NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant

2025 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) announces the availability of funds through the Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant Program. This grant provides funding to hire professional marketing and branding experts for existing value-added dairy processors, producer associations, and dairy brands using co-packing services. These professionals will develop strategies to increase consumer awareness, improve product positioning, and expand market reach for regional value-added dairy businesses. At least 75% of grant funds must be used for these professional services, ensuring that the expert drives the project's direction.

Up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the professional's recommendations, such as printing marketing materials, launching advertising campaigns, or updating branding and packaging. Eligible applicants include licensed dairy processors, producer associations, and dairy brands using co-packing services in the Northeast. The Northeast region, for the purposes of NE-DBIC programs, includes the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

KEY DATES

Request for Applications (RFA) Release Date: March 11, 2025

Application Release Date: March 25, 2025

Application Deadline: May 8, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET

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CONTACT

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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Support is generally available during business hours: Monday – Friday, 7:45 AM – 4:30 PM ET. Assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

RESOURCES FOR APPLYING

WebGrants Guides and resources for registering and applying can be found on our Resources for Applicants and Recipients webpage.

REGISTERING IN WEBGRANTS

Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1 – 2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

THE NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM), is one of four USDA-AMS Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The NE-DBIC serves the 11-state Northeast region which includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont by supporting dairy businesses through projects that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. Projects target dairy farms and processors while providing additional support through market research and technical assistance. Since its inception in 2019, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center has received $49.27 million to support projects in the Northeast region of the United States.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is offering grants to help established value-added dairy processors, producer associations, and dairy brands strengthen their brand and expand market reach. This funding supports hiring professional marketing or branding experts to develop strategies that increase consumer awareness, improve product positioning, and drive sales of value-added dairy products. By working with industry professionals, dairy businesses can enhance their branding, refine messaging, and identify new market opportunities for regionally produced dairy products.

At least 75% of the grant funds must be used to contract marketing or branding professionals who will lead the project by developing brand strategy, promotional content, or market positioning plans. Applicants may not select a contractor before receiving an award, but they are expected to gather quotes and proposals to inform their project scope. The hired professional must meet federal grant requirements, including cost guidelines. Applicants must also incorporate at least one Dairy Business Innovation Initiative resource into their project, which are available in the Eligible Projects section of this RFA.

Up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the professional's recommendations, such as producing marketing materials, launching advertising campaigns, or updating packaging and website content, and more.

Eligible applicants include licensed dairy processors, producer associations supporting Northeast dairy processors, and dairy brands that market Northeast dairy products under a co-packing or other arrangement. All applicants must be based in the Northeast and source milk or dairy components from the region.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

$200,000

MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD

Minimum: $15,000
Maximum: $50,000
Match: A 25% (cash and/or in-kind) match commitment is required.

GRANT FUND DISBURSEMENT

We will distribute grant funds to you over three payments throughout the course of the grant project. Unless otherwise arranged with the Grant Program Manager, default payment structure of this grant is 40% of grant funds upfront, 40% of funds mid-project, and 20% of funds once the grant is complete.

NE-DBIC grants are deliverable-based, meaning you can submit claims for payment when you have completed outcomes related to the activities of your grant.

PROJECT LENGTH

Your project can take from 6 – 12 months to complete, depending on your needs. Pre-award costs may be available, with permission from the NE-DBIC Grant Program Manager.

FUNDING SOURCE

Funds are available through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center which is made possible by funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) through award AM21DBIVT1011-00.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants from any Northeast state can apply: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The following applicants are eligible to apply:

1. **Licensed dairy processors that:**
    - Transform raw fluid milk, dairy components, or dairy mix into an edible product meant for human consumption.
    - Hold a license that permits the sale of their dairy products across state lines, even if they are not currently doing interstate sales.
    - Are headquartered or based in the Northeast.
    - Source or produces milk or dairy components from within the Northeast.
    - Manufacture products within the Northeast.

2. **Producer associations** that represent, support, or promote dairy products originating from the Northeast. *For the purposes of this grant, a producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association, or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry.* Producer associations are eligible if:

- The project will primarily benefit dairy processors in the Northeast.
- They provide at least one Letter of Support from one of the partner dairy processors.
- The majority of partner processors qualify under 1. above.
- Associations receiving the majority of their funds from producer check-off dollars are not eligible.

3. **Dairy brands** that market Northeast dairy products produced by a licensed dairy processor under a co-packing or other arrangement. *For the purposes of this grant, a dairy brand is a business that develops and markets dairy products but may not operate its own processing facilities. Dairy brands own the rights to their products' recipes, branding, and distribution, but work with licensed dairy processors, such as co-packers, to produce their products. White-label retailers, who rebrand products developed and produced by another company but do not own exclusive rights to the product, are not eligible.* Dairy brands are eligible if:
   - A Letter of Commitment from the partner processor is included in the application.
     - The co-packing partner needs to meet the eligibility requirements of a licensed dairy processor above.

While not required for the application, if you are awarded a grant, you will need to provide the following information. See Grant Agreement and Payment section for more information.

1. Certificate of Insurance listing the VAAFM as an additional insured.
2. Current IRS Form W-9.
3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) acquired via SAM.gov. UEIs are federally issued business identifiers replacing the DUNS system and are free to acquire. If you do not already have a UEI, we strongly encourage you to start this process during the application period to ensure a timely start to your grant, if awarded.

