

# APPENDIX F

## PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

*Updated September 2015*

## Projects

**Project Number** P1.

**Project Name** Support for UVM STEM Research & Education Building Renovation and Construction

**Project Location** Burlington

**Lead Organization** UVM

**Project Description** To upgrade, modernize, and expand state-of-the-art STEM facilities for excellence in STEM teaching, research, entrepreneurship, and innovation at the University of Vermont

**Jobs** TBD

**Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** Ongoing capital campaign; public and private funds being actively leveraged

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

The University of Vermont broke ground on a \$110 million STEM complex on May 15, 2015.

**Project Number** P2.

**Project Name** UVM STEM Education Delivery & Career Training

**Project Location** Burlington & Statewide

**Lead Organization** UVM

**Project Description** To leverage and continue critical advances in STEM education delivery and career training developed by the 2013 TAACCCT grant managed by UVM

**Jobs** TBD

**Estimated Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** Ongoing institutional recruitment and support of key faculty and staff; ongoing development of both public & private funding for STEM education

Project update as of September 1, 2015

UVM STEM Education & Workforce Development: College of Engineering & Mathematical Sciences was awarded a \$2.7M federal DOL TAACCCT grant to promote employment and/or career advancement by offering 1-year certificates in STEM fields .

**Project Number** P3.

**Project Name** iTeach: Computer Science Teacher Education Program

**Project Location** Burlington

**Lead Organization** UVM

**Project Description** To increase the capacity for computer science learning and careers in VT and increase gender, race, geographic, and economic diversity in computer science fields

**Jobs** TBD

**Estimated Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** Ongoing institutional recruitment and support of key faculty and staff; ongoing development of both public & private funding for STEM education

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Proposal was not funded

**Project Number** P4.

**Project Name** VT Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Training

**Project Location** Burlington

**Lead Organization** UVM

**Project Description** Development of a comprehensive plan for VT to address health/mental health staffing shortages & advance competency-based training for health care/mental health care professionals

**Jobs TBD**

**Total Cost TBD**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** Ongoing institutional recruitment and support of key faculty and staff; ongoing development of both public & private funding for STEM education

Project Update as of September 1, 2015-

No update

**Project Number** P5.

**Project Name** Burlington Railyard Enterprise Project

**Project Location** Burlington – Chittenden County

**Lead Organization** VTrans

**Project Description** A network of multimodal transportation infrastructure improvements to support economic development of an emerging creative economy center in Burlington as well as improving the connectivity and access to the waterfront and to the railyard while improving the livability of the surrounding neighborhoods.

**Jobs TBD**

**Total Cost**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources TBD**

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Currently under scoping

**Project Number** P6.

**Project Name** Burlington Intercity Passenger Rail Service

**Project Location** Rutland, Addison, Chittenden Counties

**Lead Organization** Vtrans

**Project Description** Extend the Ethan Allen Express Amtrak to Burlington from its current end point in Rutland.

**Jobs** TBD

**Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** TBD

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Grant application pending to complete this work

**Project Number** P7.

**Project Name** Western Corridor Intercity Passenger Rail Service

**Project Location** Western Counties, Bennington to Chittenden

**Lead Organization** Vtrans

**Project Description** With the State of New York State, develop a passenger rail service that will connect Manchester, VT, North Bennington, VT, and Mechanicville, NY to the Albany, NY and New York City Amtrak services.

**Jobs** TBD

**Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** TBD

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

No update

**Project Number** P8.

**Project Name** Rutland State Airport Infrastructure Improvement

**Project Location** Rutland Area

**Lead Organization** Vtrans

**Project Description** Add four commercially powered solar hazard beacons, a 120' x 130' jet hangar, airport rescue and firefighting building, and airport terminal to support commercial aircraft activity.

**Jobs** TBS

**Total Cost** TBD

**Non-EDA Funding Sources** TBD

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Project Completed

**Project Number** P9.

**Project Name** Newport State Airport Water and Sewer Project

**Project Location** Orleans County

**Lead Organization** Vtrans

**Project Description** Extend water and sewer lines from Newport City to the airport. Needed to accommodate planned growth on airport property and the surrounding area.

**Jobs TBD**

**Total Cost TBD**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources TBD**

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Grant application submitted by NVDA, then revised to VAOT as applicant.

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**Project Number** P11.

**Project Name** Stowe-Morrisville Airport

**Project Location** Lamoille County

**Lead Organization** VTrans

**Project Description** Extend runways and create destination for private planes accessing Stowe Mountain Resort and surrounding areas and a proposed new commercial service, Stowe Aviation, which intends to build a flight simulator and flight school.

**Jobs TBD**

**Total Cost TBD**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources TBD**

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Runway project complete and awaiting EB5 funding for the balance of the project.

**Project Number** P12.

**Project Name** Redevelopment of properties connected to rail network

**Issue:**

Vermont owns 305 miles of the rail network, predominantly used for freight haulage, and a substantial number of empty buildings and/or sites with spur lines or sidings.

The rail network is well connected into the regional network, providing good access to major markets for products/commodities made by bulk shippers and customers with large or heavy items.

**Objective:** List of 2-5 objectives

**Activity:**

Identify properties and sites that could be redeveloped for manufacturers or distributors of products and produce suitable for rail shipment/delivery e.g. large fabricated plant and engineering equipment such as blades and towers for wind turbines, girders as well as timber products.

Target manufacturers or distributors of products/produce currently hauled by rail including grain for agriculture; cement, lumber and steel building materials; wood chips and pelleted products; fuel/natural gas for residential/commercial use; marble, limestone, talc, granite and slate; marble/granite finished goods/byproducts, salt for de-icing in winter, newsprint and chemicals used in manufacturing

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Redeveloped three properties and located businesses (Rutland, Bellows falls, and Barton)  
Barton – Trans-load facility for AG Storage under construction

**Project Number P13.**

**Project Name** (4-10 word title)

Vermont Accelerator Program

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

Fred Kenney

Lars Hasselblad Torres

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

A program to seed shared work environments (“coworking” spaces) and startup “accelerators”. A coworking space is commonly seen as a shared work environment where freelancers, telecommuters and startup founders work independently, together. Coworking spaces tend to cultivate a strong sense of community identity, usually through events and informal activities. An accelerator is a structured environment where, often in exchange for equity, a startup team receives free workspace and support services for a short period of time, often about six months. While a coworking space is typically open to anyone who wishes to join, an accelerator program draws on a carefully selected cohort of participants.

Three goals of the Vermont Accelerator Program are to:

- Create a visible, publicly accessible “story” about Vermont’s creative economy as it grows around the state;
- Lower the risks associated with locating a professional or business presence downtown and starting up a new business;
- Provide a framework for the delivery of key services to startups, including networking, mentoring, promotion, workshops and training;

The Vermont Accelerator Program will assist Vermont’s growing independent workforce and support the growth and success of startups by growing a network of dynamic work spaces throughout the state that a) concentrate talent downtown; b) create markets of ideas, talent and resources; c) lower the cost of a business presence on Main Street; d) establish a platform for sharing, learning and networking; e) provide a “one stop” location for mentoring and related support services; and f) facilitate the free-flow of ideas, products and services state-wide.

The program envisions seeding a network of sites across the state that will enable participants to access the facilities and resources of any other site; this provides greater flexibility and business development

opportunities state-wide. Each site will be multitenant facility with onsite management responsible for ensuring continuity of operations, programming, marketing and outreach, and related activities.

Seed resources will include finance and technical assistance.

### *Coworking*

The coworking aspects of the program require a membership structure, minimal cash flow, furnishing and basic services to ensure an appealing, functional work environment for its users. For a period of time it may be important to provide a “community manager” who can establish an open and inviting culture and ensure that events are organized and executed effectively. Over time, the coworking community must adopt its own leadership and volunteer processes to thrive.

### *Accelerator*

In addition to providing no-cost shared work space for its members, an accelerator program must ensure a competitive application and selection process, a focused suite of oversight and mentoring services, and regular opportunities for its members to network with investors and potential customers. The Agency will work in partnership with accelerator founders to establish a financial model, local management framework, advisory board, and partners to ensure an effective program in response to local, state and regional opportunities.

Project funding will provide start-up capital for coworking and accelerator spaces throughout the state as well as follow-on support in the form of technical assistance (grant applications, oversight). Each site will be selected through a competitive process at the Agency of Commerce.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria, in addition to others listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention): Project is intended for employment expansion, through new direct hires and/or contracting.
2. **Investment** (private sector investment generation): Accelerator program requirements include efforts to attract and match investment by private sector actors including angels, banks, and VCs and the use of new tools like Kickstarter.
3. **Income and Wealth** (increase income and wealth of Vermont residents): Project can demonstrate net new spending in a downtown through increased concentration of workers in a downtown area. The project would generate income and wealth for coworking participants and accelerator startups.
4. **Resiliency** (increase the ability of Vermont’s economy to positively adapt to change): The project increases entrepreneurship and innovation and adds to the creation of new products and services as well as the diversity of business types in each region and the state.
5. **Collaboration** (across public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders): The project relies heavily on collaboration between the Agency of Commerce, the accelerator founders and managers, and the networks and partnerships developed by each

incubator. A scoring criteria for funding is the strength of the partnerships and collaboration with existing service providers to ensure success of their clients.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project): Project demonstrates local, state, and regional support through commitments from other grant sources.
7. **Project Readiness** (demonstration of ability to execute): project is ready for implementation, including provision of details on budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners. Successful project could be started within six months.
8. **Management Team** (experience and demonstrated capability of the project team): project principals must combine the right mix of business, organizing, and personality traits to inspire confidence in their capacity to anticipate risks and deliver results.
9. **Investment Appeal** (willingness of angel investors to provide investment): the accelerator side of the house must demonstrate the ability to raise funds from angel investors that will serve as both seed capital and underwriting costs.

