

1. What is Discretionary Funding?

Discretionary funding is a duly-appropriated sum of money in the Town's expense budget allocated to an eligible not-for-profit organization by the Selectboard and approved at Town Meeting.

2. What Types of Organizations May Receive Discretionary Funds?

Discretionary funds may only be allocated to not-for-profit; community-based social services providers. In order to receive discretionary funds directly, an organization must be incorporated as a not-for-profit and registered with the State of Vermont., unless exempt and have a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN).

3. What Types of Organizations May Not Receive Discretionary Funds?

For-profit entities may not receive discretionary funds, except when the primary non-profit contractor subcontracts with a for-profit entity as part of the delivery of services. Such subcontracts, however, must be only an ancillary part of the program to be funded, not the primary basis for the discretionary award, and must be approved by the contracting agency.

4. What are the Restrictions on the Use of Discretionary Funds?

All public funds, however awarded, must be used for a Town purpose. In general, a Town purpose is defined as an activity or service that is open to all members of the public, regardless of race, creed, gender, religious affiliation, etc., without restriction, and which does not promote a particular religion.

Programs and services provided by religious or religiously-affiliated organization must be able to demonstrate that the program is open to non-members, is not a religious program, and does not promote the religion.

Closed membership groups, which are those to which membership is restricted or subject to eligibility based upon prohibited factors, may generally not receive funding.

Groups that serve a particular population, for example, those age 65 and above in a particular community; are not considered a closed membership group, as long as the program is open and accessible to all seniors in the community. Similarly, tenant organizations in public housing may also receive funding, as long as they provide equal access to all residents of the public housing units they serve.

Funds may only be allocated for a public purpose and may not support political activities and private interests.

5. How to Apply for Discretionary Funding?

All organizations that wish to receive discretionary funding must submit a "Request for Special Appropriations" application to the Town Manager. The application elicits information about an organization's experience, qualifications, and integrity, and the project or service for which the organizations is requesting support. The form is available on the Town website under DOCUMENTS, then, APPLICATIONS or by emailing Kathy Daub-Stearns, Administrative Assistant, at: kdaubstearns@richmondvt.gov . Deadline for submission is the end of the day, October 4, 2021.

Town of Richmond

Request for Special Appropriations

Request for Fiscal Year: 2023

Organization's Name: _____ Richmond Farmers Market
Address: _____ PO Box 806 _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Richmond, VT 05477 _____
Website address: _____ www.richmondfarmersmarketvt.org

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Program Name: Richmond Farmers Market
2. Contact Person/Title: Stephanie Choate

Telephone Number: 802-363-2822
E-mail address: choate.stephanie@gmail.com

3. Total number of individuals served in the last complete fiscal year by this program:

It's very difficult to track how many people attend the market, but we estimate 500-800 people come through each week.

4. Total number of the above individuals who are Town residents: Estimated 42 %
Please, attach any documentation that supports this number.

For two weeks in 2020 we invited market attendees to share their town of residence. Based on information collected, slightly less than half were from Richmond.

Percent of people served who are Town residents: _Estimated 42 percent, based on 2020 survey. In 2021, nine of our 36 rotating vendors are from Richmond. One of our two anchor produce farms is a Richmond farm, and one of our three prepared food vendors was run by Richmond high school students.

5. Amount of Request: \$1,500
6. Total Program Budget: \$7,500
Percent of total program budget you are requesting from the Town of Richmond: 20%

7. Please state or attach the mission of your agency:

We are dedicated to strengthening the direct connection between producers and consumers by providing an inclusive space for all members of the community to convene over and celebrate local food, artisanal crafts, music and more.

8. Funding will be used to:
 Maintain an existing program Expand an Existing Program
 Start a new program

9. Has your organization received funds from the Town in the past for this or a similar program?

In 2021 we received \$400 from the town Recreation Department. In the past, the town of Richmond has been a market sponsor for generally \$200 - \$400. These have all been one-time sponsorships from town departments, never part of the town budget.

If yes, please answer the following:

- a. Does the amount of your request represent an increase over your previous appropriation? If yes, explain the reason(s) for the increase. ___ We have never received direct discretionary funding from the Selectboard.

- b. Were any conditions or restrictions placed on the funds by the Selectboard? ___ If yes, describe how those conditions or restrictions have been met.

B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Statement of Need: Identify the issue or need that the program will address (use statistical data to justify the need for the program). To what extent does this need, or problem exist in the Town of Richmond?

A strong farmers market is an asset to any town. We provide access to fresh, healthy foods for all locals, strengthening our agricultural economy and local food systems and connecting residents with local producers. In addition, we provide access to local produce for food-insecure Vermonters. Vermonters can swipe their EBT cards at the market and double their benefits through the state's Crop Cash program. In 2021, the farmers market secured grant funding and is running a program to triple those benefits. Eligible Vermonters can also use Farm to Family coupons at the market, using the state program that aims to get local produce into the hands of families who need it. In 2020, Vermonters in need used \$777 in EBT funds, \$1,498 in Crop Cash, and \$1,164 in Farm to Family coupons at the market. In addition, we provide bikeable and walkable access to locally grown organic food.