Prior to award, we may confirm your compliance with applicable licensing standards.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

The NE-DBIC seeks to support value-added dairy businesses to professionalize their marketing and/or branding approach to new or expanded markets, either individually or through a producer association marketing on behalf of a group of value-added dairy businesses. All projects must meet the following requirements:

BACKGROUND RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

All applications must demonstrate that the applicant has used at least one Dairy Business Innovation Initiative (DBII) technical assistance resource in the development of the proposed project. Applicants are required to have integrated information from at least one of the following DBII resources in the development of this project:

- Dairy Processor Brand Strategy & Marketing Toolkit
  - Marketing & Branding for Small Dairy Processors: 12 Case Studies

  - Marketing & Branding Toolkit for Dairy Processors
  - Final Report: Marketing & Branding for Small Dairy Processors
  - Webinar: Branding Dairy in the Northeast U.S.
- Distribution Capacity Study
  - Full Report: Strengthening the Regional Value-Added Dairy Distribution System
  - Webinar: Strengthening the Regional Value-Added Dairy Distribution System
- Sheep & Goat Market Conditions Report
  - Summary Report: Sheep and Goat Dairy Market Conditions And Consumer Research
  - Full Final Report: Sheep and Goat Dairy Market Conditions And Consumer Research
  - Goat & Sheep Dairy Product Dashboard
- Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) Market Intelligence:
  - Dairy Export Opportunities to Asia and the Middle East
  - Webinar: Market Intelligence Export Opportunities
  - Import Displacement of Goat and Sheep Cheese
  - Webinar: Market Intelligence Import Displacement
- Webinars through the Wisconsin Dairy Innovation Center. Selections to choose from includes: Fine Tuning your Marketing Strategy, Social Media Marketing, Developing E-Commerce, Developing an Export Program, and more.

ALLOWABLE COSTS

Costs covered by grant funds must be related to execution of the grant project and align with the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities). Funding must primarily support professional marketing and branding services, with up to 25% of the total grant available for implementing the strategies developed by the hired professional.

1. **Professional Services (at least 75% of grant funds)**
   Funds must be used to hire a marketing or branding professional to enhance the market position of a dairy product. The selected service provider must be an individual or firm specializing in marketing and/or branding.
   a. While applicants cannot select a contractor before receiving an award, they are expected to conduct preliminary discussions, obtain quotes, and gather bids to define their project scope. They may issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to three potential contractors and must include at least one bid/quote in the application.
   b. Awarded applicants must ensure that any hired professional adheres to AMS 2023 Terms & Conditions, including proper contractor selection and rate requirements. Contact the Grant Program Manager to learn more.
2. **Implementation of Contractor's Deliverables (up to 25% of grant funds)**
   Funds may be used to implement the marketing or branding strategies developed by the contractor. This may include producing marketing materials, launching promotional campaigns, or updating packaging and branding. If the project involves branding of packaging, logo development, or other promotion of a single business's image, logo, or brand name, there must

be a reference to a state or regional benefit for the duration of the grant period. Additional implementation costs may be covered through matching contributions.

ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Marketing services eligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

- Strategy and Planning:
  - Development of a marketing plan which may include market research, strategy and tactics, message development, market positioning, media, and/or paid advertising plan.
- Branding, Creative, and/or Design Services:
  - Design of logo, signage, advertisements, collateral design
  - Design of market-compliant labels, packaging
  - Brand style guide, templates
  - Data visualization or infographics
  - Event materials
  - Multimedia production such as video, radio, podcasts, PSAs
  - Development of marketing or branding for third-party e-commerce platforms.
- Digital Marketing and Web Development:
  - Digital content strategy
  - Web design, user experience, and design
  - Digital creative including interactive or display advertising
  - Digital marketing plan including tactics, content, templates, and channels
  - Social media content including development of copy, messaging, and creative
  - Development of an e-commerce strategy and platform, including search engine optimization (SEO)
  - Costs associated with developing, servicing, and updating consumer-facing websites.
- Public Relations: Strategic communications and earned media outreach which may include working with a public relations organization on story pitching to reputable news sources or other strategic public relations events.
- Access to New Markets: Sales strategy for accessing new markets or securing new customers such as institutional, export, or wholesale market expansion.
- Analytics & Reporting: Digital analytics including monitoring, reporting, and search optimization.

ELIGIBLE IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Implementation costs must directly support the execution of contractor-developed strategies or content, with some exclusions as described in the Ineligible Projects section below. Examples of covered implementation costs include:

- Production and distribution of marketing materials (sell-sheets, brochures, catalogs, shelf-talkers, banners, posters, recipe cards).
- Press releases, press kits, and other media/trade outreach materials.

- The cost of production and placement of advertisements in magazines, newspapers, posters, billboards, direct mail, transit, television, radio, and third-party websites.
- Online marketing such as advertisement placement on social media and search engines.
- In-store and food service promotions, consumer and trade demonstrations, shipment of promotional samples, temporary displays, and rental of temporary space for displays, such as end-of-aisle and gondola displays.
- Costs associated with the production and printing of market-compliant labels to be used by July 31, 2026, and labor costs to attach or sticker.
- Sample/initial packaging or label production (up to $1000 per SKU).

Please note that projects may only include allowable costs/activities as outlined in the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

The NE-DBIC recognizes that project scope and implementation costs may change over the course of the project. Any changes to the use of grant funds for implementation must be discussed with the Grant Program Manager before spending to ensure alignment with USDA-AMS allowed costs.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

You will need to explain how your project aligns with at least two of the following funding priorities:

- Project shows innovation in packaging type or market channels.
- Project expands or strengthens online/digital engagement.
- Project builds on or enhances previous marketing and branding efforts.
- Projects will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumer reach.
- Projects will elevate regional dairy businesses.
- Project targets new or underserved markets, such as institutional buyers, specialty retail, or export markets.
- Project improves transparency and traceability in branding and storytelling by highlighting milk sourcing, production practices, or farm connections.
- Project supports workforce development by incorporating training for staff or partners on marketing and branding best practices.

COMPETITIVE PROJECT CRITERIA

In addition to aligning with at least two of the above funding priorities, your application will be stronger if you:

- Demonstrate engagement with multiple potential contractors ahead of submission.
- Include market research in grant activities, providing a plan to share relevant findings with other dairy businesses.
- Clearly show how the project will enhance the market positioning of the dairy product line, improving brand visibility and consumer appeal.
- Develop market channels and distribution opportunities to:
    - Increase product placement; and/or

  - Support innovative strategies to boost consumption; and/or
  - Increase business revenues.
- Demonstrate the ability to maintain project-driven improvements beyond the grant period.
- Submit all required letters of commitment and/or support, supporting documentation, and other required components, as outlined in this RFA.
- Dairy processor applicants must:
  - Show a clear understanding of their current market positioning, including product sales volume, distribution channels, and pricing flexibility.
  - Demonstrate readiness to meet increased product demand resulting from marketing and branding efforts, with sufficient tools, staffing, and resources.
- Producer association applicants must show how the project will benefit multiple dairy businesses and supply chain partners.

EXAMPLES: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. A dairy processor with a well-established brand wants to expand nationally. They hire a marketing firm to develop a digital marketing plan focused on expanding into e-commerce and wholesale distribution. This includes an in-depth analysis of third-party e-commerce platforms, digital advertising strategies, and brand positioning. The business references DBI e-commerce case studies to guide their approach. They use implementation funds for initial ad placements, digital content creation, and promotional materials for new wholesale accounts.
2. A long-standing creamery with a loyal customer base is facing increased competition from newer processors. Lacking a structured marketing strategy, they hire a professional to develop a comprehensive marketing plan, including target audience analysis and branding recommendations. They also work with a designer to create new promotional materials such as brochures and digital assets. Implementation funds are used for printing and distributing product catalogs and promotional flyers. The business consults DBIC's branding and marketing toolkit for additional insights.
3. A dairy brand that uses a co-packer built an e-commerce site during the COVID-19 pandemic to adapt to changing market channels and now wants to improve and integrate it permanently. They hire a web development firm to assess and redesign their site, focusing on search engine optimization (SEO), user experience, and branding consistency. The firm also evaluates digital marketing opportunities to improve direct-to-consumer sales. Implementation funds are used to optimize the site’s performance, launch targeted online advertising, and create high-quality digital content. The business also utilizes insights from NE-DBIC’s digital marketing webinars to strengthen their strategy.
4. A producer association representing multiple processors wants to increase brand recognition and market access for its members. They hire a marketing firm to conduct consumer research and develop a unified branding strategy that highlights the cooperative’s regional identity and sustainability practices. A graphic designer is hired to create a logo, label templates, and promotional materials that can be used across multiple product lines. Implementation funds cover the cost of label printing, a small digital advertising campaign, and sample distribution to

new retail partners. The cooperative also uses insights from NE-DBIC's regional dairy branding report to refine its messaging.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects not primarily located within the Northeast.
- Projects that solely support the production or sale of raw fluid milk meant for human consumption without pasteurization.
- Projects that seek to use funds to expand production or increase production efficiencies.
- Projects that seek to hire/pay in-house marketing, branding, or sales positions.
- Projects exclusively focused on export.
- Costs associated with trade show display or attendance.
- Costs associated with implementation of activities unrelated to those developed by the professional services paid for by this grant.
- Projects that use grant funds for:
    - Construction or purchase of construction-associated materials.
    - Purchase or lease-to-own of land/building/facilities.
    - Purchase of general-use equipment.
    - Purchase of vehicles.
    - Unallowable costs/activities as outlined in the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).
- Costs incurred outside of the grant period cannot be covered by grant funds or count toward match. If a project is selected to be awarded, the recipient may request pre-award costs to be approved for expenditures that start no earlier than the date that an awarded applicant is notified of the award.

EXAMPLES: INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- An on-farm processor applies for grant funds to cover personnel costs for solely in-house marketing and branding activities.
    - **What would make this eligible?** The business must engage marketing/branding professionals in a contract relationship. Any staff time can be captured in implementation costs or match commitment.
- A dairy processor that sources milk from several farms in the Northeast is switching to a new, innovative packaging material and wants to pay for the design of a new label for their brand.
    - **What would make this eligible?** The processor would be able to use funds for developing the label design if it incorporated messaging that shows it supports multiple area dairy businesses for the duration of the grant period.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

PROJECT BUDGET

Please refer to the Allowable Costs section above for more information about eligible costs. Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions. Expenses incurred before the grant period are not eligible for grant funds or match funds.

At least one quote/bid for contractual/consulting services paid for with grant funds is required for this application. See Supporting Documentation for more information.

MATCHING FUNDS

All proposals must show matching funds which represent at least 25% of the grant request to go toward the grant project. For instance, for a grant request of $40,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least $10,000 in match. Matching funds may be contributed by the applicant or by another organization. Applicants can use other funds (state or loan, other non-Federal money) as a match to this project as long as there is not any such restriction in the agreements for those funds. The 25% required match may be any combination of cash and in-kind funds in any expense category, and may cover costs ineligible for grant funds, such as promotional items for giveaway. Match funds must be expended within the grant period.

Examples of cash match include funds in the bank, funds contributed by another organization, bank loans, other non-Federal grant funds, applicant labor, and compensation of employees. Labor rates should be in line with current market rates.

Examples of in-kind match include goods or services provided during the grant period for which no expenditure is made (e.g., contractors, consultants, or supplies provided pro bono for the project; volunteer labor; and/or donated supplies that are not part of the normal cost of doing business). In-kind contributions must be made during the grant agreement period and be directly related to the project.

