

Buy Local Vermont Consumer Stimulus Program

Agency of Commerce and Community Development

PROGRAM UPDATE: 10/1/20

The Buy Local Vermont Consumer Stimulus Program was launched to consumers on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

The program was designed to maximize the effect of local consumer spending, including at restaurants, retail stores, entertainment and performing arts venues, lodging, and tourism-related businesses to support businesses in Vermont that have suffered economic harm due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

This pilot program was funded with a \$500,000 allocation of the Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund.



#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

Enrollment for Vermont businesses interested in participating in the program began on August 25, 2020. Up until and even after the consumer launch of the program on September 8, 2020, business continued to show interest in taking part. FAQs on eligibility and common enrollment questions are available on the [ACCD website](#).

	Enrolled and Approved at Launch	Enrolled or Approved Since Launch	Signed Up After Launch, Pending Approval	Began Sign Up but Never Completed	Expressed Interest in Signing Up Since Launch	TOTAL
Businesses	1052	71	521	94	26	1764

The Buy Local Vermont program opened to consumers at 11am on September 8, 2020. Interest in the program was swift and intense with thousands of Vermonters trying to sign up within the very first hours. As part of the registration process, activation codes were sent to consumers in the order in which they were requested. Once the codes were sent, offers were awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. To ensure equity in the program across counties and business sectors, funding was allocated to different regions of the state. Ensuring equity slowed down the issuing of the codes, which led to many offers in the most populated areas of the state to sell out before consumers could fully activate their account. The entire \$425,000 available in consumer stimulus discount offers was fully subscribed within about 24 hours.

	Requested and Activated Code	Unique Customers Who Chose Offers	Activated Code But Did Not Select Gift (Either Did Not Like Offer or Sold Out)	Received Activation Code in 60 minutes or less	Offers Redeemed as of Report Date
Consumers	20,857	11,846 (57%)	9,011	79%	3,148

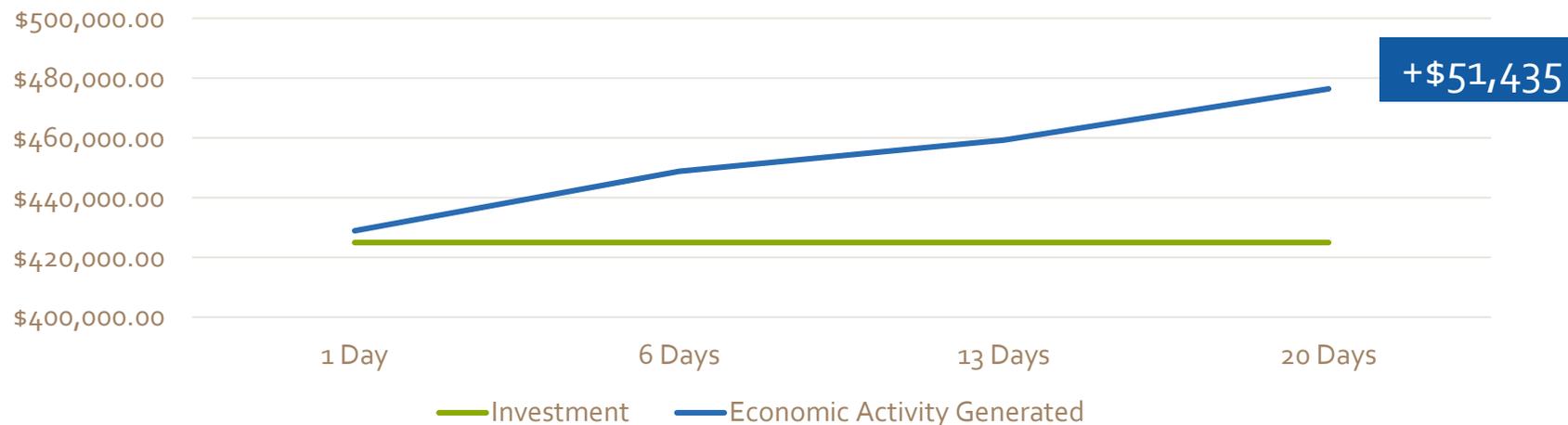
* Data provided is preliminary, pending final verification.



