

IMPACT REPORT 2024



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund



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Dear Supporters,

2024 was a year that reaffirmed the importance of our work and its reach. Our organization was formed to assist small Vermont businesses—the backbone of Vermont’s economy. Our focus has always been on supporting Vermont’s food system, forest-based, and climate technology businesses, but our impact goes much further than our state border. We see effects not only in Vermont, but also in the region, and even nationally.

Providing technical assistance to businesses to increase sales isn’t the only goal—it is to help those businesses be able to pay livable wages, increase efficiencies, and promote an economy that centers the wellbeing of people and the environment. Those goals are more important than ever considering the lack of food security, the housing crisis, and the increase in climate change related disasters.

That’s why we are proud to have expanded our capacity to support small businesses by adding two new programs. The Tools of the Trade program is a new coaching program geared at aiding energy service business owners expand their ability to hire more workers in order to install renewable energy and energy efficient technologies to more homes and businesses across the state, thereby helping Vermont meet its energy and climate plan goals. We also received a contract with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets to provide business assistance through their Resilient Food Supply Infrastructure program, which helps small businesses invest in their infrastructure to expand and streamline the middle of the food supply chain.

These and our other services that help businesses, such as the DeltaClime^{VT} energy business accelerator, Vermont Farm to Plate, and our Forest Products Development Program, all contribute to a Vermont where small businesses are valued, heard, can pay higher wages, and invest in their employees.

I hope our commitment to Vermont’s small businesses shines through in this Impact Report and inspires you to support our work.

Sincerely,



Ellen Kahler
Executive Director

Supporting Vermont's small businesses for a wellbeing economy



The vast majority of businesses (93%) in Vermont have fewer than 20 employees, many of which fall into VSJF's sectors of food and agriculture, forest products, climate technology, and waste management. Supporting these businesses is crucial—they are the backbone of Vermont's economy, providing a significant number of jobs in the state, and investing their profits back into Vermont.

Our business management coaching services help the entrepreneurs behind their businesses develop the skills to work "on their business" so they are positioned for long term growth and success. Entrepreneurs are often so busy running their business, they don't have the capacity to plan for the future. Businesses at critical junctures often benefit from outside coaching to help them grow, develop, and mature. Our services pair value-added businesses with highly experienced C-suite level coaches to learn and make a growth plan that works for their business.

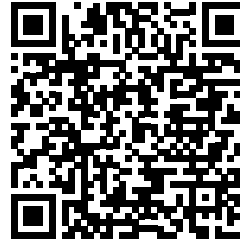
Our Impact

In 2024 we provided 'deep dive' coaching services to 21 businesses across the state. Our coaches not only work with businesses on growth and sales, but more importantly, with the entrepreneur to develop other areas, including operational efficiencies, human resources best practices and internal policies. The result is a holistic plan for both the business and entrepreneur that sets them up for success.

BUSINESS SENSE

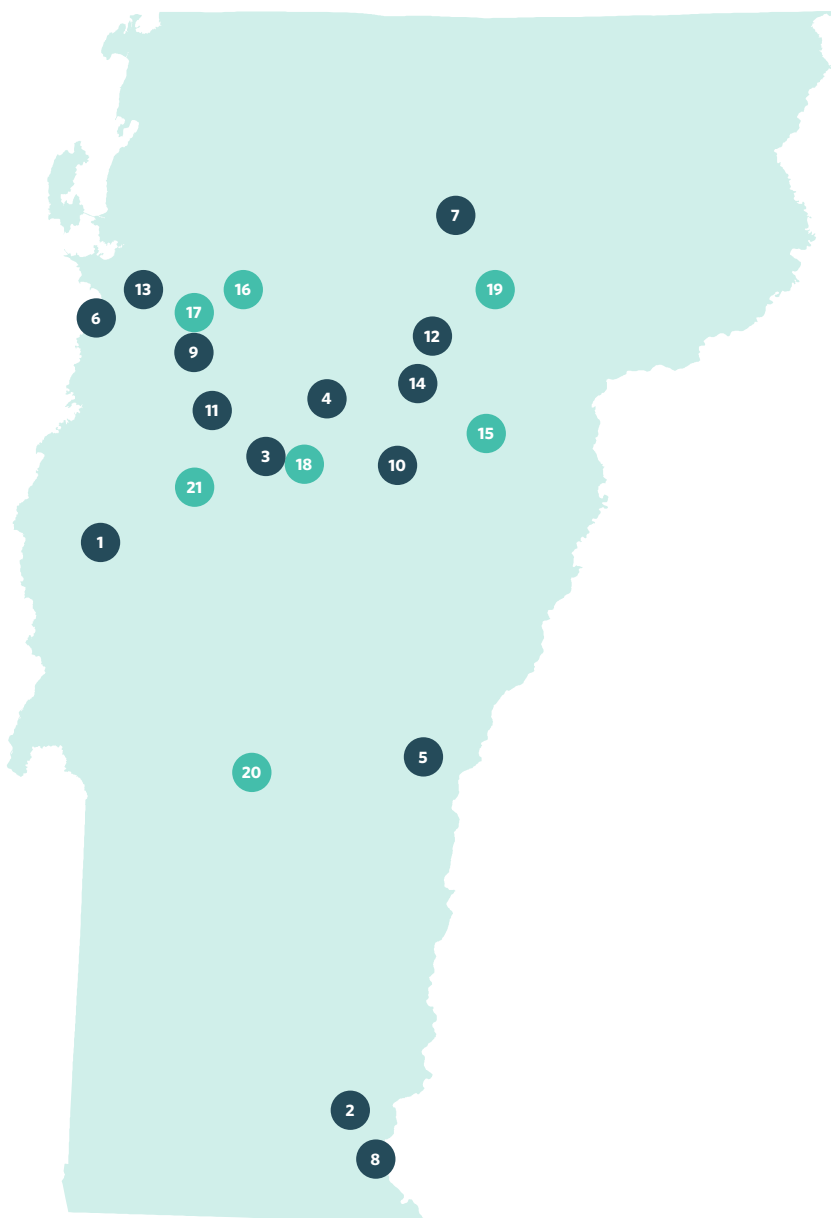
We've extended our ability to reach more businesses this year with the release of our Business Sense resource series. This free resource, written by our coaches, provides no-fluff information that gets to the heart of what businesses should know to be successful. The 36 documents across 6 modules are available on our website for free. The financial module is also available in six additional languages so we can reach more business owners in Vermont with this important tool.

SCAN TO SEE ALL OUR BUSINESS SENSE MODULES:



<https://www.vsjf.org/services/business-coaching/business-sense/>

Business Coaching Across Vermont



2024 Business Coaching Clients

- 1 Monument Farms, Weybridge
- 2 VT Hempicurean, West Brattleboro
- 3 Babette's Table, Waitsfield
- 4 Roots Farm Market, Middlesex
- 5 Global Village Foods, Quechee
- 6 SugarSnap Catering, Burlington
- 7 Myers Produce, Craftsbury
- 8 Retreat Farm, Brattleboro
- 9 Maple Wind Farm, Richmond
- 10 Trow & Holden, Barre
- 11 Krin's Bakery, Huntington
- 12 Sawyer Made, East Calais
- 13 New Frameworks, Essex Junction
- 14 Vermont Wildwoods, Marshfield

2024 Tools of the Trade Clients

- 15 Black Cat Builders, LLC, Plainfield
- 16 Maheux Heating and Refrigeration, Inc., Jericho
- 17 The She Builder & Co., LLC, Winooski
- 18 Roots Builders, Waitsfield
- 19 Solar Harvester, Hardwick
- 20 Solsaa Building and Energy Solutions, Rutland
- 21 VT Exergy, LLC, Bristol



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

We also kicked off a new type of coaching program called Tools of the Trade: Business Fundamentals for Energy Pros. This 18-month program targets builders and contractors in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industry to help them improve their business operations so they can attract and retain more workers in the growing climate solutions and renewable energy fields.



VSJF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COACHES

- Tabitha Bowling
- Gabriel Cole
- Peter Cole
- Carolyn Cooke
- Beth Gilpin
- Jean Kissner
- Linda Markin
- Lawrence Miller
- Victor Morrison
- Kathleen Murphy Moriarty

Why It's Important

Vermont's economy is built on small businesses. Entrepreneurs start their businesses because of a passion for the work. Owning and operating a business follows that passion. When the farm stand grows into a farm store, when the one-person HVAC company can't install heat pumps fast enough, or when the value-added food producer needs to expand market access, VSJF business coaches help guide business owners to work "on" their business and not just "in" their business.

VSJF business coaches work with business owners to improve their skills required to support growth such as financial literacy, operations improvements, strategic planning, human resources, sales and marketing, and more.

"The shift from a service company building custom homes to manufacturing a product for sale, was new territory for New Frameworks, which led Ace McArleton to the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) business coaching program. They came to us with this challenge of moving from a custom design-build company to something much broader. They were really looking at how big of an impact they could have with small footprint housing kits."

**Peter Cole
Business Coach, VSJF**

What We Need

\$100,000 in additional funding support for Tools of the Trade to run a second cohort starting in 2025.

\$50,000 in additional funding for periodic follow on coaching support of clients once the initial project has been completed.

Vermont—a great place to test new climate technology



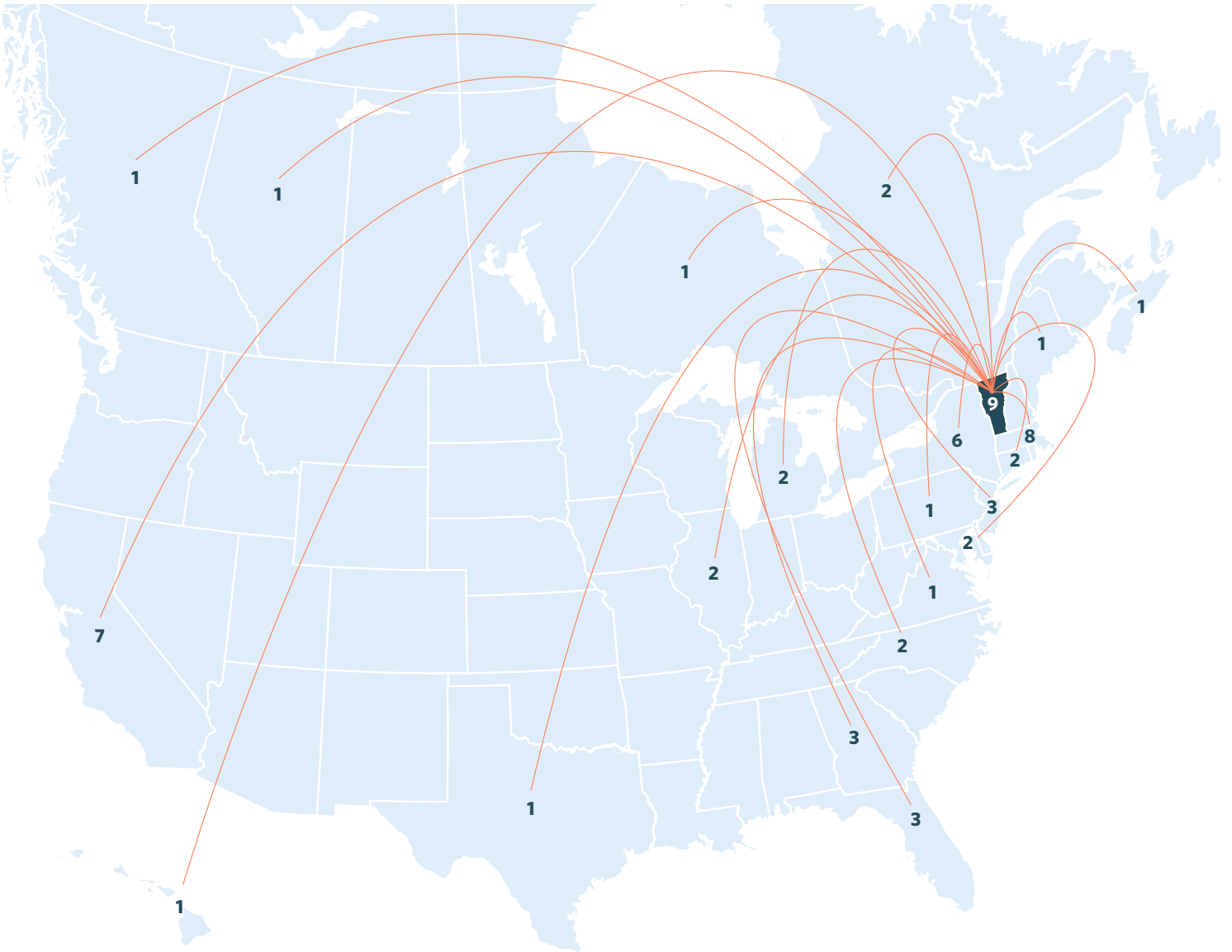
Vermont is a leader in the nation with its aggressive climate goals, including requiring utility companies to use only clean energy by 2035. But the system isn't set up to make the energy transition easy. Adopting new climate technologies is expensive and requires deep analysis while startup companies need investment and mentorship to bring their products to market. The DeltaClime^{VT} business accelerator bridges this gap.

Each year, we bring a cohort of 8 seed-stage companies with innovative climate solutions and products to Vermont to participate in our rigorous business accelerator. The program is centered around the ecosVC Lens of the Market[®] ACCELERATED curriculum, designed to ensure participating startups produce a well grounded case for their business and are able to articulate a compelling plan for success to investors. Working closely with experienced mentors from Vermont utilities, energy companies, and business professionals, each cohort focuses on growing their businesses and making connections. At the end of the program, one company is chosen by their peers to receive a \$25,000 award, and various utilities select companies for pilot projects to further test their products.

2024 Cohort Companies

- **Bidirectional Energy** California * Winner of the 2024 Cohort
- **EarthEn** California † Awarded a pilot project
- **ElecGrid** Vermont
- **EMPEQ** New York
- **Induction Food Systems** North Carolina
- **Moduly** Quebec & Florida†
- **Noteworthy AI** Connecticut
- **Rock Rabbit** California*

Breakdown of DeltaClime^{VT} Cohort Participants (2017-2024)



COHORT PARTICIPANTS BY STATE (2017-2024)

| | | | |
|----------------|---|------------------|---|
| Vermont | 9 | Illinois | 2 |
| Massachusetts | 8 | Virginia | 1 |
| California | 7 | Pennsylvania | 1 |
| New York | 6 | Hawaii | 1 |
| Florida | 3 | Maine | 1 |
| Georgia | 3 | Texas | 1 |
| New Jersey | 3 | Canada | |
| North Carolina | 2 | Quebec | 2 |
| Connecticut | 2 | Alberta | 1 |
| Washington, DC | 2 | British Columbia | 1 |
| Michigan | 2 | Nova Scotia | 1 |
| | | Ontario | 1 |



Our Impact

DeltaClime^{VT} has gathered 62 companies over 8 years to work on climate change solutions for Vermont. But our impact is not only statewide. Companies from 17 states and 5 Canadian provinces have participated in our accelerator program. We have positioned Vermont as THE place where companies with cutting edge climate solutions come to learn, connect with utilities, and pilot their products. As a result, Vermont is seen as a leader in the climate technology sector and sets an example for other states. Eighteen pilot projects have been awarded by Vermont utilities to test drive their fresh perspectives and technologies in a real-world environment. Some cohort companies have even gone on to be acquired by major energy companies where they can implement their products at scale, making an impact nationwide.

We are deepening our impact in 2025 with the launch of more pilot projects, thanks to the Small Business Administration and the Office of U.S. Senator Peter Welch. These funds will allow us to facilitate longer, more intensive pilot projects between cohort companies and Vermont utilities.

“The corporate partners and the mentors of the DeltaClime^{VT} program have been incredibly generous with their time. I’ve never experienced anything like that. Everyone said yes to having a conversation. And then they were very candid about providing feedback, even if sometimes it wasn’t the feedback you wanted to hear—but it helps your company and it helps you develop a product that’s better, so that’s been incredible. We’ve been in a few accelerators—this has been the best by far.”

Aimee Gotway Bailey
Founder and CEO, Rock Rabbit
Energy 2024 Alum and Award Winner



Transforming Vermont's Energy System

From left to right: Jared Duval, Linda McGinnis, Darren Springer, and Cara Robecheck of Energy Action Network present the Anne & Arthur Berndt Award at the EAN 2024 Summit to VSJF Executive Director Ellen Kahler. The award celebrates Kahler and VSJF’s vision, leadership, and commitment to creating a renewable energy future for Vermont.

Why It's Important

In no other state can startup founders meet with the leaders of utility and energy companies on a 1:1 basis and get real time feedback on their product. Thanks to the Vermont Legislature’s climate goals, utilities must innovate and can move more quickly to adopt greener solutions. As a result, startups want to come to Vermont to test drive their cutting edge technology and gain access to utility leaders. Through DeltaClime^{VT}, startups have the opportunity to understand what utilities need through conversations and feedback, pivot or hone their business model, and ultimately provide clean energy solutions.

What We Need

The pilot projects awarded by the utilities and energy partners are impactful now, but they are often short in duration and small in scale. We know there’s much more we can do with these innovative products and solutions. With more funding, VSJF can offset costs for longer, more intensive pilot projects that will test the products more rigorously and better prepare for going to market.

Reimagining a forest products industry that solves problems for people and planet



The forest industry in Vermont and regionally is transitioning on multiple fronts—from the consolidation of businesses to exciting research happening in the woods, to developing new products like wood fiber insulation and molded fiber. VSJF’s Forest Products Program is supporting efforts to develop new products and services that could benefit the industry while continuing to support existing businesses for a strong future.

Vermont’s forest products industry generates **\$2.1B** in annual economic output in forestry, logging, processing, construction, woodworking, and wood energy.

Source: Vermont Department Of Forests, Parks, and Recreation

As part of this transition in the industry, VSJF is also looking beyond Vermont’s borders. We recognize that the northern forest spans several states and to make a bigger impact, we are partnering with others in the region to expand opportunities for Vermont businesses in new technologies such as the development of mass timber products, wood insulation and a host of other emerging products that utilize wood cellulose.

“Many of the solutions to (the climate crisis) lie in the vast potential of the forest industry. From legacy methods to modern innovations, the forest industry holds the keys to a sustainable future, ready to be unlocked and revitalized for the modern world.”

Melissa LaCasse
Co-Founder
Tanbark Molded Fiber Products



The 2024 Forest Products Summit at Bolton Valley Resort

Working to Help the Region's Wood Basket

Our impact extends beyond Vermont. The forest economy is regional and operating in tandem is the future. Applying our experience with sector-wide work and the Roadmap, we are working to identify challenges and opportunities for the region. For example, as an advisor to Vermont's Forestry Accelerator program, managed by Vermont State University and Do North Coworking, we have helped attract more than a dozen companies from the U.S. and Canada to help grow their businesses and plant roots in Vermont and the region. Our annual Vermont Forest Industry Summit showcased regional businesses, supported innovation, and collaborated with other states to promote those making an impact on the forest economy.



The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Forest Future Roadmap, released in January 2024. Christine McGowan, VSJF's Forest Products Development Director supported the Roadmap's development.

Our Impact

Our work in network development, supply chain coordination, and strategic communications over the past 8 years helped set the stage for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation's Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap, which provides a plan to strengthen and promote the industry over the next decade. Developing the Roadmap galvanized the industry and brought together various partners who are now positioned to implement the Roadmap. We are proud of the work we did to assist the Department in its development, and we are excited to support this next implementation phase.



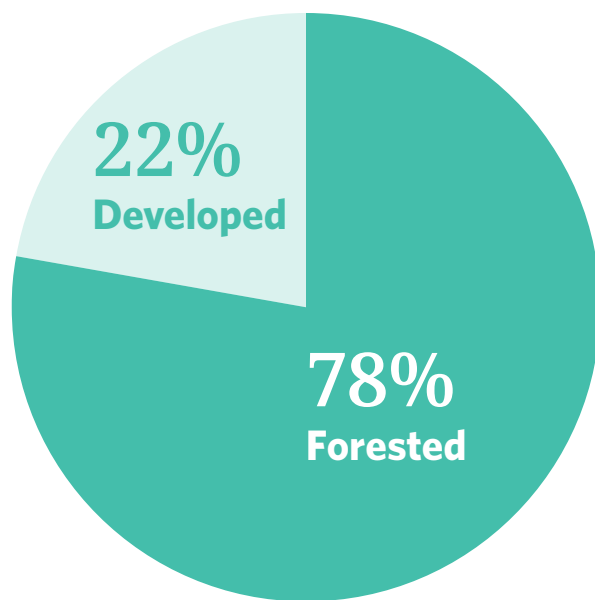
Why It's Important

About 78% of Vermont is forested and keeping those forests intact and working is crucial to Vermont's future. Working forests simultaneously mitigate the effects of climate change, provide a livelihood for rural communities, and produce innovative products like molded fiber that can replace single use plastic.

But the demographics of those in the forest industry, as well as the thousands of small woodlot owners who have long depended on healthy forest products markets, skew older. Forest products businesses must attract the next generation of operators who can pursue new markets and advance these businesses as part of a thriving forest economy. Likewise, landowners facing land transition decisions must retain an economic incentive to keep their working forests into the future. Working to strengthen the industry as a whole brings together people from disparate parts of the industry to preserve Vermont's working forests.

What We Need

Strengthening Vermont's forest economy requires long-term investments from multiple interests, both public and private. The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative is an important state funder for this program and the industry, and more funding is needed to expand our impact. The Roadmap implementation will need more investment from the State to be successful.



78% of Vermont is forested. Keeping these forests intact and working is crucial to Vermont's future.

Source: Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Working toward the goals of the Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021–2030



Because agricultural activity exists in every county of the state, in both rural communities and our more urban centers, we all have a stake in our ability to produce more of what we eat every day. Vermont needs a prosperous, resilient, food secure, and equitable food system that can meet more of our needs today and for future generations.

Farm to Plate History

Vermont Farm to Plate began in 2009 when the Vermont Legislature created the Vermont Farm to Plate Investment Program and tasked VSJF with working toward its intended outcomes. Following the success of the first 10 years, the Vermont Legislature reauthorized Vermont Farm to Plate in 2019 (Act 23) and directed VSJF and the Farm to Plate Network to create the next 10 year food system plan.

After an 18-month research and public engagement process, the team delivered the Vermont Agriculture and Food System

Strategic Plan 2021–2030 to the State Legislature in early 2021. The Plan includes 15 new Goals and 34 new Priority Strategies for expanding and strengthening Vermont’s food system even further, building upon the tremendous gains over the previous ten years.

Why Farm to Plate?

When Vermont Farm to Plate launched in 2009, we estimated that about 5% (about \$114 million in sales) of the food Vermonters consume annually was produced here. At that time there were 58,000 Vermonters employed in the food system

across 11,221 farm and food enterprises. The sector’s total economic output was estimated at \$9.3 billion.

By building a Network of 350+ businesses, non-profit organizations, government personnel, capital providers, and educators all across the state, and taking a soil-to-soil approach of taking action across every part of the food system (i.e., farm inputs, production, processing, distribution, retailing, and nutrient management), significant progress has been achieved.

Our efforts have served as a national example in food system vitality, equity, sustainability, and innovative best practices that are becoming more ubiquitous across agriculture and food systems in the United States.

Yet, there is much more work that lies ahead to further strengthen Vermont’s food system and our ability to feed ourselves. We face challenges such as climate change, industry consolidation and global supply chain vulnerabilities, lack of food security, high cost of farmland, and land use pressures. We also need to marshal the technical assistance and capital resources needed to support Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), veterans and other historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities who want to farm and/or start a food business here.

Our Impact

The Farm to Plate Network’s impact is statewide, touching all aspects of Vermont’s food and agriculture system. Our extensive sector expertise and knowledge of statewide strategic priorities has allowed us to align partner efforts with the Strategic Plan and serve as a trusted resource on many food system boards and committees, such as the Working Lands Enterprise Fund, Sodexo’s Vermont First Advisory Committee, the Climate Council’s Agriculture and Ecosystems subcommittee, Farm to School’s Common Circle, the Agency of Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant committee, and the Governor’s Commission on the Future of Agriculture (2021–2023).

