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# Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

**House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry**



# Program Impact 2012-2025



**593**

Projects funded



**\$19.5M**

Working Lands  
funds awarded



**\$31.9M**

Matching funds  
leveraged



**14**

Counties  
benefited

# Program Impact 2012-2025



**48%**

Business grantees  
added jobs



**77%**

Business grantees  
increased  
production



**74%**

Businesses  
increased sales



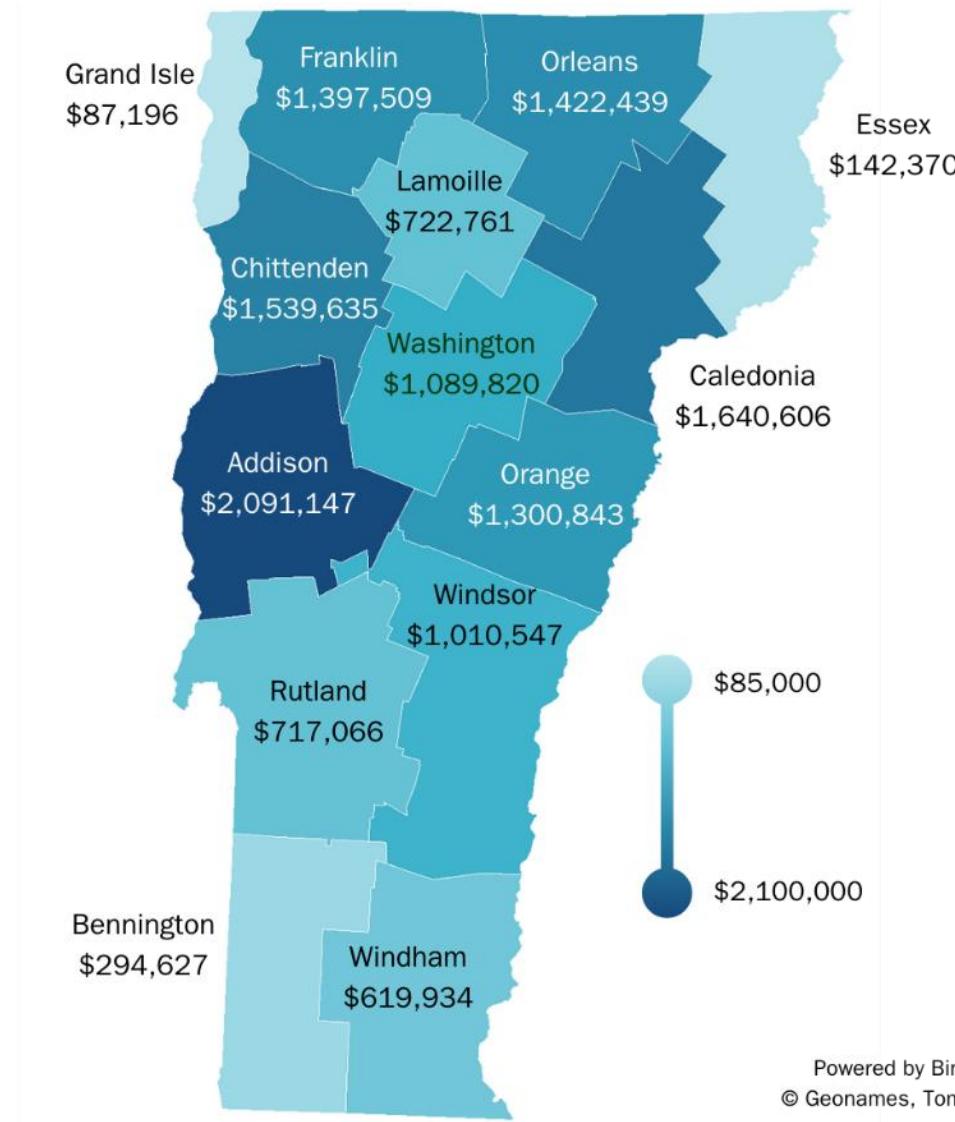
**25,000**

Acres impacted

Data above represents 59% of business grantees (excluding Trade Show Assistance Grants) from 2013-2024.

# Grant Funds to Businesses, 2012–2025

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



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FY25 Grantees: Free Verse Farm, Mayo's Maple Farm, Rowley Brothers Dairy

## WLEI Program Demand

| Fiscal Year | Funds Available | Funds Requested |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2026        | \$1,000,000     | \$5,946,643     |
| 2025        | \$1,000,000     | \$5,372,191     |
| 2024        | \$3,150,000     | \$16,187,156    |
| 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     |