**Draft selection criteria:** It is assumed that there would be a limited level of funding available to provide a start-up subsidy. Therefore, there would be an RFP process with selection criteria. Project proposals must respond to the unique needs of an open working space as well as the business requirements of a well-run accelerator program.

Four minimum eligibility requirements for projects are:

- 1) Location is within a population catchment area of > 4,000 people within 5 miles
- 2) At least one college or university campus within 5 miles of proposed site
- 3) An optional connection to gigabit fiber is available
- 4) Location exists within a designated downtown or village center

Additional criteria for project selection include:

- 1) Strength of mission statement and connection to a local and regional opportunity
- 2) Entrepreneurial experience, leadership and commitment of the management team
- 3) Diligence of market research including short-term target and long-term growth markets
- 4) Startup position, including demonstration of partnerships, grant income, tax-credits, third party investment, membership registration, etc.
- 5) Strength of plan for achieving financial sustainability including a plan for earned income, in-kind contributions and grant income over time
- 6) Strength of operational structure including budget and finances, staffing, and advisory board makeup
- 7) Strength of plan to provide services directly or through service provider network and partnerships
- 8) Marketing and recruitment plan, including selection process and criteria for accelerator participants
- 9) Plan to collect, interpret and communicate outcome and impact data over time
- 10) Internal controls, monitoring and accountability processes

**Potential Partners:** Projects are encouraged to connect with, consult and leverage existing resources as they explore and define their business proposals. These include, but should not be limited to:

- Emerge Vermont  
<http://emergevt.org>
- Fresh Tracks Capital  
<http://www.freshtrackscap.com>
- LaunchVT  
<http://launchvt.com>
- Your Local Regional Development Corporation  
<http://accd.vermont.gov/business/partners/rdc>
- StartupVT  
<http://startupvt.org>
- Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)  
<http://veda.org>
- Venture Foundry  
<http://venture-foundry.com>
- Vermont Chamber of Commerce  
<http://www.vtchamber.com>
- Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies (VCET)  
<http://www.vermonttechnologies.com>
- Vermont Small Business Development Corporation (VtSBDC)  
<http://www.vtsbdc.org>
- Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF)  
<http://www.vsjf.org>
- Vermont Technology Alliance (VtTA)  
<http://vermonttechnologyalliance>

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Accelerator funded for Windham County through WCEDP

**Project Number** P14.

**Project Name - Master's of Biotechnology degree program**

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

University of Vermont with consultation with the Vermont Biosciences Alliance.

**Primary Contact Person**

Cynthia Belliveau, University of Vermont

Cynthia.Belliveau@uvm.edu

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Biotechnology is needed to solve world problems of food shortage, human and animal disease, and environmental damage from climate change. The tools of biotechnology require not only the technical skills and scientific knowledge of animals, plants and microorganisms, but the social sciences of ethics, economics, and public safety. Vermont must have a workforce to participate in the biotechnology revolution of the 21st century and, currently, Vermont businesses struggle to find trained people for existing jobs. In-house training is costly and our most talented science graduates go to other states where the biotechnology jobs are centered near research universities and biotechnical training centers.

A Master's in Biotechnology is offered in only a few leading universities around the world and focuses mainly on drugs and medical devices. The development of a program at UVM will place the state in the appropriate leadership position to support jobs in environmental, food, and medical sciences. The nascent biotechnology industry in Vermont includes medical device manufacturing, a monoclonal antibody developer, large-scale fermentation (beer makers), and specialty biological compound manufacturers. Additionally, a large biotechnology company is planning to move to Newport and will need a skilled workforce to succeed.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

The program will have two aspects of job creation. The curriculum and management of an academic program will require full time and part time staffing at the University. But, more important, the training program, initially aimed at about 20 students per year will feed the pipeline for biotechnology positions in Vermont and outside of the state. We expect that as the industry reaches critical mass in the state, new companies will sprout from existing companies. This was the situation in Maine over the past 25 years where a number of companies spun off from companies formed in the 1980s.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

The shortage of well trained professionals in biotechnology inhibits the growth of Vermont businesses and relaxing the constraint on employee available will spur business investment and growth.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

Biotechnology is a well paying field, far above the median incomes of other Vermont sectors.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

Climate change will impact all industries in Vermont this century. How we grow food, treat old and new diseases, clean up our water and produce energy using biology instead of geology is key to our economy. Vermont's size and strategically cooperative nature could be an important model for other states.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

The development of the Master's in Biotechnology program will require partnership with Vermont businesses currently involved in the application of biotechnology. On-line curriculum will supplement skills that are not currently resident at the University. The Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center has a strong commitment to innovation and manufacturing. Biotechnology companies near Lebanon, NH could also use similar skills.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

The University of the Vermont will seek funding from external sources to make this program move forward.

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

There is a significant planning period necessary to move this program from curriculum development to student enrollment. Vermont companies could help immediately.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

The Biosciences Alliance is hosting meetings with UVM and other academic institutions to explore the option for developing a Master's Degree in Biotechnology

**Project Number** P15.

**Project Name** (4-10 word title): Southern Vermont Cold Storage and Distribution Hub

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Harlow Farm/Westminster Organics, Food Connects, Windham Farm & Food LLC

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

Paul Harlow, Harlow Farm and Richard Berkfield, Food Connects

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Project will create an expanded cold storage and food aggregation point to enable southern Vermont farmers and producers to access to wholesale markets and food distributors. The site would enable a wider array of producers to produce for winter storage and provide a longer window in which to sell their produce. The site would enable growers in the southern Vermont region to aggregate, wash, lightly process, store and distribute farm fresh products to a wide range of market channels (in-state institutions, retailers, and out of state markets) with educational programming for small agricultural producers and low income households.

The hub is anticipated to be a new structure attached to the existing Harlow Farm packing house with new cold storage rooms, packing areas, and several new loading docks to accommodate 53' semi-trailers. The timeline would be contingent on permitting and total funds, with a target completion by the start of the 2016 growing season.

The target market for the facility would be local farmers, food producers, and community food programs in VT and NH within the Connecticut River Valley. The space would allow farms to grow and enable local food producers and community groups to have a food safety compliant facility.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

INSERT WLEB LANGUAGE---permission from Paul

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

- a. The Project will enable the near-term future growth of Harlow Farm in addition to enabling other farmers and food business to expand their ability to store, process, and ship goods. Future revenue projections and land utilization on Harlow Farm would suggest that nearly

- 20 FTE would be enabled if the farm has access to improved storage and packing space as the existing space limitations bottleneck the full use of current farm property. In addition to Harlow Farm, it would be expected that one to two FTE's would be created by other businesses looking to expand their operation.
- b. The majority of the jobs created will be entry level requiring little formal education. There is a significant need for employment opportunities for this cohort.
2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)
    - a. The project will include private investment made by Harlow Farm. Additional investment is likely by those anticipated to use the facility for storage, packing, and/or shipping. Businesses who will be able to grow given new space and market opportunities will make investments in their own businesses.
  3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)
    - a. Increasing the number of employment opportunities will increase the economic health of the region through the growth of the overall business community. These will have a positive multiplier effects on the local economy.
    - b. Improved high quality food packing, storage, shipping, and educational space will contribute positivity to improved access to larger wholesale customers, higher margin customers and create higher margin products.
  4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)
    - a. Additional cold storage and improved enclosed packing house space will allow the farm to grow additional crops for winter storage and sales adding to the overall diversity of the business. Improved interior packing space will support the Harlow Farm's efforts to maintain a high quality, clean environment to meet food safety regulations.
    - b. Creating joint user space fosters innovation and collaboration among a diverse array of partners. The space can enable new products to be developed and additional employment opportunities for local residents.
  5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)
    - a. This project has strong support from a wide group of stakeholders in the southern Vermont and New Hampshire region. As a large regional farm, we have employment interest from a wide area as well as enabling smaller entities to leverage our market access. Cold storage space will be shared with several other farms and be used to support local food access to local stores and co-ops. The local Co-Op association has agreed to commit to buying local through the winter contingent on adequate supply. The additional cold storage from one facility will enable multiple farms to supply this committed demand.
    - b. Institutions and NGOs will share the space for on-farm learning and light processing. Coming direct to the farm will provide access to fresh, local, produce for use in community kitchens, educational training, and student programs. Food Connects, LLC will be the entity leading institutional and educational engagement.
    - c. Local food aggregation & distribution programs such as Monadnock Menus and Windham Farm and Food are based out of Harlow Farm and can use the additional packing house

space and cold storage space to improve their operational efficiencies as well as maintain adequate food safety compliance.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

Private investment (Harlow Farms)

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

Once funding is secured project will be ready to go within 12 months.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

No update at this time

**Project Number** P16.

**Project Name: Regional Food Processing for Food Access Programs**

The Vermont Commodity Program (Vermont's Next Correctional Industry) and the Vermont Food Bank Processing, Warehouse and Food Distribution Facility

**Lead Organizations** Salvation Farms and the Vermont Foodbank.

**Primary Contact People**

Theresa Snow, Executive Director  
Salvation Farms  
802-522-3148  
[theresa@salvationfarms.org](mailto:theresa@salvationfarms.org)

John Sayles, CEO  
Vermont Food Bank  
802-477-4101  
[jsayles@vtfoodbank.org](mailto:jsayles@vtfoodbank.org)

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Additional infrastructure is needed throughout the state to lightly process and distribute food to meet the food security needs of low income Vermonters. This project brings together the efforts of two organizations to serve a wide range of needs.