SUPPORTING RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2024, VSJF expanded its reach by launching a multi-year effort to develop our local and regional supply chains that will

Vermont Farm to Plate Investment Program Intended Outcomes (Act 23, 2019)

- Increase sustainable economic development and create jobs in Vermont’s food and farm sector
- Improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change
- Improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters

Vermont Farm to Plate—10 Years of Progress

- Doubled local food sales to 10% or \$481 million annually
- Increased total economic output of food and farm sector to \$14.2 billion
- 300 net new farm and food businesses created
- 62,000 Vermonters employed in the food system

remove structural and financial barriers for regional food infrastructure in Vermont. Funding support for this new effort has been made possible with one-time USDA-Resilient Food System Infrastructure funding flowing through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. This initiative involves stakeholder engagement across the supply chain, mapping and spatially analyzing infrastructure assets and needs, building and vetting a pipeline of high impact projects with technical experts, structuring, coordinating, and securing funding and financing

on behalf of those projects, and providing ongoing project development and operational support through business coaching services. If successful, over the next three years more Vermont businesses will have the infrastructure to expand, take on new employees, and increase sales here in Vermont and throughout New England.



Kahler Inducted into Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame

VSJF Executive Director Ellen Kahler was honored as an Ag Innovator during her induction into Vermont’s Agricultural Hall of Fame at the Champlain Valley Fair in August 2024. Ellen’s innovative work through the Farm to Plate program has had positive impacts on Vermont’s food system, making local food more widely available and sustainable, while supporting and raising awareness about viable career opportunities in the food system.

In 2024:

- **15** farm and food businesses received technical assistance through the USDA Resilient Food System Infrastructure program.
- **7** farms received training on breeding, marketing, and financial planning for the Beef on Dairy Project.
- **75** farm and food businesses received distribution and retail sales technical assistance through the Network's Independent Grocers Program.
- **1,000+** subscribers to the bi-monthly Small Bites e-newsletter, addressing producer, vendor, and buyer interests in support of local food sales—a 65% open rate and consistent positive feedback from readership.
- **\$20,000** secured for the Network's CSA & Healthcare Community of Practice's to aid the development of Food Is Medicine initiatives.

In addition:

- We are facilitating 5 food hubs to identify middle of the supply chain investment needs for both supply and distribution, improve strategic planning and operational efficiencies between food hubs, distributors, and producers, and surface market research or shared logistics technology needs.
- The Intervale Center, with the support of the Network's Financing Farmland Access Priority Strategy Team, explored the feasibility of various shared equity models and how they relate to community, farmer, racial, and gender equity.

**New Staff**

The Farm to Plate team at the 14th Annual Farm to Plate Network Gathering (from left to right) front row: Hannah Baxter, Jake Claro, Esther Erbe, Jessica Poulin; back row: Kelly Nottermann, Becka Warren, Ellen Kahler, Kurt Ericksen. In 2024, VSJF created a Farm to Plate Network Assistant position, hiring Jessica Poulin and welcomed Hannah Baxter as our new Farm to Plate Network Manager.

“I attended the Producer, Distributor, Buyer Forum organized by the Network's Independent Grocers Program. The candid conversation and insider knowledge about distribution was invaluable. In addition, the contacts both with distributors and information sharing with other producers was ideal one-stop networking. I'm glad that I invested the time in participating, and I know that other participants felt the same way.”

Becky Castle
Fisher Brothers Farm and
Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream



Why It's Important

If where our food comes from suddenly mattered, would Vermont and our six state New England region have a reliable, safe, and abundant food supply? Coming out of the pandemic and experiencing the effects of climate change, securing Vermont's food supply chain is more important than ever. No single state or region can become food self-sufficient, but we can increase food self-reliance as both an investment in our shared future and an insurance policy against current and future risks.

Vermont's working lands are the state's economic powerhouse, a means to our quality of life, and important to the state's recreational and tourist economy. Consumers have proven that they want to buy local, know where their food comes from, and are concerned about the safety of our food supply. All of these economic trends necessitate more local food production for overall food security.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There are 15 goals and 87 objectives that will be the focus of VSJF and the Farm to Plate Network over the next 10 years. Here is a sampling of what we hope to achieve through our collaborative and aligned activities by 2030.

- Food system economic output will increase by \$3 billion (a 26.5% increase) by 2030.
- There will be 5,000 net new food sector jobs and 350 net new food sector establishments by 2030.
- By 2030, Vermont food products will be 25% of all in-state food purchases, by dollar value.
- By 2030, the aggregate total of Vermont products sold in the Northeast will increase, by dollar value.
- Median wages for all job categories in the food system will, at minimum, match the Vermont Livable Wage.

“I love being in community and holding space to talk about what things are working, what things aren't, and what things we can work on together to get further.”

Farm to Plate Gathering Participant

- Diverse cultural groups in Vermont will increasingly report that their food needs are met by Vermont producers.
- Total acres of conserved farmland will increase by 30,000 acres. River and stream miles impaired or altered by agriculture will decrease by 20%.

What We Need

We greatly appreciate the Legislature's continued support of Vermont Farm to Plate, but there is more work to be done. We need **infrastructure investment** in Vermont's food system at a larger scale, **climate policy** that supports the resilience and adaptive capacity of farmers and farmland, **policy** that supports existing and innovative approaches to farmland access, and dedicated funding that improves our food security and access to local food for all Vermonters.

FARM AND FOOD BUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- \$5 million to support the Working Lands Enterprise Board and \$6 million to VAAF to support infrastructure and supply chain development for meat, maple, and produce.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- Implement the policy priorities developed by the Agriculture and Ecosystems Subcommittee of the Vermont Climate Council.



