of alternative breeding including sourcing genetics, housing accommodations, feed changes, and marketing
- Developing Co-operative or other forms of shared marketing among pasture-based farms, including the development of cooperative agreements and necessary documents

Contact

Samantha Gasson, Humane Farming
Program Manager
Samantha@foodanimalconcerns.org
grants@foodanimalconcerns.org



<https://FoodAnimalConcernsTrust.org>

Vermont Beekeeper Resources

In Vermont there are approximately 700 registered beekeepers, 1,200 apiaries, and 16,500 colonies. In order to support Vermont beekeepers state agencies and organizations provide numerous resources to help aspiring beekeepers learn the trade and support established beekeepers to manage healthy colonies.

Vermont Beekeepers Association

Since 1886 the Vermont Beekeepers Association has promoted the general welfare of Vermont's Apiculture Industry while sustaining a friendly bond of unity among the state's beekeepers. To support apiculture in Vermont, the Vermont Beekeepers Association:

- Provides educational resources, mentorship opportunities, and networking opportunities for aspiring and experienced beekeepers
- Hosts annual meetings to further collaboration, networking, and education among Vermont beekeepers
- Keep beekeepers up-to-date on relevant state and national laws related to apiculture

Learn more at:

<https://www.vermontbeekeepers.org/>

Vermont Bee Lab

The Vermont Bee Lab is a research and outreach laboratory located at the University of Vermont. The Bee Lab is dedicated to the protection of pollinators through research, education, and outreach. Initiatives include:

- Ongoing research projects
- Educational workshops and beekeeping classes
- Free diagnostic testing for Vermont beekeepers, including tests of Nosema and Varroa mites
- Educational resources on pesticide monitoring, pests and diseases, and bee and equipment suppliers

Learn more at:

<https://vermontbeelab.com/>

VAAFM Apiary Program

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' Apiary Program works to accomplish the dual purposes of ensuring that Vermont beekeepers comply with the Chapter 172 Inspection of Apiaries and supporting the Vermont beekeeping industry through education, outreach, and promotion, with a focus on pollinator health. Resources and services include:

- Apiary registration
- Guidance on Varroa mite management plans
- Rules and statutes
- Inspection services
- Resources for beekeepers

Learn more at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division/apiary-program>

Agroforestry Resources

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic and social benefits. Agroforestry can allow producers to diversify, produce more crops and products per acre, provide wildlife habitat, support soil health and water quality, and sequester carbon.

Interlace Commons

Interlace Commons is an organization that aims to connect people with information about the functionality and implementation of ancient and modern forms of agroforestry through programming and farm-driven research initiatives. Interlace Commons works with farmers to plan and develop agroforestry projects, trains technical service providers to build knowledge and skills needed to successfully implement agroforestry practices, and regularly hosts workshops. Grant funding may be available to assist producers interested in agroforestry on their farm.

Learn more at: <https://www.interlacecommons.org/>

VT Farm to Plate Agroforestry Resources

The Vermont Farm to Plate Agroforestry Priority Strategy Team works to further the adoption of agroforestry practices and grow agroforestry product markets in Vermont. The team regularly coordinates and hosts events and trainings on agroforestry and creates and compiles agroforestry resources, including a Vermont Agroforestry Species List.

Learn more at: <https://www.vtfarmplate.com/agroforestry>

The Nature Conservancy Expanding Agroforestry Project

The Expanding Agroforestry Productions and Markets for Producer Profitability and Climate Stabilization Project aims to increase the adoption of agroforestry practices on farms across 30 states. Through this initiative, TNC and partners offer technical assistance and education to farmers, provide direct incentive payments for planting trees, work to expand markets for agroforestry products.

Learn more at: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/provide-food-and-water-sustainably/expanding-agroforestry-production/?vu=expandingagroforestry>

NRCS Agroforestry Practices

The Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist farmers in planning and funding agroforestry practices on their land. Practices include Alley Cropping (311), Silvopasture (381), Windbreaks (380), Forest Farming (379), Hedgerow Planting (422), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Riparian Buffers. Reach out to your local field office to learn more.

Agritourism Resources

Agritourism has become an effective means for Vermont farms to diversify income streams, connect with community members and out-of-state tourists, strengthen their farm business brand, and promote agricultural literacy and understanding of food and agricultural systems by offering on-farm experiences and exposure to the public. These resources listed below can serve as a starting point for farms interested in starting agritourism initiatives.

UVM Extension Agritourism Collaborative

UVM Extension's Agritourism Collaborative website provides information, resources, and connections for farmers offering agritourism experiences throughout Vermont. Resources include:

Guide to Navigating Vermont's Agritourism Regulations, which provides guidance for farmers interested in a variety of agritourism ventures ranging from farm stays, operating farm stands, hosting summer camps, and more. This guide informs producers on regulations, permitting requirements, liability, and licenses. View the guide at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/vtagritourism/guide-navigating-vermont-agritourism>

How-To Guides and **A Guide to Successful Agritourism Enterprises**, which assist in assessing your farm for agritourism, business planning, safety and risk management, marketing, and information for developing specific agritourism business. View at resources at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/vtagritourism/agritourism-guides>

Signage and sign templates that can support safety for farm visitors. View and download signs at https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Vermont-Agritourism-Collaborative/farm_signage_bundle.pdf

Business Planning for Agritourism Enterprises Webinar Series, with seven recorded webinar sessions which can help you draft your agritourism business plan with the assistance of AgPlan, a free business planning tool. View the recording at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/vtagritourism/business-planning-agritourism-enterprises>

View more resources at: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/vtagritourism>

Additional Agritourism Resources

VAAFM Agritourism Resources: Resources and synthesized information to support agritourism, with specific guidance on relevant laws and regulations. Learn more at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/development/agritourism>

Agritourism Community of Practice (CoP), Vermont Farm to Plate: Formerly known as the "Agritourism Task Force", the Agritourism Community of Practice brings together individuals and organizations to advance Vermont's culinary and agricultural tourism industry. The CoP develops and compiles resources on agritourism, identifies initiatives to further agritourism and consumer education, and collaborates with state agencies and organizations. View resources, connect with the community, and learn more at:

<https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/network/agritourism-community-practice>

Pesticide Program & Resources

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM), UVM Extension

VAAFM


Professional and homeowner use of pesticides are regulated under the Vermont Regulation for the Control of Pesticides. These regulations cover sales restrictions, proper use, storage, and disposal of pesticides. Product registration, applicator certificates, dealer licenses, and permits may be required for use of certain pesticides.

Pesticide Applicator Certification

- There are four categories of pesticide applicator certification in Vermont:
 - Private Applicator
 - Commercial Applicator
 - Non-commercial Applicators
 - Government Applicators
- To be certified as a commercial, noncommercial, or government applicator, you must take the CORE exam and at least one other category exam

Pesticide Usage Report

- Pesticide Usage is reported annually to the VAAFM by certified commercial, non-commercial, and government applicators, as required by the Pesticide Regulations.
- VAAFM is publishing new annual reports for commercial pesticide usage data. The Agency has taken many steps to create these reports for the public and hopes you find them useful.

 <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division/pesticide-programs>

UVM Extension

Pesticide Safety Education Program

The UVM Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) works closely with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets to provide training and education resources for current and prospective pesticide applicators, ensuring proper and legal use of pesticides that reduces potential risk to human health and the environment.

Pesticide Applicator Report

Extension and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets for Vermont's pesticide applicators. Includes mail-in quizzes for pesticide recertification credits.



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pseponline>

Plastic Recycling Program

Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC)

The ACRC is a not-for-profit organization that works to facilitate the collection and recycling of one-way rigid HDPE plastic agricultural crop protection, specialty pest control, animal health, micronutrient/fertilizer, and/or adjuvant product containers. This is done through member funding of cost-effective programs that fosters public health and safety, environmental protection, resource conservation, and end-user convenience. The ACRC is fully funded by our member companies and affiliates that formulate, produce, package, and distribute crop protection and other pesticide products.