#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

One of the many benefits of a consumer stimulus program like #BuyLocalVermont, is that the economic activity generated surpasses the original investment as the discounts offered to customers spur additional spending. As more consumers use the discount offers in the days and weeks ahead, the cumulative impact of the original \$425,000 investment will be multiplied. As can be seen in the testimonials at the end of this report, this type of consumer stimulus also has the benefit of bringing local Vermont businesses new customers for future sales, brings consumers to nearby merchants in downtowns and village centers, and influences overall consumer spending habits to reinforce the effect that local spending has on the Vermont economy.

	Launch + 1 Day (9/9)	Launch + 6 Days (9/14)	Launch + 13 Days (9/21)	Launch + 20 Days (9/28)
Percent of Discounts Redeemed	3.85%	10.58%	14.96%	19.84%
Number of Discount Offers Redeemed	611	1,678	2,374	3,148
Percent of Additional Spending Achieved	24%	53%	54%	61%



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#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

Of the 1,052 Vermont businesses enrolled and approved by launch of the program, 975 or 93% had offers chosen by consumers and will received stimulus revenue.

Businesses Receiving Funds

	Retail	Restaurants	Lodging & Accomodations	Health & Wellness	Entertainment & Attractions	Other	Total
Chittenden	88	85	5	20	21	5	224
Washington	55	47	3	7	8	6	126
Windham	42	37	8	6	15	2	110
Windsor	32	29	3	11	18	1	94
Rutland	33	21	2	5	7	4	72
Lamoille	19	19	8	2	6	1	55
Bennington	21	29	2	6	7	3	68
Caledonia	14	28	1	3	6	3	55
Orleans	16	13	1	2	5	2	39
Addison	16	17	7	2	5	2	49
Franklin	13	18	2	4	4	2	43
Orange	6	10	3	1	1	2	23
Grand Isle	3	4	1	0	2	1	11
Essex	2	3	1	0	0	0	6
Total	360	360	47	69	105	34	975

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The average amount of funding business received was \$436. The majority of consumer discounts offered had a \$30 value, but the exact discount amount varied by sector to appropriately incentivize spending at different price points and ranged from \$10 at fast-casual eateries to up to \$150 at lodging establishments.

Funds per Business

	Retail	Restaurants	Lodging & Accomodations	Health & Wellness	Entertainment & Attractions	Other	Total
Chittenden	\$418	\$639	\$1,470	\$179	\$420	\$114	\$497
Washington	\$212	\$302	\$3,100	\$73	\$421	\$110	\$315
Windham	\$206	\$240	\$600	\$300	\$285	\$300	\$264
Windsor	\$356	\$340	\$1,830	\$237	\$438	\$90	\$397
Rutland	\$547	\$385	\$2,475	\$192	\$779	\$525	\$550
Lamoille	\$231	\$352	\$713	\$30	\$155	\$300	\$328
Bennington	\$297	\$214	\$225	\$710	\$366	\$390	\$307
Caledonia	\$515	\$287	\$900	\$520	\$422	\$310	\$385
Orleans	\$315	\$229	\$8,400	\$420	\$310	\$495	\$508
Addison	\$362	\$341	\$1,333	\$150	\$868	\$285	\$533
Franklin	\$582	\$398	\$4,200	\$735	\$1,823	\$495	\$799
Orange	\$1,395	\$282	\$1,950	\$270	\$360	\$465	\$809
Grand Isle	\$290	\$150	\$2,700	\$0	\$320	\$90	\$445
Essex	\$1,320	\$63	\$1,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$672
Total	\$374	\$377	\$1,592	\$285	\$476	\$294	\$436

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In addition to allocating the funds to be geographically distributed by population density across all 14 counties, the funds were also allocated to benefit the hardest hit sectors of restaurants (32%), retail (32%), lodging (18%), entertainment/attractions (12%) and health/wellness (5%).

