



**DRAFT**

# **Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program**

## **FY 2018 Request for Applications**

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Funding Source and Available Funds**

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule will require many Vermont produce growers to adopt rigorous production, harvest, and post-harvest handling practices that reduce food safety risks. In order to assist the produce industry in achieving compliance with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and/or buyer-driven requirements such as USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, the Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program will provide funding to address on-farm food safety infrastructure improvements and equipment upgrades that must be established for Vermont growers to be compliant with the law and remain competitive in the marketplace.

In FY 2017, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) received \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the Vermont State Legislature to provide matching grants for capital investments that will support Vermont agricultural producers to make infrastructure upgrades resulting in improved food safety and maintained competitiveness in the wholesale and retail marketplace. The goal of this program is to provide cost share payments and technical assistance to produce operations seeking to improve on-farm food safety capabilities. Funding will support cost share payments to produce operations for equipment, design, and construction projects related to improving produce safety. Priority will be given to operations seeking to meet federal and state food safety requirements.

There is a maximum cap among all Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program grants of \$15,000 per farm, and farms must contribute a one-to-one match of requested funds. Up to 50% of the matching contribution may be in-kind (such as applicant labor).

The deadline for applications is Sunday, October 15, 2017 at 11:59 PM. Grants will be awarded competitively. Please read all application materials closely, including the scoring criteria outlined on Page 9 of this document. Failure to submit a complete application may result in disqualification.

#### **Eligibility and Program Goals**

The goals of the Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Grant Program are to increase sales of Vermont fruits and vegetables by maintaining or increasing market access and promoting food safety. Any Vermont farm that grows, harvests, packs, or holds fresh produce is eligible to apply. To be eligible for funding the participant must be in good standing with the Agency of Agriculture regarding regulatory requirements and resulting

penalties and in compliance with all State of Vermont regulations. Applicants must complete the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/vtfsma](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vtfsma) to determine where their farm falls under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.

**Pre-approved uses for this grant include the following. Additional uses may be proposed.**

- Water systems, delivery and treatment devices and improvements
- Fixed or portable restrooms
- Hand-washing sinks (mobile or stationary)
- Crop production equipment to reduce food safety risks
- Field harvest systems to reduce food safety risks
- Cooler walls and refrigeration units
- Improvements to wash/pack facilities, including, but not limited to—
  - Pack shed walls, ceilings, and light fixtures
  - Building and equipping wash stations
  - Drainage systems in coolers and pack sheds
- Installation of traceability systems
- Improvements to cold chain maintenance
- Fencing or other systems to prevent domestic or wild animal intrusion into produce fields

### **Application and Review Process**

The full application format is provided below. This grant application must be fully completed, signed, and submitted to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets via mail or email. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of representatives of the Agency, UVM Extension, NOFA-VT, and producer groups.

If selected, you will be notified by the Agency. We expect to notify applicants of funding decisions within 6 weeks of the application receipt. Successful applicants will have to sign grant agreements and submit W-9 forms as well as certificates of insurance to the Agency before funds can be disbursed.

### **Application Instructions**

1. Fill out the cover sheet
2. Answer the application questions. We recommend that you read the scoring criteria before answering the questions and ensure that these criteria are addressed in your responses.
3. Fill out the one-page budget form and attach a budget narrative, showing and describing the sources and uses of funding for your project. Be sure to show the required 1-to-1 funding match from sources other than the Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program.
4. Mail or email the completed application materials to:

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets  
116 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05602

Email: [emma.hanson@vermont.gov](mailto:emma.hanson@vermont.gov)

Application assistance: For assistance with your application, contact Emma Hanson, Agriculture Development Coordinator at 802-828-\_\_\_\_ or [emma.hanson@vermont.gov](mailto:emma.hanson@vermont.gov).

## Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program

### Cover Sheet

Name(s) of individual applicant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of business \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