Information

What Can I Recycle?

The ACRC program accepts rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE) 55-gallon containers and smaller, which previously held products utilized in agricultural crop protection (pesticides), animal health, specialty pest control, micronutrient, biologicals, fertilizer, and/or adjuvant products for professional application.

More information on types of plastic that can be recycled through the ACRC program:

<https://www.agrecycling.org/recycling/#recycle>

What Happens to the Plastic?

Currently, the ACRC collects around 11,000,000 lbs of HDPE annually. This plastic is then processed to create sellable, recycled resin which is repurposed into many useful products. The Ag Container Recycling Council is continually evaluating and approving a wide array of end uses.

You can learn more about this program at ACRC's website:

www.agrecycling.org

ACRC Contractor for VT

Justin Geisinger, Ag Plastic Solutions, LLC (APS)
info@agplasticsolutions.com
717-446-9917
www.agplasticsolutions.com

Contact APS to schedule collection at your location in VT.

Where is the APS recycling facility?

330 Wolf Avenue
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides free technical and financial assistance to landowners, managers, tribes, corporations, schools, and nonprofits interested in improving wildlife habitat on their land. Since 1987, they have helped more than 60,000 landowners restore more than 7 million acres of forest, prairie, wetland, and stream habitat for wildlife.

Through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program staff from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service can assist landowners interested in restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat on their land.

Services offered include:

- Assistance to plan, implement, and monitor projects
- Identifying project partners
- Identifying funding resources
- Providing permitting guidance

Process

A biologist will consult with landowners to help them conserve and improve wildlife habitat at no cost through planning, design, and supervision of restoration projects. Services also include identification of other funding sources and offering permitting guidance.

Landowners continue to own and manage their land while they improve conditions for wildlife.

Many Partners for Fish and Wildlife projects take place on working landscapes such as forests, farms, and ranches. USFWS focuses on upland forests, wetlands, native prairies, marshes, rivers, and streams. Migratory birds, as well as endangered, threatened, and at-risk species, are considered.

Example Projects

- Livestock exclusion fencing
- Improved aquatic connectivity
- In-stream aquatic habitat
- Streambank stabilization
- Invasive species control
- Native tree and shrub planting
- Wetland restoration/enhancement
- Riparian reforestation

Contact

Chris E. Smith, Supervisory Fish & Wildlife Biologist, Vermont
Chris_E_Smith@fws.gov
(802) 622-5303



<https://www.fws.gov/program/partners-fish-and-wildlife>

Resources for Loggers

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR)

The State of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation offers resources for forest-based business, including educational resources, bridge rental information, business planning resources and links, and state regulation information.

Resources

The Acceptable Management Practices

Manual: Acceptable Management Practices for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont (AMPs) provide loggers, foresters, and landowners with the practices to be in compliance with Vermont's Water Quality Standards. The AMPs are available online in pdf form, or offline on the Vermont AMP app.

Mapping: Information on Avenza Maps software and VT ANR Atlas.

Business Management Resources:

Information on the Right to Conduct Forestry Operations, Limitations of Municipal Land Use Bylaws, and Working Lands Enterprise Initiative.

Trainings & Certifications

Vermont Logger Education to Advance

Professionalism (LEAP): Certifications and trainings for mechanized and non-mechanized operations. Certification emphasizes professionalism, managing forests ecosystems, mechanized logger safety and first aid.

Northeast Master Logger Certification

Program: Certifications and Trainings for loggers and harvesting companies that focus on legal compliance, employee protection, environmental standards, harvest planning, and logging techniques.

Mechanized Logger Training Manuals:

Available to view on the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation website.

Vermont Acceptable Management Practices Guide

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/managing-your-woodlands/acceptable-management-practices>

Download the Vermont AMP App to assist with planning and access the AMPs on the go!

Rentals

Skidder Bridges: Rentals available through some Natural Resources Conservation Districts

25' Steel I-Beam Bridges: \$100 per month rental. Available through the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

30' & 40' Truck Bridges: \$100 per month rental. Available through FPR

Contact

Dave Wilcox, Watershed Forester
(802) 793-0265
David.Wilcox@vermont.gov



<https://fpr.vermont.gov/forests>

Forest Legacy Program

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) is a federal grant program to protect forestlands from conversion to non-forest uses. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation working in conjunction with the USDA Forest Service is the State Lead Agency for Vermont's Forest Legacy Program. The FLP provides funding to further conservation of important forestland properties. The program is entirely voluntary. Landowners who wish to participate may either sell the property as fee simple title (all rights), or only a portion of the property rights and retain ownership of the land. The use of conservation easements allows the land to remain in private ownership and ensures that important public values such as wildlife habitat, natural areas, forest resources, and outdoor recreation opportunities are protected.

Overview

The Forest Legacy Program provides for up to 75% of the costs of a conservation easement or fee-simple acquisition, including the costs of appraisals, surveys, closing costs, title work and insurance, and other associated costs. The remaining 25% must be matched by either the landowner or an assisting entity, such as a non-profit organization or non-federal governmental entity.

Landowner Responsibilities

Landowners who participate in the Forest Legacy Program will be required to manage their property according to the terms of the resulting conservation easement. As required for the Forest Legacy Program, a management plan or forest stewardship plan must be developed for each property. A management plan encourages long-term stewardship by assisting private landowners with the active management of their natural resources. Plans can be amended periodically to account for changes in landowner objectives, land ownership, or other factors which may not have been apparent originally.

Contact

Kate Sudhoff, Forest Legacy Program
Coordinator
Kate.sudhoff@vermont.gov
(802) 505-0678



https://fpr.vermont.gov/state_lands/acquisition/forest-legacy-program

Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Vermont's UVA Program enables eligible private landowners who practice long-term forestry or agriculture to have their land appraised based on the property's value of production of wood or food rather than its residential or commercial development value. The Department of Taxes, Division of Property Valuation and Review (PV&R) is the lead agency, but the Division of Forestry with County Foresters helps to administer the Forestry Use Value Appraisal portion of the program.

Eligibility

- Parcels must contain at least 25 acres that will be enrolled and be managed according to a forest plan approved by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
- For most forestland on productive soils (Site I, II and III), the primary forest management objective must be long-term production of forest products in accordance with established forest practices. Wildlife habitat, aesthetics, recreation, watershed protection, etc. are acceptable objectives when consistent with and complementary to timber management. Significant wildlife habitats, special places and sensitive sites, miscellaneous inclusions of one acre or less, and Ecologically Significant Treatment Areas (ESTAs) may also qualify without timber production.
- Open/idle agricultural land (not eligible for Agriculture Use Value) that is not to be reforested within two years may also be enrolled but cannot exceed 20% of total enrolled qualifying acreage (open/idle ag land plus forested acres on productive soils)
- Site IV land: Also called non-productive soils; land having soils incapable of growing a minimum amount of wood. There is no limit on Site IV enrollment.
- Not Eligible:
 - House sites and land under other private or commercial developments
 - A minimum of two acres surrounding dwellings including houses, camps, and mobile homes
 - Land used for commercial mining or removal of gravel
 - Other non-conforming uses such as lawns, recreational ponds, cell phone towers, etc.
 - Any forested areas where the landowner chooses not to harvest trees, unless enrolled as an ESTA
 - Any utility right-of-way in excess of two acres and wider than 40 ft
 - Any land where vegetation is not under the legal control of the landowner may not be enrolled

For information regarding enrollment of land:
<https://tax.vermont.gov/property-owners/current-use>

For more information regarding forestland enrollment, please contact your County Forester.

Resources for Trail Stewardship

Landowners who host specific types of recreation trails on their property may qualify for trail corridor management labor from local trail organizations. Organizations such as non-profits, municipalities, and governmental entities can apply for funding related to maintenance and construction of public recreational trails, trail linkages, trailhead facilities and parking areas, trail rehabilitation, and easements. If you are interested in installing a trail, or seeking maintenance on a current trail, please reach out to your town conservation commission or Vermont Trails and Greenways Council to find organizations who operate in your area.

Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

VOREC is a collective network of public and private partners organized by the state to sustain, grow, and drive sustainable development in Vermont's outdoor recreation sector by leveraging natural outdoor recreation assets, brand, and culture.

VOREC Administers:

- Move Forward Together Vermont, a partnership with FPR to create a shared vision for Vermont's outdoor recreation future, with actionable steps and a five-year plan.
- VOREC Action Plan

Vermont Trails & Greenways Council

VTGC is an independent non-profit that works to support VT trails and the outdoor recreation community and serves as an advisory body for the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR).

VTGC Provides:

- Resources on trail planning, construction, maintenance, and standards
- Resources on accessible trail standards, mountain biking, equestrian, back-country ski, snowmobile, and rail trails
- Resources on wetland trail design
- Resources on funding opportunities

FPR

Claire Polfus, Recreation Program Manager, FPR
(802) 505-5372
Claire.polfus@vermont.gov

anr.fprrecreationgrants@vermont.gov
<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation>

VTGC

Sharon Plumb, VTGC Program Manager
sharon@vermonttgc.org

<https://vermonttgc.org>

VOREC

Jackie Dagger, VOREC Program Manager

Jackie.dagger@vermont.gov
(802) 636-7410

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/VOREC>

Resources for Trail Stewardship

FPR Recreation Grant Opportunities

Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grant Program:

This grant program is intended to fund community projects that leverage outdoor recreation, which VOREC defines as leisure, sport, and therapeutic activities pursued outdoors, mainly in natural settings. Eligible applicants include municipalities and non-profit organizations.

Recreation Trails Program (RTP): The Recreation Trails Program grants are administered through the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, and are intended for the development and maintenance of public recreational trails for motorized and non-motorized recreation. Eligible applicants include municipalities, non-profit organizations, and state and federal agencies. Funds of up to \$50,000 are available, with 20% match requirement.

Land & Water Conservation Fund: These funds support the development of public outdoor recreation opportunities across Vermont, with a focus on creating parks and open spaces, enhancing recreation areas and facilities, and protecting wilderness areas and forests. Eligible applicants include municipalities and state agencies. Grants are only available for projects on public lands.



To view grant opportunities, deadlines, and application instructions visit:

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/recreation-grants>

anr.fprrecreationgrants@vermont.gov

Guide to Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

This guide can help you get started with USDA, whether you are new to farming, ranching, or forestry management, or just new to working with them. From farm loans to crop insurance, and conservation programs to disaster assistance, USDA is here to support you and your operation. Some groups of people are identified in

Farm Bill legislation and in USDA policy as being Historically Underserved (HU). Members of these communities have been historically underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs. Four groups are defined by USDA as “Historically Underserved,” including farmers or ranchers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veterans; and Limited Resource.

Contents Include

- Defining Historically Underserved
- Working with Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Working with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Working with Risk Management Agency (RMA)
- Urban Agriculture
- Organic Certification and Organic Transition
- Additional USDA and External Resources

Where to Access the Guide

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/guides-and-instructions/get-started-a-guide-to-usda-resources-for-historically>

Contact

Your local FSA, NRCS, or RMA Office.
See the pages at the end of this guide for contact information.

New & Beginning Farmer Resources

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM)

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets maintains a repository of resources for new and beginning farmers. The list of resources VAAFAM has compiled cover a wide breadth of topics relevant to new and aspiring farmers in starting their agricultural venture. Visit the website to explore all the resources thoroughly.

Land Access:

Fact sheets, organizations, and working groups that focus on land access and tenure for farmers.

Selling Your Product:

Farmers market regulations, labeling and packaging requirements, direct marketing practices, wholesale, and distribution guidance, and agrotourism information.

Business Planning & Advising:

Technical assistance providers, working groups, and organizations that focus on business planning, at all stages of business development.

Health & Wellness:

Organizations and agencies providing health and counseling services and assistance for farmers.

Product Specific Resources:

Resources on a wide array of agricultural products. Resources also include regulations and food processing guidance.

Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Farmers:

Resources and organizations focused on serving BIPOC farmers and working towards a just and equitable food system.

Women-Owned Farms: Organizations and networks providing resources, trainings, and assistance for women in farming.

Grants & Loans:

VAAFAM grant opportunities, FSA loan information, and funding/financing resources for VT producers.

Getting Registered:

Resources on getting farm businesses registered with the Farm Services Agency, VT Department of Taxes, VT Secretary of State and guidance in determining business entity.

Regulations, Permits, & Construction on Farms:

Regulation, licensing, and registration information regarding Act 250, water quality, pesticide applications, construction, and more.

Agronomy & Farming Practices:

List of technical service providers and research entities providing consulting, service, and training.

Farmers with Disabilities: Organizations providing advocacy, legal support, and resources for farmers with disabilities.

Veteran Farmers: Financial resources, trainings, and health resources for Veterans in farming.

LGBTQ Farmers: Organizations, networks, and resources for LGBTQ+ farmers.

Immigrant/Refugee Farmers: Organizations supporting refugees and immigrants farming in Vermont.



View the full resource list at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/development/new-farmer-resources>

Classes and Courses for Beginning and Aspiring Farmers

The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension

No matter what stage your farm business is in, UVM Extension offers educational opportunities to help you reach your full potential. Courses offered by the New Farmer Project and other UVM Extension programs are specifically designed to meet the needs of aspiring and beginning farmers. Check their Calendar for a regional list of events such as field days, workshops, classes, and webinars which may be of interest but do not necessarily specifically target beginning farmers.

Courses Offered

Growing Places

- For aspiring farmers and start-ups.
- Get your enterprise off to the right start. Participants define goals, explore and evaluate opportunities and resources, and become familiar with state and federal agriculture programs. Co-sponsored by the Women's Agricultural Network.

Farm Financial Management and Education

- UVM Extension ag business educators provide coaching, and consultations related to farm business development. The Building a Sustainable Business course guides participants through developing a farm business plan.

Taking Stock

- Designed for farmers with at least five years of commercial production experience and who are considering changes to the scale, scope, and/or design of their farm business.

Building a Sustainable Business

- UVM Extension ag business educators provide coaching, and consultations related to farm business development.

Contact

newfarmer@uvm.edu
(866) 860-1382 (toll free in Vermont) or
802-476-2003



<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/newfarmerproject>

Scholarships and Stipends

Vermont Farm Women's Fund (VFWF)

The Vermont Farm Women's Fund provides stipends and scholarships to help women farmers build thriving businesses and to participate in agricultural policy development. Since 2009, the fund has made 71 awards totaling over \$36,000.

Overview

Scholarships can be used to defray registration fees for educational conferences, courses, and classes. The key to a successful proposal will be explaining how the education relates to improvements you are considering on your farm.

VFWF targets its scholarship awards to women who own, operate and/or work on Vermont farms, and who earn a majority of their income from farm-related activities.

VFWF will contribute up to 75% of class/course/conference registration fees. Except in cases of extreme financial hardship, the maximum scholarship amount will be \$150. VFWF reserves the right, at its discretion, to award less than the full amount an applicant requests or no amount.

In selecting scholarship recipients, they are seeking individuals who: have specific plans to use the skills, information and knowledge they gain at the conference to implement successful farming practices on their own farm in the next 6-12 months, and/or who intend to share what they learned with other farmers in the 6-12 months; agree to submit a written report about the education they received within six weeks of the event; and to respond to follow-up surveys from the VFWF. Award decisions will also consider the applicant's financial situation.

