



Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

Hearing with House Commerce and Economic Development on 02.21.24

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The mission of the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative is to strengthen and grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape.



The Working Lands Enterprise Board achieves this by making essential, catalytic investments in critical leverage points of the Vermont farm and forest economy and facilitating policy development to optimize the agricultural and forest use of Vermont lands.

WLEB Tri- Agency Governance

- “The agriculture and forest product sectors are similar and share many of the same challenges. There are potential benefits to be realized by the joining of these sectors in development planning and coordination, making policy decisions, and leveraging economic opportunities....
 - ...It is the intent of the general assembly in adopting this subchapter to stimulate a concerted economic development effort on behalf of Vermont’s agriculture and forest product sectors by systematically advancing entrepreneurship, business development, and job creation...”
- Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. chapter 207 (Act 142)

WLEB Seats

- Forestry business seats
 - Member who is a representative of a membership-based forestland owner organization
 - Member who is actively engaged in primary forestry or logging
 - Member who is actively engaged in wood products manufacturing
 - Member who represents the VT forest industry who is a forester
- Agricultural business seats
 - Member involved in production agriculture whose primary enterprise is not fluid milk
 - Member who is a representative of Vermont's dairy industry who is also a dairy farmer
 - Member who is actively engaged in on-farm value-added processing
 - Member who is actively engaged in manufacturing or distribution of Vermont agricultural products
- Maple business seat
 - Member who is actively engaged in commodity maple production
- Agricultural/forestry stakeholder seats
 - Member who is an employee of a Vermont institution engaged in agriculture or forestry education, training, or research
 - Member who is an agriculture and forestry enterprise funder
 - Member with expertise in land planning and conservation efforts that support Vermont's working landscape
 - Member with expertise in rural economic development
 - Member with expertise in sales, marketing, or market development

WLEI Program Impact 2012-2023



446

Projects funded



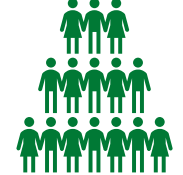
\$15.6M

Working Lands
funds awarded



\$24.6M

Matching funds
leveraged



14

Counties
benefited

Within two years of grant completion, grantees have:



