

Buy Local Consumer Stimulus Package COVID-19 Mitigation and Recovery

WHY: The State of Vermont is facing an unprecedented challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of Vermont businesses have closed or reduced activity since Governor Scott initiated the Stay Safe – Stay Home order on March 24, 2020. As the State relaxes the restrictions on business activities, many businesses will struggle to open up with strong customer activity to be a viable business. Businesses rely on out of state visitors during the summer and fall seasons and with only a trickle of sales from out of state this year, a focused approach to attract in state purchases from Vermonters and online purchases from out of state consumers will be necessary to sustain the most impacted and fragile businesses.

WHO: The Buy Local Consumer Stimulus Package is focused on the most impacted sectors including restaurants, retail, entertainment and performing arts, lodging, and tourism related industries.

WHAT: The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development is seeking the best ideas and tools on how to increase the frequency and spending of Vermont and out of state consumers buying goods and services from small businesses. Beyond a simple marketing request, we are asking for responses in considering how an innovative deployment of state financial resources might best increase consumer spending to help support local businesses.

WHEN: The RFP was sent out on June 5th and responses are due June 18th. Regional groups have been meeting to collaborate and discuss strategies so they are ready to hit the ground running when the funding is approved.

HOW: The RFP will create a menu of State accepted or “prequalified” consumer stimulus proposals from companies and/or organizations. Upon approval of the State funding, each of the regions will select a fiscal sponsor who will contract for services to deliver the consumer stimulus program from one or more strategies selected from the menu of prequalified proposals to implement in their region. ACCD will provide funding to the regions for partnering with the approved proposed strategies from the prequalified vendors.

Distribute \$3.5 million to seven regions of the state, \$500,000 per region, to implement consumer stimulus programs aimed at increasing in state and out of state consumer spending at VT owned businesses. The regions are defined as follows: 1) Grand Isle and Franklin; 2) Chittenden; 3) Washington and Lamoille; 4) Orleans, Essex and Caledonia; 5) Addison and Rutland; 6) Orange and Windsor; and 7) Bennington and Windham.



For more information, please contact:
[Heather Pelham](#), Commissioner
Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing

Buy Local Consumer Stimulus Package COVID-19 Mitigation and Recovery

Regional Example

\$500,000 grant to the Regional Development Corporation – fiscal sponsor who receives funding from ACCD and signs contracts with prequalified vendors to deliver consumer stimulus program. The regional funding would invest:

- \$100,000 – vendor A hired to deliver a service through a Vermont restaurant app that offers discounts for purchases made at Vermont restaurants. The program would subsidize the discounts for a period of time so there is no out of pocket expense to the businesses.
- \$150,000 – vendor B hired to incentivize the purchase of discounted travel packages for trips to and within Vermont. The program would subsidize the discounts for a period of time so there is no out of pocket expense to the businesses.
- \$100,000 – vendor C hired to distribute pre-paid e gift cards to people in the community connecting them with local businesses who receive direct deposits when gifts are redeemed.
- \$150,000 – vendor D hired to deliver buy local challenge that incentivizes local purchases through a passport program that rewards consumers for shopping at multiple local businesses.



For more information, please contact:
[Heather Pelham](#), Commissioner
Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing