



Working Lands Enterprise Initiative

House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry

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WLEI Program Impact 2012-2024



555

Projects funded



\$18.8M

Working Lands
funds awarded



\$30.9M

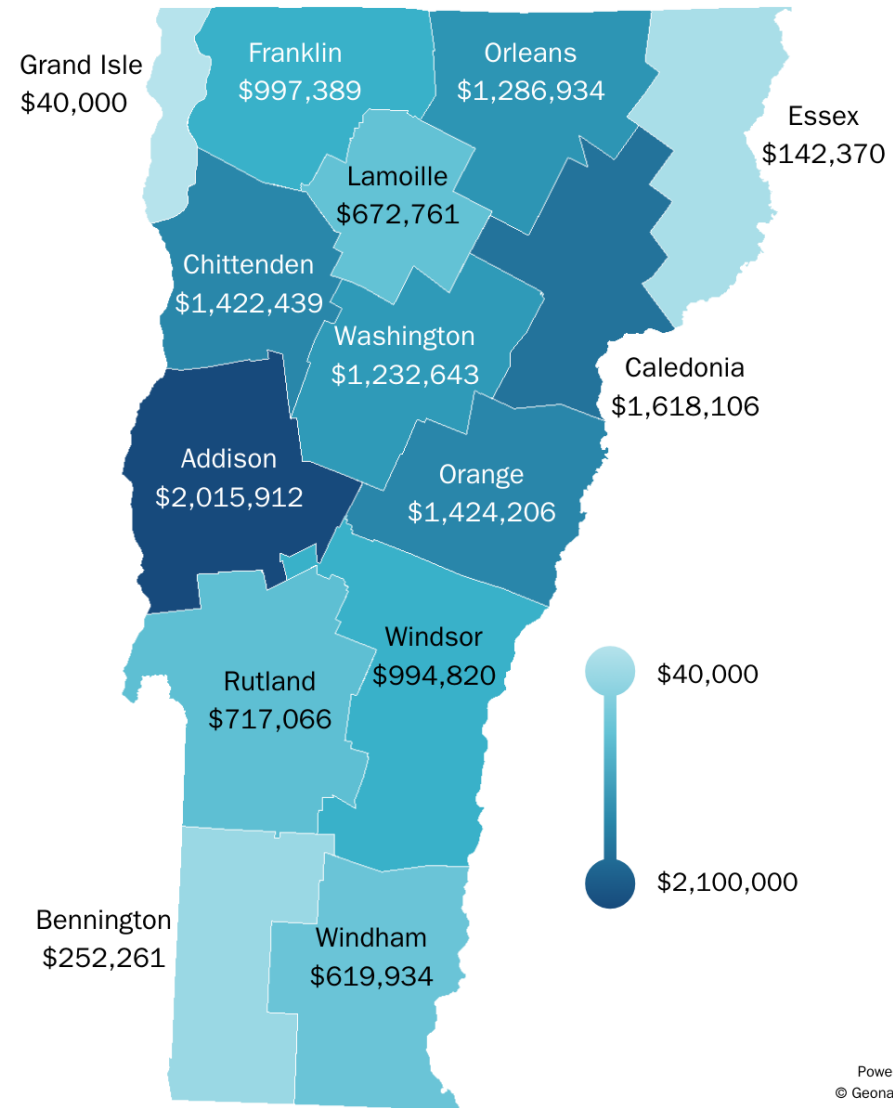
Matching funds
leveraged



14

Counties
benefited

Grant Funds to Businesses, 2012–2024



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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
2025	\$1,000,000	\$5,270,785
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

Center for Women & Enterprise

Center for an Agricultural Economy

Private consulting foresters

Private farmers

FY24 Application Timeline

Funding Opportunity	Number of Applicants	Funds Requested	Application Due Date	Applicant Notification Date
Service Provider Contract	8	\$630,155	November 3, 2023	December 7, 2023
Service Provider Grant	4	\$75,792	October 16, 2023	
Producer Association Grant	3	\$56,888		
Business Enhancement Grant	63	\$2,556,119	November 20, 2023	January 4, 2024
ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant	31	\$4,473,279	January 19, 2024 (pre-application) March 25, 2024 (final application)	May 8, 2024
Supply Chain Impact Grant	46	\$6,035,603		
Small Farm Diversification & Transition Grant	171	\$2,381,715	March 4, 2024	April 17, 2024

WLEI Program Impact FY24



65

Projects funded



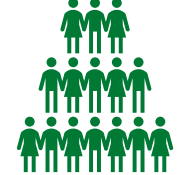
\$3,021,672

Working Lands
funds awarded



345

Applications
received



16,187,156

Funds requested

Business Enhancement Grant & Small Farm Diversification & Transition Grant

802 Logging, Craftsbury: \$50,000 for feller buncher to increase efficiency and safety and to minimize environmental impact during harvesting

Agrigorial LLC, Jeffersonville: \$35,100 for The Farm Between value-added processing kitchen

Bear Island Maple, Bolton: \$16,650 for establishing maple sap collection

Calabash Gardens, Wells River: \$10,300 for certified kitchen build for value-added production

Carman Brook Orchard, Swanton: \$15,000 for sustainable cider orchard transition

Chamberlin's Farm, Underhill: \$14,737 for farm store refrigeration

Ezili's Respite Farm & Sanctuary, Groton: \$15,000 for goat dairy handling & processing facilities

FinAllie Ferments, Townshend: \$50,000 for improving efficiency and storage capacity

Grateful Morning Dairy, Shaftsbury: \$15,000 for establishing an on-farm creamery for value-added dairy

Hackett's Orchard, South Hero: \$25,000 for Honeycrisp storage expansion

Hillside Farm, Albany: \$11,253 to establish on-farm poultry parting

Howmars Farm, Franklin: \$8,600 for increasing organic potato production

Maple Valley Farm, Bridgewater: \$15,000 for establishing a farmstand

Martin Family Farm, Williamstown: \$6,042 for hay wagon to improve hay sales capability

Milkweed Farm, Westminster West: \$15,000 for farm store display cooler

New Tradition Farm, Huntington: \$14,900 for diversifying with fruit and nut trees

Northeastern Vine Supply, West Pawlet: \$50,000 for vineyard expansion and wine production

Slopeside Syrup, Williston: \$50,000 for high-output packaging machine

SS Forestry Solutions, Williston: \$15,000 for Valmet forwarder rehab

Sunday Bell Farm, Danville: \$50,000 for new milking parlor and milking equipment

The Goat Project, Bennington: \$50,000 for creamery construction

Top Rankin, Johnson: \$48,485 for organic raw milk dairy infrastructure development

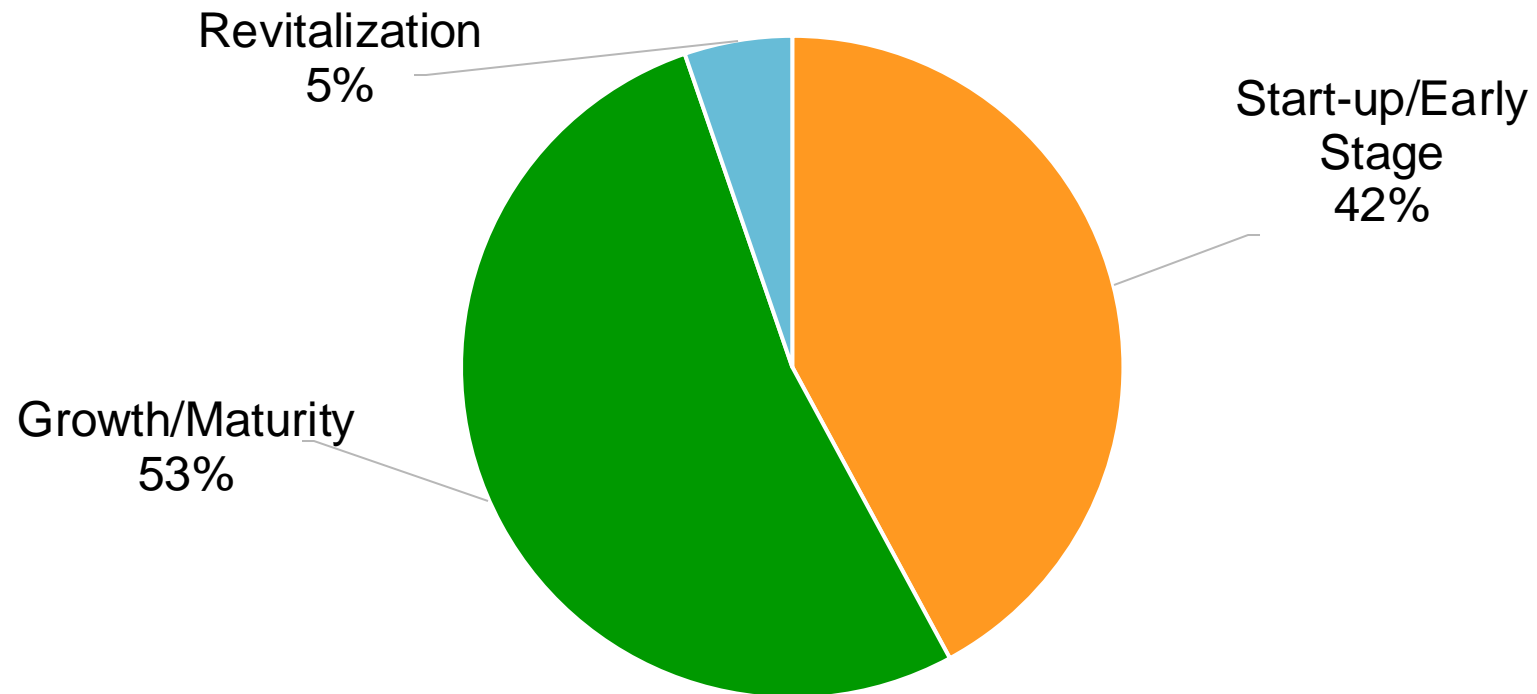
Triple J Pastures, Irasburg: \$18,108 for mobile chicken house

