



July 27, 2020

I've enclosed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for your engagement, with Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) as statewide program coordinator and fiscal agent, as one of multiple organizations to serve as Community / Regional "Hubs" in Vermont's CARES Act-funded program, "*Vermont Everyone Eats.*"

The statewide *Vermont Everyone Eats* Task Force's RFP Review Team will review and evaluate responses to the RFP and select those proposals that best meet the needs and interests of the statewide program, the participating restaurants, food producers, and communities, and the individuals receiving the meals the program will produce, in accordance with the criteria outlined in the RFP.

All proposals must be submitted electronically to VEE@sevca.org. They will be accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed when received, commencing on or about August 3, 2020, and continuing until funds are fully allocated.

Please direct any questions you might have concerning how to respond to this RFP to VEE@sevca.org.

We look forward to receiving your proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Geller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "S" and "G".

Steve Geller
Executive Director

Our Mission is to empower and partner with individuals and communities to alleviate the hardships of poverty, provide opportunities to thrive, and eliminate root causes of poverty in southeastern Vermont.

Everyone Eats - VT Restaurants Supporting Emergency Feeding Request for Proposals (RFP)

Contact Information:

Prospective applicants should submit proposals (and associated attached documents), as well as any questions, to VEE@sevca.org.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is serving as the fiscal agent and central administrative body in support of the Everyone Eats program. Please review the entirety of the RFP prior to reaching out with questions.

Information Session: Monday August 3, 2019 4:30 pm

We will host a webinar on Monday August 3rd at 4:30 pm to present an overview of the Everyone Eats program and application process. You can register in advance of the meeting [here](#). Applicants are not required to attend this session.

Application Deadline:

Project proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis starting August 3, 2020 until all funds are allocated.

Overview

In response to COVID-19, restaurants, farmers and community organizations across Vermont have stepped forward to help feed neighbors experiencing food insecurity. These programs have helped stabilize communities by nourishing Vermonters, alleviating the surging demand on food shelves, and providing economic support to restaurants. The State of Vermont has allocated [\\$5M from the Coronavirus Relief Fund \(CRF\)](#) to support restaurants feeding Vermonters who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. Program funds need to be expended by December 13, 2020.

Everyone Eats is being developed by a Statewide Task Force with representatives from organizations with expertise in hunger relief, the restaurant industry, local food and agriculture systems, and key project partners like the VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD) and Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA). See Appendix 1 for a list of Task Force members.

Everyone Eats reimburses restaurants at \$10/meal. Restaurants are responsible for covering the costs of production (ingredients, labor, packaging). Program applicants and community hubs can request funds to cover project operating expenses (accounting, marketing, distribution, storage, etc); project operating expenses cannot exceed 20% of the total funds requested from Everyone Eats (a minimum of 80% of funds must support direct payments to restaurants at \$10/meal).

Projects are not required to secure matching funds, but are welcome to leverage matching resources to support higher per meal payments to restaurants, increased local ingredients purchasing, provide additional meals to community members, or cover project operating expenses.

Grant recipients can request one month of projected expenses as an advance upon signing the grant agreement with SEVCA. Throughout the project, SEVCA will pay invoices on Net 7 terms. Final invoices must be submitted to SEVCA by December 13, 2020.

Program Goals

- Provide nutritious meals to specific populations of Vermonters who are in need of additional food assistance at this challenging time, including:
 - a) Sheltered vulnerable populations
 - b) Families and individuals with loss of income or difficulty accessing food due to COVID-19
 - c) Homebound seniors/families
- Provide a source of income to restaurants in need, including meaningful employment opportunities for food service workers over the program period.
- Provide Vermont farmers and value added food producers with an opportunity to increase sales through restaurants participating in the program
 - At least 10% of the value of ingredients used must be purchased from Vermont farms and food producers.
- Provide funding for “community hubs” to organize and execute planning and coordination of meal preparation, distribution, and the flow of funds to restaurant partners.
- Provide accurate and positive information to people served by Everyone Eats about food and nutrition resources that compliment the Everyone Eats project, and how to access them. These food and nutrition resources include the federal nutrition programs (3SquaresVT, WIC, school meals, and Meals on Wheels) as well as local food shelves and other food distribution options appropriate to the participating community. Application materials and assistance for the federal nutrition programs may also be provided on site when possible. Outreach materials will be developed and made available to participating Everyone Eats restaurants and sites--deep knowledge of these programs is not required.
- Create a community of practice among community hubs to share best practices and learning to evolve the program over time, especially since the program will likely still be needed in 2021.

Timeline

Everyone Eats will accept project applications on a rolling basis until all funds have been allocated.

- Week of 7/27/20: announce RFP, proposals accepted on a rolling basis.
- Week of 8/3/20: First awards announced.
- Week of 12/13/20: Final funds obligated.

