



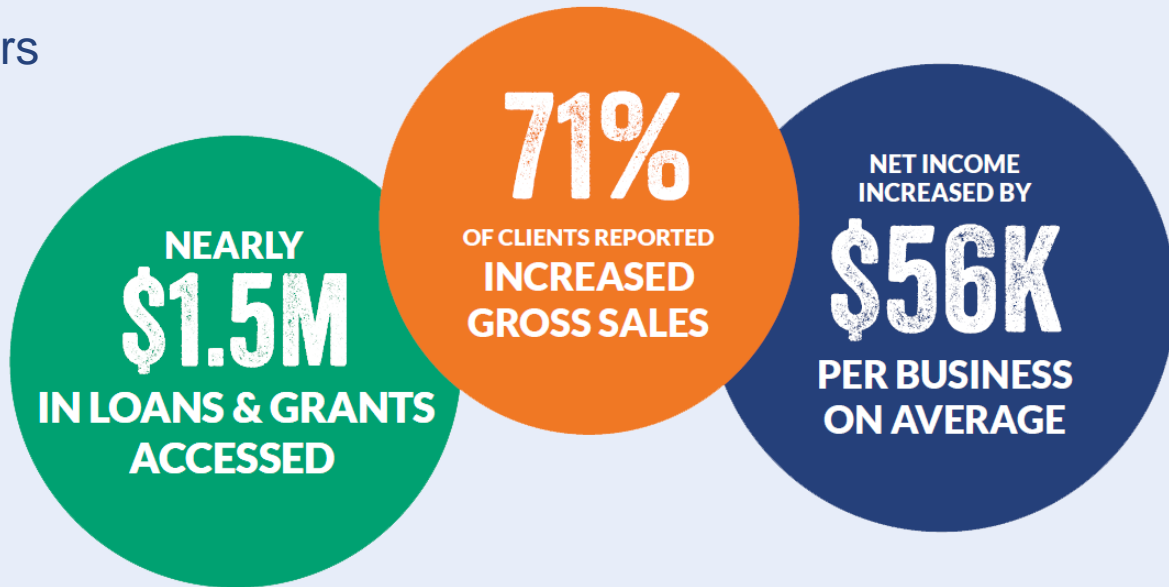
Senate Committee on Agriculture

Feb. 24, 2022



Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

- 19 years of in-depth advising
- 850+ farm, food & forest products businesses served
- 1/3 clients engage in transition/succession planning
- 550+ businesses assisted with navigating COVID impacts
- Supporting Horizon producers
- Businesses report skills improvement in:
 - Financial analysis
 - Accessing resources/specialists
 - Planning investments
 - Strategic planning





Spring Brook Farm, Westfield

Lyle “Spud” and Kitty Edwards worked with the Intervale Center to design a gradual transfer to their long-time employee, Sebastien LaTraverse. They also received a \$40,000 Water Quality Grant to make a long-term investment to eliminate manure storage overflows.



God's Country Farm, Holland

“When our advisors helped us put everything into a spreadsheet, it was like night and day and I knew exactly what was needed for the organic certification. It was a blessing that I had them to keep me organized, to point me where I needed to get my information, and to know that I could do it.” – Theresa Fortin

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

Purpose: “Promoting and facilitating community economic development in the small towns and rural areas of the State” (10 V.S.A. § 325m)

Priority Projects:

- Milk plants, milk handlers, or dairy products, as those terms are defined in 6 V.S.A. § 2672;
- Outdoor recreation and equipment enterprises;
- Value-added food and forest products enterprises;
- Farm operations, including phosphorus removal technology for farm operations;
- Co-working or business generator and accelerator spaces;
- Commercial composting facilities; and
- Restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings in community centers.



***Yellow Barn Project, Hardwick
\$936,000 CDBG Implementation Grant***

Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)

- Assists small towns, businesses, and organizations with grant writing to secure funding for economic development projects
- *Since 2017, \$325,000 in REDI funds has helped secure more than \$6.9M in grants for businesses & communities*
- *In 2021, REDI helped 8 businesses secure \$1.5M in USDA VAPG awards*



USDA RD Value Added Producer Grant to Sweet Rowen Farm (\$114,000)



USDA RD Value Added Producer Grant to Kingdom Creamery of VT (\$250,000)

Program Reach FY22

- **FY22 Viability Program Contracts to Service Providers: \$1.3M**
 - Increase from \$775k in FY21
 - 18 month contracts
 - ~140 long-term clients & 180 shorter-term
 - Supports continued & expanded business advising services at 11 service provider organizations (5 new contracts in FY22)
- **FY22 REDI Funding: \$200,000 (\$100k General Funds, \$100k one-time funding)**
 - From 2017-2021, provided grant writing help to 15 communities/businesses on avg. per year
 - ~20-25 anticipated for FY22