To be eligible for funding, applications must be submitted to the Vermont Farm Women's Fund least 10 days before the event that you want to attend. VFWF reviews and awards scholarship requests on a first-come, first-served basis as funds are available. Applicants are notified within 10 days of receipt of the application. If your proposal is not selected, you can resubmit it for a future round of funding. Rather than simply resubmitting the original proposal, however, you might consider ways to revise and strengthen your proposal.

If you receive an award from the VFWF, you will need to wait 2 years before applying again. This is to ensure that the funds are spread out and help as many individuals as possible.

Vermont Farm Women's Fund

(802) 476-2003

vfwf@uvm.edu

<https://blog.uvm.edu/vfwf/>

Farmland Conservation Vermont Land Trust (VLT)

Rooted in Vermont since 1977, Vermont Land Trust unites land and lives for the enduring benefit of people and the place we share. The nonprofit has protected more than 640,000 acres of land and fosters life-long connections to farms, forests, and community spaces that define Vermont. With expertise in conservation, ecology, community engagement, and finance, VLT helps:

- Conserve land with important economic, community, and environmental benefits by limiting development and ensuring sound land stewardship practices
- Support farmers in buying land and growing sustainable businesses
- Improve the health of land, water, and soil, and share that knowledge with all others
- Ensure that permanent legal protections on 2,200 parcels are upheld, in partnership with landowners
- Connect all people to the outdoors through education and events

Farmers & Farmland

To support Vermont's agricultural economy and protect agricultural land Vermont Land Trust:

- Protects farms conservation easements
- Works with landowners to transfer, sell, and conserve farmland
- Assist prospective farm owners to purchase farmland with guidance, relationships, or a lease with VLT.
- Assists land stewards support soil health and water quality, helping with restoration, easements, or program enrollment.
- Assists land stewards to access grants and resources like the Eric Rozendaal Memorial Award, Land Stewards Award, and partner programs.

Forests & Woodland Owners

To support Vermont's forestland and individuals stewarding forests Vermont Land Trust:

- Protects woodlands through woodland donations to VLT or another partner.
- Assist landowners and stewards with developing conservation and management plans
- Provides assistance to protect land important to your community through legal help, fundraising planning and support, ecological restoration, or conservation.
- Hosts educational events and provides
- Helps promote outdoor recreation and access by creating trails that are accessible, clarifying indigenous rights, assisting people experiencing hunger, and expanding land ownership for people who have been historically marginalized and oppressed.

Contact

Vermont Land Trust
8 Bailey Avenue Montpelier, VT 05602
Phone: (802) 223-5234
Email: info@vlt.org



vlt.org

Eric Rozendaal Memorial Award Vermont Land Trust (VLT)

The Eric Rozendaal Memorial Award is given annually to a farmer who honors the legacy of Eric Rozendaal - a thoughtful, creative, and entrepreneurial farmer. The award fund was created through contributions from Eric's family and friends and is managed by the Vermont Land Trust. The first Eric Rozendaal Memorial Award was given in 2019 to Corie Pierce of Bread & Butter Farm.



Application Deadline in January



Up to \$5,000



View Application Instructions at:
<https://vlt.org/eric-rozendaal-award/>

Eligibility

The awardee must:

- Be a resident of Vermont
- Be actively managing or working on a commercial farm operation in Vermont
- Have not received the award in the past

The applicant does not have to own a farm. Current VLT staff, VLT board members, members of the Selection Committee and the immediate family members of VLT staff, VLT board members, and members of the Selection Committee are not eligible to apply.

Criteria

Land stewardship: A demonstrated commitment to building healthy soils and protecting natural resources.

Giving back: A commitment to giving back to the community and to fellow farmers. This could be through mentorship, community engagement, or other activities.

Entrepreneurism: A demonstrated entrepreneurial approach to farming. This could include introducing new farm products or developing new markets.

Use of the funds: A clear description of recent or planned project(s) on the farm related to the award criteria that the funds can support.

Contact

Jessie Estes, Executive Assistant
Jessie@vlt.org
802-272-7036



<https://vlt.org/eric-rozendaal-award/>

A Landowners Guide to Leasing Land for Farming & Farm Access Methods

Land for Good

Land For Good's mission is to ensure the future of farming in New England by putting more farmers more securely on more land. Since 2004, Land for Good has provided caring support and expert guidance to help farmers, landowners, and communities navigate the complex challenges of land access, tenure, and transfer. Their comprehensive and collaborative approach achieves solutions to help realize family, farm business, and community goals.

Farm Access Methods

The purpose of the Farm Access Methods guide is to provide an organized framework of farm access methods to help farmers make informed decisions.

This guide is organized into categories based on ownership:

Ownership Now

- Sole Ownership or Whole Shared Ownership Interests
- Partial Ownership Interests

Ownership in the Future

- Lease to Own
- Land Contract
- LLC or Corporation
- Gift Over Time

No Ownership

- Leasehold Interest in Land
- Other Arrangements for Land

Link to Farm Access Methods Guide:
<https://landforgood.org/resources/toolbox/leasing-3/>

Landowner's Guide

A Landowner's Guide to Leasing Land for Farming is intended to assist landowners in making land available for farming by others. If you have property that could be used for agriculture, this guide will help you through the steps.

Link to Access Guide:

<https://landforgood.org/wp-content/uploads/LFG-Landowners-Guide-To-Leasing-To-A-Farmer-Handbook.pdf>



landforgood.org

Phone: 603-357-1600

Email: info@LandForGood.org

PO Box 625 Keene, New Hampshire
03431

Advancing Equitable Land Access

Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust (NEFOC)

The Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust (NEFOC) is a BIPOC-led organization dedicated to positively impacting the health and wellness outcomes of BIPOC communities and the lands and non-human beings in the Northeast region of what is now known as the United States, an area that comprises the traditional territories of many sovereign nations. NEFOC’s overarching goal is to reshape root causes and systems that marginalize our communities, co-creating a mass of self-determined communities generating scalable knowledge together, while synthesizing, sharing, and embodying expressions of land-based solidarity as means of mutual healing and survivance.

Programs & Focus Areas

<p style="text-align: center;">Land Network Services Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business planning & technical assistance for farmers of color • Equitable lease agreement assistance and negotiations • Land reparations connections • Connections to trainings and education • NEFOC Emergency Relief Fund • NEFOC Network Mycelia Fortification Stipend • La Beca Braiding Seeds Fellowship 	<p style="text-align: center;">Reparations Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Programs including Every Town Project, Neighbors Network, and Land Matching Committee • Trainings and gatherings committed to dismantling racism and oppression • Assistance to match land stewards with donated land, with focus on equity and culturally sensitive approach to land access
<p style="text-align: center;">Policy, Partnerships, & Climate Justice Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating engagement and collaborative policy development • Connecting “on-the-ground” projects to regional and national movements • Drawing connections of ancestral land and climate stewardship 	<p style="text-align: center;">Community Conservation Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend and strengthen relationships, collaborations, and knowledge among Black, Indigenous, and other Land Stewards of Color • Advance land sovereignty and ecological health projects related to environmental protection
<p style="text-align: center;">Black Land Stewardship Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Farmers Learn, an educational subsidy of up to \$500 for programs of the applicant’s choice • Networking and community building for Black farmers 	<p style="text-align: center;">Relationships & Reciprocity Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Indigenous Reciprocity & Partnerships • Communications • Relational Bridging • Reparations • Land Stewardship Planning and Biocultural Re-storyation
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> https://nefoclandtrust.org </div>	

Farm First

Farm First is a public, not-for-profit program jointly sponsored by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and the Vermont Agency of Human Services' Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. Our staff include friendly and caring licensed counselors and an agricultural resource navigator, all with an interest or experience in agriculture. We can assist you remotely through video-conferencing and in person - oftentimes right at your farm.

What is Farm First?