Funding

	Retail	Restaurants	Lodging & Accommodations	Health & Wellness	Entertainment & Attractions	Other	Total
Chittenden	\$36,810	\$54,280	\$7,350	\$3,570	\$8,830	\$570	\$111,410
Washington	\$11,680	\$14,210	\$9,300	\$510	\$3,370	\$660	\$39,730
Windham	\$8,670	\$8,880	\$4,800	\$1,800	\$4,280	\$600	\$29,030
Windsor	\$11,400	\$9,850	\$5,490	\$2,610	\$7,880	\$90	\$37,320
Rutland	\$18,060	\$8,090	\$4,950	\$960	\$5,450	\$2,100	\$39,610
Lamoille	\$4,380	\$6,680	\$5,700	\$60	\$930	\$300	\$18,050
Bennington	\$6,240	\$6,220	\$450	\$4,260	\$2,560	\$1,170	\$20,900
Caledonia	\$7,210	\$8,030	\$900	\$1,560	\$2,530	\$930	\$21,160
Orleans	\$5,040	\$2,980	\$8,400	\$840	\$1,550	\$990	\$19,800
Addison	\$5,790	\$5,790	\$9,330	\$300	\$4,340	\$570	\$26,120
Franklin	\$7,560	\$7,160	\$8,400	\$2,940	\$7,290	\$990	\$34,340
Orange	\$8,370	\$2,820	\$5,850	\$270	\$360	\$930	\$18,600
Grand Isle	\$870	\$600	\$2,700	\$0	\$640	\$90	\$4,900
Essex	\$2,640	\$190	\$1,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,030
Total	\$134,720	\$135,780	\$74,820	\$19,680	\$50,010	\$9,990	\$425,000

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#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

Businesses participating in the program achieved an average of 16 consumers choosing the incentive gifts that were offered. The number of offers accepted at each business was based on consumer choice and the number of businesses in any given county that signed up to participate, in addition to the geographic distribution and the distribution between the impacted sectors the program was designed to achieve.

Gift Selections per Business

	Retail	Restaurants	Lodging & Accomodations	Health & Wellness	Entertainment & Attractions	Other	Total
Chittenden	14	42	10	6	14	4	23
Washington	7	18	21	2	20	4	12
Windham	7	15	4	10	9	10	10
Windsor	12	14	16	8	17	3	13
Rutland	18	15	17	6	25	18	17
Lamoille	8	20	5	1	5	10	11
Bennington	10	9	2	24	9	13	11
Caledonia	22	15	6	17	22	10	17
Orleans	11	11	56	14	19	17	13
Addison	12	17	13	5	40	10	16
Franklin	19	26	28	25	61	17	27
Orange	47	22	13	9	12	16	26
Grand Isle	10	6	18	0	12	3	9
Essex	44	4	8	0	0	0	18
Total	13	22	11	10	18	10	16

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#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

Results from the first two weeks of the program show consumers redeeming gifts across all counties and sectors, with restaurants and retail stores seeing the most activity in this time period. Redemption data reported is as of 9/21/20.

Gift Redemptions

	Retail	Restaurants	Lodging & Accomodations	Health & Wellness	Entertainment & Attractions	Other	Total
Chittenden	222	386	1	9	46	0	664
Washington	93	155	6	3	84	3	344
Windham	74	82	2	7	26	0	191
Windsor	78	54	1	5	17	0	155
Rutland	105	48	2	2	25	5	187
Lamoille	20	28	8	0	3	0	59
Bennington	55	40	0	96	20	1	212
Caledonia	34	72	0	4	12	1	123
Orleans	36	23	6	0	4	1	70
Addison	55	66	15	0	8	2	146
Franklin	55	46	3	5	34	0	143
Orange	16	19	14	0	0	1	50
Grand Isle	4	4	1	0	1	0	10
Essex	17	2	1	0	0	0	20
Total	864	1,025	60	131	280	14	2,374

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#BuyLocalVermont Consumer Stimulus and Business Recovery Program

Business owners from around the state have been supportive of the program, offering testimonials of their experience. Since the launch of the program, over 500 additional businesses have expressed support in being active participants should the program be funded to continue.