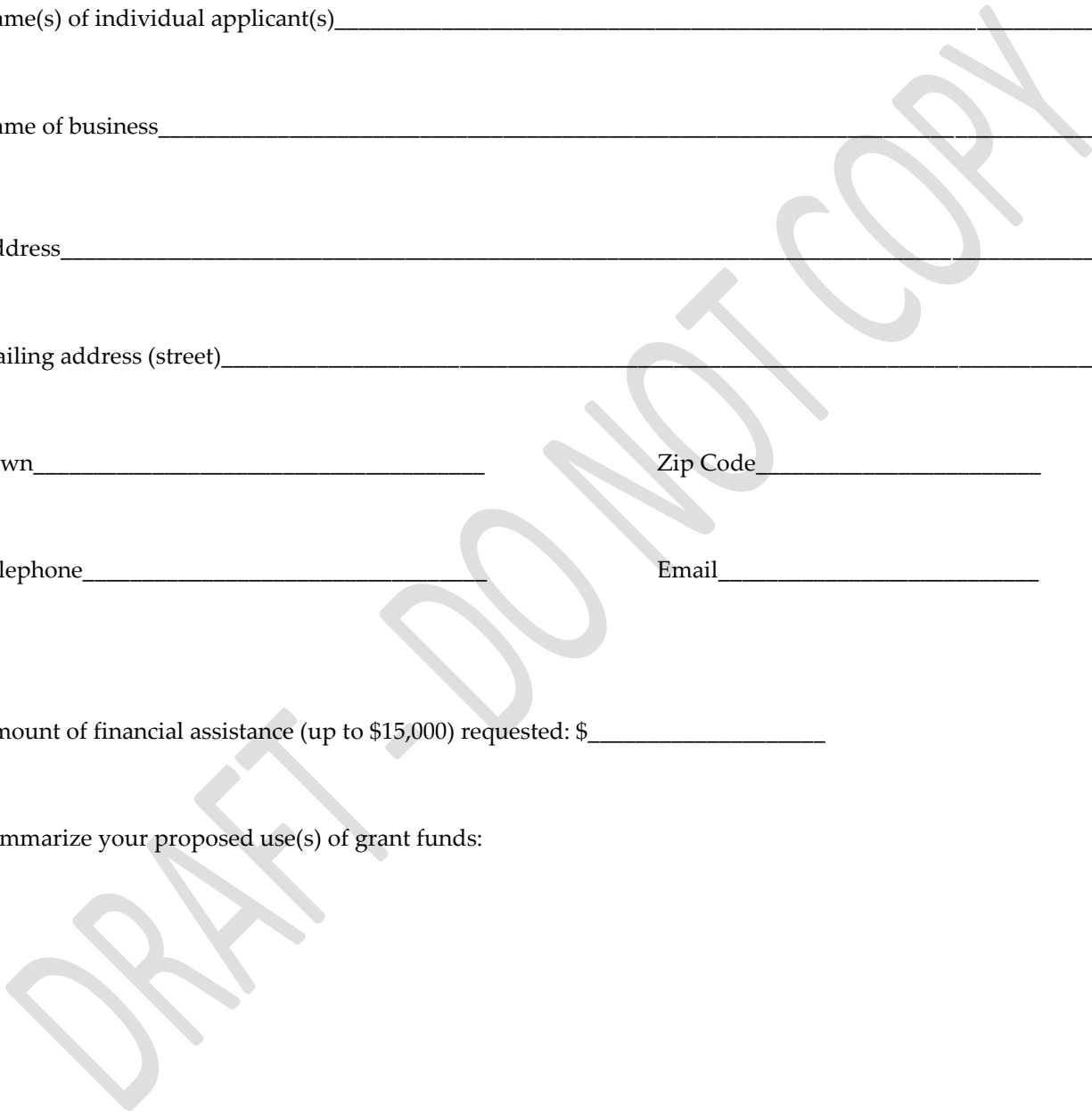
Mailing address (street) \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of financial assistance (up to \$15,000) requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize your proposed use(s) of grant funds:



## Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program Cost-Share Grant Application

In Operation Since (Year) –

Size of Farm (Acres in Production) –

Number of Part-Time & Full-Time Employees –

Type of Wash System(s) –

Size of Wash/Pack Area –

Describe your post-harvest storage area –

Markets – Indicate % wholesale (suppliers/distributors) \_\_\_; institutional (incl. schools, hospitals) \_\_\_; retail or restaurant \_\_\_; and direct to consumer (incl. farm stand, CSAs, farmers markets) \_\_\_

Do you have a current produce safety plan? If yes, indicate when the plan was completed or last revised:

Has your farm received any of the following food safety accreditations/certifications? (YES/NO)

Vermont Vegetable & Berry Grower Association CAPS (Community Accreditation for Produce Safety)	
USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the title and date of your most recent accreditation/certification:

Do any of your buyers require food safety accreditation or certification? If yes, indicate the buyer and the type of credential required:

Select your farm type as defined by the FDA Produce Safety Rule. Complete the survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/vtfsma](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vtfsma) to determine your farm type.