Example of an eligible budget that shows 25% matching funds for a $40,000 grant request:

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match	Project Total
Personnel	$0.00	$3,500.00	$0.00	$3,500.00
Fringe	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Training	$1,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,000.00
Contractual/Consultant	$32,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$32,000.00
Supplies	$7,000.00	$6,500.00	$0.00	$13,500.00
Travel	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Other	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
TOTALS	**$40,000.00**	**$10,000.00**	**$0.00**	**$50,000.00**

PROJECT PARTNERS

If your project includes project partners, they should be identified at the time of application and must submit a Letter of Commitment. Partners include any entities outside the applicant's business that are key participants in the project. The following entities would be considered partners:

- Processors whose participation in the project is necessary for success, if they are not the primary applicant.
- Technical assistance (TA) providers offering ongoing support through the life of the grant project. This can include TA providers such as business planning consultants, agricultural extension, small business development centers, food business incubators, and other business viability services.

Contractors should not be included as project partners if they are providing services included in their normal course of business.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT/COMMITMENT

At least two Letters of Commitment or Support are required for this application. Additional letters may be required, as outlined below. Additional letters beyond what is required may increase the competitiveness of the application.

Requirements by Applicant Type:

- **Processors** must include at least two Letter of Commitment or Support.
- **Producer associations** must include at least one Letter of Support from their member processors who will benefit from the project and an additional Letter of Commitment or Support.
- **Dairy Brands** marketing products produced under a co-packing or similar arrangements must include at least two letters:
    - One Letter of Commitment from the processor organization.
    - At least one additional Letter of Commitment or Support.

Letters of Commitment should articulate project partners' involvement and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success.

- If the application includes project partners, you are **required** to submit a Letter of Commitment from each.
- If you have match contributors from outside your business, you are **required** to submit a Letter of Commitment from each. Match contributors, such as lenders, should provide a letter that describes their contributions and assigns value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support).

Letters of Support should explain support from businesses or organizations that are connected but not directly engaged in project work. This could include but is not limited to producers, farmers, or producer associations, retail outlets, and customers. Letters of Support should describe the benefits of the project both for the applicant business and the greater dairy sector, supply chain, or community at large.

It is strongly encouraged that all letters be written on the writer's letterhead, include their signature, and be submitted as .pdf documents.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

You should include any additional information that shows the impacts of this grant such as impact on business viability, quotes for work included in the proposed activities, evidence of marketplace demand that the project will address, or other documentation that provides further context for your proposed project.

Bids or quotes are required for all contractual/consulting services that will be covered by grant funds. Bids or quotes should be dated less than six months ago, include the name of the business providing services and include scope of work with sufficient detail to confirm eligibility. Contractors are expected to adhere to the GS-15 Step 10 pay rate for the locality in which the contractor operates according to the Office of Personnel Management (review at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/). In many cases, applicants will need to ask the contractor to provide an hourly rate which excludes fringe benefits, indirect costs, or other expenses.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted via the WebGrants system at agriculturegrants.vermont.gov. No paper applications will be accepted. Applications will be accepted from March 25, 2025 – May 8, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET. Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1 – 2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

We strongly advise that you submit your application ahead of the deadline. Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant's responsibility to adhere to all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this request for applications (RFA). The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) will accept the last validated electronic submission through the grants management system, WebGrants, prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

Submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances, will not be accepted.

WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the cut-off time.

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from <agriculturegrants.vermont@mail.webgrantscloud.com>. Please add this email address to your "safe senders" list. If you do not receive this confirmation, please check your junk or spam folder.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will each be reviewed by a multi-state NE-DBIC advisory committee comprised of representatives from Northeast state agriculture agencies/departments, agriculture extension agencies, and dairy sector stakeholders. Three reviewers will be assigned to score each application. Funding decisions are made according to scoring, reviewer comments, past grant performance, and with consideration to diversity across geography, herd type (as applicable), size of operation, and impacts beyond the grantee.

See Section III: Scoring Criteria.

AWARD INFORMATION

All applicants will be notified of the NE-DBIC decision of whether to award funds to their project.

GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE

DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

March 11, 2025	Request for Application (RFA) released
March 25, 2025	Application period opens
May 8, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET	Application closes
June 2025	Applicants notified of award status
July 2025	Estimated grant start date
January – February 2026, date may depend on project	Interim report due
February – July 2026, depending on project	Project end date
March – August 2026, depending on project	Final report due

II. FULL APPLICATION

The application content is listed below but may be subject to change. Please reference the WebGrants Application Guide for guidance on completing your application in the WebGrants system. Applications will only be accepted through WebGrants.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

This section is a standard form for all grant applications submitted to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

- Business/organization name, legal entity (e.g., LLC, sole proprietor, etc.), primary contact information.
- [Optional] demographic information.

Applicant Eligibility

For the purposes of the following sections, "you" refers to the applicant for the grant. The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

- Are you a dairy processor that transforms raw milk or dairy components into an edible product? If yes:
    - Are you headquartered or based in a Northeast state?
    - Do you source or produce milk that originates within the Northeast?
    - Do you manufacture dairy products within the Northeast?
    - Are you currently a licensed processor in compliance with all required state and federal standards? *Prior to awarding a grant, we may confirm your compliance with applicable licensing standards*.
    - Does your current license allow you to sell products across state lines? *To be eligible, processors must be licensed to sell across state lines.*
- Are you a dairy brand that markets at least one Northeast dairy product produced under a co-packing or other arrangement? *Refer to the Applicant Eligibility section of this RFA for a definition of a dairy brand for the purposes of this application.* If yes:
    - Does your project primarily benefit a dairy product meant for human consumption produced by a licensed processor?
    - Are the products that will benefit from this project produced with milk or dairy components that originate within the Northeast?
    - Are the products that will benefit from this project manufactured in the Northeast?
    - Are the products that will benefit from this project licensed for sale across state lines? *Prior to awarding a grant, we may confirm your compliance with applicable licensing standards*.

