

VT House and Senate Appropriations Committee Testimony, 2/25/19 - Winooski

My name is Claudia Marshall. I live in Charlotte. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you not only as a taxpayer but also as a representative of **Salvation Farms**, the Morrisville-based non-profit with an impact both regionally and nationally. I'm the newest member of the staff with just about two months under my belt and I'm really inspired by the mission.

You may be familiar with our work *gleaning* -- going to farms with surplus produce and getting that food moving to Vermonters who need it.

What you may not be as familiar with --is Salvation Farms' workforce development training program right here in Chittenden County -- at a Winooski food hub just up the street (276 E Allen Street), where we give some of the area's *most vulnerable people* a second chance. While getting this food processed for the food insecure, we're simultaneously running a 16-week job training program for those with serious hurdles to employment -- women and men with histories of homeless, incarceration, addiction and disabilities --some face several of these obstacles all at once. It's a hand up -- and we currently have nearly a 90-percent hiring rate. And, since 2012 the program has distributed more than 1.8 million food servings to those in need.

I'm here to urge you to support this important work -- with a one-time appropriation to build out infrastructure needed to move the job training program and food hub into a new and *permanent location*....and an ongoing, annual appropriation of to support the food hub's job training program. (H.328 & H.371)

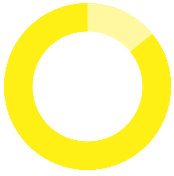
It's estimated that an infrastructure program like this could cost upwards of a half-million dollars. Currently, it costs a quarter-million, annually.

In conclusion: Salvation Farms is getting individuals *off* public assistance and *into* the workforce-- so they can support their families and pay their taxes. It's a boost to the economy on multiple levels. And with the food these folks are helping process, Salvation Farms is feeding Vermont's food insecure. Please consider supporting SF in your budgeting work this year.

Signed,

Claudia Marshall, Charlotte
Salvation Farms
(914) 830-5360

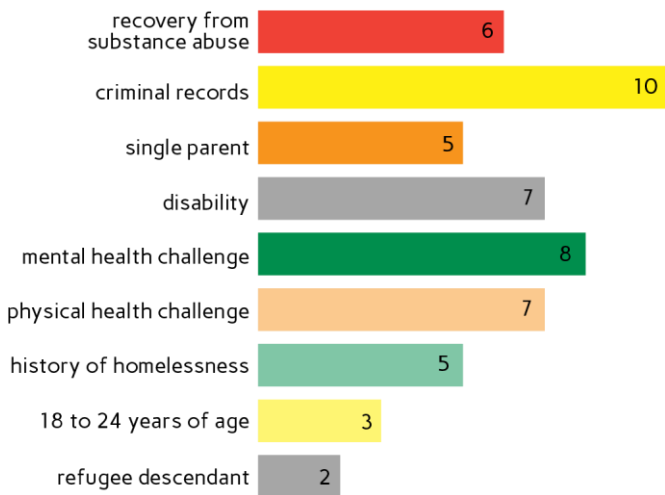
Workforce Development at Salvation Farms' Vermont Commodity Program



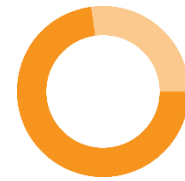
Twenty-one (21) individuals have completed a 16-week job readiness training in food handling and light manufacturing at Salvation Farms' food hub in Winooski. Eighteen (18) individuals secured full- or part-time employment post training, a rate of 86%. In the **last year**, Salvation Farms' workforce development trainee rate of employment increased to **91%**, 10 out of 11.



The individuals who completed Salvation Farms' job readiness program confronted diverse barriers to employment.



87% of trainees report changes in food system knowledge and food choices.



73% report an increase in self-esteem and confidence.

Cost savings to Vermont when someone remains out of jail is roughly \$70,000 per year.

Salvation Farms seeks a one-time appropriation for planning and buildout of infrastructure needed to move the job-training program and food hub into a new and permanent location.

Additionally, Salvation Farms seeks an annual appropriation to support the job-training components of the food hub's operation. Salvation Farms will report annually the program's impact to the Legislature; how many individuals receive training, move into employment, and report changes in their self-esteem and diet-related behaviors.

Salvation Farms' workforce development efforts are **in partnership with** the VT Department of Labor, Community Action, VocRehab, Creative Workforce Solutions, Probation & Parole, Community Justice, Pathways VT, among others.

Salvation Farms' Vermont Commodity Program has distributed more than 1,845,330 servings of local food to Vermont's food insecure since 2012. Through distributing wholesome food and providing job training in its food hub, Salvation Farms serves an individual's whole person. This fosters self-worth and affects physical and mental health. Salvation Farms prepares people for employment, helping them support themselves and contribute to the local economy. **A win-win-win.**

Watch this brief video to learn more: <https://youtu.be/bC7QvE1fw7w>

Salvation Farms is a federally recognized, 501c3 non-profit with more than fifteen years of experience providing experiential education opportunities to Vermont communities. Salvation Farms' founder serves as its Executive Director.