

Feb. 26th 2019

Dear Vermont Legislator,

I am writing to offer a real voice as Salvation Farms comes before you, seeking your support with a one-time appropriation and an annual appropriation.

I am a recent graduate of their workforce development program: The Vermont Commodity Program which is the site that functions as a hub for both training and the facility for processing surplus crops.

This program was instrumental in providing me with the support, tools, and skills necessary for my reentry into the workforce after almost one year of unemployment. As a single mother I now have a new job I love and am competent in, and I can provide for myself and my family.

Salvation Farms and Vermont Commodity Program are unique - there is no other program like it in the state. With a commitment to both supporting farms and farmers by salvaging surplus and gleaned crops to feed those in need, and also by training the unemployed with significant barriers to mainstream employment. The end result is hungry Vermonters are fed healthy local veggies and fruits, which are sorted, processed, and packed by people like myself.

I feel the Vermont Commodity workforce development program has more room to grow as a facility, to offer advanced skills training and also to be able to accept and process more produce for our neighbors in need.

We are a small, proud, hardworking and innovative state. Your financial backing will help to lead the way forward. You can help so many and the need is certainly there. I urge you to **be the change** by supporting this exceptional organization forward. Please help this important work to continue!

Thank you,
Cathy Austian
Vermont Commodity Program Trainee, 2018

Dear Theresa,

12/26/2018

I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to further my career. Salvation Farms is an amazing program and that's all in thanks to you. You have started this great program for so many people and I want you to know that you are greatly recognized for it and also an enormous blessing to all here in Winooski and Morrisville. You are an outstanding women with a huge heart and I hope that I can one day be a lot like you. I am so glad that you came up with this idea to help so many people, it brings tears to my eyes and joy to my heart. Being part of this program has really opened my eyes in so many ways. I can now see the things that I need to work on and give myself a big pat on my back for my accomplishments because of the skills that you all have taught me in this short time together. I will never forget this change in my life that the Salvation Farms crew has given me. I know I have had some hard days but I want you to know that getting feedback from you all has been a great help for me. I didn't always take it that well but it has given me the practice I need for my next job. I am forever grateful to you for being there for me through all the struggles and joys i've had since day one of VCP. I am truly going to miss seeing you all and having you all be a part of my daily life. I will be sure to stop in and visit and call on occasion to see how everything is going. I'm planning on volunteering at some point as well. Your program is a big success and I'm so proud to say that I have been a part of it. Thank you again for everything and you will truly hold a special place in my heart always.

Sincerely, your trainee from the 2018 cohort,

Kayla Temple

Kayla Temple

(MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR)

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

My name is Julia Scheier. I live in downtown Morrisville. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you not only as a taxpayer but also as a representative of **Salvation Farms**, a Morrisville-based non-profit with regional and national impact.

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

What you may not be as familiar with -- is Salvation Farms' workforce development training program in Chittenden County -- at a food hub in Winooski - where we make second chances available to some of our most vulnerable neighbors. While processing Vermont's surplus crops 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 homelessness, incarceration, addiction and disabilities; some face several of these obstacles all at once.

Our program offers a hand up -- and we currently have a 90% hiring rate. And, since 2012, this program has distributed more than 1.8 million servings of local produce to those in need. -- All made possible through philanthropic funding.

I'm here to urge you to support this important work -- H.328 & H.371

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 to process, Salvation Farms is feeding Vermont's food insecure. Please consider supporting Salvation Farms in your budgeting work this year.

In conclusion, I would love to share with you some reflections from a 2018 trainee, Mandy:

*I felt good about what I was doing. I learned to work as a team. I learned to run machines. We were taught manufacturing skills, as well as shipping, receiving, and inventory. I learned a lot from Salvation Farms. We all received CPR and First Aid, ServSafe, and OSHA-10. The resume help I received was a huge help. At the end of the program I felt confident in my ability to apply for jobs and be taken as a serious applicant. Right after completing the program I interviewed and was hired at King Street Center as their chef. I am still employed there eight months later. I'm very lucky. It's a wonderful place to work. **I no longer receive public assistance. I work full time and am able to provide for my family.** Salvation Farms is amazing. I know the program has changed people's lives for the better. It would be wonderful if they could be funded to find a permanent home. The work they are doing is so important for the environment, the people, and the world. Thank you for your time.*

Signed,

Julia Scheier, Morrisville
Salvation Farms
802-888-4360

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