  - Provide the name and location (town, state) of the organization that processes the dairy products you market. *Dairy brand applicants must include a Letter of Commitment from their partner processor.*
- Are you a dairy producer association that represents and promotes dairy products originating from the Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or Vermont)? For the purpose of this grant, a producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry. If yes:
  - Describe your producer association, addressing: 1) founding members, 2) how the association is funded, 3) industry scope covered by the association, and 4) association activities.
  - If your association encompasses products other than dairy, describe how you will ensure that the project will benefit dairy only.
  - What percentage of the association's annual operating budget comes from producer check-off dollars? *Associations receiving more than 50% of funding from producer check-off dollars are not eligible.*
- Describe your business or organization in terms of size (gross sales, number of employees, production or sales volume), products, markets, and number of years in business. [3000-character limit]

Entity History

- Has your business/organization received any federal or state grant in the past 5 years? If yes:
  - List the grants received and briefly describe the topic areas of the grant(s). [1000-character limit]
- Have you or your project partners received any (federal, state, or other) grants **for this specific project** in the past 5 years? If yes:
  - List the grant(s) received and describe the work done under the grant(s). [1000-character limit]
  - How will the work in this grant differ from and/or build upon that work? [2000-character limit]
- Have you applied for, or do you plan to apply for, other grant(s) in conjunction with this grant? *Leveraging other funds to complete this project is encouraged.* If yes:
  - Please list the other grants you will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant. [1000-character limit]
- Will you be using loans to supplement this application? If yes:
  - List any loans you will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant. [2000-character limit]
- Has your business/organization ever been unable to complete or adhere to granting requirements for a grant you were awarded? If yes:

    - Describe the circumstances that prevented you from completing/adhering to the requirements of your grant(s). [2000-character limit]
- Describe why you and your staff are qualified to complete this project, as proposed. [1000-character limit]
- Rate your business's experience in implementing similar past work/projects related to this grant program. (Select from dropdown: significant experience, some experience, no experience.)
- Do you currently work with a business planner to support the financial health and future planning of your business? If so, enter their name and organization. [250-character limit]
- Have you received relevant technical assistance in the preparation of the project, or do you plan to receive related technical assistance during the course of this grant project? *Technical assistance includes farm viability planners, business planners, agricultural extension, and other business viability services.* If yes:
    - List name/organization providing relevant technical assistance. [2000-character limit]
    - Describe the role of the technical assistance provider(s) in the development and/or implementation of this project. [2000-character limit]

- If awarded, I understand that if my project involves conducting market research that I must have a plan for sharing the results with other dairy processing businesses. [yes/no]
- If awarded, I understand that if my project involves branding of packaging, logo development, or other promotion of a single business's image, logo, or brand name, there must be a reference to a state or regional benefit for the duration of the grant period. [yes/no]
- If awarded, I understand that any contractors may not exceed the GS-15 Step 10 pay rate [Right click on the hyperlink and select “open link in new tab” to avoid closing this page] for the locality in which the contractor operates, . [yes/no]

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Overview

This section is meant to provide a comprehensive overview of your proposed project.

- Summarize your project in a couple of sentences. [600-character limit]
- Give a full description of your project, including what you will do, what it will accomplish, and why you want to do it. Share any background that helps explain your project as needed [6000-character limit]
- Describe your business/organization’s previous and current marketing and branding efforts. How does this proposed project fit into your current marketing and branding efforts? [4000-character limit]
- Identify at least one Dairy Business Innovation Initiative technical assistance resource you referenced in the development of the proposed project. [600-character limit]

- Describe what you learned from this resource and how it shaped the development of your proposed project. [4000-character limit]
- How do you plan to sustain the activities implemented through this project beyond the grant period?
- Identify at least one of the following Funding Priorities that your project addresses and provide an explanation of how your project aligns.
    1) Project shows innovation in packaging type or market channels. [3000-character limit]
    2) Project expands or strengthens online/digital engagement. [3000-character limit]
    3) Project builds on or enhances previous marketing and branding efforts. [3000-character limit]
    4) Projects will increase sales, revenue, and/or consumer reach. [3000-character limit]
    5) Projects will elevate regional dairy businesses. [3000-character limit]
    6) Project targets new or underserved markets, such as institutional buyers, specialty retail, or export markets. [3000-character limit]
    7) Project improves transparency and traceability in branding and storytelling by highlighting milk sourcing, production practices, or farm connections. [3000-character limit]
    8) Project supports workforce development by incorporating training for staff or partners on marketing and branding best practices. [3000-character limit]

Project Impacts

- What specific outcomes do you expect by the end of the grant period? Describe the improvements, changes, or milestones you aim to achieve. What will success look like for your project? [5000-character limit]
- How will this project support long-term dairy business viability? [5000-character limit]
- Describe what metrics you will use to track your progress, including what you will measure, how you will track them, and estimated results. [5000-character limit]
- Through this project, do you expect to be able to access new markets? If yes:
    - Describe the target market, including how you know it has unmet demand, and how the new market will affect your production or processing. [3000-character limit]
- Do you expect to increase dairy business revenue with this grant project? If yes:
    - Estimate the increase in revenue by the end of the grant project (in $)
- How many jobs do you expect to maintain with this grant project?
- How many jobs do you expect to create with this grant project?
- How many dairy businesses do you expect to benefit from this project?
- Describe any expected impacts from this project beyond the dairy businesses directly involved in the project, including to other businesses or the Northeast dairy sector at large. *If none are expected, write N/A.* [3000-character limit]

PROJECT WORKPLAN

Provide a detailed list of all major activities that will take place during this project and their associated deliverables and timeframes. Include at least 5 key project activities. For each activity, provide:

- Detailed description of the activity [2000-character limit]
- Description of the deliverables you will be able to show in your reporting to demonstrate this activity has been successful [2000-character limit]
- Estimated timeframe and/or date of completion of the key activity [2000-character limit]

Example Project Workplan

Description of key activity	Description of associated deliverables	Estimated timeframe
Development of cohesive brand story	• PDF of branding guide document. • Evidence of brand story including visual identity guidelines, tone, and target audience.	July 1 – September 30, 2025
Development of New Website with SEO and e-Commerce	• Evidence of an updated website equipped with e-commerce capability and optimized for SEO.	September 1 – December 31, 2025
Designed and Installed Roadside Retail Store Signage	• Photos or other evidence of store and road signage designed and installed.	December 1, 2025 – March 30, 2026
Professional Photography Captured	• Evidence of professional product photography.	March 1 – June 30, 2026
Public Relations and Media Outreach Accomplished	• Documentation of outreach to respected publications, local and national media channels, and social media. • Evidence of media coverage highlighting products.	May 1 – June 30, 2026
Grant and match funds fully expended	• Proof of payment to contractors/consultants .	July 31, 2026

BUDGET

Please complete the following budget table, listing all grant requests and match contributions. Totals will appear once the grid has been saved.

Allowable Costs: Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

Match contributions: All projects must demonstrate matching funds of at least 25% of the grant request to go toward the grant project. For instance, for a grant request of $40,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least $10,000 in match.

- Match contributions do not need to adhere to AMS allowable costs.
- Match contributions are not required to reflect 25% per expense line, but they must make up 25% of the total grant ask. (For example, a grant request for $7,000 in supplies and $33,000 in contractual/consultant could be matched with $6,500 of supplies and $3,500 of personnel.)
- Must take place during the grant period.

Refer to the Project Budget section above for more details, including match and budget examples.

Example Budget Table

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match	Project Total
Personnel	$0.00	$3,500.00	$0.00	$3,500.00
Fringe	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Training	$1,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,000.00
Contractual/Consultant	$32,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$32,000.00
Supplies	$7,000.00	$6,500.00	$0.00	$13,500.00
Travel	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Other	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
TOTALS	**$40,000.00**	**$10,000.00**	**$0.00**	**$50,000.00**

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget narrative should reflect what you have outlined in your budget table. Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs/activities as outlined in the 2023 AMS Terms and Conditions (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities). Please ensure that values associated with the following questions align with your budget table.

- Total funds requested for this grant. *Must be between $10,000 and $50,000.*
- Amount of matching funds. *Projects must demonstrate at least 25% cash/in-kind match.*
- List each 1) match source, 2) each contribution amount (and specify if it is cash or in-kind), and 3) describe how the contribution will be used to accomplish your project activities. *Note that all outside match contributors also need to provide a Letter of Commitment for their match.* [3000-character limit]
- Are all matching funds/contributions committed at this time? If not:
    - Provide the sources and timeline/plan for securing these commitments. [2000-character limit]

SECTION II. FULL APPLICATION

*Complete the following questions **only for expenses that are covered by grant funds** (not matching funds, which should be detailed in questions above). Please thoroughly describe each category for which you are requesting grant funds, answering all parts of each question.*

- Are 'Personnel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? If yes:
    - Personnel: for each individual whose time can be directly attributed to grant activities, provide 1) individual's title and role, 2) hourly rate, 3) expected number of hours, 4) grant funds requested. [3000-character limit]
- Are 'Fringe Benefit' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget? If yes:
    - Fringe Benefits: for each of the project's salaried employees, provide the 1) fringe benefit rate and 2) grant funds requested. [3000-character limit]
- Are 'Training' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? If yes:
    - Training: for each training, provide 1) description, 2) estimated cost, and 3) justification for how the expense is necessary for the success of this project. [3000-character limit]
- Are 'Contractual/Consultant' expenses included in the 'Grant Funds Requested' column of your above budget? *Note that at least one bid is required. Refer to Allowable Costs in the AMS Terms and Conditions.* If yes:
    - Contractual/Consultant: List each anticipated contractor/consultant service. For each, provide: 1) grant funds requested, 2) detailed description of services, and 3) justification for why the services are necessary for the success of this project. [3000-character limit]
    - Bids or quotes are required for contractual/consultant services paid for with grant funds. Upload quotes here. Additional upload slots are available in the Supporting Documentation section. *Bids or quotes should be dated less than six months ago, include the name of the business providing services, list services provided, and include sufficient detail to confirm eligibility.*
- Are 'Supply' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? *Supplies include materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than $5,000 per unit.* If yes:
    - Supplies: List each supply (with a description if needed). For each, provide: 1) per unit cost, 2) # units purchased, 3) grant funds requested, and 4) justification for how this supply is necessary for the success of this project. [3000-character limit]
- Are 'Travel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your above budget? *Travel costs must not exceed Federal GSA rates. Refer to Allowable Costs in the RFA.*
    - Travel: For each trip: 1) list expense types (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.) and associated grant funds requested, 2) number of travelers, and 3) justification for how this travel is necessary for the success of this project. [3000-character limit]
- Are 'Other' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget*? E.g. rental expenses, shipping.* If yes:
    - Other: Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit and provide justification for how the expense is necessary for the success of this project. [3000-character limit]

Anticipated Project Income

Any program income generated during the grant period must be used to further the objectives of the grant project. Program income includes, but is not limited to: income from fees for services performed; the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award (this includes items sold at cost if the cost of producing the item was funded in whole or partially with grant funds); and registration fees for conferences, workshops, events, etc.