1) **Salvation Farms**, through the Vermont Commodity Program (VCP), has been working with private, public, and non-profit partners to raw pack and minimally process Vermont farm-raised surplus crops. The Vermont Commodity Program is a supplemental food source for institutions serving our state's most vulnerable; the young, sick, elderly, and food insecure. Working side by side with inmate crews at the Southeast State Correctional Facility (SESCF) in Windsor to clean and pack edible farm-fresh surplus raw and in Rutland, Windham, and Lamoille Counties with community partners to develop minimally process product, the VCP has captured 144,486 pounds of 15 crops from 22 farms and provided resulting products to 24 institutions and food access sites including the Vermont Foodbank. Renovations to transition an underutilized agricultural building at SESCOF to accommodate greater crop volumes and diversity, increasing appropriate raw crop handling are currently underway. This will provide the VCP and the inmate work crew a workspace and vocational experience that operates at industry standards. Raw packing and minimal processing of surplus Vermont-grown crops is envisioned being incorporated into future infrastructure developments at the SESCOF.

2) The Vermont Food Bank (VFB) gathers and delivers hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh, whole local produce every year to our hungry neighbors throughout the state through an extensive local partner network. Need exceeds supply, and the VFB's fresh food program is seeking to add capacity to source, process and deliver up to 5 million pounds of fresh food in the coming years. The VFB is planning a physical expansion of our Barre facility to increase refrigeration, sorting and processing capability, and is expanding into other regions, such as Rutland and Chittenden County, to increase fresh food access, processing and distribution. Increased capacity will allow the VFB to expand the availability of fresh foods to our Vermont neighbors, improving their health outcomes and daily lives. Partners with the capacity to deliver processed or preserved fresh foods for distribution will be key to increasing the volume of food and impact on our communities.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

**A. Salvation Farms** projects an increase of two Department of Corrections staff to support the VCP activities at the SESCOF and its eventual transition to a Correctional Industry. Salvation Farms will increase our staff by one providing a Director for the VCP to act as liaison between activities occurring onsite at SESCOF and farms, the Vermont Gleaning Collective, wholesale trucking partners and recipient sites/institutions. Additionally, and possibly most noteworthy, is the workforce development implications of engaging 16-24 inmates per year, in applied food sector education to include food and workplace safety trainings and certification, industry guest visits, optional readings, documentaries, and discussions coupled with applicable work experience. Salvation Farms will work closely with the Department of Corrections, when possible, to identify re-entry food sector work options for inmates who have successfully worked, earned certifications, and gained skills on the VCP crew.

**B. The Vermont Food Bank** will require 1-4 additional full-time staff as the fresh food program ramps up, depending on the final number of locations and the volume distributed. The VFB's Community Kitchen Academy program could also expand with fresh food opportunities, retaining and adding jobs, and preparing student for employment. An outlet for surplus local produce can also help support local producers by ensuring a market for surplus production.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

**A. Salvation Farms** has raised a total of \$59,586 to support the first phase building renovation at SESCOF and another \$140,000 in additional foundation grants, contracts, fees for service and in-kind donations towards the overall project. The overall renovations project budget to

**B. The Vermont Food Bank's** donors will invest up to \$2 million in the next 5 years directly related to increasing the amount of fresh, local food that the VFB can gather, process and distribute. These funds will leverage federal and other public investment.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

**A. Salvation Farms** – the VCP will increase the income and wealth of Vermont residents through food sector workforce development with an inmate population; and developing stability and dependability of the VCP Vermont generating a retention of institutional dollars and redirecting these funds toward sourcing Vermont farm-fresh foods via market avenues

**B. The Vermont Food Bank's** fresh produce program will provide more fresh, healthy food to our neighbors with low incomes thereby increasing their ability to afford housing, medical care and other means necessary to live an active, healthy life, support their families and contribute to the community. The program also strengthens the local farm economy by creating a reliable outlet for surplus product and by creating new customers for locally grown food.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

**A. Salvation Farms** is building a new segment of our food system by engaging key stakeholders whose potential role in managing farms surplus foods has been unrealized until now. Black River Produce is our hired trucking company; we positively impact their bottom line by maximizing the use of their fleet. Additionally, consumption of Vermont produced foods will increase as will the local purchasing power of institutions serving vulnerable citizens.

**B. The Vermont Food Bank** for 27 years has been supporting Vermont's economic resilience by supporting our neighbors in their time of greatest need, allowing people to make it through times of crisis ready to contribute back to our communities in a meaningful way. Feeding our neighbors fresh local food during the hardest times keeps our neighbors healthier and the producer economy stronger.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

**A. Salvation Farms' key partners for this project are:**

- *Vermont Department of Corrections, Southeast State Correctional Facility & Vermont Offender Work Program* – Collaboratively work with Salvation Farms to integrate the Vermont Commodity Program into the vocational work opportunity for inmates at the Southeast State Correctional Facility. SESCOF is a 100 bed facility located in Windsor. All offenders participate in daily work assignments, 70% of whom must work within the fence each day receiving a small monetary payment for their time.
- *Vermont Department of Buildings & General Services* – The SESCOF property and physical infrastructure is owned by Vermont's Department of Buildings & General Services and leased to the Department of Corrections. Buildings and General Services plays a vital role in the adaptation of any state owned property and plays a vital role in Salvation Farms renovation of a building at SESCOF.
- *Institutional Food Providers, i.e. Charitable Food Agencies, Schools, Nursing Home, etc.* – Interest in quality assessed, cost effective, easy to receive and utilize locally produced surplus crops is a must among institutions that are serving nutritional- and food-insecure Vermont citizens.

**B. The Vermont Food Bank** has collaboration as a core part of our mission. The VFB relies on tens of thousands of private sector fund and food donors, the federal government, the state of Vermont and not lastly more than 200 grassroots nonprofits and faith-based organizations to do our work. There is no VFB without partnerships and collaborations.

5. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

**A. Salvation Farms** Refer to #2, investments.

**B. The Vermont Food Bank** – Local financial donors (the VFB raises more than \$4 million dollars every year), local and national foundations, business partners, and the state of Vermont.

6. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

**A. Salvation Farms** Minimal processing is already taking place at the SESCOF under not-ideal circumstances until renovations can be completed. At minimum, \$65,000 remains to be secure by Salvation Farms before the State can put the VCP/SESCF renovation project out to bid. Beyond that, we anticipate another \$150,000 would be needed to complete the first phase of renovations at SESCOF and provide training for additional staffing to accommodate the added products being produced at the facility. On-going funding for staff will be supplied by the sale of products and foundation grants.

**B. The Vermont Food Bank** is already engaged in this project and can provide the needed detail in minimal time with minimal effort.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

The organization met its funding goal (\$156,000) to renovate the building they envisioned housing the Vermont Commodity Program at the SE State Correctional Facility. Construction was supposed to begin this past spring.

**Project Number** P17.

**Project Name** (4-10 word title)

**Vermont Livestock Slaughter and Processing Co's ("VLSPC") Relocation and Expansion**

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Addison County Economic Development Corporation

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

Robin Poole Scheu

Executive Director

Addison County Economic Development Corporation

***GREAT STARTS HERE!***

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[rpscheu@addisoncountyedc.org](mailto:rpscheu@addisoncountyedc.org)

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Assistance of \$200,000 is being sought in the \$4 million (total) expansion project for a critical piece of VT agricultural infrastructure, namely, the slaughter and cutting (processing) of all livestock species. VLSPC has completely outgrown its current premises in the county, and has secured financing to move its operations to Middlebury. The project has the backing of VEDA, several prominent social impact investors, and the Development Director of the City and College of Middlebury. More than fifty growers depend upon this capability in the State's largest ag. country, as do fifteen current employees as well as ten additional new employees.