Program Growth Potential

Farm & Forest Business Advising: Increase to \$3M in stable funding

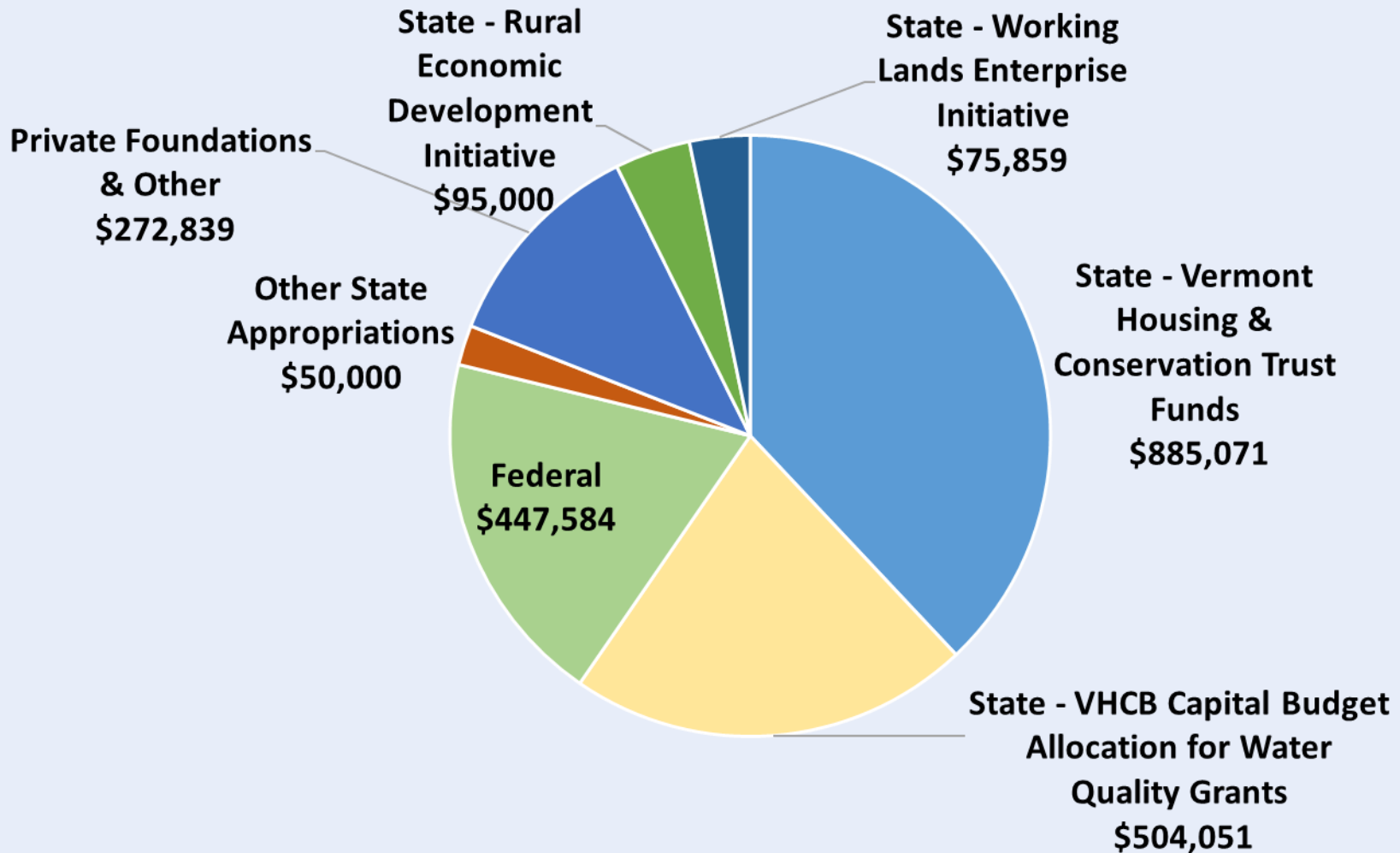
- Serve ~200 long-term clients & 250 shorter-term
- Grow service provider network by at least 5 FTEs
- Annual Implementation Grants for businesses

REDI Program: Increase to \$350k in stable funding

- FT staff position; increase client outreach and grow consultant network
- 30+ communities/businesses served annually



Viability Program FY21 Funding Sources



Appropriations to VHCB for Base Funding 2013 to 2023

Does not include One-time Appropriations of State and Federal Funds