FARMLAND ACCESS

- Revise loan statutes to create easier pathways for shared or equitable farmland ownership with USDA-FSA and other financial institutions. Allow for equal ownership percentages among multiple non-married/non-family members as borrowers.
- Invest in training for accountants and lawyers to reduce the risk of working with farmers pursuing alternative land access.
- Develop land access policies that support a diversity of goals such as affordable housing and farmland conservation.
- Fund the Land Access and Opportunity Board to work with communities that have been excluded from policy and resource allocation decisions around land and housing access.

FOOD SECURITY AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

- Create a \$20 million Vermont Farm Emergency Fund to provide rapid relief to impacted businesses and communities when natural disasters and other state emergencies arise.
- Provide \$1.75 million for Responsive Readiness to support the services and systems of the Vermont Foodbank.
- Increase funding for proven ways to ensure food security, including \$500,000 in base funding for NOFA-VT's Crop Cash Plus and Farm Share, \$3.25 million in one-time requests from the Vermont Foodbank for network partner support (i.e., food shelves, meal sites, senior centers, after school center, schools, and hospitals).

We are on the Road to Food Security in Vermont



Vermont has the tools, knowledge, and resources to create food security and ensure that every person living here has the food they want and need to be healthy and nourished. The Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035 guides our way to a future when all Vermonters are food secure.

The Roadmap, developed over two years with tremendous community input and engagement, provides actionable, detailed strategies to reach Vermont Farm to Plate's Legislative Outcome of healthy local food for all Vermonters. Vermont will be food secure when the Roadmap's three goals are met:

1. Government ensures food security for all in Vermont
2. Vermont farms have the resources to be resilient
3. Communities have the tools to support food security

Now the Vermont Food Security Coalition is working with Legislators and communities across the state to advance Roadmap strategies and reach these goals. During the 2024 Legislative session, we advanced seven Roadmap strategies. For example, the Coalition worked with representatives to begin to

add food considerations within state disaster preparedness, response, and recovery planning (Act 143). With the State's leadership, our collective action will be successful.

You can find information about the Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035 on the Farm to Plate Network website.

VERMONT FOOD SECURITY COALITION MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Feeding the Valley Alliance | NOFA-VT |
| Hunger Free Vermont | Vermont Foodbank |
| Intervale Center | Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) |
| Land Access and Opportunity Board | |



“There will be a huge need for more funding, but we can’t be overwhelmed by the cost; we live in a land of abundance and must use it for our people.”

From the statewide input for the Roadmap



New England Feeding New England Project (NEFNE)



VSJF continues to provide important leadership for the New England Food System Planners Partnership, a collaboration between seven state-level organizations, six state agricultural, economic and environmental department representatives and Food Solutions New England (FSNE).

Our Impact

Since its release in June 2023, the Partnership has made over 100 presentations across the six New England states to share out the findings of its foundational research—*New England Feeding New England: A Regional Approach to Food System Resilience*. For most of 2024, the Partnership focused on conducting local food counts in the other five New England states, building off the methodology developed in Vermont and conducted four times between 2011-2020. In September, the Partnership released a detailed analysis of local food spending in *New England—Regional Food Count 2022*. The report reveals that \$2.28 billion or 3.1% of New England’s total \$120.6 billion in food, beverage and alcohol expenditures were directed towards local and regional products, highlighting a critical area for

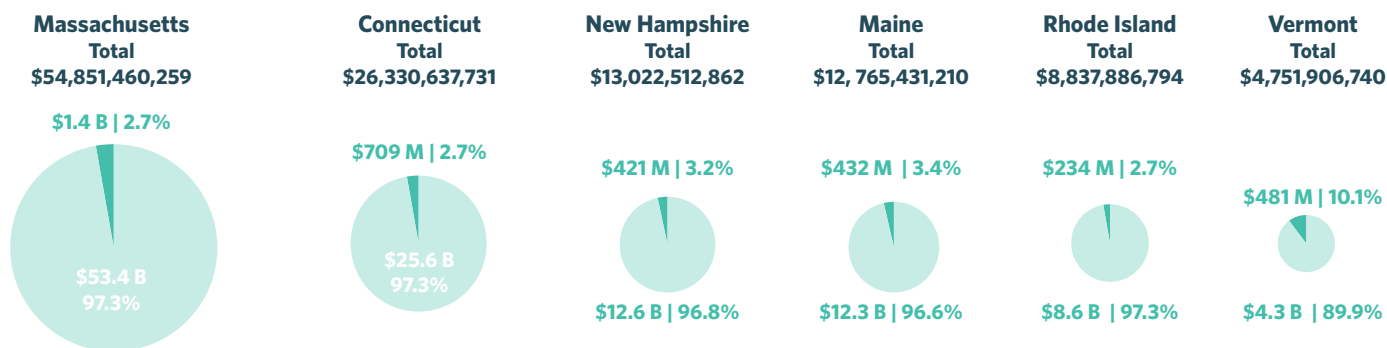
potential growth and investment. Of the six states, Vermont has the highest percentage of local at 10.1% and the third highest in overall dollars spent on local food.

Also in 2024, the Partnership released an interactive Data Dashboard that contains all the graphics from the NEFNE reports and the six State Briefs released in 2023, as well as the new Local Food Counts data.

Why It’s Important

The 2022 Local Food Counts data will encourage the region to work more collaboratively towards a 30% regional food consumption by 2030 goal. By equitably expanding our regional food system, we can strengthen New England’s economy, be more climate resilient and food secure. It is going to take all

Estimated Total and Local Food Spending in New England



Source: NEFNE

of us working together—businesses, community groups, governmental agencies, and eaters—to reach this goal but we all have a role to play and we will be better off for it.

What We Need

Local and Regional Food Availability: For New England grocery stores, restaurant owners and chefs, sourcing local and regional food can be an economic boost for businesses in the region. By including better signage and labeling on shelves or featuring menu items that promote local farms, and seafood producers, this commitment from New Englanders to New Englanders drives sales, keeps dollars close at home and supports jobs for the community.

Institutions such as colleges, hospitals, and schools, have already implemented strategies to expand local and regional food offerings; more can be done through state policy and funding commitments.

Residents and business owners can help strengthen our regional food economy by choosing local and regional food when making purchases, keeping our dollars closer to home.

Farmers, fishers and food manufacturers can do their part by both selling more of what is already produced in the region, throughout the region, and producing more of what 15.3 million New Englanders eat every day.