A commitment has been received from the seller of the building in Middlebury in to which VLSPC will relocate, and the construction firm of Neagly and Chase has been hired to manage the extensive fit-up required. The building plans have been drawn. VLSPC is in the process of formalizing loan agreements with lenders who have largely completed their due diligence. The last and only task remaining is to secure approximately \$200,000 as a grant to finalize the mortgage lender's requirement.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

VLSPC currently employs sixteen full time employees and intends to hire an additional ten when the expansion move is complete. The \$2.2 fit-up of the building will employ approximately eleven different trades and as many as 35-40 individuals at various stages of the six month construction program. Farmers who are able to grow their herds by virtue of the slaughter and processing capacity that will be provided, will also require additional hired labor on their respective farms.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

This is a \$ 4million capital expansion program that will provide sorely needed livestock processing capability in the southern part of the State. It will bring approximately \$2.5 million from out of state to investment in the Middlebury Industrial Park, and it will generate investment returns for the in-state investors/lenders. The expansion of VT's agricultural sector by virtue of the processing capacity will be seen in consumer purchases and in the hospitality industry which features VT raised food.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

VT growers of livestock cannot expand their herds presently because there is a shortage of slaughter and processing capability. While some additional capacity has recently come on line, there still remains a need for slaughter and processing that will enable growers to market to larger food stores and upscale chains. This requires professional cutting, labeling and packaging, which VLSPC's new facility will provide.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

The primary agricultural sector has undergone extreme changes in the last several decades. Farmers no longer sell meat from their farms that they have slaughtered themselves. Meat must be slaughtered and processed in highly regulated UYSDA facilities which are very costly to build and maintain. While small farms can market their product through direct consumer sales, their ability to sell consistently to larger chains is dependent upon their being able to provide a constant, year-round amount of quality product. This is only possible when a farm can expand, and it cannot expand without the certitude that it can have its animals slaughtered and packaged on a timely basis. Currently livestock producers must wait for weeks, and reserve many months in advance, to secure slaughter "slots." VT's ability to service the demanding criteria of Food Chains and restaurant chains – the fastest growing sector of livestock sales – is dependent upon the infrastructure of slaughter and processing availability.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

The following entities are involved in financing this project:

VEDA, the Vermont Community Fund, Addison County Development Agency, Yankee Farm Credit, and indirectly, the City and College of Middlebury. It has the support of the VSJF Flexible Capital Fund, and

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Inc. The seller of the building, a private individual, is also supporting the financing with the assumption of a note for a portion of the sales price. Many farmers are supportive of the expansion as their livelihoods depend upon improved and enlarged ag. infrastructure.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

There are very substantial matching funds for this project; just under \$4 million in funding has been committed in principle, dependent upon the acquisition of a \$200,000 equity (grant) infusion.

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

This project is still in process. The slaughter landscape has changed in the last 12-18 months so capacity needs to be reviewed. Regardless, VSL&P needs to move out of its current space and update its equipment. A funders meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2015

**Project Number P18.**

**Project Name** (4-10 word title) **Dairy Farm Infrastructure Development**

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

**Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB), Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM), Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB), Vermont Agency of Natural Resources**

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

**Ela Chapin, VHCB and Diane Bothfeld, VAAFMM**

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

In Vermont there are 17 Large Farm Operations (greater than 700 milking cows), 142 Medium Farm Operations (between 200 to 699 milking cows). The majority of these farms have built new infrastructure within the last 5 to 15 years to meet increasing cow numbers. There are a substantial number of dairy farms (751) that milk less than 200 cows and a majority of these farms have not made recent infrastructure improvements. Vermont's dairy farms collectively produce a relatively stable supply of milk at 2.6 billion pounds per year. However, improved infrastructure would assist in increasing both the quality and volume of milk produced in Vermont, which in turn ensures our dairy processors in Vermont have the supply they need to stay and continue to expand, and additional production can help attract additional processing businesses. Needed dairy farm infrastructure ranges from improvements for increased cow comfort, improved labor efficiencies, and expanded facilities.

One of the first steps in any infrastructure improvement or installation is the design of the facility. In Wisconsin, the state supported the dairy industry by providing incentive grants for engineering work on design of new dairy related facilities. Grants would be provided through state and other sources for farms to hire engineers to design new dairy facilities taking into account water quality protection, waste management, integration of new technologies (robot milking machines, ventilation, etc.) and cow comfort.

There are a limited number of agricultural engineers and other technical support for dairy facilities in Vermont as well as construction firms for the installation of the equipment required for dairy farms. Education and training could be provided through programs provided by the state and local colleges.

The next step in infrastructure improvement is implementation, and many dairy farm businesses are already highly leveraged, especially after 4 consistent years of low milk prices. Grants will be provided through state and other sources for farms to help implement infrastructure improvement projects and to ensure they have the equity to leverage the debt capital needed for such improvements.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

Dairy farms employ 1-20 full time equivalents. Each business that is assisted in implementing infrastructure improvements will be retaining jobs and likely adding jobs as the business expands or adds new enterprises. Improvements also result in improved working environments, labor efficiency and safety for employees.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

VHCB's historical experience providing support for dairy farm improvements is that the public investment leverages four or more times the amount in private sector investment or other sources of funds.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

As dairy farmers make improvements in their business, they improve the financial sustainability of their business, the working environment for family members and employees, and their capacity to make further investments in employees and the farm. This leads to increased income for family farm owners and their employees, and increased business and property values for farmers.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

Resiliency is one of the most important factors to retaining agricultural businesses in our state. We need dairy farmers to have the resources needed (both financial and technical) to ensure they can weather a variety of risks, including natural disasters, weather-related and disease-related crop failures, herd health issues, and milk price volatility. This project is critical to increasing the dairy industry's resiliency to these and other risks, and the resiliency of the dairy industry has a direct impact on the resiliency of Vermont's overall economy to adapt to changes. As commodity milk prices and markets for other agricultural products shift, so do farmers in response. Many farmers are making investments in their businesses in order to respond to shifting dynamics in the marketplace, such as the current opportunity to assist in the implementation of Act 148 by creating and expanding composting operations, for example. Farmers will also be required to make investments to meet the proposed additional requirements of the Lake Champlain TMDL (water quality improvement plan) as approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets already collaborates closely with the Agency of Natural Resources, Agency of Commerce, the VT Housing & Conservation Board, the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative and other state-wide entities to address the needs of the dairy industry. This project is an extension of existing collaborative projects, including a new dairy improvement grants

program started with funding from Commonwealth Dairy in Brattleboro, VT, and potential new funding opportunity through the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)  
\$400,000 in private industry match annually (Commonwealth Dairy), and the possibility of additional public and private funds. Up to \$20 million over five years from the USDA RRPC Program, as well as related support and match.

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

This project expects to move forward with the funds listed above in December 2014, and then again annually at that time for several years. Dairy farmers will be invited to make proposals for projects, and they will be reviewed and considered in January-February 2015. Projects funded will be implemented in April-December 2015, including engineering studies, construction of new facilities and other infrastructure development projects. Other funds for Water Quality Infrastructure improvements will be provided on a modified schedule dependent on federal guidelines.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

No update at this time

**Project Number** P19.

**Project Title** Demonstration on-farm integrated solar, wind and biomass project with Smart Grid

**Situation / Critical Issue: (25-100 words)**

Vermont farms have high demands for energy to feed animals, milk animals, clean equipment, heating, ventilation and lighting for farm structures. Vermont farms also have waste products that can be used to generate energy, have large land bases that may be located away from population centers, can grow energy crops, and can grow fiber crops such as wood and grasses.

Many Vermont farms have tight to limited profit margins and another source of income or a means to reduce energy input costs would be beneficial to long term sustainability. The ability to generate heat to extend the growing season would also allow for greater reliance on local foods during the cold winter months. Barriers to implementation are time to research appropriate renewable sources and available investment funds.

**Description of the Initiative: (50-200 words)**

Success has been obtained in the adoption of renewable energy production – methane digestion of manure to produce electricity - through the use of consultants to interact with farmers through the decision making, design and implementation process for these projects. Having information regarding renewable energy opportunities in a centralized location will be helpful and is being tackled by Farm 2 Plate. Increased technical assistance for farms of all sizes and for all types of renewable energy would expedite implementation. Consultants could be funded to work directly with farmers from the design to the implementation of the project.

There is great opportunity to utilize current and future methane digestion of manure on farms as a method of managing organic waste products that must be removed from landfills as prescribed in ACT 148. Also new technology is being proposed that can further reduce phosphorus from the methane digestion effluent prior to spreading on farm land. This would have a water quality benefit for livestock producers. Investments in infrastructure will be required.

With new and current renewable energy technology for farms, jobs could be generated in the installation, management and repair of these infrastructure installations.

**Outcomes: (How could we measure the success of the Initiative, in terms of jobs, etc.)**

Success could be measured through

- Number of installations of renewable energy equipment on farms in Vermont
- Farm numbers and profitability of farms with renewable energy equipment
- Reduction of organic wastes entering landfills and energy production from these wastes

- Jobs could be created and maintained in the field of technical assistance to farmers in selection and implementation of renewable energy on farms and the continued operation and maintenance of this equipment.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

No update at this time

**Project Number** P20.

**Project Name** Food Safety Program to Maintain Market Access and Ensure the Integrity of the Vermont Brand

**Issue:** Food safety is a paramount issue facing Vermont fruit and vegetable operations. Producers want to produce safe and healthy food that consumers demand and that protects the quality reputation and brand associated with Vermont agriculture. Most wholesale and retail customers seek assurance that food safety practices are being followed by all farms they purchase from. Many customers are more than ever aware of where their food comes from and connected to the local growers that represent Vermont's community-based agriculture system. Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAAFM) supports the premise of a food safety program and the regulatory authority needed for implementation.