Farm First provides confidential help with any personal or work-related issue. We know that if left unaddressed, stress correlates with chronic health, safety, family, and business problems. Consulting with a Farm First counselor or resource specialist, located statewide, can help you resolve problems before they mushroom into debilitating situations. Farm First is here to provide you, your family, and your operation with the resources, professional, and personal support to address a wide range of issues, including labor and management issues, financial concerns, alcohol or drug problems, injury, illness, or adaptive equipment needs, legal issues, family stress, depression and much more.

Eligibility

Vermont farm owner, or farm-based family member of owner, grossing a minimum of \$10,000 per year from agriculture. Farmers working with a disability or injury are also eligible.

Contact

Call: (802) 318-5538 during
daytime work hours

Call: 877-493-6216 outside of
daytime work hours

Email: Eva Griffin at
EvaG@farmfirst.org

www.FarmFirst.org

With a single phone call, you can reach Farm First's fully licensed, agriculturally-sensitive resource specialists and counselors. We will discuss with you, confidentially and at no cost, the best method to address and resolve your concerns.

AgrAbility

The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities, so that they, their families, and their communities continue to succeed in rural America. For this target audience, “success” may be defined by many parameters, including: gainful employment in production agriculture or a related occupation; access to appropriate assistive technology needed for work and daily living activities; evidence-based information related to the treatment and rehabilitation of disabling conditions; and targeted support for family caregivers of AgrAbility customers.

Toolbox Database

The Toolbox: Agricultural Tools, Equipment, Machinery & Buildings for Farmers and Ranchers with Physical Disabilities is a resource that contains assistive technology solutions for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. The toolbox provides recommendations and descriptions, and sources for assistive equipment as well as technical reports providing techniques and suggestions focused on a specific topic on farming/ranching with a disability.

View the toolbox at:
<http://www.agrability.org/toolbox/>

Resources

The AgrAbility website provides resources on a wide range of topics of interest to agricultural workers with disabilities. Resources include those related to specific disabilities, assistive technology for adapting farming practices, funding assistance, information on organizations supporting farmers/ranchers with disabilities, technical reports, success stories, and more.

View AgrAbility’s resource repository at:
<http://www.agrability.org/resources/>



<http://www.agrability.org/>

Events & Webinars

The National AgrAbility Project provides free online training as a service to farmers and ranchers with disabilities, the professionals who work with them, other nonprofit service providers, and anyone else who may be interested. Some web-based seminars (webinars) are broadcast live and then archived, while others are prerecorded and posted on this site.

In-person event schedules can also be found on the AgrAbility website.

Vermont Agricultural Mediation Program (VTAMP) Environmental Mediation Center (EMC)

The Environmental Mediation Center is a nonprofit organization that provides free mediation services to the agricultural community. The EMC utilizes a roster of highly trained mediators experienced in agricultural mediation. The EMC works on a variety of agricultural disputes.

Mediation Topics

VT EMC can provide mediation services concerning the following issues:

- Contracts, Farm Management, and Labor
- Credit Counseling
- Crop Insurance
- Easement Issues
- Environmental Compliance
- Family Farm Transitions
- Farm Credit/Debt Issues
- Farm Loans
- Farm-Neighbor Disputes
- Leases (Land & Equipment)
- Organic Certification
- Pesticide Issues
- USDA Farm and Conservation Programs
- USDA Rural Development Loans
- Wetlands Determinations

Process

- After a party requests mediation, the mediation program will contact all parties to get details and provide education on the mediation process.
- Mediation is a process where the parties meet with an impartial person to assist them with negotiation of their differences. Mediation is voluntary. Mediation is confidential and mediators cannot impose a resolution.
- Mediation services are free of charge to the agricultural community when funding is available. In some cases, VTAMP may ask parties to pay on a sliding scale.

Contact

Matt Strassberg, Director of the
Environmental Mediation Center
802-583-1100 ext 101
matts@emcenter.org

Julie Hoyt, Mediator
julieh@emcenter.org



<https://emcenter.org/>

Signs of Conservation

Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD)

The Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District uses simple roadside signs and social media to raise awareness and appreciation for all the ways that farmers in Vermont build soil health, improve water quality, and create other benefits besides the food they grow. Our campaign was founded in Franklin County, but signs are available statewide.



No cost for signs within Franklin County, other counties may vary



Contact your local Conservation District

Ten signs are available to producers! Connect with your local Natural Resources Conservation District about assistance with installing and maintaining signs, or to learn more about support for practice implementation. There is a Directory of Natural Resources Conservation Districts at the end of this guide. You can also find a directory at <https://www.vacd.org/>.

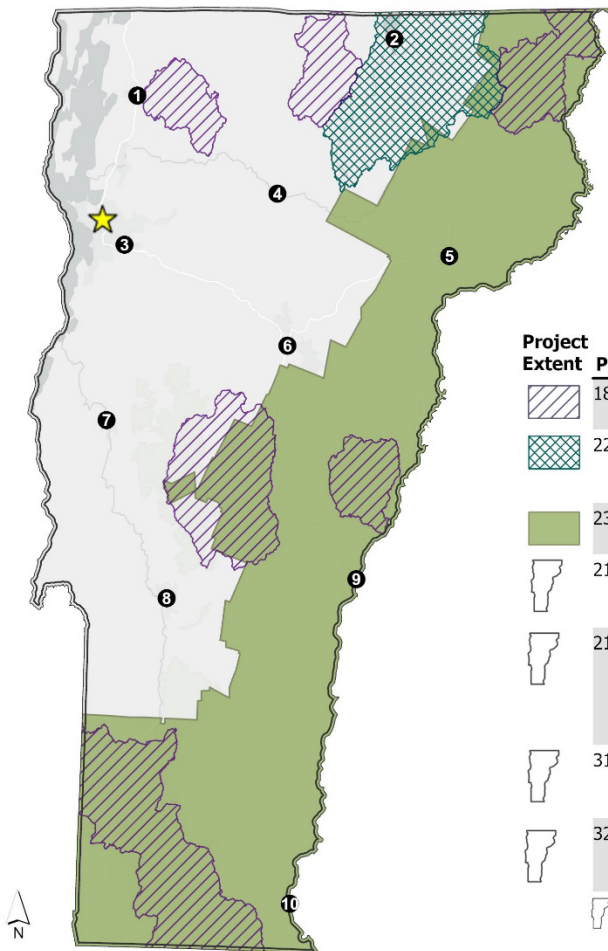


Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program that follows a partner-driven approach to conservation. RCPP funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural and forest land.

RCPP projects and partnerships are developed to address local and regional natural resource concerns and conservation priorities.

Through the RCPP, NRCS cooperates with project partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements to resource concerns. RCPP projects are implemented using NRCS contracts and easements with producers and landowners. RCPP projects and supported may be funded through a separate funding pool, increasing chance of funding, or may have higher payment rates.



VERMONT REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)



Project Extent	Project #	Lead State	Name	Lead Partner	Activity Types
	1865	ME	Northern Tier Stream Restoration and Resilience	Trout Unlimited	Land Management, US Held Easements
	2280	VT	Memphremagog Long-Term Water Quality Partnership	Orleans County Natural Resource Conservation District	Land Management
	2311	MA	Regenerative Agriculture for Western New England	American Farmland Trust	Land Management, Rentals
	2145	VT	Vermont Pay-for-Phosphorus Program	Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets	Alternative Funding Arrangement
	2132	VT	Accelerated Implementation of Agricultural and Forestry Conservation Practices in the Lake Champlain Watershed of Vermont and New York	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation	Land Management, Land Rentals, US Held Easements, Entity Held Easements
	3155	VT	Vermont Dairy Farms Working for Water, Wildlife, Climate, Food and Farmers	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Land Management
	3273	VT	Vermont Water Quality Collaborative Partnership	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation	Land Management, Rentals

= Statewide Project

NRCS VT Service Centers

- 1. Saint Albans
- 2. Newport
- 3. Williston
- 4. Morrisville
- 5. Saint Johnsbury
- 6. Berlin
- 7. Middlebury
- 8. Rutland
- 9. White River Junction
- 10. Brattleboro
- ★ Colchester (State Office)



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) cont'd

RCPP #1865: Northern Tier Stream Restoration and Resilience

Purpose: Improve in-stream habitat in high priority brook trout and Atlantic salmon watersheds in the northern tier New England states.

