

Salvation Farms' Next Chapter: Advancing farm viability and food access through surplus food



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House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

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Salvation Farms' FY27 Budget Request

Salvation Farms requests \$100,000 in ongoing annual funding beginning in FY27 to support the operations of its food processing program. We respectfully request that this funding be included in the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry's budget memo.



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Salvation Farms' Mission and Vision

Salvation Farms' mission is to create a future where all are fed and farms are thriving. Through partnerships, effective use of available resources, and skill-building, we work to fully integrate surplus food from local farms into a resilient and sustainable food system.



Salvation Farms' vision is a resilient, community-based food system where farms thrive, surplus food is fully utilized, and everyone has reliable access to local, sustainable food.



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What is 'surplus food'?



Food from farms that is not reaching traditional markets -
A challenge and an opportunity for Vermont's agricultural
economy:

- 14.3 million pounds of vegetables and berries from Vermont farms end up as food waste each year
- Result of supply chain issues, labor shortages, or cosmetic standards. SF is meant to be responsive, able to bridge the gap between farm surplus and those in need



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Our Story: Evolving alongside VT's agricultural and food access needs

- **2004:** Established a gleaning program within NOFA -Vermont. Move to Vermont Foodbank as fiscal sponsor in 2010
- **2012:** Processing programs at Green Mountain College, Harlow Farm in Westminster, and at Southeast State Correctional Facility
- **2013:** Partnership with the Food Venture Center in Hardwick. End program with the DOC in 2015.
- **2016:** Opened and operated Vermont's only surplus crop food hub (Winooski) for three and a half years.
- **2020:** End program in Winooski. Since then, renting kitchen space at the Food Venture Center while looking for a new home.
- **2023:** Salvation Farms receives a State Appropriation
- **2024:** Theresa Snow leaves ED role and is replaced by Kelly Dolan
- **2025:** Award from Northern Borders' Regional Commission's Catalyst Program
- **2026:** Finishing renovation and relaunching farm surplus food processing program



Salvation Farms' Program Areas:



SF has moved more than 1.25 million pounds of surplus food from farms to Vermonters, much of it in partnership with food shelves, meal programs, and institutions.

- Gleaning Program
- Vermont Gleaning Collective
- Processing Program



Gleaning Program and Vermont Gleaning Collective



- 200,000 servings, 10,000 people fed, 73,000 pounds
- 34 partner farms, 65 food distribution sites
- 100+ volunteers; 300+ hours of service



Salvation Farms' Processing Program

Supporting farm viability and addressing barriers to local food for institutions and charitable food programs

- **Affordability**
- **Accessibility**
- **Ease of use**
- **Guided by market research**
- **Focusing on what we do well and working in partnership with other food hubs**



Partnership with VT Department of Corrections

- 6 prisons across the state, 1,600+/- incarcerated individuals and 600+/- staff
- SF's longstanding history with DOC - Southeast State and Northeast Correctional Complex
- Received the Farm to Institution Market Development Grant
- Providing 20,000 lbs of processed produce to Vermont's 6 prisons
- SF Brokering support
- Benefits for incarcerated individuals and staff



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What is the goal - New processing space?

Develop new paying markets for farm surplus



- Grow our impact to a statewide model
- Build on existing partnerships with institutions, food hubs and farms
- Feed more people with Vermont grown food
- Generate additional farm revenue using a product that would otherwise be waste

What is the status of the project?

Partnering with CAE to renovate space at the Vermont Food Venture Center



- Leveraging existing resources – Space shared by both organizations' processing programs
- Working on floorplans and equipment list
- Developing business plan with support of VHCB
- Fully operable by August/September

Diversifying our Funding

Potential and confirmed funding sources

- \$500,000 - State Appropriation
- \$469,000 - NBRC
- \$29,750/2 yrs. - Farm to Institution Market Development Grant
- \$125,000 – Sales revenue, yr. one
- \$100,000 – State of VT ongoing funding request
- Planned internal fundraising campaign - operational costs in first 3 yrs.

Year one operational costs - \$325,000

In Summary:

- Reduces food loss on farms, mitigating climate impacts while generating economic value for Vermont farmers
- Recovers surplus crops and delivers affordable, minimally processed local food to charitable programs and institutions, including highly price-sensitive markets
- Expands access to nutritious local food for Vermont's most vulnerable residents, including incarcerated individuals, children, and older adults



Salvation Farms is requesting \$100,000 in ongoing funding from the State of Vermont and inclusion in the House Ag's budget memo

- Goal: Processing 50,000+ pounds of Vermont farm surplus and generating \$125,000 of revenue in year one
- Expanding food access for vulnerable Vermonters, including individuals served by DOC, VT Foodbank, local schools, Meals on Wheels programs, and more
- Economic activity across the local food system, including expanded distribution markets in partnership with food hubs, building toward statewide and regional plans, and increased sales opportunities for 10 to 15 Vermont farms

Thank you for your support

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