Since 1998, USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) have provided voluntary guidelines for produce farmers to reduce the risk of microbial contamination related to food borne illnesses on their farms. Now, many producers are pro-actively preparing to adapt to new pending regulatory requirements associated with the U.S. FDA's implementation of FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act) which will be finalized by the end of June 2015.

VAAAFM currently lacks the statutory authority to implement a produce safety regulatory program but supports developing a state program that offers education, technical assistance, and outreach for compliance prior to enforcement. Vermont's produce industry is receptive to food safety planning and pro-active compliance with food safety regulations but essential infrastructure capabilities are generally lacking. In 2012, UVM Extension estimated a need of \$5-12 million by Vermont vegetable, berry, and apple operations to make necessary equipment and infrastructure improvements to be in compliance with GAP food safety standards. In FY '11 VAAAFM received \$100,000 from Act 52 Section 40 (Jobs Bill) providing capital improvement matching grants to support agricultural producers in obtaining GAP certification. Grants were successfully awarded to 12 fruit and vegetable operations to address: packing procedures, product inventory and tracking, sanitation practices, constructing a pack house, storage space and washing areas. This initial grant program played a vital role in business expansion and job creation for the produce industry in Vermont.

**Objective:** The initiative will:

- Maintain and expand mid-scale markets for Vermont producers by promoting food safety, ensuring integrity of the Vermont brand, and increasing market access while continuing to grow and expand the state's produce industry.
- Develop the regulatory framework for a food safety program.
- Achieve state-wide of the FSMA by 2017.
- Provide technical assistance, training and planning to support the implementation.

**Activity:** Final FSMA rules will likely be released during the summer of 2015 and then operations will have 2-4 years to comply, based on farm size. Once FSMA is implemented, many fresh produce growers will be required to adopt and document rigorous production and handling practices that reduce food safety risks.

The proposed rules as they are currently drafted exempt smaller farms with less than \$500,000 in annual food sales if at least 50% is sold to retail customers within a 275 mile radius. Consequently many Vermont growers may not be covered under FSMA regulations. According to the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, growers – regardless of total sales or customer base – are indicating their willingness to participate in food safety planning and implementation of on-farm production and handling practices. The sentiment is that food safety is essential on all farms - of all sizes - as it influences market access, impacts economic development within the agricultural sector, and represents Vermont's prominence around value, quality, and brand.

VAAFM recommends the development of a state-level FSMA-compliant food safety program that focuses on education, technical assistance and outreach for compliance prior to enforcement. A comprehensive Vermont Produce Safety and Market Access Program that offers food safety education and training, financial assistance for capital improvements, and regulatory assistance to meet FSMA requirements will support and expand Vermont's fruit and vegetable industry.

A program to increase market access and provide economic viability to our state's produce farms would include the following components:

- Develop the regulatory framework for a food safety program within VAAFM;
- Engage stakeholders to partner with VAAFM to co-lead the discussion and development of a Vermont food safety regulatory framework;
- Support ongoing food safety technical assistance, training and planning; and Capital infrastructure cost-share funding to encourage best management practices through installation of priority food safety practices.

#### **Outcomes:**

Identification of industry impact of FSMA regulations (number of farms effected);

- Feedback from stakeholders involved with FSMA, and potentially regulated by FSMA, on their regulatory needs, VAAFM statutory authority, and a state food safety regulatory program;
- Development of Vermont statutory authority language necessary to the framework of a produce safety program; and
- Incentive payments to Vermont fruit and vegetable farms to assist with implementing on farm food safety practices that will help their business maintain or access new markets.

#### **Project Update as of September 1, 2015**

Progress has been made on creating the basic regulatory authority to implement FSMA final rules. VAAFM hired a Produce Safety Program coordinator (Limited Service Position) using federal grant monies in January 2015. VAAFM, VT Department of Health, and UVM Extension are

engaged in conversations about a produce safety TA continuum. Start-up federal resources are pending to pilot FSMA readiness reviews (technical assistance) on farms beginning in summer 2016. Fall 2015 - Winter 2016 will consist of a series of industry and stakeholder outreach meetings to explore the development of a produce safety program at VAAF. VAAF also anticipates a legislative agenda during the 2016 session to expand their statutory authority around inspecting and regulating produce operations.

**Project Number** P21.

**Project Name** (4-10 word title)

Domestic Export

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Vermont Agency of Agriculture

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

Chelsea Bardot Lewis, Agricultural Policy Administrator, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, 802-522-5573, Chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Vermont is an export state. Our products are known and respected nationally and internationally for their quality and the strength of the Vermont brand helps our entrepreneurs sell products across the world. Our market access program has been targeted at the international marketplace because of the resources available through Food Export-Northeast. However, many of Vermont's small agriculture and forest products companies are not ready or interested in international exports, but instead need assistance accessing statewide, regional or national markets. This initiative addresses this critical gap in services to assist agriculture and forest products businesses to supply the considerable demand of regional and national markets.

The Vermont Legislature created a Domestic Export Program in 2014, with a small amount of seed funding (\$50,000). The Agency of Agriculture will launch this pilot program with the following components:

***Education and Technical Assistance***

- Educational workshops and seminars on topics such working with brokers, maximizing the trade show experience, and identifying trends in specific markets

***Market Entry***

- Statewide Matchmaker bringing together producers and buyers
- Vermont Pavilions at trade shows to build Vermont brand recognition

***Financial Assistance for Trade Show***

- Matching grants of up to \$2,000 to subsidize the costs of exhibiting at trade shows

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

Vermont's food and agriculture sector has been a major driver for job creation in the state. Since 2011, over 1,100 net jobs have been created in the food system, accounting for over 30% of all job growth in the state. In order to sustain this growth and expand the viability of Vermont's farm and forestry businesses, it is critical that we develop new market channels.

Should funding be secured, we anticipate that over 75 businesses will participate in the education, market entry, and/or trade show assistance offered through this program during the first 12 months. **Gringo Jacks** of Manchester has already committed to participating, and anticipate that they will be able to maintain 4 jobs and create 1 job as a result of this program (total of 5 jobs). Extrapolated over 75 businesses, we estimate that in the first year of this program over 10 jobs could be created, and well over 65 jobs could be maintained.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

Private sector investment is inherent in this project. Trade show grants will be matched by at least 50% in company investment.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

Building our export economy will bring more revenue into the state, growing our economy and increasing wealth of Vermont residents.

All participating companies will fill out an evaluation immediately after participation, and at the 6 and 12 month mark. The following metrics will be tracked:

- Jobs maintained or created
- Increased sales
- New distributorships
- Connections made
- Sales leveraged : funds invested

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

Market diversification is a critical strategy for resiliency of our small food, farm, and forestry businesses.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

We are in close partnership with the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing and the Chief Marketing Officer, and this program will be implemented in concert with the Made in Vermont program, to be rolled out in summer 2014. We also work closely with the Vermont Specialty Foods Association, which supports this program, and Vermont Fresh Network, which will be a partner in the statewide Matchmaker event.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

\$50,000 has been appropriated from the legislature. We have also applied for a USDA Rural Development Enterprise Grant and are exploring a USDA Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program grant.

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

We have the partners in place, and funding appropriated from the Legislature to launch the pilot phase of this project within the next 6 months. EDA Funds would enable us to move from a small pilot into a larger, more sustainable program that would reach many more companies and have a more significant impact.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

Great progress has been made on this project. VAAFM has worked closely with the Agency of Commerce and industry associations (e.g. Vermont Specialty Food Association, Maple Sugar Makers' Association, Cheese Council) to launch a coordinated program to reach out-of-state markets. Key initiatives include the Big E, the Summer Fancy Food Show in NYC, and Harlow's Vermont Farmstand, which opened in July at the Boston Public Market. The Trade Show Assistance grant has seen incredible impacts thus far, and funding was just secured from the Working Lands Enterprise Fund to continue the grants into a second year.

**Project Number** P22.

**Project Name** Expanding the Farm & Forestry Technical Assistance Continuum

**Lead Organization** - Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB), Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) and industry-based partners

**Primary Contact Person** - Ela Chapin, Director, Farm & Forest Viability Program, VHCB

### **Project Description**

The Farm and Forestry Technical Assistance Continuum is a program that strengthens the technical assistance network for both farmers and those in the forest products industry. The Vermont Farm Viability Program at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has initiated the project and is building the capacity of agricultural capital and service providers to help farmers with accessing financial markets when business growth opportunities are otherwise constrained. The basis of the program is to provide current agricultural support staff with additional experience in finance so that the assistance provided to farmers includes financing options for implementing farm improvement practices. Additional professional development is needed for business advisors who work with value-added food businesses, as there are not enough providers available to meet the needs of growing businesses in this sector (e.g., the VT Agricultural Development Program based at the VSJF provides year-long in-depth coaching to value added businesses but only has the staff capacity to serve the needs of 8-12 businesses per year).

The technical assistance network for forest products businesses is not as robust as that for the agricultural community. This project will build on the success of the Vermont Farm Viability Program to build capacity of technical assistance providers so that foresters and wood products value added businesses can have the necessary full suite of expertise to ensure their long term viability.

### **Project Assessment**

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

There are more than 500 logging contractors in Vermont. In addition, more than 200 mills employ more than 3,500 Vermonters. Both loggers and mill businesses face a changing landscape and tackling new business practices requires business planning and possible investments. Between 2009-2013, more than 1,500 new jobs have been added in the food manufacturing sector. This program will help existing businesses stay in business and possibly expand.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

This project will leverage investment by assisting businesses to access capital.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents) As with other sectors, the improvement of business practices leads to greater productivity, and requires a broader skill set for workers. The increase in business income leads to higher wage opportunities for skilled workers.

Loggers have an average annual wage of \$25,000 and improvement in income is necessary to ensure long term viability. Food manufacturing workers have an annual wage of \$32,000/year.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change).  
Comprehensive assistance provides the necessary support to ensure viability for agriculture and the forest product industry that are in a competitive environment. Resiliency of the Technical Assistance provider network to provide services across all economic sectors, not just working lands, will be enhanced. Business acumen will increase which will result in resilient businesses through improved management and financial stability, increased profit margins and greater capacity to pay livable wages.
5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)  
The project will be a collaboration between the lead organizations, relevant state agency personnel, industry partners, various service providers (e.g., RDC, SBDC, VMEC) and counterparts from neighboring states.
6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)  
Matching funds through VHCB include state and private foundation funds (@ \$100,000).
7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)  
Project is already launching this year (has been in planning stages for three years). Second year funds are critical.

#### Project update as of September 1, 2015

Progress has been made on this project. A TA continuum for Farm and Food businesses has been the focus to begin with; this work should be completed in FY16. It is unclear what will be done on the forest products side at this point.

**Project Number** P23.

**Project Name** Tech Assistance for Farms and Water Quality

### **RCPP Draft Framework**

#### General Background

- Application to the national pool addressing a multi-state resource concerns (e.g. Lake Champlain watershed)
- Funding max is \$20M – we are striving for as much match as possible to enable us to request the greatest amount – projects that meet or exceed the request will be most competitive
- Addressing water quality, soil health and water quantity (flood resilience) priorities (National NRCS)

#### RCPP Vision and Goals

1. Enhance regional cooperation
  - Partner involvement
2. More effectively implement and maintain practices
  - Increasing cost-share, flexibility, outreach to increase signups
  - Long-term agreements
  - Incentive for financial benefits increases signup and participation
3. High priority outcomes
  - Leveraging resources
  - Meeting or avoiding regulations
  - Coordinating with state or national efforts
  - Innovation
  - Outcome based

### **VT Proposal –Lake Champlain Whole Farm Improvement Initiative**

#### Vision and Goals

Vision – to increase soil conservation, enhance flood resilience, improve water quality and ensure farm viability throughout the Lake Champlain watershed as a first phase for developing, testing and implementing the tools and approach we develop to achieve the same vision statewide and regionally.

#### Goals

Overall: to develop an integrated strategy designed to meet the mutually reinforcing goals of farm economic viability, soil conservation, and clean water and flood resilience, as the best means to achieve our vision.

Specific:

1. Develop a small farm certification program that will assist small farms to be more economically viable and reduce water pollution through implementation of soil management and water pollution control practices
2. Develop an environmental stewardship program that will provide a mix of economic, technical assistance, and regulatory incentives and opportunities for any farmer willing to move above and beyond minimum state and federal requirements.

Project Area – The project will be developed and piloted in the Lake Champlain Watershed where we have the greatest and most immediate challenges driven by an EPA-led Clean Water Act pollution allocation process (Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL). Over time, our goal is to extend the practices and approach we develop in the Lake Champlain watershed to address all areas where agriculture is a significant component of the water pollution load.

#### Project Summary

##### *Small Farm Certification Program (Vermont Component)*

Small farm dairies in Vermont comprise nearly one-half of the total milking herd but have received a small fraction of resources spent on technical assistance, regulatory oversight, and funding for improved practices.

In the fall of 2014, VAAFM will begin the rulemaking process for amending the state regulations guiding barnyard and field practices designed to reduce water pollution as part of the state's commitment made to EPA in the development of a Lake Champlain TMDL. The process should be completed within a year. VAAFM will also increase the level of oversight and technical assistance provided to small farms. There are approximately 850 small dairy farms in the state, with approximately 550 dairies located in the Lake Champlain Basin. We will evaluate and inspect all small dairies in the basin by 2020. This will generate a high need for additional technical assistance and financial cost-share support for farm infrastructure and management improvement.

All small farms will be required to submit a certification of compliance. The development of a Vermont Small Farm Certification Program will ensure a level of compliance using an innovative and creative approach to water quality improvement.

##### *Environmental Stewardship program (Vermont component)*

Concurrently with the small farm certification program, we will develop an incentives program that would provide opportunities to farmers who are willing to go above and beyond baseline regulations and implement additional water quality improvement practices. Based on the "certainty" concept adopted by some states, farmers would receive assurance that they are in compliance with all regulations of the state of Vermont and the EPA, and in addition, will have access to levels of valuable incentives and opportunities that will directly affect their farm viability, and their ability to continue to maintain long-term commitments to natural resource protection. As farmers recognize the importance

of water quality protection and see the connection between natural resource management, business planning and farm viability, we have seen an increased interest in innovations such as manure injection, anaerobic digestors, precision feed management and creative use of shared equipment that allow for more diverse nutrient management planning. This program will reward this innovation and incentivize more of this type of expansion and planning to further decrease agricultural water quality impacts.

In focusing on small farms and incentivizing additional management actions, the following actions will be priority activities:

- Farm infrastructure improvement (manure and feed storage, barnyards, heavy use areas)
- Field practices (cover crops, reduced tillage, nutrient management, tile drain management, erosion stabilization)
- Conservation easements (emphasizing floodplains and sensitive areas)
- Forestry practices (forest roads, erosion control)

Activities required for each farm and forestland area to achieve baseline regulations and to achieve certainty will be determined through development of a conservation plan or resource assessment based on an evaluation of individual resource concerns. The plan will require practice implementation and a timeline for qualification for the Environmental Stewardship Program. Multiple partners will contribute the necessary funding, outreach, assessment and implementation of project goals.

Our RCPP application will request funds to help farmers meet state regulations and become positioned for achieving a higher standard that will raise their economic viability, enhance soil conservation, improve flood resilience, and increase water quality protection. In a year-long process of discussion with the agricultural community (Ag Workgroup) during the development of the TMDL, we determined a strong interest in an incentive program that compensated and recognized farmers who had implemented additional water quality practices. Various incentives were discussed, and will be further explored in a planning process with our agricultural advisory committee. Some ***draft*** incentive ideas include:

- 0% interest loans for the purchase of equipment that will help address nutrient runoff reduction (manure injection, reduced tillage equipment)
- Nutrient management plan flexibility – allowing farmers to spread winter manure on land where there would be no water quality impacts (possibly eliminating the need for major waste storage improvements on the farm)
- Recognition – many farmers deal with substantial social and community pressures and believe that recognition of their stewardship, through publicity or signage that was validated by an outside party would provide security and relief.
- Waivers from reports or inspections – while no farmer would be allowed to violate regulations, farmers who have demonstrated commitment to regulations as well as a higher, accountable level of management may receive a “safe harbor” protection from further requirement improvements, relief from reporting or annual inspections.

- BMP challenge – this was a trial program in 2012 where farmers were incentivized to try new field management practices (shorter season corn which increased cover crop success, reduced tillage practices) with the knowledge that any loss in production would be compensated for by the BMP challenge program.
- Increased cost-share – providing a higher rate of support for additional practices

#### *Partner support and leverage*

The application will leverage extensive and comprehensive current partner support as well as additional partner resources from non-traditional partners. Some partners have asked about opportunities to participate as well as benefits to their organization or business. Some examples include:

- Dairy cooperatives – can contribute cash or in-kind services that could include assistance by field staff. St. Albans Co-operative has offered a percentage of their field staff time to learn about farm water quality concerns to be able to help producers recognize, find resources for and address any potential on-farm projects.
- Feed/fertilizer dealers – agribusiness of any kind succeeds when a client critical mass exists. These clients, farm producers, will continue to be viable with strong management training and practice implementation that increases their on-farm nutrient allocation and use (rather than running off into streams and lakes) and allows them to meet state and federal regulations without penalty and enforcement. Agribusiness will also need to expand their own employment to address some of the regulatory needs (increased number of nutrient management plans, conservation planning, engineering and monitoring).
- Conservation organizations – groups such as The Nature Conservancy, VT Housing and Conservation Board and the VT River Conservancy can provide match to RCPP funds for conservation easements through their individual donations and fundraising, as well as other grant opportunities they have received, in return, access RCPP easement funds to increase their own programs.
- NGOs – organizations such as the VT Association of Conservation Districts, the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain, and the Missisquoi River Basin Association can provide match to RCPP funds through other grants and donations they receive. In return, they can access technical assistance and outreach funds from RCPP to increase on-farm networking, education and practice implementation.