Recipients are not required to report program income earned after the grant period.

- Do you anticipate having any program income? If yes:
  - List any anticipated sources of income generated by the activities covered by this grant. [1000-character limit]
  - How much income do you expect to earn through those activities (in $)?
  - Describe how you will reinvest the program income into the project to enhance the education, promotion, or consumption of Northeast-regionally produced dairy products. [2000-character limit]

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Project Partners

If your project includes project partners, they should be identified at the time of application and must submit a Letter of Commitment. Partners include any entities outside the applicant's business that are key participants in the project. The following entities would be considered partners:

- Processors whose participation in the project is necessary for success, if they are not the primary applicant.
- Technical assistance (TA) providers offering ongoing support throughout the life of the grant project. This can include TA providers such as business planning consultants, agricultural extension, small business development centers, food business incubators, and other business viability services.

Enter project partners into the grid provided. For each partner, include:

- Partner name and title
- Business/Organization
- Address
- If a dairy processor, describe size and product type [500-character limit]
- Description of role in the project [500-character limit]
- Have they committed to partnering?

Letters of Commitment and Support

At least two Letters of Commitment or Support are required for this application. Additional letters may be required, as outlined below. Submitting more than the required number of letters may strengthen the application's competitiveness.

Requirements by Applicant Type:

- **Processors** must include at least two Letters of Commitment or Support.
- **Producer associations** must include at least one Letter of Support from their member processors who will benefit from the project and at least one additional Letter of Commitment or Support.
- **Dairy Brands** marketing products produced under a co-packing or similar arrangements must include at least two letters:
    - One Letter of Commitment from the processor organization.
    - At least one additional Letter of Commitment or Support.

Letters of Commitment should articulate project partners' involvement and specify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success.

- If the application includes project partners, you are **required** to submit a Letter of Commitment from each.
- If you have match contributors from outside your business, you are **required** to submit a Letter of Commitment from each. Match contributors, such as lenders, should provide a letter that describes their contributions and assigns value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support).
- Letters of Commitment are required to be submitted from any co-packer that is named in the application.

Letters of Support should explain support from businesses or organizations that are connected but not directly engaged in project work. This could include but is not limited to producers, farmers, other producer associations, retail outlets, and customers. Letters of Support should describe the benefits of the project both for the applicant business and the greater dairy sector, supply chain, or community at large.

It is strongly encouraged that **all letters** be written on the writer’s letterhead, include their signature, and be submitted as .pdf documents.

Supporting Documentation

You should include any additional information that shows the impacts of this grant. Additional documentation could include but is not limited to: additional bids or quotes, previous work that this project will build upon (market research, training, business investments, etc.), or any other documentation that provides further context for your proposed project.

III. SCORING CRITERIA

REVIEWER SCORING CRITERIA

Project Proposal (80 points)

Applicant demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of their business's or organization's marketing and branding limitations and has a clear vision for a trajectory forward.	20 points
Project overview clearly illustrates an impactful, innovative, and realistic project that will improve marketability of Northeast dairy products. Applicant shows that they have worked with at least one potential contractor to develop their project concept.	20 points
Project timeline/workplan is clear and identifies a set of key activities that aligns with the project overview.	15 points
Applicant demonstrates that their project is well-aligned with funding priorities and provides details to support that.	10 points
Applicant provides clear and relevant reasoning for timely need for funding and can show that they have a reasonable plan for sustaining the activities implemented in this project past the grant period.	10 points
Letters of Commitment/Support and additional documentation are included that demonstrate the potential for project success.	5 points

Budget (20 points)

Budget and budget narrative are realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed, including using at least 75% of funds to hire a marketing/branding professional. Applicant has leveraged the required percentage of match contribution. Any match contributors have written Letters of Commitment outlining their match contribution and value.	10 points
Application includes at least one quote for contractual/consulting services included in the grant budget.	5 points
Applicant has leveraged the required percentage of match contribution and provides high-level details on match sources.	5 points

IV. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing NE-DBIC/VAAFM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants (12/07/2023 Revised).

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee will be required to submit:

1. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement. [Not required if grantee has a current certificate of insurance on file with the Agency of Agriculture.]
2. A current IRS Form W-9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months
3. A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, acquired through SAM.gov
4. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Unless other arrangements are made with the Grant Program Manager, payments will be made on the following schedule:

- **Initial payment: 40%** of the total grant will be paid to the grantee upon receipt of certificate of insurance and Form W-9, confirmation of Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) via SAM.gov, and a claim submission in WebGrants. Failure to submit all required documents and an executed copy of the grant agreement within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded funds.
- **Second payment: 40%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's interim performance report by the Grant Program Manager and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.
- **Final payment: 20%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's final performance report, the completion and submission of a survey provided by the Grant Program Manager, and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.