<p>Ghost Dog Dairy (Hardwick)</p>	<p>Piece Meal Pies (White River Junction)</p>	<p>Advanced Skin Care Solutions Vermont</p>	<p>ART, etc. (Northfield)</p>	<p>Bijou Blu VT Cryotherapy (South Burlington)</p>
<p><i>“As a small farm we struggle to find the time and energy to market our products and connect with new customers. We always seem to have too many things to do around the farm and not enough time. With the pandemic it is harder to get out and open up new stores and go to events.</i></p> <p><i>The NIFT certificates have brought in a whole new crop of in-state customers who are learning about our farm for the first time just by selecting the certificate. Many of them we hope will continue to buy from us locally now that they know about us. The program is really easy to use and gave us a quick marketing boost at a time when it was needed most. THANK YOU SO MUCH.”</i></p> <p>-Steve and Kathy F.</p>	<p><i>“The collaborative program developed by Nift and Vermont is a great example of the state's innovative solutions to support independent restaurants during the pandemic. Restaurants are in the business of feeding their community, and this program allows us to continue doing so while generating much needed revenue. It would benefit the food insecure, small businesses, and ultimately the health of our communities if we grant funding to continue #buylocalVermont.”</i></p> <p>-Justin B.</p>	<p><i>“As a small business owner during Covid I am so grateful to programs like the Vermont Nift Network Program! Not only have they brought me new customers they also bring me hope and encouragement to hang in there during these times. I believe small businesses are so precious and I am so grateful and relieved to be receiving help to sustain during this difficult times.”</i></p> <p>-Mary F.</p> <p>Henry's Diner (Burlington)</p> <p><i>“I think it is a great idea for the public and small businesses to support each other. Our first transaction worked well. The customer came to Henry's for the first time! Hopefully with more visits to come. Before signing up I watched the info/video online. Seems cut and dry. Thank you and the State of VT.”</i></p> <p>-Naomi</p>	<p><i>“13 more customers! YIPPEE!!! About half of those who have already come in were completely new to the store (!) and one came back a few days later to purchase a very nice (read: pricey!) necklace. So this program is DEFINITELY working for my small business!! And I'm sure those that were new to the store will return for upcoming holiday shopping. This program was certainly the “nudge” some needed to get out and shop safely, support local businesses and were willing to try stores completely new to them.”</i></p> <p>-Andrea</p> <p>Bayberry Cottage (Saint Albans)</p> <p><i>“At this time I feel the program has been a great success. I have seen a lot more traffic in downtown - especially from outside Franklin County. Picking up many new customers!!“</i></p> <p>-Sharon</p>	<p><i>“As a new business in Chittenden County we were planning on opening March 29th of this year and because of COVID we were pushed out two months and opened May 29th with a very uncertain future. This funding from the state is not only helping Bijou Blu Cryotherapy boost revenue but it also gives us another avenue to create awareness that we are in fact open for business and the state's program is an excellent means of educating the community about Cryotherapy & what the benefits are. The 5 customers that picked our center to receive and use a \$30 giftcard will hopefully turn into residual business and also from these 5 customers we will gain 15 more new customers via word of mouth. On behalf of Bijou we would like to thank the State of Vermont for initiating this program. As the owner I can assure you the efforts of the program will help to grow my business.”</i></p> <p>-Annie S.</p>



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North Branch Café (Montpelier)

"As a business in the hospitality industry that has been hit hard by COVID-19, we are so appreciative of this program. We consider every new customer who finds us because we were on this list to be a tremendous opportunity for us to expand our customer base. As we look at the list of people who have selected us, we see a LOT of new names. This is great for us as we recreate ourselves and respond to the side effects of the pandemic. Thank you very much for this program!"

-Lauren P.

Vermont Organic Solutions

"I would like to point out that this program is a bigger win for us than just the immediate orders. Customers are using the \$30 coupon to order a minimum of \$30 worth of products, so the potential for sales will exceed the 16 orders of \$30 each! (We are giving free shipping with each order.) We're also getting invaluable local exposure to new customers. It expanded our customer email list for potential future sales. It offers the potential for media/social media exposure and promotion. And it allowed us to get our products in customers hands which is how we get most of our sales. This should prove to have long term positive impacts on many, many Vermont businesses. I would love to see this program utilized by the state of Vermont to help promote and grow Vermont businesses beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Personally, the best benefit of this program is the feeling that Vermont supports Vermonters. That positive unity is sorely lacking at the national level and is unbelievably appreciated in our current situation. We're ALL in this together. #ShopLocal #VermontStrong."

-Amy L.

Brass Lantern Inn (Stowe)

"The \$150 stimulus money that this guest received from this program will translate directly to our lodging business as an approximately \$600 sale for those three nights. Additionally, these newlyweds will of course be dining, shopping and most likely taking advantage of attractions while here in Stowe that will then be a net add onto that direct spending.

We appreciate the opportunity to be included in this program and I hope our state legislators can appreciate the immediate, positive, economic impact of this program has had on a small, family owned, operated business such as ours."

-George L.