# WLEB Seats

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- **Forestry business seats**
  - Member representing a membership-based forestland owner organization
  - Member actively engaged in primary forestry or logging
  - Member actively engaged in wood products manufacturing
  - Member representing the VT forest industry who is a forester
- **Agricultural business seats**
  - Member involved in production agriculture whose primary enterprise is not fluid milk
  - Member representing of Vermont's dairy industry who is also a dairy farmer
  - Member actively engaged in on-farm value-added processing
  - Member actively engaged in manufacturing or distribution of Vermont agricultural products
- **Maple business seat**
  - Member actively engaged in commodity maple production
- **Agricultural/forestry stakeholder seats**
  - Employee of a Vermont institution engaged in agriculture or forestry education, training, or research
  - 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
- **State government seats**
  - Secretary of the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets or designee
  - Commissioner of the Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation or designee
  - Secretary of the Agency of Commerce & Community Development or designee
- **Ex-officio, non-voting seats**
  - Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
  - Vermont Economic Development Authority
  - Vermont Housing & Conservation Board



# Reviewer Organizations

Vermont Agency of Agriculture  
Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation  
Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development  
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board  
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Vermont Community Loan Fund  
UVM Extension  
Intervale Center  
NOFA-VT  
Shelburne Farms  
Vermont Economic Development Authority  
Healthy Roots Collaborative  
Liberation Ecosystems  
VT Professionals of Color Network  
Center for an Agricultural Economy  
Private consulting foresters  
Private farmers and maple producers

# WLEI Program Impact FY25



38

Projects funded



\$1,064,208

Working Lands  
funds awarded



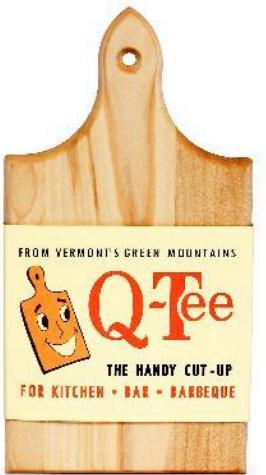
150

Applications  
received



5,372,191

Funds requested



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FY25 Grantees: Top row: JK Adams Bottom row: Witt Acres Farm

**WLEI funds a wide range of both small and large businesses, from beginning to growth stage.**

The largest grantee in 2025 reported annual sales in excess of \$5 million with 45 employees, while the smallest grantee's sales, as a new farm, were under \$10,000 with two employees.

# Business Enhancement Grant

## **Agricola Farm, Panton**

\$43,472 for growing Vermont charcuterie from farm to plate

## **Butterfly Bakery of Vermont, Montpelier**

\$45,000 for communications and marketing strategy to increase and diversify locally sourced produce for value-added products

## **Carman Brook Farm, Swanton**

\$50,000 for maple processing modernization through improving efficiency and expanding production capacity

## **Conscious Homestead, Winooski**

\$15,429 for securing climate resilient, culturally accessible food production at urban homestead and community center

## **Crossroad Maple, Bakersfield**

\$49,831 for equipment and automation for improved sugaring efficiency

## **Ellison Estate Vineyard, Grand Isle**

\$47,195 for harvest infrastructure development for on-farm grape processing

## **Free Verse Farm LLC, Chelsea**

\$13,909 for battery-powered harvester to drastically increase efficiency on herb farm

## **J K Adams, Dorset**

\$42,366 for creation of a closed loop Vermont-made collection of cutting board products

## **Keck Wine Enterprises, Jeffersonville**

\$50,000 for Stella14 Wines trellising project

## **Lower Notch Farm, Bristol**

\$31,763 for barn build with wash and pack facility and cold storage

## **Mayo's Maple Farm, Richford**

\$35,000 for wireless monitoring system to increase production through efficiency

## **Rowley Brothers Dairy, Milton**

\$50,000 for enhancing new robotic milking system by prioritizing cow care and labor efficiency

## **Sawyer Made, East Calais**

\$50,000 for workshop facility expansion for painting, oiling, and storage

## **Sunrise Organic Farm, White River Junction**

\$13,158 for increased egg production through new infrastructure

## **Sylvacurl, East Hardwick**

\$22,500 for website optimization, social media, and store front advertising to increase awareness and sales

## **Vermont Heavy Timber, Huntington**

\$50,000 for timber drying and storage facility

## **Witt Acres Farm, Fairfax**

\$30,035 for fresh market green bean harvester to fulfill wholesale market demands



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## **Carman Brook Farm**

### **Maple Processing Modernization: Improving Efficiency and Expanding Production Capacity**

**Swanton, VT**

**Grant Amount: \$50,000**

**“This investment is enabling us to sustain growth, expand market reach, and solidify our role as a cornerstone of Vermont's maple industry”**



## **Agricola Farm Growing Vermont Charcuterie From Farm to Plate**

Panton, VT

Grant Amount: \$43,472

“We have reached our goal with 229 pigs with hoofs on the ground and 5 more litters expected within 4 months. We are estimating a conservative 40 new piglets in the next 4 months”.



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# **Conscious Homestead**

## **Securing climate resilient, culturally accessible food production**

Winooski, VT

Grant Amount: \$15,429

“Conscious Homestead is a learning urban farm in Winooski that centers Black and Brown land-based healing, liberation, and community care...to empower BIPOC people to be in relationship with the land to care for our immediate needs and create opportunities to build a thriving future”.