Award Criteria

- 1) Does the project demonstrate capacity to meet program goals and guidelines?
- 2) Does the project serve a Vermont community not currently served by another Everyone Eats project? See this [listing](#) of projects that are anticipated or already have been awarded and their service territories. Organizations are encouraged to link up with community hubs in their region.
- 3) Qualification criteria of program applicants - it is expected that program applicants represent collaborative partnerships to meet these qualification criteria.
 - a) Demonstrated understanding of community needs and resources - populations in need of food assistance, existing food assistance programs, restaurant assets and capacity, etc.
 - b) Demonstrated experience in meal preparation, safe food handling, distribution, project management, and financial management.
 - c) Evidence of partners representing key stakeholders: restaurants, hunger relief community, and local food producers.
 - d) "Shovel-readiness": Existing infrastructure in support of the proposal
 - e) Ability to demonstrate equitable service to populations regardless of Limited English Proficiency, Gender, Date of birth, Race/ethnicity, Disability status, number in Household, Income range

Guidelines for Program Participation

	Community Hubs	Restaurants	Meal Recipients
Eligibility	Any organization or enterprise with demonstrated capability to meet project goals and requirements.	<p>Restaurant experiencing economic harm due to COVID-19. <i>(self-certification)</i></p> <p>Restaurants are establishments that pay Vermont Meals Tax and can include cafes, cafeterias, dining rooms, diners, lunch counters, salad bars, private or social clubs, bar or tavern, theater concessions, street vendors, street cart, food truck, and catering businesses.</p>	Individuals whose food access has been impacted by COVID-19 or otherwise are experiencing food insecurity (<i>self certification</i>).
Roles	<p>Single point of contact to fiscal agent (SEVCA);</p> <p>Coordination of community partners (e.g., restaurants, farms, community volunteers, distributors);</p> <p>Gathering and management of information on meal distribution and recipients served;</p> <p>Management of project funds.</p>	<p>Prepare nutritionally balanced “to go” meals for \$10/meal;</p> <p>Source no less than 10% of ingredients (by cost) from Vermont farms and food producers.</p>	Receive meal assistance.
Reporting Needs	<p># of participating households;</p> <p># of meal recipients whose food security was impacted by COVID-19 and other individuals experiencing food insecurity (<i>self certification</i>);</p> <p># of meals delivered to “high risk” participants age 65 or older or with certain underlying health conditions, as available (FEMA);</p> <p># of meals delivered to state sheltered individuals (FEMA);</p> <p>Total dollars spent on ingredients purchased from Vermont farms and food producers included in meals by cost (H656 definition);</p> <p># of participating restaurants</p> <p>Reports must be submitted according to the timeline - grant payments will be contingent on SEVCA receiving required reporting.</p>	<p># of meals produced.</p> <p>Total dollar amount spent on ingredients purchased from Vermont farms and food producers.</p>	Has your access to food been impacted by COVID-19 or are you otherwise experiencing food insecurity? (<i>self certification: “by accepting this meal I verify that my ability to access food has been negatively impacted by COVID-19</i>)

Resources

These resources are available to support your program design and implementation.

Nutritionally balanced meals:

- [USDA MyPlate Tips](#)
- [ShiftMeals menu book](#) of nutritionally balanced meals. Meal options include low-sodium meals appropriate for senior populations as well as recipes free from pork/beef appropriate for new american populations. Recipes available upon request: Brittany@skinnypancake.com

Vermont farms and food products:

- Statute definition of Vermont local foods is available [here](#).
- Vermont Fresh Network [member database of producers](#) that typically work with restaurants.
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture - assistance finding local product sources via [email](#) or 802-828-2430.
- Vermont Farm to Plate Food Atlas searchable database [here](#) or inquire via [email](#).

Meal assistance resources:

- Hunger Free Vermont has many resources promoting additional food assistance programs. Visit their [website](#) or [email](#).
This program will develop and share statewide educational materials (social media posts and flyers) to help your project meet the goal of educational outreach about food resources. It is not necessary for you to develop these materials on your own.

Community of Practice [share folder](#):

- This folder has program materials from projects around the state.

Examples of potential program models:

- Meal vouchers to be used in participating restaurants.
- Frozen, individually packaged, heat and serve meals. Frozen meals are especially useful for distribution to homebound populations.
- Fresh (not frozen), individually packaged, heat and serve meals distributed at restaurants or community pick up sites.
- Community meal service of ready-to-eat meals.

Project Proposal

Instructions:

- 1) Applications must include answers to the following questions. Please format your documents as .doc and .xls.
- 2) Email your application and the following attachments to VEE@sevca.org
 - a) Budget
 - b) W9
 - c) Compliance verification form

Community Hub Applicant Information:

- Organization Name
- Contact Person(s)
- Contact Information (phone, email, address)

Project Narrative:

1. How does your project meet the goals of Everyone Eats?
2. Project Partners: Everyone Eats represents a unique intersection of restaurants, Vermont farms and food producers, and Vermonters experiencing food insecurity. How is your project informed by the following stakeholder groups? Describe your prior experience serving/connecting with these stakeholders and/or project partners that bring expertise in these areas. Note: please be specific re: which farms, which organizations, which restaurants and which populations of Vermonters will benefit from your project.
 - a. Restaurants
 - b. Vermonters who can benefit from food assistance
 - c. Local charitable food and social service organizations
 - d. Emergency and mass feeding organizations
 - e. Local farms and food producers
3. Who will oversee your project? Describe roles and work flows for the following accountabilities:
 - a. Program enrollment - Demand: meal recipients
 - b. Program enrollment - Supply: restaurants, distributors, farms, etc.
 - c. Accounting and distribution of funds
 - d. Data collection and reporting
 - e. Overall project team (e.g., other community partners who will help make the program possible in your region)
4. Describe your project timeline:
 - a. Anticipated project launch date
 - b. Major milestones including timeline for engaging partners, public announcement, expansion milestones (if ramping up), etc.
5. What populations of Vermonters does your project aim to serve? Describe how your project will address the specific needs of each target population (e.g. dietary restrictions, mobility restrictions, culturally appropriate recipes, etc.) Example: If your project is targeting service to senior populations how will you meet this populations' need for low sodium, heart healthy, diabetic, low spice/heat meals, and/or soft foods?
6. What is the geographic scope of your project? Which towns and/or counties will you serve?

7. How many meals will be served per week once your program is fully operational? How many meals will be served over the life of the project through 12/13/20?
8. How have you determined the demand for meals (#/week) in your region?
9. Describe your project delivery model: Which days of the week will meals be made available? How will meals be distributed? Please describe any operations partnerships that have already been identified.
10. How will your project inform participants about other food assistance programs? Describe plans you have for promoting participation in 3SquaresVT, School Meals, WIC etc. *This program will develop and share statewide educational materials (social media posts and flyers). It is not necessary for you to develop these materials on your own.*
11. How will you reach out to restaurants in your community and engage them in this project? How many restaurants will participate? Have those restaurants already been identified? Participating restaurants must be able to certify that their business has been negatively impacted by COVID-19. For this program, Restaurants are establishments that pay Vermont Meals Tax and can include cafes, cafeterias, dining rooms, diners, lunch counters, salad bars, private or social clubs, bar or tavern, theater concessions, street vendors, street cart, food truck, and catering businesses. Restaurants are NOT required to pay meals tax on these meals produced through this program.
12. Please describe the invoicing process and payment terms for participating restaurants. Consult the “example of potential program models” section of this RFP (page 5) for some ideas. Questions to be posed might include
 - a. With what frequency will restaurants be able to invoice the “community hub”?
 - b. How will the “community hub” validate restaurant invoices?
 - c. How quickly will restaurants be paid?
 - d. How will the “community hub” manage cash flow between restaurant payments and SEVCA’s Net 7 payment terms?
13. Do your participating restaurants need support identifying local farms and food producers to purchase from? Are your participating restaurants able to purchase 10% or more of total ingredients from Vermont farms and food producers?
14. Use the budget template below to outline your proposed project budget

Attachments: Your application must include the following forms:

- a. W9 for the organization that will receive and disburse funds
- b. Written certification or assurance that all entities participating as meal providers within your hub qualify as “restaurants” in Vermont (e.g. MRT-441 forms)
- c. Stated willingness to reach agreement with SEVCA on compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and requirements that are contained in SEVCA’s grant agreement with the State of Vermont.

Everyone Eats Budget Template			
	Everyone Eats Funding <i>Meals must make up at least 80% of your total funding request from Everyone Eats.</i>	Cash Match Match is optional	Inkind Match Match is optional
Meals Worksheet			
# of meals/week			
# of total meals delivered over project time period			
Meals Budget: Meals must make up at least 80% of your total funding request from Everyone Eats.			
Meals Purchased: # of meals x \$10 per meal NOTE: Everyone Eats pays meals at \$10/meal. <i>Your program can pay a higher per meal price, by using any matching funds you may have.</i> <i>Restaurant partners cover the input costs of the food they will be producing, including food purchased from Vermont farmers and value-added producers.</i>			
Total Meals Budget to be paid to participating restaurants			
Project Management and Operations Budget: Meals must make up at least 80% of your total funding request from Everyone Eats.			
<i>Project development labor expenses (pre-grant expenses are allowable)</i>			
<i>Project management labor expense detail</i>			
<i>Marketing & communications expense detail</i>			
<i>Meal distribution expense detail</i>			
<i>Other expense (add additional lines as needed)</i>			

Total Project Budget			
-----------------------------	--	--	--

Appendix 1: Statewide Task Force

State Coordinator – <i>tbd new hire with SEVCA</i>
Fiscal Agent - SEVCA – Carolyn Sweet, Steve Geller & Kevin Brennan
VT AHS – Sue Graff
VT ACCD – Gary Holloway
VEM/SEOC - Erica Bornemann
VT PSD - Chris Herrick
Hunger Free VT & Hunger Councils of VT – Anore Horton, Faye Mack
VT Foodbank – John Sayles, Andrea Solazzo, Zach Herbert
VT Hospitality Coalition – Sue Bette
VT Fresh Network – Tara Pereira
VAAFM – Abbey Willard
VSJF - Farm To Plate – Ellen Kahler
VCF – Sarah Waring, Chelsea Lewis
VT Association of Area Agencies on Aging – Janet Hunt
ShiftMeals - Jean Hamilton
Capstone - Sue Minter
Downtown Brattleboro Alliance - Stephanie Bonin