Lead Partner: Trout Unlimited, Inc.

RCPP 1865 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of practices that improve aquatic habitat, support long-term protection of parcels with forested coldwater stream systems, and support weather resilience through improved floodplain access and increased stream channel roughness.

RCPP #2145: Vermont Pay-for-Performance Program

Purpose: Pay-for-performance for phosphorus load reductions that exceed average reductions required for non-point source pollution in Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load.

Lead Partner: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Learn more about the Vermont Pay-for-Performance (formerly Pay-for-Phosphorus) Program on page 33.

RCPP #2280: Memphremagog Long-Term Water Quality Partnership

Purpose: Address water quality degradation in the Memphremagog and Tomifobia Watersheds through the implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices.

Lead Partner: Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District

RCPP 2280 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of practices, as well as monitoring and modeling that address and evaluate the following resource concerns: field sediment, nutrient, and pathogen loss, concentrated erosion, and soil quality limitations.

RCPP #2311: Regenerative Agriculture for Western New England

Purpose: Improve resiliency of livestock farms by implementing innovative practices that support adoption of regenerative agriculture.

Lead Partner: American Farmland Trust

RCPP 2311 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of practices that improve soil health, pollinator habitat, and support carbon sequestration.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) cont'd

RCPP #3155: Vermont Dairy Farms Working for Water, Wildlife, Climate, Food and Farmers

Purpose: Help organic and pasture-based dairy farms adopt practices that improve water quality and climate impact.

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

RCPP 3155 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of practices that support aquatic habitat and water quality, improve soil health, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through implementation of manure management practices, and supports safe storage and handling of pollutants and agricultural waste.

RCPP #3155: Vermont Dairy Farms Working for Water, Wildlife, Climate, Food and Farmers

Purpose: Help organic and pasture-based dairy farms adopt practices that improve water quality and climate impact.

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

RCPP 3155 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation of practices that support aquatic habitat and water quality, improve soil health, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through implementation of manure management practices, and supports the safe storage and handling of pollutants and agricultural waste.

RCPP #3273: Vermont Water Quality Collaborative Partnership

Purpose: Reduce nutrient impacts, improving soil health and retention, improving flood resilience, and increasing resilient terrestrial and in-stream habitat.

Lead Partner: State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

RCPP 3273 provides financial and technical assistance for the development and implementation agricultural and forestry best management practices to address concentrated erosion, degraded plant condition, field sediment, nutrient pathogen loss, flood resilience, and restoration and long-term protection of habitat. Priority is given to smaller farms and forest operations.

For more information about the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) or any other USDA-NRCS programs, please contact your local NRCS Field Office.

Tree Plantings

Regional Organizations

Natural Resources Conservation Districts, as well as Watershed Organizations, have access to funding to implement tree planting projects. Planting trees along stream banks helps reduce erosion, improve water quality, and provide habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife. Reaching out to Natural Resources Conservation Districts and Watershed Groups directly is the best way to determine how to get trees planted on your land. These organizations can also refer you to other programs and organizations that offer support for your specific tree and shrub planting goals on your land, such as the NRCS and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Each program has different requirements and criteria. A service provider at a Natural Resources Conservation District or Watershed Group can facilitate matching you to the best program for your objectives.



Funding will be announced with Request for Applications (RFA)



To apply, contact your local Conservation District or Watershed Group



In general, applications open in the fall

Conservation Districts help coordinate project scoping and grant applications. They source and procure plant materials and organize and perform installation and maintenance. The grant covers the cost of materials and labor. Landowners may inform Natural Resources Conservation Districts of species preference and be involved in planting and maintenance. Natural Resources Conservation Districts welcome connection with landowners interested in stewardship opportunities any time of year.

Why install a buffer?



- Perennial vegetation provides shade which reduces water temperature and increases oxygen, promoting aquatic life



- Provides wildlife and pollinator habitat



- Promotes water infiltration, reduces soil loss and fertilizer/amendment runoff



- Increases stability of stream banks, improving flood resilience

Find your local Watershed Group
<https://WatershedsUnitedVT.org>

Find your local Conservation District
<https://www.vacd.org> or see the end of this Guide for a Directory

Tree, Trout, & Plant Sales Natural Resources Conservation Districts

Annual tree, shrub, plant, and trout sales hosted by Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts take place throughout the state each spring. These events have a long tradition, and are an excellent resource for native species, supporting local economies, and district fundraisers. NRCs often include fruit-producing trees, shrubs, and canes, native evergreens and hardwoods, species supporting native and local wildlife, and species suitable for restoration projects along Vermont's waterways.

Franklin County NRC: Each May Franklin County NRC hosts their annual Tree & Trout Sale, offering a wide selection of bareroot trees and shrubs, as well as trout. The primary goal of this sale is to provide trees, shrubs, and trout at an accessible price, allowing community members to complete projects to support food productions, wildlife habitat, recreation, and more. Pre-Orders are open from December-April.

Lamoille County NRC: Lamoille County NRC hosts their tree and trout sale in late April and provides an array of native trees and shrubs that can be used for fruit production, wildlife habitat, and restoration projects, along with 6"-12" trout.

Orleans County NRC: For over 40 years Orleans County NRC has hosted an annual plant sale, offering bareroot plants including fruit trees, berry bushes, native trees, and native wetland plants and shrubs. The Orleans County NRC also offers Rainbow and Brook trout. Orders open in January each year.

Otter Creek NRC: Otter Creek NRC sponsors its Annual Tree/Seedling Program each spring, providing community members with seeding and bareroot trees, along with shrubs, small fruit such as strawberries and raspberries, and asparagus.

Poultney Mettowee NRC: The Champlain Valley Native Plant Restoration Nursery was created through partnership between Poultney Mettowee NRC and The Nature Conservancy's Southern Lake Champlain Valley Program, and offers a source for native potted plants and bareroot stock. Pre-Orders for bareroot trees and shrubs are open through April, while potted plants may be purchased throughout the growing season.

Rutland County NRC: Each year Rutland County NRC hosts Seedling and Trout sales. The sale includes hardwoods and evergreens, species supporting wildlife, fruit producing species, and wildflower seeds.

Windham County NRC: Pre-orders for Windham County NRC's annual plant sale is open until late April. Plants include conifers, hardwoods, fruit trees, canes, and shrubs, perennial vegetables, perennial flowers.

Winooski NRC: Pre orders for the Winooski NRC annual Tree Sale are open until early May. Included in the sale are fruit producing trees and shrubs, native evergreens and hardwoods, and species supporting native and local wildlife.

Learn more about Vermont NRC Tree, Trout,
& Plant Sales, including ordering instructions
and catalogs, at:

<https://www.vacd.org/plant-sales/>

Agricultural Support Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRCB)

Natural Resources Conservation Districts can assist Small Farm Operations, Certified Small Farm Operations, Medium Farm Operations, and Large Farm Operations with a wide range of services, including Nutrient Management Planning, water-quality related workshop coordination, event hosting, and provide referrals to additional assistance.

Capacity for support ranges from one NRCB to another. Please reach out to your local NRCB for additional information.

Services May Include:

- Soil Sampling
- Manure Sampling
- Equipment Rentals including portable skidder bridges, scales, and seed drills.
- Land Treatment Planning, Nutrient Management Planning, understanding the RAPs
- Program & Technical Assistance
- Referrals to applicable local, regional, state, and federal programs
- Workshop Coordination and Hosting
- Help navigating funding opportunities, including assisting with applications and providing producers with letters of support
- Precision Agriculture Assistance
- Coordinate and facilitate state, local, and federal staff for site visits
- Act as a liaison with town, state, and federal regulators

NRCB staff may also work with producers to identify, plan, and implement other non-agricultural natural resources projects, including tree plantings, wetland restoration, and habitat enhancement projects.