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## **Crossroad maple Equipment and automation for improved sugaring efficiency**

**Grant Amount: \$49,830**

**"Crossroad Maple is a family-owned and operated maple farm in Enosburg and Bakersfield, VT. Crossroad utilizes over 430 acres of forest to produce high-quality, organic maple products".**



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## Sylvacurl

### Public awareness and targeted advertising

Hardwick, VT

Grant Amount: \$22,500

“We want to help solve two problems: reduction of plastic pollution and global warming from plastic packaging; and supporting Vermont's forest-based economy to maintain healthy forests and woodlots and the working landscape and build strong local communities”.



## Sunrise Organic Farm LLC New Infrastructure for Increased Egg Production

White River Junction, VT

Grant Amount: \$13, 157

“Our wholesale production rose from 2,800 dozen to 4,300 dozen and we became the primary egg supplier for two local businesses....We have profit sharing in place this year for the first time, and the increased profitability of the egg business will flow to the employees”.

# FY25 Service Provider & Producer Association Grantees

## Service Provider Investments

**Clemons Family Farm, Inc.** \$25,000 for Piloting the African Diaspora Foodways Institute of Vermont

**Northeast Forests, LLC** \$40,000 for Vermont Forest Business School Training and Business Coaching Program

**Parish Hill Creamery** \$25,000 for Science & Craft of Artisan Cheese Conference

**Paul Frank and Collins P.C.** \$18,150 for human resources & employment law skills for working lands businesses

**Vermont Community Loan Fund, Inc** \$72,000 for SPROUT Loan Program

**Vermont Housing & Conservation Board** \$75,000 for business development services through the Farm & Forest Viability Program Montpelier

**Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund** \$55,000 for the Forest Products Development Program

## Producer Association Grants

**Vermont Woodlands Association (VWA)** \$39,160 for merging VT Logger Education for Advancing Professionalism LEAP with VWA

**Connecticut River Watershed Farmers** \$20,000 for a farmer-led ag plastics recycling pilot



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**SPROUT Loan Program: Subsidizing Interest Rates on Loans to Help Working Lands Enterprises that Traditional Lenders Often Overlook**

**Vermont Woodlands Association: Building a Resilient Future for Vermont's Working Woodlands: Merging Logger Education to Advance Professionalism (VT LEAP) with VWA to Secure Logger Education**

**Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance: A Farmer-led Ag Plastics Recycling Pilot for the Connecticut River Watershed**



## VT Heavy Timber Timber Drying and Storage Facility

Huntington, VT

Grant Amount: \$50,000

“The (grant funded) structure will store timbers that have been processed through the Vermont Heavy Timber sawmill and are waiting to be cut or installed in historic timber frames, or erected into new timber frames.”



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## **Mayo's Maple Farm**

### **Installation of a Wireless Monitoring System to increase production and labor efficiency**

**Richford, VT**

**Grant award: \$35,000**

“Because this (wireless monitoring) system will pinpoint where trouble areas are, vacuum leaks, it will enable us to increase our productivity and reduce the amount of labor required to search for and fix vacuum leaks.”



## Sawyer Made

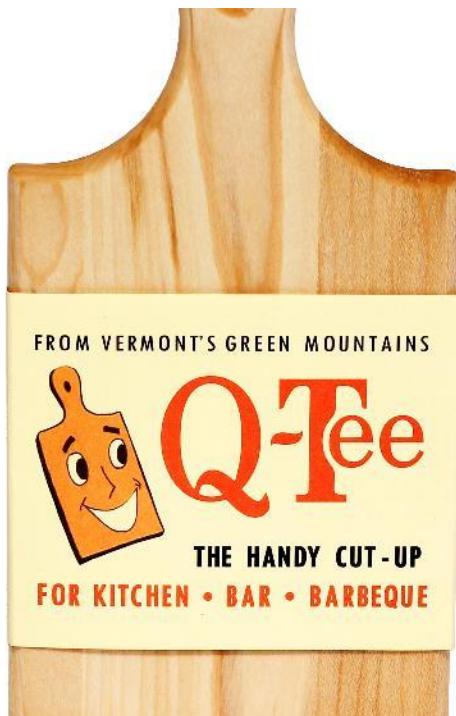
Expansion of their facility

East Calais, VT

Grant award: \$50,000



“We feel confident that we can continue to grow as a business, increase our use of local lumber and offer more well-paying, high skilled jobs over the next several years if we have adequate working space to meet our needs”.



**JK Adams Company,**  
Creation of cutting board line from all VT  
wood  
Dorset, VT  
Grant award: \$42,366

“Our objective is to launch a new line of cutting boards sourced entirely from Vermont-grown and processed lumber, emphasizing the importance of local craftsmanship, sustainability, and the beauty of Vermont's natural resources”.



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Photos of FY25 Grantees: Top: VT Heavy Timber Bottom: Sawyer Made

## Vision

Our shared working landscape is the foundation of Vermont's evolving culture, vibrant economies, healthy ecosystems, and sense of place.

## Mission

To make strategic investments and develop policy recommendations that support a resilient and sustainable farm, food, and forest economy in Vermont.