Micro Exempt	Qualified Exempt	Large Business	Small Business
Very Small Business	Processed Exempt	Rarely Consumed Raw Exempt	

Select the types of produce you grow, harvest, pack, or hold on your farm.

Leafy greens, incl. lettuce	Other vegetables	Tree fruit	Berries
Other fruit	Sprouts		

Select any irrigation practices that apply to the above produce. If you do not irrigate, leave blank.

Drip irrigation – water does not come into contact with the edible portion of the plant	
Overhead irrigation – water comes into contact with the edible portion of the plant	

Other (describe below):

Select any of the following water types you use for irrigation, produce washing, handwashing, or other processes involving produce or food contact surfaces.

Town/municipal water	Well /ground water	Surface /river/lake/pond water
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Other (describe below):

**Needs Assessment**

Describe the infrastructure improvements you plan to implement and explain how they will improve the microbiological safety of your produce.

Explain how the proposed investment will address potential hygiene or sanitation issues, and increase food safety standards at your farm.

**Market Access**

Will implementation of these improvements allow you to maintain access to current markets and/or access new markets? YES/NO

If yes, describe how implementing produce safety infrastructure improvements will allow you to maintain market access and/or access new markets.

### **Business Impact**

Will these improvements increase productivity, energy efficiency, or produce shelf life? Will these improvements reduce costs and/or time associated growing, harvesting, packing, or holding fresh produce? If yes, describe below.

Include information on projected financial returns to your business, including any increase in jobs. If you anticipate sales increases, indicate the percentage or dollar increase you expect, e.g., "Our annual sales of \_\_\_\_\_ will increase by \_\_\_\_%, or from \$\_\_\_\_\_ to \$\_\_\_\_\_.

### **Outcomes**

Explain how will you measure your progress toward meeting your goals.

Will implementation of these improvements assist you in complying with applicable Federal and/or State laws?  
YES/NO

If yes, describe how these improvements will assist you in complying with applicable laws.

What, if any, additional long-term produce safety plans do you have for your farm? Is the proposed project part of a longer-term plan?

If awarded funds, when will you begin this project? \_\_\_\_\_

When will your project be completed? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Additional Financing**

Have you applied or will you apply to any additional State, Federal, or other grant programs to complete this project?

List other organizations or people you have contacted for funding or technical assistance for this project.

Please list any other applications upon which your project is contingent (i.e. other grants or bank loans). Please list any federal, state, or local permits or approvals that will be necessary for you to implement this project and their current status.

### **Budget**

Please complete the budget sheet on the next page (required), and briefly describe how the funds will be used, where matching funds are expected to come from, and what matching funds are already secured. Your labor may be used for match. In addition, you may provide a more detailed project budget in your own format, although this is not required. An optional detailed budget does not serve as a replacement for the required budget sheet.

Please show budgeted amounts for the investment you hope to make. Fill in as many lines as are appropriate.

The first part of the budget should show how you would use funding from the Produce Safety Infrastructure Improvement Program. The second part of the budget should identify each additional source of funding (the matching funds), such as personal savings, bank loan, grants, labor, etc. Your labor or that of your employees may only appear in the "Match" section. Match must be equal to the total grant funds requested, at minimum.

**PART ONE: GRANT-FUNDED ITEMS (REQUEST)**

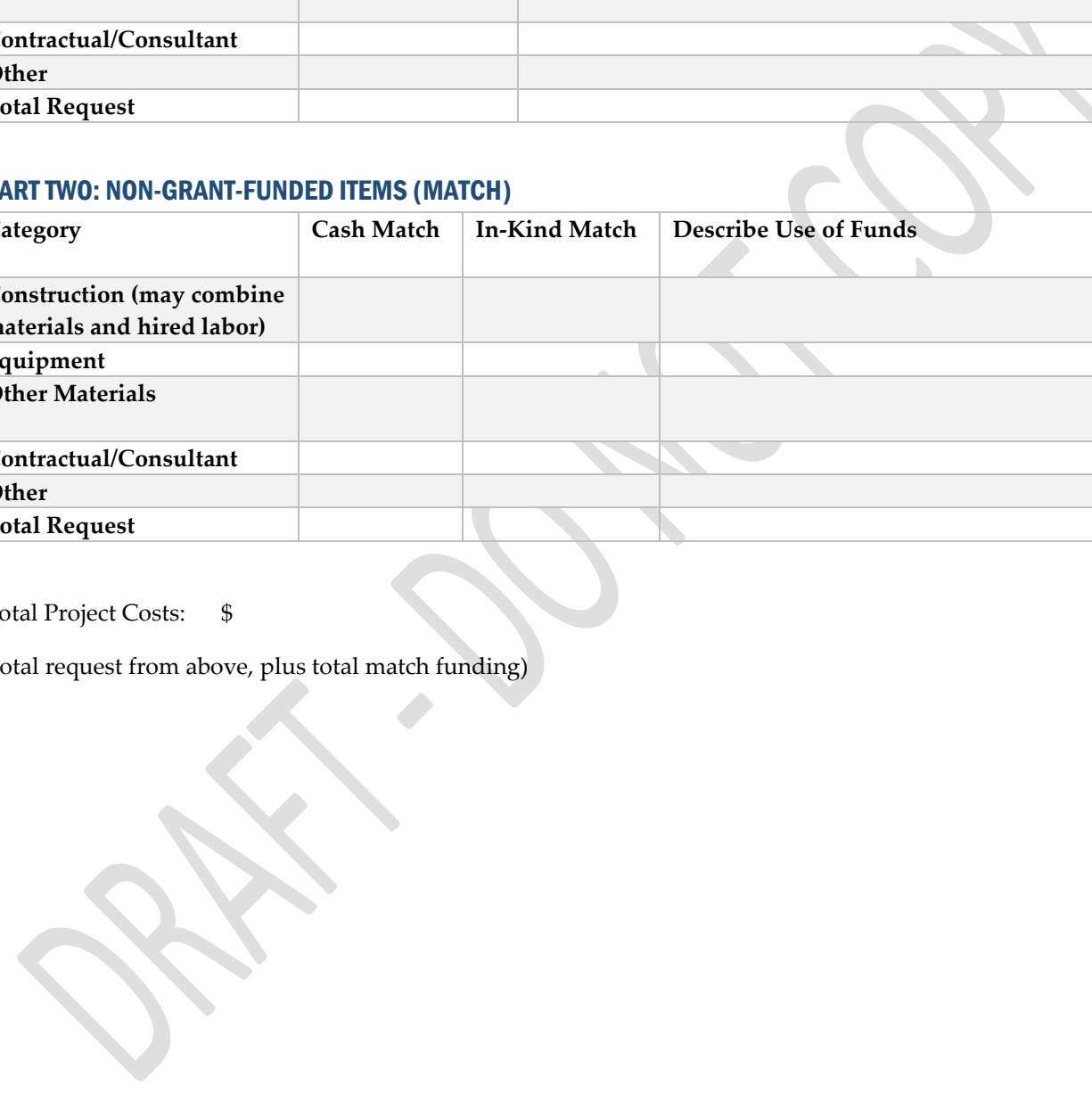
Category	Funds Requested	Describe Use of Funds
Construction (may combine materials and hired labor)		
Equipment		
Other Materials		
Contractual/Consultant		
Other		
<b>Total Request</b>		

**PART TWO: NON-GRANT-FUNDED ITEMS (MATCH)**

Category	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Describe Use of Funds
Construction (may combine materials and hired labor)			
Equipment			
Other Materials			
Contractual/Consultant			
Other			
<b>Total Request</b>			

Total Project Costs: \$

(total request from above, plus total match funding)





## **SCORING CRITERIA**

**Experience.** Applicant has at least 5 years of successful farming experience – Up to 10 points.

**Food Safety Outcomes.** The proposed project directly addresses sanitation and hygiene issues and will improve the overall food safety standards of the farm – Up to 20 points.

**FSMA Produce Safety Rule Coverage.** The applicant self-identifies as being fully covered under FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule. While coverage under this rule is not a pre-requisite for grant funding, preference will be given to those operations that are fully covered under the rule. Fully covered under the rule – 15 points.

Economic Development Outcomes.

(A) The proposed project will create and/or maintain jobs. The number of jobs must be evidenced by a written commitment from the business to be assisted. One job or less per each \$15,000 in grant funds expended - 5 points. More than one job per each \$15,000 in grant funds expended – 10 pts.

(B) Applicant has evidence that the proposed project will increase sales or market access as a result of the activities to be carried out under the grant. – Up to 25 points.

**Business readiness and knowledge of food safety.** Applicant demonstrates an understanding and commitment to on-farm food safety and can provide evidence that the proposed project necessary to expand or maintain market access. – Up to 20 points.