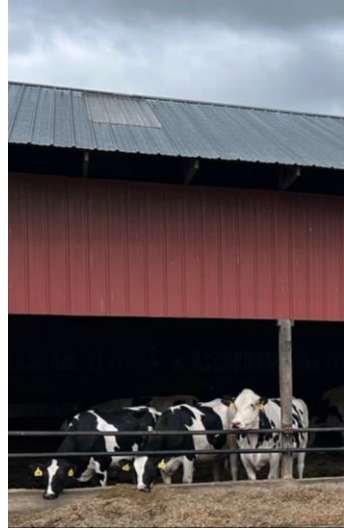
Union Brook Farm, Northfield: \$9,168 for equipment to expand on-farm poultry processing

Vermont Bees, Swanton: \$50,000 for honey extraction equipment upgrade

Vermont Cider Lab, Essex: \$50,000 for processing equipment and farm partnerships

FY24 Grantee Business Stage





Program Impacts – jobs & labor

Belter Family Partnership: installing four milking robots to save 105 human milking hours per week.

Sunday Bell Farm: installing milking pipeline system to eliminate manual handling/carrying of milk, reduce handling of animals, double overall milk production, and cut labor in half.



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Program Impacts – land management, increased acreage in production, and climate adaptation

Carman Brook Orchard: Carman Brook Orchard is transitioning from traditional dairy to cider apple production. Planting apple varieties that address the challenges posed by inconsistent weather, reduce pesticide costs, and reduce operating costs by 17%.

Sweetland Farm: installing biomass- and solar-fueled winter crop production and storage capacity, increasing ability to produce, store, and deliver products in November-April, while phasing out fossil fuels.

Bear Island Maple: establishing maple sap collection on 10 acres of forest.





Program Impacts – equity

Ananda Gardens: building a permanent farmstand to continue promoting the link between farming and wellness in the BIPOC community.

Ezili’s Respite Farm & Sanctuary: new processing achieved by installing pasteurizer equipment and micro creamery facilities to serve as an incubator hub for BIPOC and transgender people in rural Vermont.

New Tradition Farm: diversifying from salad greens into fruit and nut enterprise that will support reduced-price and free food shares, as well as steward land held in perpetuity for women, transgender, and non-binary people.

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Program Impacts – product output and sales

Chamberlin's Farm: reopening the farm store to increase sales by over \$10,000/year.

Howmars Farm: dairy farm diversifying into potato production by purchasing a potato harvester to increase productivity over tenfold, decrease labor input, improve product quality, and increase sales by 25%.