Learn more about Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation District and your local NRCB at <https://www.vacd.org/>.

Required Agricultural Practices (RAP) Quiz

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD)

The goal of the Required Agricultural Practices (RAP) Online Quiz is to provide an accessible, informative tool for livestock farmers to raise awareness of the RAPs and water quality improvement practices available for Vermont farmers while providing them with water quality credits.

What You'll Learn:

- How the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) apply to your farm
- Specific on-farm examples
- Impact of management practices on water quality
- Links to additional resources

Take the RAP Quiz
www.vacd.org/rapquiz

View Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
(VAAFM)
Farm Definitions and Determinations

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/farm-definitions-and-determinations>

View the Required Agricultural
Practices Rule & Short Summary

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/rap>

Water Quality Educational Training

Agricultural Water Quality Training is required for CSFO, MFO, and LFO operators, as well as Certified Custom Applicators. Trainings are hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and partner organizations and institutions including UVM Extension and local Conservation Districts.

Trainings may be online courses or webinars or online events, covering topics including:

- Vermont's Required Agricultural Practices Rule
- Manure Management
- Nutrient Management
- Reading Soil Tests
- Understanding Nutrient Flows, Macronutrients, and Micronutrients
- Manure Injection & Reduce Tillage Equipment and Practices
- Precision Agriculture
- Stream & River Conservation

Learn more about Water Quality Education Credits at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality-educational-credits>

Equipment Rental Directory

Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance Equipment Rental Library

10 Benning Street #245, West Lebanon NH 03784; (802) 457-2230
Service Area: Connecticut River Watershed in VT and NH
Equipment: No-till Drills, Roller Crimper, Portable Truck Scales
Website: <https://www.crwfa.org/equipment-rental>

Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District

50 Main Street, Suite B-20, St. Albans, VT 05478; 802-528-4176
Service Area: Franklin County, some programs serve Grand Isle County
Equipment: Portable Skidder Bridge
Website: <https://www.franklincountynrcd.org/skidderbridge>

Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District

59 Waterfront Plaza, Newport VT 05855; (802) 334-6090 Ext. 7008
Service Area: Orleans County and neighboring region
Equipment & Services: No-Till Drill (Sunflower 9412 -Aerator (Aerway – 20 ft), Portable Truck Scales (Set of 6 GEC MD 500 portable wheel load truck scales), Soil Probes, Portable Skidder Bridge, Manure Sample Shipping Service, Soil Sampling

Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District

PO Box 209, Poultney VT 05764; (802) 558-6470
Service Area: Southern Addison, Rutland, and Bennington Counties
Equipment: No-Till Drill (10ft), Aerator (8ft), Portable Truck Scales

UVM Extension Middlebury Office

23 Pond Lane, Suite 300, Middlebury VT 05753; (802) 388-4969
Service Area: Addison County and neighboring regions
Equipment: No-Till Drills (10ft), Portable Truck Scales

UVM Extension Rutland

271 North Main St, Rutland VT 05701; (802) 773-3349
Service Area: Rutland County
Equipment: Soil Probes

UVM Extension St. Albans Office

278 So. Main Street, St. Albans VT 05478; (802) 524-6503
Service Area: 75-mile radius of St. Albans, unless part of a larger project or special arrangement
Equipment & Services: No-Till Drills (10ft, 12ft, 15ft), Manure Spreader (Tebbes), Subsoiler (Krause), Interseeder (15ft), Cover Crop Seeding Service, Interseeding Service, Reduced-till Corn Planting Service

Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District

617 Comstock Road, Suite 1, Berlin VT 05602; (802) 828-4493 AND
300 Interstate Corporate Center, Suite 200, Williston VT 05495; (802) 288-8155 Ext. 104, or info@winooskinrcd.org
Equipment: Aeration Tiller

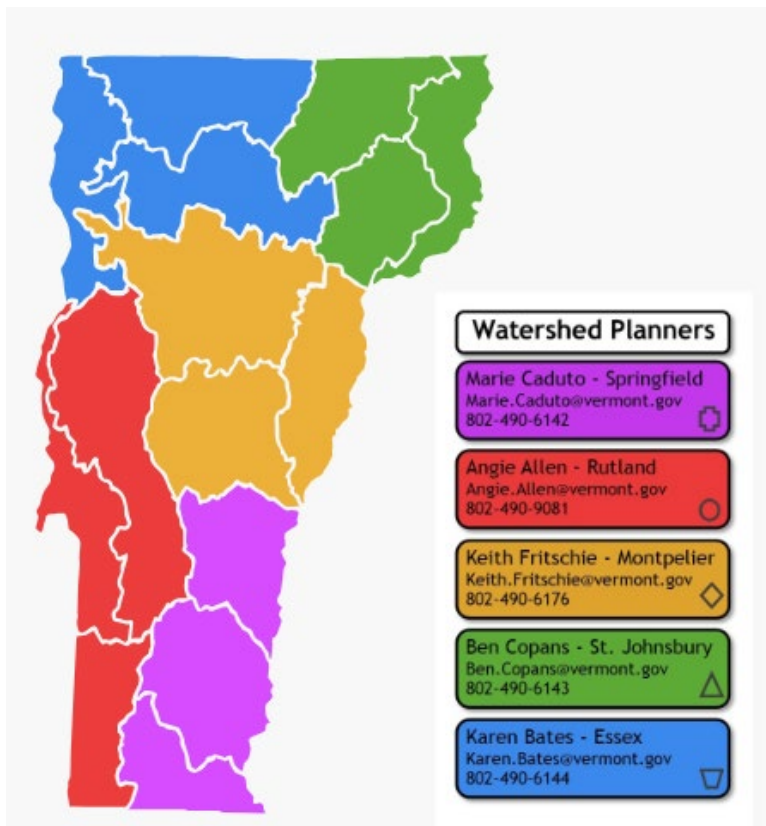
The Vermont Agency of Agriculture & Food Markets' Conservation Equipment & Services Locator contains a growing list of conservation equipment and services available to rent, borrow, or hire found across the state. The locator can be found at [here:](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/equipment-rental)
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/equipment-rental>

There are additional NRCs that do not offer equipment rentals but may offer additional agricultural support and services. Navigate to the full directory on page 134.

Tactical Basin Planning

Tactical Basin Plans (TBP) are strategic guidebooks for achieving watershed health. They identify surface waters that are in need of restoration and protection, and outline a list of actions to achieve water quality goals. Vermont has identified 15 planning basins, managed by five Watershed planners who work in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to monitor water quality and analyze data, identify strategies and projects to protect and restore waters, seek public comment and participation in plan development, and implement and track planning priorities.

Find your Regional Watershed Planner



Project Resources

View current projects, Water Quality Project Screening Tool, & Funding Opportunities

<https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/cleanWaterDashboard/>

Get Involved

Interested in becoming involved with development or implementation of your watershed's Tactical Basin Plan? Need help scoping a potential restoration project?

Find your local watershed group at:
<https://watershedsunitedvt.org/>

Find your local Natural Resources Conservation District:
www.vacd.org or via the Directory at the end of this Guide



<https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/watershed-planning/tactical-basin-planning>

Vermont County Foresters

Vermont's County Foresters provide services at a regional basis and may operate outside of their designated county in order to support Vermont's forest landowners and stewards. Visit <https://fpr.vermont.gov/forest/list-vermont-county-foresters> to find the most up-to-date information on the County Forester serving your town.

Northern Region

The Northern Region includes towns predominantly in Franklin, Grand Isle, Orleans, Lamoille, Essex and Caledonia counties.