Project update as of September 1, 2015

No update at this time

**Project Number** P24.

**Project Name**

Advancing Culinary Arts to support Vermont restaurants and inns

**Lead Organization**

Vermont Agency of Education in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**Primary Contact Person**

John Fischer, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Education

Phone

email

Megan Smith, Commissioner, Department of Tourism and Marketing

Phone

email

**Project Description**

The Stafford Technical Center in cooperation with the New England Culinary Institute has developed a program of study that provides advanced training for cooks and others involved in food preparation and service. This training provides the necessary skills to workers that will allow for Vermont restaurants and inns to improve their service and expand the market. During the pilot, NECI and the Stafford Center has prepared several courses

Front of House Servers

Sous Chef

Front of House Management

Line Cook

Baking and Pastry

Certificate of Professional Cooking

Meat fabrication

Sous vide certification

Individual sessions for particular food preparations

This project is to use the results from the pilot effort and expand its delivery to other Career and Technical Centers across the state. Each training has a revenue stream from tuition associated with it. The proposal is for the up-front investment necessary to initiate the training in the other Career and Technical Centers.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** Each set of trainings will accommodate 100 students. In general, these trainings increase the value of the worker about 20%. As with many training activities, the goal is to increase the effectiveness of a worker so that they can improve their career opportunities.
2. **Investment** Estimate to be developed
3. **Income and Wealth** Estimate to be developed
4. **Resiliency** The shortage of trained restaurant professionals is a constraint to the expansion of restaurants in Vermont. In 2012, there were more than 1,300 restaurants in Vermont providing employment to more than 18,000 individuals. Providing enhanced skills training to 2% of the current restaurant workforce reaches more than 360 individuals.  
The goal to increase visitation by 10% over the next five years will require an expansion of the restaurant business in Vermont and the number of individuals with those skills by an additional 100 individuals.
5. **Collaboration** – The pilot for this project is a cooperative effort between the New England Culinary Institute and the Stafford Technical Center in Rutland. The expansion of this project to the other Career and Technical Education Centers will build on this cooperation.
6. **Matching Funds** – to be described
7. **Project Readiness** – The results from the pilot will be evaluated during the 2014-2015 school year and the expansion will be ready to move forward for September of 2015

Project Update as of September 1, 2015

No update at this time

## **Project Overview** P25.

**Project Name** (4-10 word title): **Wood Pellet Mill in St. Johnsbury, VT**

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)  
Northeast Vermont Development Association (NVDA)

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

- David Snedeker, Executive Director, NVDA
- Russell Blake, principal in the pellet mill

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

To build a 20,000 ton per year premium wood pellet mill to serve the residential and commercial pellet market in the Northeast Kingdom and other New England states. Wood will be sourced from within the Northeast Kingdom and the northern most counties of New Hampshire. The project will work with foresters and forest landowners for harvesting logs that will lead to the long term development of high quality, productive forests by providing a market for lower quality trees. This project will partner with the Northern Forest Center (based in NH) which is launching the Model Neighborhood Project (which provides subsidized pellet stoves to low income households and commercial facilities) in Lyndonville, VT with the intention of building the demand for wood pellets in the region.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

- The feasibility analysis conducted indicates a mill of this size will employ at least 13 employees. A plant of similar size in another part of Vermont employs 24 people. These would be new direct jobs at the mill itself. Indirect jobs include local loggers, log truck drivers and foresters – likely an additional 100 jobs.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

- This would be a \$4.5million facility with 80% of funding coming from traditional debt sources and 20% being owner and partner financed.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

- Income through wages would be increased for more than 13 employees as well as the 100+ suppliers of raw materials to the mills.
- By reducing the cost of heating fuel (switching to wood pellets from #2 heating oil) will save money for homeowners and commercial users.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

- This project would reduce dependency on foreign oil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and would provide renewable heat for residents and commercial operations.
5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)
    - This project would be a partnership between Russ Blake as the pellet mill owner, NVDA as the local economic development corporation, local lenders, loggers, log truck drivers, forest land owners, foresters, and end users of the pellets.
  6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)
    - Given the total project cost of \$4.5million, EDA funds would be well matched with private capital.
  7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)
    - An economic feasibility study has been completed along with a wood supply study. A business plan is currently being finalized. Local and state permits still need to be obtained, engineering and equipment studies need to be finalized and capital needs to be raised. The project has been explored over the past year. If funding and permits fall into place, this project could come on line in time for the 2016 heating season.

#### Project update as of September 1, 2015

A pellet mill in West Windsor has begun production. A potential mill project in the St. Johnsbury area is moving ahead slowly. In parallel with efforts for new mill production, the Clean Energy Development Fund has funded the Modern Wood Heat Initiative. This project has a goal of providing wood heat (mostly wood pellets) to the schools and municipal buildings in Windham County. This is an example of the activities to increase demand for pellets leading to expansion of pellet production.

This project has been shuttered due to a lack of funding. Specific reference to a St. Johnsbury site should be removed but the project concept could be preserved in the CEDS as everyone involved is still interested in seeing another pellet mill developed in VT.

## **Project Number 26.**

**Project Name** Forest based recreation destination hubs

### **Issue:**

Vermont is renowned for its forest-based recreation: hiking, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, hunting, skiing and more. The Vermont active outdoor recreation economy (according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation):

- Supports 35,000 jobs across Vermont
- Generates \$187 million in annual state tax revenue
- Produces \$2.5 billion annually in retail sales and services across Vermont
- Accounts for 12% of gross state product

Given the huge economic contribution of recreation, many towns and communities are seeking resources to become Recreation Destination Hubs. The example of Kingdom Trails in Burke, VT which has created a huge boon for the local, regional and statewide economy is often sought to be replicated. People travel from all over the world for this excellent resource. There are many other communities which could benefit from thoughtful planning and design assistance to create a strong, forest-based recreation economy.

### **Objective:** List of 2-5 objectives

- Expand forest-based tourism destinations in Vermont by helping villages and towns develop support facilities and undertake marketing activities.

### **Activity:** Description of the initiative: (50-200 words)

The components of this initiative are:

1. Economic impact study data for emerging non-fee forest based recreation uses (mountain biking, backcountry skiing, destination hiking, etc.)
2. Compile economic impact data for fee based and known recreation uses.
3. Literature review/case studies of trail towns/recreation hubs locally, nationally and internationally.
  - a. Examples: Trail Town Program (<http://www.trailtowns.org/>) along the Alleghany Passage in PA.
  - b. Kentucky Trail Towns:  
<http://www.kentuckytourism.com!/userfiles/Industry/Adventure/4%20-%20Trail%20Town%20How%20to%20Guide.pdf>
  - c. Local: Kingdom Trails
  - d. Hunting/Fishing Destination Towns
4. Hire expert to guide a future stakeholder group as a demonstration project (see below)
5. Potential Hubs: Stowe-Rochester, Newport, Waterbury Ride Center, Brownsville, Addison County, etc. Perform initial analysis for potential, solicit proposals to use as template (grant program)
6. Analysis of Businesses in Vermont: what do businesses need to support a recreation-based economy?
7. Incentives for private landowners to allow public recreation access

8. Design a toolkit and facilitated program for communities (including non-profits, towns, town committees, Friends of Groups, etc.) to be able to create a forest-based recreation hub. This will culminate in a program that will award grants to communities for planning and marketing assistance.
9. Training and education on sustainable recreation infrastructure design, construction and maintenance.
10. Funding for recreation infrastructure construction and maintenance (trails, facilities, etc.)

Project update as of September 1, 2015

ACCD, in cooperation with VAST and others is beginning an analytic project to assess the economic impacts of recreational trails in Vermont.

**Project Number** P27.

**Project Name** Master Naturalist Program Development: Reconnecting Vermonters to the Great Outdoors

**Location:** Statewide

**Situation/critical issue: (25-100 words)**

Vermont residents rank first in the lower 48 states in wildlife-based recreation. In fact, wildlife watching, hunting, and angling bring more than \$700 million to the state each year. Much of this activity takes place in rural areas that rely heavily on this revenue base. However, as the population ages and outdoor recreation loses ground to electronic forms of entertainment, these numbers have begun to slip and the state risks producing a population that no longer is connected to the values of wildlife conservation and environmental protection.

Establishing a Master Naturalist program provides an opportunity to engage our traditional user groups at a higher level, to increase understanding of the natural world, to encourage participation in conservation and recreation activities taking place statewide, and to develop a future generation of Vermonters who are more actively engaged in the natural world. With a strong instructional base, these Master Naturalists will help contribute to future conservation of and recreation activities within the state by serving as mentors and knowledge sources for both residents and visitors to Vermont.

**Description of the initiative: (50-200 words)**

This project will create a partnership between Vermont Fish & Wildlife educators, natural resources instructors, department scientists and faculty at Vermont colleges to develop a curriculum that will train and certify participants to become Master Naturalists. The curriculum will cover such areas as ecology, natural history, and environmental issues specific to Vermont. It will also provide an understanding of wetland ecosystems and the importance of upland habitats. The program will consist of classroom presentations, discussions, videos, field trips, and practical experience in interpretation. Students receive detailed course manuals and, upon completion, certificate of achievement, patch and pin, and registration in our online student database.