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Photos: Chamberlin's Farm

FY24 Impact Grants

Ananda Gardens, Montpelier: \$62,595 for building an accessible farmstand in the Montpelier area

Belter Family Partnership, South Burlington: \$250,000 for purchase and installation of GEA 9500 milking robots

Champlain Valley Grain Center, Ferrisburgh: \$150,000 for still system for processing local grain day of harvest

David White Trucking, Lemington: \$67,370 for expanding logging equipment system

Goodridge Lumber, Albany: \$225,789 for converting from diesel to electric-generated three-phase power

Last Resort Farm, Bristol: \$74,565 for building new hay storage and renovating dairy barn hay loft for storing and curing high-value crops

LSF Forest Products, Fletcher: \$250,000 for sawmill expansion to increase production

Machia Brothers Dairy, Franklin: \$50,000 for farmworker housing replacement project

Myers Produce, Craftsbury: \$45,000 for digital infrastructure to support regional sales and transportation of Vermont food

Severy Farm, Cornwall: \$185,829 for new livestock facilities for profitability

Sweetland Farm, Norwich: \$190,002 for fossil-free winter crop storage and production facility

Vermont Farmers Food Center, Rutland: \$50,000 for Heart of Vermont Agriculture Food Center



802 Logging: purchasing a used feller buncher for improved productivity and safety.

LSF Forest Products: expanding sawmill to double capacity and production to be able to produce 4000 boardfeet per day and increase sales by 60%.

SS Forestry Solutions: rehabbing a logging forwarder to enable more nimble log hauling and versatile operations, like firewood production, when weather conditions limit the use of larger equipment.





Vermont Farmers Food Center: implementing business plan to establish supply chain link between central and southwestern Vermont's farmers and consumers.

Champlain Valley Grain Center: providing grain processing services (cleaning, drying, storage) and a market for VT grain growers.



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FY24 Service Provider & Producer Association Grantees

Service Provider Investments

Center for Women & Enterprise: \$20,000 for Business Planning for Women-Owned Working Lands Businesses in Vermont

Intervale Center: \$23,800 for Upgrading Vermont Land Link Website to Accelerate Farmland Access

Northeast Forests Vermont Forest Business School: \$75,000 for Training and Business Coaching Program

Northern Forest Center: \$19,987 for Supporting Adaptation & Growth for Vermont Wood Products Businesses

Northwest Regional Planning Commission: \$12,005 for Sale & Marketing Technical Assistance and Updates to Northwest Vermont Grown Website

Paul, Frank, & Collins: \$55,800 for Building Executive Business Skills Training Program in Labor and HR Management

Rival Brands: \$33,250 for Building Up The Beliefs and Brands of Vermont's Business Owners

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board: \$99,065 for Building Resilience in the Agricultural Sector through Executive Business & Marketing Skills

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board: \$99,986 for Expanding Access to Business & Technical Assistance to Foster a Resilient Forest Economy

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund: \$100,000 Developing a Supply Chain for Beef-on-Dairy Terminal Crossbred Animals

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund: \$56,430 for VT Forest Industry Network

Producer Association Grants

Vermont Cheese Council, Inc: \$24,888 for Expanding Organizational and Board Development for Greater Impact on Members

Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers' Association (VVBGA): \$12,000 for Maintaining and Improving the VVBGA web site

Vermont Woodlands Association: \$20,000 for Growing Vermont Woodlands: Amplifying the role of stewardship to private woodland owners through marketing



SPROUT Loan Program: subsidizing interest rates on loans to help working lands enterprises that traditional lenders often overlook.

Paul Frank & Collins: bringing working lands businesses into compliance with the wide variety of employment laws and support them in becoming good employers.

Rival Brands: educational cohort focused on enhancing business marketing and branding for 30 workinglands businesses.

Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association: adding a Pick Your Own marketing section to website that will allow growers to promote their farm products.

The screenshot shows the website header with the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Assoc. logo and navigation links: 'PYO Home', 'Search by Map', and 'Search'. Below the header is the title 'Pick-Your-Own Farm Finder'. A 'Search by Map' button is visible. A text instruction reads: 'Zoom or drag to navigate the map, then click on an icon to reveal a popup.' Below this is a 'Pick-Your-Own Crop' dropdown menu currently set to 'Blueberries'. The main content area features a map of Vermont with several red circular icons representing farms. Labeled locations on the map include Cornwall, Massena, Ogdensburg, Brockville, Plattsburgh, Milton, Burlington, Montpelier, St. Johnsbury, and Bethlehem. The Vermont state logo is at the bottom of the map area.





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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