Ruby Charuby Weavings (Hardwick)

"I am the sole proprietor of my weaving business. Every single one of my crafts shows, weaving conferences and teaching gigs (throughout the country) has been canceled due to Covid, creating a year of zero income (possibly continuing into next spring as well). Unemployment has absolutely helped but the Buy Local Vermont program has unexpectedly put the joy back into my weaving life (yeah, does sound corny but it's true!). Having 20 people suddenly express interest in my Ruby Charuby Weavings craft business has boosted my hopes that perhaps there is financial light in the tunnel, and I can continue to find new, local and potentially loyal customers."

-Ruby L.

Brandon Music and the Compass Music and Art Center

"We cannot thank you enough for this opportunity. We are an intimate performance venue and have operated for 12 years in Brandon, Vermont. We are known as a music haven, offering high quality music performances by the very best musicians both in and beyond the State of Vermont. Our business had to close on March 6, 2020 to comply with COVID-19 regulations and also our deep desire to keep everyone in our community and the State safe and well. I was speechless with gratitude when contacted to say that we would benefit from the program. We can't thank you enough. It is a very difficult time for those of us involved in Vermont's creative economy."

-Edna S.

Lasting Image Salon (Waterbury)

"The Vermont buy local giveaway was amazing. New clients are coming in and loving the program and my salon!!!! Thank you Thank you."

-Jodi G.



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Courtney Reckord Jewelry

"Thank you! As far as how this program has impacted my business, I will say the following:

- I generated \$180 in direct income from the program from the 6 people who chose my \$30 gift.*
- Those folks have not redeemed the gifts yet, so I have yet to see what the indirect revenue will be.*
- I saw a spike of traffic (50 visitors to my typical 20 a day) to my website on Tuesday when the program was launched so I know people were discovering my business.*
- I also plan on putting an option in my checkout process where people can let me know where they found out about me. That way I will know what residual business is coming from the program.*

I appreciate this program and believe that it was a fantastic way to get business distributed around the state and to different businesses. I think it would be wonderful to expand this program and give the \$150 card to all Vermonters. Thank you"

-Courtney R.

The Frozen Ogre (St. Albans)

"I'm writing today to give my opinion of the current state of the Buy Local Vermont program. My initial response is very enthusiastic. I see many positive indicators, the first the huge initial response by customers. I know many, many people were unable to receive any offers due to the program running out of funding so quickly. The very next day I redeemed 3 offers immediately! People used this value to buy things for themselves that they've put off due to a lack of funds, making a positive impact! We're a toy and game store so the other thing that people have redeemed the funds for were gifts for children. Everyone who redeemed value has been very happy to do so. And I was happy to redeem them for them, since I'm guaranteed the value. I went to the Nift page, logged in and saw many local people had chosen our store, which is both gratifying and exciting since the value of the Nift will more than cover next month's rent! What a great windfall! The last great part of the program is that several of the people that have redeemed value hadn't been in our store and now hopefully will become regular customers!"

-Erik S.

Vermont Maple BBQ (Bethel)

"I am thrilled and surprised that Vermont Maple BBQ has had a quick and positive response from this program. We are supper happy with this program and for the opportunity to be a part of Buy Vermont Local. This will give our local community members an opportunity to step out and enjoy a gift of kindness and a good homemade meal. This will give Vermont Maple BBQ as well as other small business a boost that we all need. This program is working, and I request that it be extended as it is helping small business like mine. It will help to keep the lights paid and the doors open."

-Pauline P.

Gypsy Coast Company (Danville)

"I'm a small business owner in Vermont and heard about your company and this program from a friend and am so glad I was able to sign up and see results so quickly! Not only did we receive nearly 20 customers in the first couple of hours that the gift cards were made available, but they are also all new customers who may not ever have found us otherwise. I also really appreciate the excellent customer service, how quickly you responded to me, and how friendly and helpful you were! I'll be sure to spread the word about you and I hope you can continue to grow and help more small businesses like mine."

-Stephen

Otter Creek Used Books (Middlebury)

"Thank you for bringing this program to Vermont. I appreciate the business it brought into my store with no effort on my part. Such a win-win! As a business off the beaten path in downtown Middlebury and closed for over two months the program proved to be a shot in the arm - financially and mentally. Please keep this #BuyLocalVermont by GoNift.com going."

-Barbara H.