**Outcomes:** (How could we measure the success of the initiative, in terms of jobs etc?)

1. Vermont will develop a corps of citizen scientists who actively engage in conservation projects across the state.
2. Schools and other organizations will have broader participation in outdoor and nature-based recreational programs.
3. Attendance at state parks, national forests, and other natural recreational areas will increase both by residents and visitors to the state.
4. Revenue generated in fishing and hunting licenses, boat registration fees, expenditures on recreation and camping gear, utilization of state lands and access areas, and visitation to science museums and similar attractions will increase.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015 – No update at this time

**Project Number** P28.

**Project Name** Waste to Work – a statewide job creation and capacity-building initiative

**Lead Organization**

Central Vermont Community Action Council

**Primary Contact Person**

David Rubin

(802) 477-5180

drubin@cvcac.org

**Project Description**

Vermont is the first state in the nation to mandate the recycling of organics statewide through its Universal Recycling law passed in 2012. This represents an unprecedented opportunity for Vermont to turn a currently wasted material into jobs, economic development and value-added products. Successful implementation of this legislation will require both new and improved organics management facilities and hauling systems, as well as collection materials, comprehensive job training, and public education. A group of organizations from the nonprofit, public and private sectors have come together in a dynamic partnership to leverage resources from within the food system in the development of the necessary infrastructure. This coalition, developed under the Farm to Plate Initiative, is known as the “Food Cycle Coalition.” The Coalition is a platform for supporting the statewide implementation of the vision behind the legislation. This project will help fund critical organics management infrastructure in the state (such as compost and/or anaerobic digester site improvements and development). It will include funding for organics management facility development, business planning, marketing, and job training. Aligned with Vermont’s Food Residuals Management Hierarchy, which prioritizes (in order from most to least preferred) source reduction, capture of quality food to feed people in need, feed for animals, composting and anaerobic digestion, and energy recovery, this project will create jobs and assist in building sustainable organics management infrastructure.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

100 FTE – all of whom are low income and/or currently underemployed Vermonters.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

This project requires the participation of a large number of businesses throughout the food systems network.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

This project results in the improvement of job opportunities for individuals from lower income households.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

Vermont has limited infrastructure for the management of the organics portion of the waste stream. The development of these industries diversifies the management of solid waste and introduces a new sector to the economy. Every step to diversify economic activity results in greater resiliency to economic shock.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

This project includes dozens of partners from the public and private sector.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

The overall cost for this program will be \$1.8 million.

\$800,000 is match from HHS, Office of Community Services (pending grant award)

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

Planning stage – no or partial planning design work done, partners identified but not fully committed, financing not in place, professionally prepared supporting planning or design done, assumptions are reasonable, significant financing committed, regulatory hurdles minimal.

Project Update as of September 1, 2015 –

No update at this time

**Project Number** P29.

**Project Name** (4-10 word title)

Wetland Restoration Program - to enhance wildlife habitat, flood resiliency, and water quality

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Vermont Fish and Wildlife

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

John Austin

Email: John.Austin@state.vt.us

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

Wetlands function as filters to clean water, as “sponges” to absorb the discharge of “flashy” floodwaters, and as critical wildlife habitat. A recent study by the Gund Institute at the University of Vermont suggested that the wetlands between Rutland and Middlebury saved the town of Middlebury up to 5 million dollars in infrastructure and home damage from Tropical Storm Irene alone (G. Galford, pers com). Given the economic value of wetlands for reducing flood resiliency as well as all of the other natural resource values, the Department of Fish and Wildlife is proposing to restore a previously existing program that was eliminated due to funding cuts. The goal of the program would be to work cooperatively with a wide range of partners (e.g., USFWS, EPA, NRCS, DEC, FPR, Ducks Unlimited, among others) as well as private landowners to identify and develop restoration plans for wetlands in strategic locations within various watersheds in Vermont. Funds would be used to restore a wetland restoration ecologist position in the Department as well as provide funds for the conservation of wetland habitats. This program would build resilience for Vermont’s communities and working lands by creating greater capacity to minimize the effects of floods and loss of high quality agricultural land.

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)
2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)
3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)
4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont’s economy to positively adapt to change)
5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)
6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

Project Update as of September 1, 2015 –

No update at this time

**Project Number** P30.

**Project Name** Build on TechJam and Hackathon

**Project Location** Statewide

**Lead Organization** ACCD

**Project Description** The existing TechJam and Hackathon activities are successful in drawing entrepreneurs and making connections with financing resources. Expanding on this success by locating the activities throughout the state and broadening the participation will build on the brand of the two events and provide greater opportunity for the software and IT sectors.

**Jobs TBD**

**Total Cost**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources TBD**

Project Update as of September 1, 2015 – No update at this time

**Project Number** P31.

**Project Name** Burlington Airport Infrastructure Improvement

**Project Location** Burlington

**Lead Organization** AOT

**Project Description** Build Customs facility to facilitate the movement of international passengers.

**Jobs**

**Total Cost**

**Non-EDA Funding Sources**

Project Update as of September 1, 2015 –

In the planning stages of the project

**Date Project Submitted: 8-12-2015**

**Project Number: P32**

**Project Name: *Forest Products Value Chain Investment Strategy***

**Lead Organization** (which organization or agency will be the primary entity responsible for the project?)

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

**Primary Contact Person** (contact information including, name, title, organization, phone, and email for the person responsible for project submission and providing additional information if needed)

Ellen Kahler  
Executive Director, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund  
802.828.5320  
Ellen@vsjf.org

**Project Description** (200 words or less description of the project including what infrastructure or services are being proposed? how they will be delivered? Starting when and for how long? Targeted clients, customers, or citizens?)

The VT Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), in partnership with the Northern Forest Center (The Center), is working to raise sufficient funding over 3 years for a new initiative – **the Forest Products Value Chain Investment Strategy** – designed to assist the forest products industry throughout Vermont to create and retain quality jobs by providing business technical assistance, market development expertise, and workforce development along strategic points of the value-add chain.

Specifically, the Forest Products Value Chain Investment strategy will seek to address these challenges by building on the existing work of each organizations and their collaborators and increasing capacity to provide direct assistance to companies in the following areas:

1. Deliver technical assistance to primary and secondary forest products-related businesses focusing on growth

2. Enhance forest products sector network development
3. Initiate the development of a sector-based communications strategy

**Project Assessment** (Projects will be assessed by the CEDS Committee based on the seven primary criteria listed below. For each provide a brief description (1-2 paragraphs for each) of how the project intends to address or impact these criteria.)

1. **Jobs** (creation and/or retention)

**Technical Assistance:** Assist 50 forest products companies along the supply chain in implementing transformational innovations that will make a significant difference and can also serve as models to encourage replication by others. Conservatively, these companies will have an estimated 400 employees.

2. **Investment** (private sector investment generated)

This project supports the work of the Working Lands Enterprise Fund, by providing technical assistance, network development and communications support to the Forest and Forest Products Sector. WLEB is actively investing in this sector, which is matched by private sector investment aimed at strengthening the businesses in the sector. Some of the technical assistance provided is specific to helping firms access growth capital.

3. **Income and Wealth** (increasing income and wealth of Vermont residents)

By assisting companies to be more profitable – through technical assistance and broader consumer awareness about the importance of the sector – they will be able to create or retain more jobs and pay higher wages.

4. **Resiliency** (the extent to which the project increases the ability of Vermont's economy to positively adapt to change)

**Communications Strategy:** Building on the work outlined above, engage marketing experts to develop a communications strategy and key messages to enhance public awareness of the benefits of working forests and the forest products industry. Engage more than 50 companies in strategy development. Increased consumer awareness of the importance of this sector may provide a steadier market pull from consumers and expand the overall scope of the market sector.

5. **Collaboration** (including among public and private sector, state agencies, regional and local governments, and other stakeholders)

This project will be a partnership between the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund and the Northern Forest Center (based in Concord with programs spanning 4 states). The workplan comes out of a year-long market assessment and value chain analysis which the Working Lands Enterprise Board funded Yellow Wood Associates to conduct. Other collaborators will include: WLEB, VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, VT Wood Manufacturers Association, VT Woodland

Owners Association, VT Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets, and various private industry stakeholders.

**Network Development:** Host 12 convenings (1 per quarter/year) attended by over 120 company representatives (minimum 10 attendees/event) to highlight innovations and catalyze business relationships. Engage multiple program partners to develop relationships among ‘industry’ associations and supportive organizations.

6. **Matching Funds** (non-EDA funds leverage for the implementation of the project)

We have applied for Northern Border Regional Commission funding. We are exploring other private foundation sources and other federal funding sources.

7. **Project Readiness** (how soon can the project be ready for implementation including provision of details on: budget; State, local, regional funds to be leveraged with EDA Funds; and roles and responsibilities of partners)

We are ready to go. All we lack is sufficient funding to hire staff and begin our workplan!