1,135

People employed



540

New jobs created



24,985

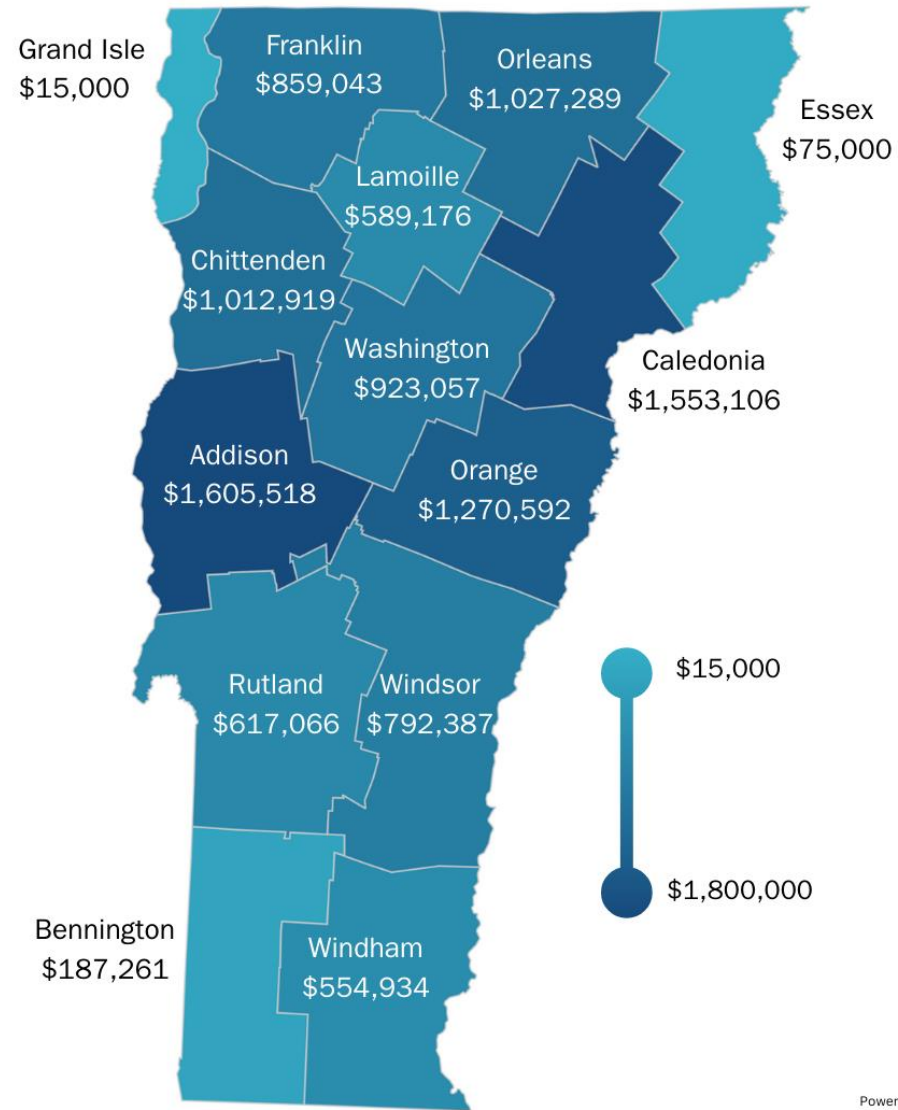
Acres benefited



\$92M

Sales dollars
generated

Grant Funds to Businesses, 2012–2023



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Business grant totals displayed here do not include Trade Show Assistance Grants.



WLEI Program Demand

Fiscal Year	Funds Available	Funds Requested by Applicants
2025	\$1,000,000 recommended	
2024	\$3,150,000	> \$13,805,441
2023	\$2,000,000	\$10,575,516
2022	\$5,594,000	\$10,109,747
2021	\$594,000	\$2,043,716
2020	\$1,594,000	\$5,015,147
2019	\$700,000	\$1,178,287
2018	\$694,000	\$1,902,316

FY24 Grantmaking Overview

Funding Opportunity	Number of Applicants	Funds Available	Funds Requested
Producer Association Grant	3	\$50,000	\$56,888
Service Provider Grant	4	\$75,000	\$75,792
Business Enhancement Grant	63	\$550,000	\$2,446,119
Supply Chain Impact Grant	46	\$750,000	\$6,035,603
ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant	31	\$815,000	\$4,473,279
Small Farm Diversification Grant (to date)	~96	\$150,000	Closes March 4th, 2024

WLEI Program Impact FY23



51

Projects funded



\$2,188,773

Working Lands
funds awarded



169

Applications
received



10,525,717

Funds requested

FY23 Business Grantees

Bissonnette Firewood, Bristol: \$157,951 for upgrading firewood kiln and drying equipment

Boyden Farm, Cambridge: \$133,609 for infrastructure, HR, financial, and marketing systems for sustainable growth

Dhaurali Goats, Colchester: \$99,500 for upgrading goat slaughter facility to obtain VT state meat inspection

Dorset Peak Jerseys, Danby: \$35,000 for improved sheep and lamb production infrastructure for increased profitability

Fort Waite Holsteins, Corinth: \$35,000 for bunk silo infrastructure to reduce non-recyclable plastic waste and increase feeding efficiency

Giddings Hill Forest Products, Enosburg: \$60,000 for new forwarder to provide safe, reliable, efficient machine for logging operation new employee

Joe's Brook Farm, St. Johnsbury: \$35,000 for tie stall barn conversion to vegetable production, storage, and sales infrastructure

Kalche Wine Cooperative, Fletcher: \$35,000 to streamline efficiency and safety in packaging to increase production

Sweetland Farm, Norwich: \$35,000 for an electric tractor to support transition to fossil-carbon-free farming

Lemington Maple Farm, Canaan: \$35,000 for installation of grid power lines and a road to replace diesel generated power, improve sugarhouse accessibility, and allow for business growth