Jared Nunery, Northern Region Lead
Serving landowners in Orleans County
jared.nunery@vermont.gov
1162 North Craftsbury Road (Mail: P.O. Box 62)
Craftsbury Common, VT 05827
802-595-5754

A.J. Follensbee, County Forester
Serving landowners in and around southern Caledonia County
5 Perry Street, Suite 20
Barre, VT 05641-4265
Phone: 802-595-2429
allen.follensbee@vermont.gov

Charlie Hancock, County Forester
Serving landowners in and around Franklin and Grand Isle Counties
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452-4695
Phone: 802-917-2711
charlie.hancock@vermont.gov

Matt Langlais, County Forester
Serving landowners in Essex and northern Caledonia Counties
374 Emerson Falls Road, Suite 4
St Johnsbury, VT 05819
Phone: 802-535-8486
Matt.Langlais@vermont.gov

Emily Potter, County Forester
Serving landowners in and around Lamoille County
5 Perry Street, Suite 20
Barre, VT 05641-4265
Phone: 802-622-4230
emily.potter@vermont.gov

Central Region

The Central Region includes towns predominantly in Addison, Chittenden, Orange, Washington and northern Rutland counties.

David Paganelli, Central Region Lead
Serving landowners in Orange County
118 Prospect Street, Suite 102
White River Junction, VT 05001
Phone: 802-461-5304
david.paganelli@vermont.gov

Brandon Benedict, County Forester
Serving landowners in Chittenden County, northern Addison County and Mad River Valley
111 West Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452-4695
Phone: 802-261-7179
brandon.benedict@vermont.gov

Robert Nelson, County Forester
Serving landowners in Washington and Orange Counties
5 Perry Street, Suite 20
Barre, VT 05641-4265
Phone: 802-636-7203
robert.nelson@vermont.gov

Mark Raishart, County Forester
Serving landowners in northern Rutland and southern Addison County
271 North Main Street, Suite 215
Rutland, VT 05701-2423
Phone: 802-522-9510
mark.raishart@vermont.gov

Vermont County Foresters

Southern Region

The Southern Region includes towns predominantly in Bennington, Windsor, Windham and southern Rutland counties.

Sam Schneski, Southern-Region Lead

Serving landowners in southeastern Vermont

100 Mineral Street, Suite 304

Springfield, VT 05156-3168

Phone: 802-380-8916

sam.schneski@vermont.gov

Hannah Dallas, County Forester

Serving landowners in southern Windsor and northern Windham Counties

118 Prospect Street, Suite 102

White River Junction, VT 05001

Phone: 802-622-4169

hannah.dallas@vermont.gov

Northern Windsor County

Vacant - Coverage by AJ Follensbee until January 2025

100 Mineral Street, Suite 304

Springfield, VT 05156-3168

Phone: 802-595-2429

allen.follensbee@vermont.gov

Tessa McGann, County Forester

Serving landowners in southwestern Vermont

271 North Main Street, Suite 215

Rutland, VT 05701-2423

Phone: 802-505-1579

tessa.mcgann@vermont.gov

Field Offices

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Addison County Farm Service Agency
68 Catamount Park, Middlebury, VT 05753
(802) 388-6748

Caledonia County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Chittenden and Essex Counties)
481 Summer St., St Johnsbury, VT 05819,
(802) 748-2641

Chittenden County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Washington County)
94 Harvest Ln., Williston, VT 05495
(802) 288-8155

Franklin County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Grand Isle County)
50 S. Main St., St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 527-1296 ext 110

Lamoille County Farm Service Agency
109 Professional Dr. Ste 2, Morrisville, VT 05661
(802) 888-4935

Orleans County Farm Service Agency
59 Waterfront Plaza Ste 11, Newport, VT 05855
(802) 334-6090

Rutland County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Bennington County)
170 S. Main St. Ste 4, Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 775-8034

Windham County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Bennington County)
28 Vernon St., Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 254-9755

Windsor County Farm Service Agency
(Also Serves Orange County)
28 Farmvu Dr., White River Junction, VT 05001
(802) 295-7942

Farm Service Agency State Office
356 Mountain View Dr.
Colchester, VT 05446

(802) 658-2803

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Offices

Northwest Zone:

St. Albans NRCS Field Office
50 South Main St, Ste B-20 St. Albans, VT 05478
802-527-1296

Morrisville NRCS Field Office
109 Professional Dr., Ste. 2 Morrisville, VT 05661
802-888-4935

Northeast Zone:

Newport NRCS Field Office
59 Waterfront Plaza, Ste. 12 Newport, VT 05855
802-334-6090

St. Johnsbury NRCS Field Office
481 Summer St., Ste. 202 St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-748-2641

Central Zone:

Middlebury NRCS Field Office
68 Catamount Park, Ste. B Middlebury, VT 05753
802-388-6748

Williston NRCS Field Office
94 Harvest Lane, Suite 203 Williston, VT 05495-
8997
802-288-8155

Berlin Field Office
617 Comstock Rd., Ste. 1 Berlin, VT 05602
802-828-4493

South Zone:

Rutland NRCS Field Office
170 S. Main St., Ste. 4 Rutland, VT 05701
802-775-8034

White River Junction NRCS Field Office
28 Farmvu Dr., White River Jct., VT 05001
802-295-7942

Brattleboro NRCS Field Office
28 Vernon St., Ste. 332 Brattleboro, VT 05301
802-689-3037

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Office

356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 105
Colchester, Vermont 05446

802-951-6796
Fax: 855-794-3677

Natural Resources Conservation Districts (NRC D) Offices

Bennington County NRC D

170 South Main St, Suite 4 Rutland, VT 05701
Michael Fernandez, District Manager
(802) 775-8034 x 132 or Michael@bccdvt.org

Caledonia County NRC D

481 Summer St., Suite 202,
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
Emily Finnegan, District Manager
(802) 424-3149 or emily.finnegan@vt.nacdnet.net

Essex County NRC D

5396 VT-105, Brunswick, VT 05905
Sam Mayne, District Manager
802-424-5353 or essexnrcd@gmail.com

Franklin County NRC D

50 South Main Street, Saint Albans, VT 05478
Lauren Weston, District Manager
802-528-4176 or info@FranklinCountyNRC D.org

Grand Isle County NRC D

P.O. Box 212, North Hero, VT 05474
Molly Varner, District Manager
802-372-8400 or molly.gicnrcd@gmail.com

Lamoille County NRC D

109 Professional Drive, Suite 2,
Morrisville, VT 05661
Peter Danforth, District Manager
802-521-2004 or lcddirector@gmail.com

Orleans County NRC D

59 Waterfront Plaza Newport, VT 05855
Sarah Damsell, District Manager
802-334-6090 x 7008 or
sarah.damsell@vt.nacdnet.net

Ottawaquechee NRC D

28 Farmvu Drive, White River Junction, VT 05001
Kelly Stettner, District Manager
802-436-6241 or ONRCD1@gmail.com

Otter Creek NRC D

68 Catamount Park, Ste. B, Middlebury, VT 05753
Pamela Stefanek, District Manager
802-771-3037 or pam.stefanek@vt.nacdnet.net

Poultney Mettowee NRC D

PO Box 209, Poultney VT 05764
Hilary Solomon, District Manager
802-287-6880 or hilary@pmnrcd.org

Rutland NRC D

170 S Main Street Ste 4, Rutland, VT 05701
Nanci McGuire, District Manager
802-775-8034 x 117 or
nanci.mcguire@vt.nacdnet.net

White River NRC D

28 Farmvu Dr, White River Junction, VT 05001
Jennifer Byrne, District Manager
802-369-3167 or WhiteRiverNRC D@gmail.com

Windham County NRC D

28 Vernon Street, Suite 332 Brattleboro, VT 05301
Cory Ross, District Manager
802-689-3024 or windhamcountynrcd@gmail.com

Winooski NRC D

94 Harvest Lane, Suite 203, Williston, VT 05495
And
617 Comstock Rd, Suite 1, Berlin, VT 05602
Daniel Koenemann, District Manager
Daniel@winooskinrcd.org