



Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

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Photos of FY25 Grantees: Top: Butterfly Bakery, Lower Notch Farm, Ellison Estate Vineyard

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

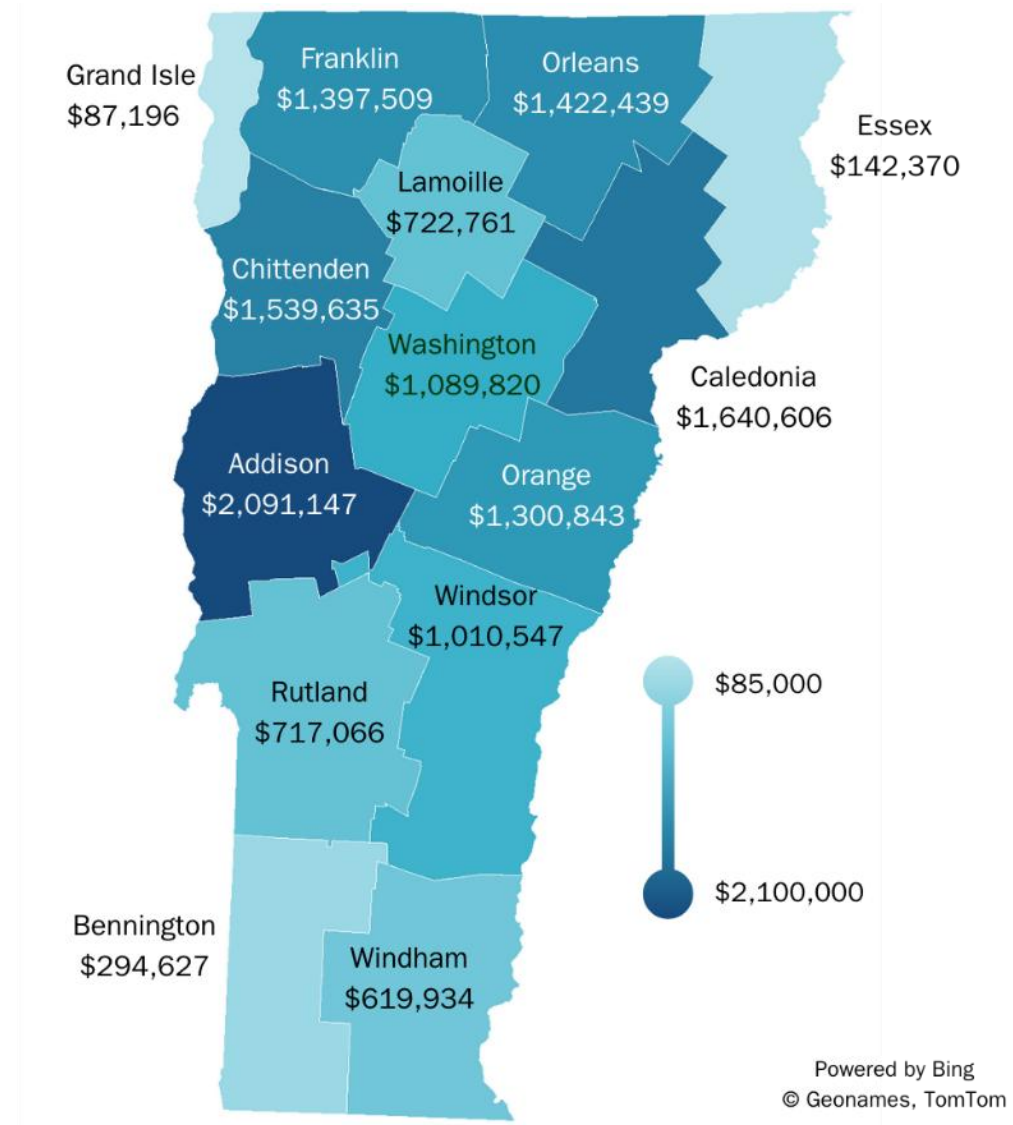


25,000

Acres impacted

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

Grant Funds to Businesses, 2012–2025



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



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

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WLEB Seats

- **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



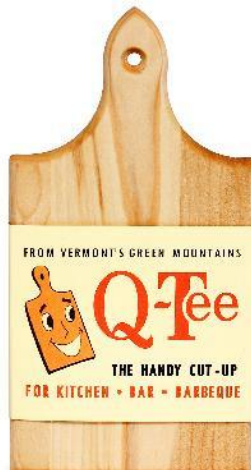
150

Applications
received



5,372,191

Funds requested



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.



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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



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”.



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”.





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".





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

Clemmons 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



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.”



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”.

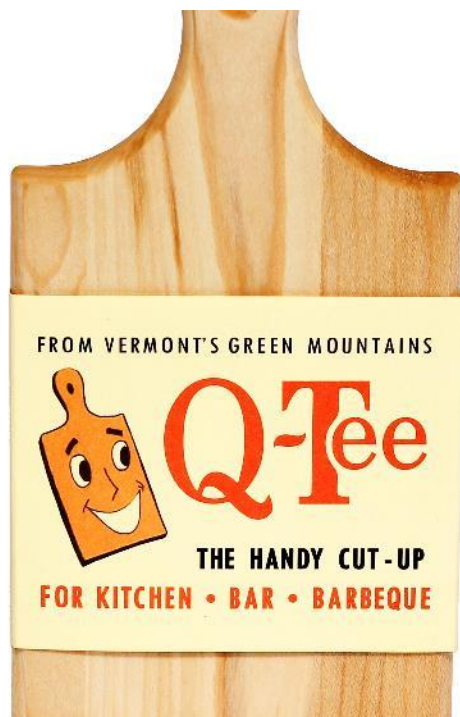


JK Adams Company,

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”.



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.



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