LSF Forest Products, Fletcher: \$35,000 for stormwater mitigation sitework for sawmill expansion

Mama's Farm, Williston: \$32,000 for relocation and construction of chicken housing and slaughter facility to newly purchased farm property to serve refugee community customers

Trade Show Assistance Grants (\$2,500-\$5,000): Butterworks Farm, Eden Ice Cider Company, Food Connects, Grand Isle Ice Cream Company, Mad River Distillers, Mixed Up Nut Butter, Runamok Maple, Sawyer Made, Shrubbly, VT Dog Eats, VT Farmstead Cheese Co., VT Nut Free Chocolates, Von Trapp Farmstead

Miller Farm, Vernon: \$30,000 for energy efficient milk storage capacity improvement

MKVT Farm, Glover: \$35,000 for freezer and farm sales expansion

Mud City Farm, Morrisville: \$78,000 for establishing maple sap collection

Mureta's Butcher Shop, Northfield: \$35,000 for construction and installation of equipment required to become a certified slaughterhouse.

NOFA-VT, Richmond: \$24,000 for organic market research & consumer insights

Old Soul Farm, Barre: \$25,500 for barn renovation to increase business viability, revenue, and year-round access to local food

Redstart, Inc., Bradford: \$70,000 for restoration nursery expansion

Riverview Farm, Franklin: \$171,649 for net zero farmworker housing

Stark Mountain Woodworking, New Haven: \$35,000 for developing new market opportunity bringing Vermont hardwood custom furnishings from tree to consumer

Stonewood Farm, Orwell: \$66,300 for slaughter plant improvements and additional turkey poult brooder space

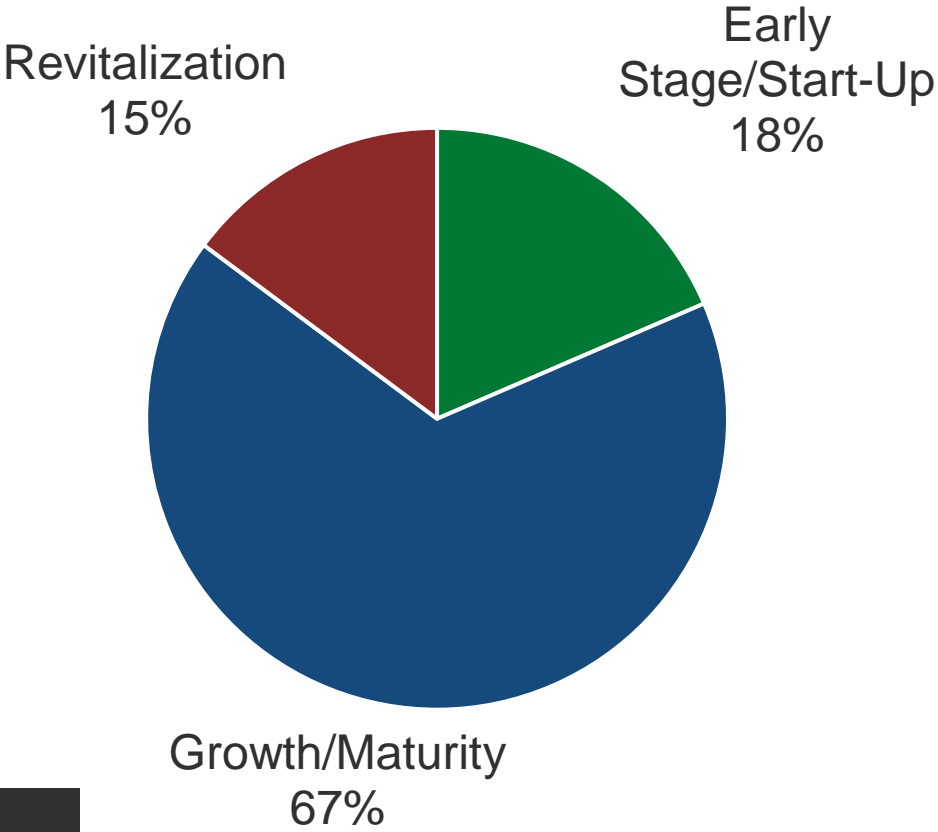
Sunrise Orchards, Cornwall: \$250,000 for cidery and farmstand for farm income diversification

