



Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

VERMONT FARM & FOREST
VIABILITY PROGRAM

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, provides opportunities for Vermont forestry and forest products businesses to receive custom-tailored business planning and technical assistance. Our program staff works with forestry and forest products businesses to find a consultant, or team of consultants, with the skills required to help those businesses achieve their goals. In some cases participating businesses already have a consultant they wish to work with; in most cases we identify consultants or advisors from our broad network of service providers who specialize in the sector. Once the right consultant is identified, the Viability Program provides funding for this consultant work one-on-one with the participating business owner and follows up on their progress. Select businesses that need advanced venture coaching and meet additional criteria will be matched with the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund's Business Management Coaching program.

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.

Return application with a \$75 check (made out to VHCB) to:
 VT Farm & Forest Viability Program
 VHCB
 58 E. State St.
 Montpelier, VT 05602



Vermont Housing &
 Conservation Board

VERMONT FARM & FOREST
 VIABILITY PROGRAM

Received:

Office use only

**FORESTRY & FOREST PRODUCTS
 BUSINESS APPLICATION**

A. CONTACT INFO:

Applicant Business Name: _____

Contact Name(s): _____

Mailing address: _____

Town: _____, VT Zip: _____ Email: _____

Location (i.e. Street & Town, if different): _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Website: _____

Structure of business (check one): Sole Proprietor Partnership LLC Corporation

How did you hear about the program? _____

B. TYPE OF ASSISTANCE BEING REQUESTED (Check all that apply)

Business Planning

Technical Assistance: (select below)

Marketing Production Financial Management Human Resources/Staffing

New Product or Service Ownership Transfer Growth/Expansion Other

Please describe briefly: _____

C. MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The business is based in Vermont:	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
To the best of our knowledge, the company has no outstanding overdue obligations due to the Vermont or federal government. If false, explain:	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
For the next six-to-twelve months, management is prepared to commit significant time to preparing and implementing a business or technical assistance plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
The business is primarily involved in the harvesting, production, processing, storage, marketing, and/or distribution of local forest products.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
Number of years that business has been operating in Vermont:	

D. TYPE OF FORESTRY OR FOREST PRODUCTS BUSINESS (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner | <input type="checkbox"/> Kiln |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forester | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking/Secondary Processor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logging Operation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mill | |

It is highly recommended that you complete sections E and F (below) in order to ensure you are well matched with a consultant. However, these sections may also be completed during a preliminary meeting with a consultant.

E. BUSINESS PERFORMANCE DATA

	For current year (if ≥6 months) or most recent full year	For previous full year
Gross Sales	\$	\$
Net Income	\$	\$
Net Worth	\$	\$
Full-time nonfamily employees	# FTEs:	# FTEs:
Full-time family employees	# FTEs:	# FTEs:
Part-time/seasonal employees	# FTEs:	# FTEs:
Gross Payroll	\$	\$

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – Please attach answers separately.

- 1) A description of the business, including:
 - A brief history and the number of years in business
 - A description of the products made or services provided
 - The scale of your business (production volume or throughput, number of jobs per year, etc)
 - And your markets: Who do sell products/provide services to? Where do you source materials?
- 2) A short description of who manages the business, including their experience and expertise.
- 3) A description of why you are applying to this program (including any ideas or plans for changing or improving your operation).
- 4) A summary of any technical assistance you are already receiving.
- 5) A short description of your use of Vermont wood or forest products, **for example**:
 - % of the wood you purchase or process that is from Vermont forests
 - % of the acres you log that are in Vermont
- 6) Attach financial statements (ex. income statements, balance sheets) for the past 1-2 years. **(Optional)**