Choose Local & Regional Food: The single best way we can make a difference now is to choose local and regional food items over those from far away. By shifting even just \$10 per week from your typical food purchases to local or regional food items goes a long way toward supporting our regional food economy. Every dollar counts and helps our overall effort to achieve our New England goal of 30% regional food consumption by 2030!

“The Local Food Count 2022 report clearly highlights the opportunity to increase the amount of Maine and regionally-grown and produced food consumed in our state. We are committed to continuing our work to enhance farm and food production infrastructure and investment, market access, food security, and more in support of getting more Maine foods onto the plates of our friends and neighbors—here in Maine and regionally.”

Commissioner Amanda Beal
Maine Department of Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry

Liberation Ecosystem



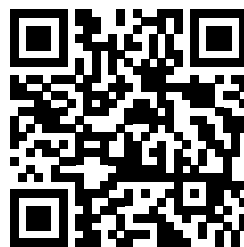
Congratulations to Liberation Ecosystem, on obtaining their own nonprofit 501(c)3 status! Formerly known as the Vermont Releaf Collective, Liberation Ecosystem was fiscally sponsored by VSJF from 2022–2024 while they worked to increase their capacity and grow as a collective.

Since 2020 Liberation Ecosystem, cultivated connection, shared resources, and amplified the voices of people of color in Vermont within their focus areas of Land, Environment, Agriculture, and Foodways.

In 2024, they received their own nonprofit status as the next step to collectively creating a dignified future that is an equitable and safe place for Black, Indigenous, People of Color. With a membership of 390+, Liberation Ecosystem is fostering an ecosystem for collaboration and support for its members through skillshares, workshops and gatherings, and external advocacy.

As they continue to grow their network and platform, they welcome donations, grants, and other forms of financial support.

SCAN TO VISIT LIBERATION ECOSYSTEM'S NEW WEBSITE:



<https://www.liberationecosystem.org/>

VSJF Staff



VSJF 2024 Staff:

Back Left to Right: Geoff Robertson, Kelly Nottermann, Laura Brill, Becka Warren, Kurt Ericksen, Christine McGowan, Jake Claro. Front Left to Right: Sydney Lucia, Esther Erbe, Ellen Kahler, Jessica Poulin, Anthony Mennona. Not pictured: Janice St. Onge, Hannah Baxter.

Ellen Kahler
Executive Director

Janice St. Onge
Deputy Director

Christine McGowan
Forest Products Program Director

Geoff Robertson
*DeltaClime^{VT} Managing Director
through 10/24*

Jake Claro
Farm to Plate Director

Hannah Baxter
*Farm to Plate Network Manager
as of 8/24*

Kelly Dolan
*Farm to Plate Network Manager
through 4/24*

Becka Warren
Food Security Coalition Project Manager

Jessica Poulin
*Farm to Plate Network Assistant
as of 4/24*

Kelly Nottermann
Communications Director

Anthony Mennona
Finance Director

Laura Brill
Bookkeeper and Contracts Manager

Sydney Lucia
Grants and Fund Development Manager

Esther Erbe
Office Manager & Events Coordinator

Kurt Ericksen
*Operations and Human
Resources Manager
as of 4/24*

* Leah Rovner
*Director, New England Food System
Planners Partnership*

* VSJF serves as the fiscal sponsor
for this program

Between April 2022 and June 2024, VSJF served as the fiscal sponsor for Liberation Ecosystem, (formerly known as the Vermont Releaf Collective).

In 2024, their staff included:

Samantha Langevin
*Director of Partnerships
& Community*

Jennifer Morton
*Technical Assistance and
Resource Manager*

Alyssa Beauchamp
Director of Operations as of 3/24

2024 Board of Directors



VSJF 2024 Board Members:

Back left to right: Noelle MacKay, Maureen Hebert, Ken Linge, Diane Abruzzini Riggs. Front left to right: Jean Hamilton, Aditi Datta, Shelly Severinghaus, Anson Tebbetts, along with VSJF Executive Director, Ellen Kahler. Not pictured: Tayt Brooks, Amanda Wheeler, Brodie O'Brien

“VSJF is an exceptional organization, fostering resilience and building networks in the ag and food, forestry, and energy sectors, supporting Vermont businesses statewide. What I am continually impressed by is VSJF’s ability to provide visionary leadership and on the ground support.”

Shelly Severinghaus
VSJF Board Chair

Shelly Severinghaus, WSP
Chair

Aditi Datta, Breef
Vice Chair as of 7/24

Noelle Mackay
formerly of Regulatory Assistance Project
Secretary/Treasurer

Diane Abruzzini-Riggs
Rigorous Technology
as of 7/24

Jean Hamilton
Land Access and Opportunity Board

Maureen Hebert
University of Vermont

Ken Linge
Vermont Bond Bank
as of 7/24

Brodie O'Brien
EnergyHub
as of 10/24

Tayt Brooks
Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Anson Tebbetts
Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets

Amanda Wheeler
Office of Governor Phil Scott

Nate Hausman
Green Mountain Power
through 6/24

Laura Sibilia
Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
through 6/24

Andrea Cohen
Vermont Electric Cooperative
through 6/24



FY24 Funding Sources

VSJF could not continue without the generous support of our many funding partners including:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Anonymous Foundation & Individuals | Henry P. Kendall Foundation | U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/HRSA (via Bistate Primary Care Association) | Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development (General Fund) |
| Angell Foundation | Jane’s Trust Foundation | Various Corporate Sponsors supporting VT Farm to Plate and DeltaClime ^{VT} | Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (General Fund) |
| Canaday Family Charitable Trust | Northern Border Regional Commission | Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (General Fund) | Vermont Housing & Conservation Board |
| Centers for Disease Control (via VT Department of Health) | The PCLB Foundation | | Vermont Community Foundation |
| U.S. Economic Development Administration (via Northern Forest Center) | Sandy River Charitable Trust | | |
| | U.S. Small Business Administration | | |
| | U.S. Department of Agriculture | | |

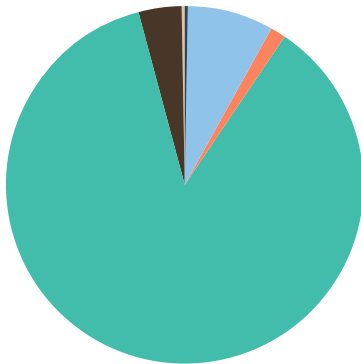
VSJF also provided fiscal sponsorship services for the Hunger Mountain Food Coop Fund, the New England Food System Planners Partnership and Liberation Ecosystem, Inc. (formerly known as the Vermont Releaf Collective).

