



Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

VERMONT FARM & FOREST
VIABILITY PROGRAM

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, offers business planning and technical assistance services to Vermont farm and forest businesses as part of a statewide effort to improve the economic viability of Vermont's working lands.

ELIGIBILITY & SELECTION PROCESS

Eligible businesses include wood lot owners, foresters, logging operations, sawmill and kiln enterprises, and woodworking/manufacturing businesses of any scale. The following three conditions must also be met:

- You must have at least 2 years of experience managing this or another related business
- Your business must be based in Vermont
- Your business must be primarily involved in the harvesting, production, processing, storage, marketing, and/or distribution of local forest products

Applications will be selected based on clarity of the proposal, how well the proposal meets the program's objectives, and the readiness of the project. In some cases waivers are available for businesses that don't meet the eligibility requirements. Applications are accepted at any time of the year. If your application is selected, Viability Program staff will pair you with an advisor to provide one-on-one services.

ENROLLMENT

There is a \$75 fee to enroll in the Vermont Farm and Forest Viability Program. Please submit the \$75 enrollment fee check with your application. We will return your check if we are not able to enroll you in the program. Businesses that are owned by a non-profit organization or foundation, or are supported by a non-profit or foundation are required to pay a larger fee. If your business meets this definition, please contact program staff (contact information below).

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Complete the attached application form,
- 2) Enclose a \$75 check or money order made out to VHCB, and
- 3) Mail to: Vermont Farm Viability Program
VHCB, 58 E. State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Please contact Calley Hastings, Program Manager, at 828-3370 or calley@vhcb.org with any questions.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), as a public instrumentality, is subject to the Vermont Public Records Law, 1 VSA § 315. The statute contains specific exemptions for tax-related information of persons, personal financial information of an individual, and trade secrets. Therefore the information submitted by businesses, other participants and service providers to VHCB will be held in confidential files at VHCB and will not be available for public inspection under the Public Records Law.

VHCB considers the following information about businesses and other participants to be subject to public record: names of businesses, business owners, farms and other participants that have applied to or are enrolled in the program; their town of residence; type of farm or business; and the purpose and amount of any implementation grant or technical assistance award applied for or received.

VHCB staff will require copies of completed farm business plans for several reasons: (1) to monitor quality of work conducted by those receiving VHCB funds, and (2) to collect data in order to measure the success of the Program over time.

Business plans contain confidential financial information, such as past and projected income statements. Business plans may also contain trade secrets and marketing strategies that business owners or other participants wish to keep confidential for reasons of competitive advantage. Business planners and technical assistance providers must agree to keep business plans confidential to protect business owners' interests, but must agree to furnish copies of completed business plans to VHCB staff. Notwithstanding the Records Law exemption, when VHCB shares business plans with selected staff of the Program's statutory administrative partner, the Agriculture Agency, or with selected staff of the Viability funding organizations or agencies – private foundations and USDA Rural Development– strict confidentiality guidelines will be followed. Staff or contractors who are approved for viewing business plans will not be allowed to make copies, or to share information from the plans with any other person. When plans are removed from VHCB files for inspection, the approved staff will be required to sign for the documents, and sign again when they are returned to the files.

Cooperating organization:

UVM Extension

Check Received: _____

Enrollment: _____

Advisor: _____



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Conservation Board

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Forest Business Application

Name(s) of applicant(s) _____

Business Name _____

Mailing address (street) _____ Town _____, VT Zip _____

Address where business is located (if different) _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Website _____ Circle the best way to contact: Email Phone Mail

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Do you currently operate a business based in Vermont? Yes No

Are you actively involved in the day-to-day management of the business? Yes No

Do you have at least 2 years' business experience as manager or owner? Yes No

The business is primarily involved in the harvesting, production, processing, storage, marketing, and/or distribution of local forest products. Yes No

If you answered "yes" to all of the above, you are eligible for the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program. If you did not answer "yes" to all of the above and you are planning for a Vermont forest or wood-based enterprise, you may still be eligible for services. Please call (802)-828-3370 to find out how we can assist you.

What is the business structure of your operation?

Sole proprietorship Partnership Corporation Limited Liability Corporation Other

What type of forestry or forest products business is your operation?

Landowner Forester Logging operation Mill Kiln

Woodworking/secondary processor Other (please specify): _____

What year did you begin managing your business? _____

How did you hear about the program?

- From a friend/colleague From the VT Farm & Forest Viability Website At an event/conference
 In a publication From a service provider or consultant : _____
 Other: _____

Business Income

Owner Income (combined for all business owners)

Gross business sales for the most recent tax year (line 1 on schedule C)	Net business income for most recent tax year (line 31 on schedule C)	Non-business income for the most recent tax year	Total income from the most recent IRS form 1040 (line 9)
\$	\$	\$	\$

Please check your top priorities for specific technical assistance you might be interested in receiving during the business planning process:

- Marketing Ownership transfer Production Growth/expansion
 Financial Management New product or service Human resources/staffing Other

Please answer the following questions:

Are you willing to set aside significant time (several hours per month) to meet with and prepare for meetings with your Viability business advisor?

- Yes No

Do you have immediate financial concerns that you would like to address? (Ex: cash flow, bankruptcy, foreclosure, engaged in mediation, loan repayment, etc.)

- Yes No Other (please describe) _____

Are you considering transferring the business (sale or lease) to someone else in the immediate future?

- Yes No

Are there family members who don't share ownership of the business but have an interest in becoming owners?

- Yes No Other (please describe) _____

Do you have detailed balance sheets and income statements for the last two years?

- Yes No

Do you have any formal education in business management?

Yes No

What describes your financial record-keeping system best?

Private bookkeeper Quickbooks Written ledger Spreadsheets
 None Other: _____

Please indicate how you identify yourself:

Black or African American Latino/Latina/Latinx Middle Eastern or Arab
 Asian or Southeast Asian First Nation/Indigenous to America Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian
 White Prefer not to respond Other: _____

Using the page below, or your own paper, please attach a one-page description of your ideas for business planning, including plans for changing or improving your farm enterprise. Please address the following:

- a. A brief description of your business
- b. Your ideas and plans for the future
- c. What you hope to get out of enrolling in the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program
- d. What technical assistance you are already receiving or actively seeking
- e. A short description of your use of Vermont wood or forest products, for example:
 - i. % of the wood you purchase or process that is from Vermont forests
 - ii. % of acres you log that are in Vermont

I/we have read and understand the included Viability Program "Confidentiality Policy". I/we hereby authorize the Program to disclose information about our business, provided that the Program restricts access to confidential information. The information given in this application is true to the best of my/our knowledge.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please attach a \$75 application fee. See Application Instructions for details.

Return application to: Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, VHCB, 58 E. State St., Montpelier, VT 05602

For more information, contact: Calley Hastings, Program Manager. (802) 828 3370, calley@vhcb.org

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