The final performance report is due no later than 30 days after the grant end date. Final invoices must be submitted to the State within 45 days of the grant expiration date. Invoices submitted before the completion of an interim or final report will not be paid until the report has been received, reviewed, and accepted by the Grant Program Manager. The State cannot reimburse the grantee for work performed after the expiration date of the grant.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following reporting is required under this grant program:

1. Grantees will submit an Interim Performance Report mid-project that may include but is not limited to:
    a. Summary of status of grant activities
    b. Description of successes and challenges
    c. Discussion of any modifications deemed necessary and justification for changes
    d. Documentation of any marketing/promotion of project
    e. Photos/documentation that demonstrates grant activities.
    f. Expenditures to date
2. Grantees will submit a Final Performance Report and complete a survey no later than thirty (30) days from the grant end date. The final report may include but is not limited to:
    a. Summary of achievements from this project including impacts on the community, public, and other businesses/organizations
    b. Description of any challenges or changes to the project
    c. Lessons learned from this project
    d. Opportunities that arose from the completion of this project
    e. Plans to build on the work completed under this grant
    f. Representative documentation and photos representative of the full breadth of activities under this grant
    g. Final grant and match expenditures
    h. Project outcomes:
        i. Results of grantee's measures of success.
        ii. Number of project beneficiaries reached.
        iii. Number of project beneficiaries that are dairy businesses (buy, sell, aggregate, store, produce or distribute dairy products).
        iv. Number of project beneficiaries that gained knowledge on how to access or produce dairy products.
        v. Number of dairy businesses that increased their annual sales due to this project.
        vi. Estimate of total annual sales increase across all dairy businesses involved in this project.
        vii. Number of existing sales outlets in each of the following categories that expanded their dairy product offerings either by volume or expanded product category, as a result of this project: farmers markets, grocery stores, wholesale markets, restaurants, agricultural cooperatives, retailers, distributors, food hubs, school food programs, other (specify).
        viii. Number of new sales outlets in each of the following categories that expanded their dairy product offerings either by volume or expanded product category, as a result of this project: farmers markets, grocery stores, wholesale markets, restaurants, agricultural cooperatives, retailers, distributors, food hubs, school food programs, other (specify).

ix. Number of dairy businesses that increased sales by selling to new or expanded sales outlets, in order to meet market demand.
x. How many new partnerships were established between dairy businesses (farmers or processors) and supply chain businesses (processors, retailers, cooperatives, distributors, etc.) through this project, if any. Of those new partnerships:
    1. Number that were formalized (e.g. with a signed contract or memorandum of understanding).
    2. Number that involved a dairy cooperative.
    3. Number that resulted in expanded or improved local/regional dairy infrastructure.
    4. Number that resulted in higher profits.
    5. Number that resulted in more efficient transportation.
    6. Number that resulted in improved marketing channels.
    7. Number that resulted in an increase in volume of Northeast regional milk entering the supply chain.
    8. Number that resulted in other mid-tier value chain enhancements.
xi. Number of dairy businesses gained knowledge about dairy product development or dairy business improvement methods through this project.
xii. Number of dairy businesses implemented new or improved processes or production methods through this project.
xiii. Number of dairy businesses expanded their existing product lines through this project.
xiv. Number of dairy businesses began producing dairy product lines through this project.
xv. Number of dairy product lines were created with this grant project.
xvi. Number of existing dairy product lines were improved with this grant project.
xvii. Number of jobs maintained because of this grant project.
xviii. Number of jobs created because of this grant project.

i. If Grantee is a dairy business, rate the level of satisfaction and positive outlook for the future of their dairy business before and after the grant.
j. If Grantee is a farmer, which of the following did they experience?
    i. Reduced cost of production.
    ii. Increased lifestyle satisfaction.
    iii. Improved water quality.
    iv. Increased soil health.
k. If Grantee is a dairy processor that increased their use of Northeast regional milk due to this project, estimate the change in volume as a percentage.
l. If Grantee is a non-dairy business/organization that served a group of dairy businesses through this project, how many businesses were served. Of those businesses:
    i. The number that expressed satisfaction or positive outlook for the future of their business following this grant project.

ii. The number of farmers that learned new management strategies that reduced cost of production, increased lifestyle satisfaction, improved water quality, or increased soil health through this project.

m. Reporting on any program income generated by the grant activities and description of how income generated is rolled back into the purpose of the grant

NE-DBIC/VAAFM reserves the right to utilize and/or summarize information and photos provided through these reports to use on publications/promotions.

NE-DBIC via VAAFM reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project. Information submitted in any report under this program will be a public record. Failure to adhere to reporting requirements and deadlines may disqualify the grantee from future grant opportunities through the NE-DBIC or State of Vermont.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations; most agents are familiar with it. **The State of Vermont must be listed as an additional insured on the grantee's policy.** We recommend forwarding the Vermont State Insurance Specifications (11/01/2023 revised) to prospective insurers for accuracy.

A summary of the requirements is below:

1. General Liability and Property Damage: with respect to all operations performed under the Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:
    a. Premises – Operations
    b. Products and Completed Operations
    c. Personal Injury Liability
    d. Contractual Liability
    e. The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:
        i. $1,000,000 Each Occurrence
        ii. $2,000,000 General Aggregate
        iii. $1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
        iv. $1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury
2. Automotive Liability: if motor vehicles will be or are used in connection with the Agreement, the Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than $500,000 combined single limit. For Contracts involving construction or when performance under the Contract would require a commercial or other specialized driver's license, limits shall not be less than $1,000,000. When performance includes interstate commerce or transport of hazardous products or materials regulated by the Federal Motor Carrier Administration and set forth in 49 C.F.R. § 387.9, the coverage shall include the MCS-90 endorsement.

3. Additional Insured:
    a. The General Liability, Property Damage, and Umbrella/Excess coverages required for performance of the Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers, and employees as Additional Insureds using ISO forms CG2010 and CG2037 or their equivalents.
    b. If performance of the Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers, and employees as Additional Insureds.
    c. If third-party cyber liability coverage is required, such coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers, and employees as Additional Insureds.
    d. Additional Insured coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance and shall include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the State of Vermont.
4. Workers Compensation: with respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. The State will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy if necessary to comply with Vermont law. For work involving construction, workers compensation coverage shall include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the State of Vermont.
5. Notice of Cancellation or Change: with respect to all required coverage, there shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits, or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days prior written notice to the State.