Tup's Crossing Farm, Orwell: \$24,596 for utility tractor for pasture and land management

Walnut Hill Farm, Pawlet: \$34,675 for processing certified organic corn into masa harina

Wooden Hammer, N. Ferrisburgh: \$25,000 for purchase, installation, and training of new CNC machine

FY23 Grantee Business Stage





Service Provider Grants & Contracts:

Investments in business and technical assistance service providers who work directly with working lands enterprises to support them as they grow, pivot, and adapt to an ever-changing marketplace, or prepare for new capital investment or an intergenerational transfer.



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FY23 Service Provider & Producer Association Grantees

Service Provider Investments

Center for Women & Enterprise - \$20,000 for business planning for women-owned working lands businesses

Clean Economy Works - \$20,000 for energy audits and grant writing support for farms

Northeast Forests Vermont Forest Business School - \$65,000 for training and business coaching program

Northern Vermont University - \$20,000 for Forest Products Accelerator program

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board - \$99,655 for business assistance services for the forest economy

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund - \$100,000 for developing a supply chain for beef-on-dairy terminal crossbred animals

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund - \$70,000 for VT Forest Industry Network development

Vermont Woodworking School - \$19,497 for computer lab to train students in cutting edge CAD and rendering software

Producer Association Grants

Real Organic Project - \$10,000 for Real Organic Project farm and label promotion

Vermont Brewers Association - \$19,500 for strengthening and supporting member brewers through streamlined access to local sources

Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance - \$10,000 for VDPA legislative & regulatory outreach and education to increased farmer participation proposal



Agriculture Business Supply Chain Investments

Maple Wind Farm, Richmond: \$67,400 for blast chiller, freezer capacity, processing equipment, and retail building

Harlow Farm, Westminster: \$50,000 for upgrades to improve shipping and storage

Vermont Bean Crafters, Warren: \$50,000 for growing the Northeastern staple-foodshed with dry beans

Wicked Bines/Whitefield Hop Yard, Berlin : \$30,000 for a hops harvester and storage.

Intervale Community Farm Cooperative, Burlington: \$35,000 for multi-user wash/pack/storage facility and nursery stock

Sap! Maple Beverages, Burlington: \$40,000 for building a first-class marketing team and marketing plan.

Sweet Rowen Farmstead, West Glover: \$50,000 for an on-farm creamery and community space

Farmers to You, Berlin: \$50,000 for Regional Market Development

Agricola Farm, LLC: \$50,000 for Vermont-cured Agricola meats

Five Generations Farmstead Creamery: \$150,000 for state-of-the-art, on-farm creamery

Equinox Food Brokers: \$75,000 for sales and consultation to VT businesses.

Kingdom Creamery of Vermont: \$143,954 for HACCP certification

Adam's Berry Farm: \$36,713 to expand their organic blueberry production

Stony Pond Farm: \$65,000 for on-farm creamery

Joneslan Farm: \$150,000 to transition from a cow dairy farm to a goat dairy farm

Vermont Livestock and Slaughter Processing Company: \$100,000 for facility renovation.

Northeast Kingdom Processing: \$104,028 for safety and efficiency upgrades for slaughter floor and smokehouse.

Adam's Turkey Farm: \$100,000 for farm modernization and expansion

Haystack Farmstead: \$95,259 for a modular meat plant.

Babette's Table: \$95,345 for smokehouse and packaging machine for increased capacity and efficiency for smoke pork products and expansion for hog farms in Vermont.

Royalton Meats: \$50,032 for expanding smokehouse operations through training.