Photo Credits: Front cover, Erica Houskeeper; pg. 2, Erica Houskeeper, pg. 4, top left, Kurt Erickson, bottom left, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 5, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 6, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 7, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 8, Erica Houskeeper; pg. 9, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 10, Erica Houskeeper; pg. 11, Erica Houskeeper; pg. 12, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 13, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 14, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 15, clockwise from top left, Hannah Baxter, Tre McCarney, Jessica Poulin, Hannah Baxter, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 16, Erica Houskeeper, pg. 17, clockwise from top left, Vermont Foodbank, Vermont Foodbank, Hunger Free Vermont, Kelly Nottermann, Becka Warren; pg. 18, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 20, Liberation Ecosystem; pg. 21, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 22, Kelly Nottermann; pg. 23, top left, Kelly Nottermann top right, Erica Houskeeper. Inside back cover, Kelly Nottermann.

VSJF Financial Report

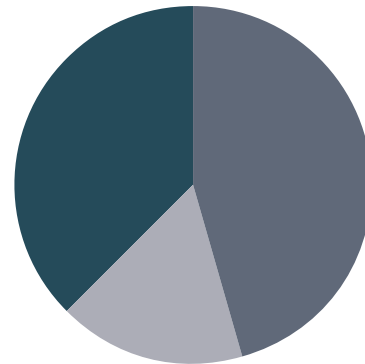
July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024

VSJF Revenue by Source



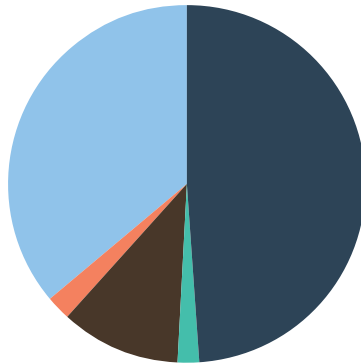
| VSJF REVENUE BY SOURCE | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Interest & Misc. Income | \$11,129.74 | 0.4% |
| Fees for Service | \$232,627.65 | 7.9% |
| Special Events | \$36,557.00 | 1.2% |
| Grant Revenue | \$2,539,166.71 | 86.4% |
| Corporate Sponsorships | \$113,960.10 | 3.9% |
| Contributions | \$4,229.51 | 0.1% |
| TOTAL | \$2,937,670.71 | |

Grant Revenue by Source



| VSJF GRANT REVENUE BY SOURCE | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| State | \$948,133.18 | 37.3% |
| Federal | \$1,159,973.42 | 45.7% |
| Foundation | \$431,060.11 | 17.0% |
| TOTAL | \$2,539,166.71 | |

VSJF Expenses by Category

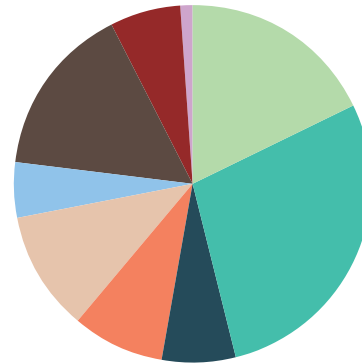


| VSJF EXPENSES BY CATEGORY | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Personnel | \$1,467,046.92 | 49.0% |
| Grantmaking | \$60,000.00 | 2.0% |
| Operations | \$326,104.25 | 10.9% |
| Occupancy | \$62,522.77 | 2.1% |
| Professional Services | \$1,076,148.64 | 36.0% |
| TOTAL | \$2,991,822.58 | |

Note 1: Federal Grant Revenue Sources include the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), USDA, Centers for Disease Control (via VT Dept of Health), and US SBA. Foundation grants represent private philanthropic foundation funds received in FY23 or FY24 but expensed in FY24. Some general support funds will be expensed in FY25.

Note 2: Professional Services include accounting, audit, and legal expenses as well as special projects conducted by consultants which are related to specific market development initiatives and/or are connected to specific grantee and/or business client support services.

VSJF Expenses by Initiative



| VSJF EXPENSES BY INITIATIVE | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Operations | \$532,815.01 | 17.8% |
| Farm to Plate | \$854,978.74 | 28.6% |
| Forests Products | \$195,990.35 | 6.5% |
| DeltaClime ^{VT} | \$253,022.71 | 8.5% |
| Business Assistance | \$323,344.49 | 10.8% |
| Flex Cap Fund—Fund Manager | \$148,485.06 | 5.0% |
| Fiscal Sponsorship | \$465,361.24 | 15.5% |
| New England Feeding New England | \$188,535.37 | 6.3% |
| Vermont Prosperity Project | \$31,789.61 | 1.1% |
| TOTAL | \$2,994,322.58 | |

Note 3: VSJF provided fiscal sponsorship services in 2024 to the Hunger Mountain Coop Foundation, Liberation Ecosystem, Inc. (formerly known as the Vermont Releaf Collective), and the New England Food System Planners Partnership.

Note 4: This is an unaudited financial report. As of January 1, 2022 the VSJF has switched to a calendar based fiscal year (Jan-Dec). This financial report represents revenue and expenses during the period of the state fiscal year (July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024).



"I always come away with renewed connections and new ones. I am profoundly grateful for all the connections that are made through the strategies of Farm to Plate. We are fortunate to tackle large systemic cross sector issues in the environment created through the Network."

Farm to Plate Gathering Participant

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development



<https://vsjf.org/donate>



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

3 Pitkin Ct #301E
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-828-1260

VSJF.ORG



VERMONT FOREST INDUSTRY SUMMIT



DELTA CLIME^{VT} BUSINESS ACCELERATOR



**FARM TO PLATE NETWORK/
ROOTED IN VERMONT**