Singing Cedars Farmstead: \$60,000 for Infrastructure Improvements to Enhance Supply Chain

Snug Valley Farm: \$75,000 for Farm Product Aggregation and Retail Space

Bread & Butter Farm, LLC: \$75,000 for Market Place and Food Accessibility Expansion

Hillside Homestead: \$70,000 for Dry Sawdust and Hay Storage Project for Raw Milk Cheese

Sweet Rowen Farmstead: \$75,000 for Remote Aggregation and Distribution Hub Infrastructure

Bear Roots Farm, LLC: \$75,000 for Infrastructure Expansion & Improvement

Food Connects: \$74,800 for New Market Opportunities for Working Lands Producers

Vermont Refrigerated Storage Company, LLC: \$147,000 for Freezer Infrastructure

Buffalo Mountain Co-op, Inc.: \$130,500 for Community Grocery Co-op Expansion in Hardwick

Center for an Agricultural Economy: \$249,360 for Expanding Market Access for Value Added Farms and Food Producers

Vermont Technical College: \$250,000 for Meat Processing Training: Sustaining a Regional Meat Supply

Cellars at Jasper Hill: \$250,000 for Market Expansion Equipment Purchase

Global Village Foods: \$250,000 for Developing Local Sourcing Supply Systems for Business Expansion

Jasper Hill Creamery: 75,000 for Jasper Hill Creamery Supply Chain Impact project

Naga Bakehouse: \$75,000 for Regional Grainshed Mill project

Boyden Farm: \$133,609 for Sustainable growth through infrastructure, HR, financial systems, and marketing

Dhaurali Goats: \$99,500 for Increasing local food access and entering new markets by upgrading goat slaughter facility to obtain VT state meat inspection

Riverview Farm, \$171,649 for Net Zero Farmworker Housing

Stonewood Farm: \$66,300 for Slaughter plant improvements and additional turkey poult brooder space

Sunrise Orchards: \$250,000: Farm income diversification through cidery and farmstand



WORKING LANDS ENTERPRISE INITIATIVE

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Photos: Global Village Foods, VT Livestock Slaughter & Processing, Center for an Agricultural Economy



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Forestry Business Supply Chain Investments

Vermont Greenwood Resources, Co., : \$75,000 to add chipping capacity and develop pulpwood concentration yard

Winterwood Timber Frames, LLC: \$75,000 for infrastructure upgrades for bioregional wood building-material product line

Kingdom Pellets: \$50,000 for construction of 30,000 ton super-premium softwood pellet mill

Renewable Fuels of Vermont: \$50,000 for a wood pellet mill finish dryer

Vermont Farm Table: \$50,000 for commercial development plan

Maple Landmark: \$40,000 for an automated wood-turning lathe

Green Mountain Grain & Barrel: \$50,000 for stave jointer and hoop press machine acquisition

Bourne's, Inc.: \$27,500 for purchase of a bulk pellet delivery truck

Kirby Mulch Company, LLC: \$130,000 for producing high-quality mulch and soil blends

DCI, Inc.: \$75,000 for the installation of a high efficiency Resaw

Tony Dwyer Logging: \$75,000 for Low Grade Wood Equipment - Firewood Kiln

Gagnon Lumber, Inc.: \$120,000 for extending three-phase power to sawmill

Rick's Firewood: \$150,000 to increase production capabilities and raw material storage and improving waste storage.

Jenson Enterprises, LLC: \$75,000 for Tree House Hardwoods/Vermont Butcherblock Co. Expansion

Juniper Chase, LLC: \$75,000 for Native Restoration Nursery to Meet Growing Demand

Gevry Firewood LLC: \$250,000 for Firewood Processing Improvements: Market Channels for Vermont Firewood

Lyndon Woodworking, Inc.: \$250,000 for Milling Upgrades

VT Natural Forest Products: \$250,000 for pellet mill Improvements and Investments

White Rock Farm LLC: \$250,000 for Sawmill Expansion

Lyme Green Heat Inc.: \$250,000 for Bulk Wood Pellet Mill in Wells River

Bissonnette Firewood, \$157,951: Upgrading firewood kiln and related drying equipment increase production and energy efficiency

Giddings Hill Forest Products, \$60,000: New forwarder to provide safe, reliable, efficient machine for logging operation new employee

Mud City Farm, \$78,000: Establishing maple sap collection operation

Redstart, Inc., \$70,000: Expansion of Restoration Nursery





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