The market also provides economic opportunity for local businesses and entrepreneurs, creating a solid vending space for established small businesses and an incubator space for new ones. This year, we had a new, woman-owned farm in Richmond that began selling at the market, plus eight other Richmond businesses. Other vendors are former Richmond residents who still feel connected to the community, or vendors who chose the Richmond Farmers Market specifically because their products are for sale in Richmond stores. The market also draws nearly 60 percent of its clientele from other towns, many of whom visit other Richmond businesses after they visit the market. Local kids can also have a free booth at the market to flex their entrepreneurial skills.

We also provide a safe, inclusive social space for residents. The opportunity to shop outside in a safely distanced environment has been crucial in the past two years. Many families attend the market as a family outing, and others catch up with friends and neighbors while there. It's also a safe space for young Richmond residents to recreate, exercise, and try new healthy food. Many come with their parents, or even walk straight to the market after school. People of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds gather and socialize at the market. We also created and implemented a COVID plan that we shared with local volunteers to create a safe Halloween event for Richmond kids.

We also provide free entertainment for all ages, bringing local bands to perform every week. Many of these performers are Richmond residents. We have also provided childrens' activities like juggling and crafts, and a cider press and fall events for families. The social and entertainment aspects of the market boost Richmond's desirability as a whole — we often see the farmers market listed as an asset of the town in real estate listings.

In addition, we provide a space for other local groups and community organizations to reach out to residents and share their missions through our free Community Booth offering. In 2021, we hosted the Richmond Climate Action Committee, Richmond Racial Justice Committee, Halloween on the Green, Champlain Housing Trust, a bike mechanic event, and the Community Senior Center. We also held a First Responder Day, giving locals a chance to connect with the Richmond Police Department, Fire Department, and Richmond Rescue. We also hosted a free COVID vaccination site. In the past, we've hosted voter awareness and racial justice events, local PTOs and school boards, and many other local groups.

2. Program Summary:

a. Identify the target/recipients of program services. Specify the number of Town residents your program will serve during the fiscal year and explain the basis upon which this number is calculated. Indicate any eligibility requirements your program has with respect to age, gender, income or residence.

Our target recipients are all residents of Richmond and surrounding towns, plus any tourists or visitors. All are welcome!

Exact numbers are tricky, but if we estimate on the low end that 5,000 people come through the market during the course of our 20-week season and 42 percent of those are Richmond residents, the market serves 2,100 residents. That's in addition to the Richmond businesses, local kids who have a Youth Booth, and Richmond organizations who have a Community Booth.

The market has no eligibility requirements, whether to attend or vend. We do occasionally have to waitlist or turn away vendors if their products overlap too much with an existing vendor.

b. Identify what is to be accomplished or what change will occur from participating in the program. How will people be better off as a result of participating in the program? Describe the steps you take to make the project known to the public, and make the program accessible and inclusive?

Town residents who attend or vend at the market can benefit from all the things we provide for the community listed above — access to fresh, local food; economic opportunity for and connection to local businesses and entrepreneurs; a safe, inclusive social space for all; free entertainment and events; and a space for local organizations and groups to share their missions with residents.

We promote the market each week through an email list, social media channels, signage, direct connection with town groups and residents, and Front Porch Forum.

3. Program Funding:

- a. Identify how Town funds, specifically, will be used (i.e., funds will provide “X” amount of units of service.)

Town funds will be used to cover our fixed operating costs before any of our entertainment and event costs. These are the non-negotiable, bare-bones costs of running the market: manager stipends; insurance; the town’s park use fee; farmers market membership fee; website and domain name costs; basic administration costs; and supplies such as signs, masks and hand sanitizer. We’ve cut everything we possibly can from these. Vendor fees cover most of these costs, but \$1,500 is the approximate amount that we are often short. Often, we are short a greater amount and must make up the difference through fundraising.

In addition, we hope to use town funds to ensure we can provide a \$15/hour liveable wage for our managers. Our main source of funding — vendor fees — is somewhat variable, and this support would help us retain skilled, driven individuals even in a challenging season. Our managers are the face of the market, and by extension, of Richmond, to both attendees and vendors.

- b. List the other agencies to whom you are submitting a request for funds for this program and the amount requested. How would this program be modified should revenues be lost?

Farmers markets often operate on a shoestring budget where boards must fundraise in order to bring in enough money to make the market happen. This is a serious investment of time from volunteers and success is by no means certain. Several towns have struggled to keep their markets going due to a lack of volunteers and funding — Essex recently lost their market, and Williston has had an off-and-on market for several years. In 2018, Richmond almost did not have a market due to a shortage of volunteers and funding capacity. We were able to pull the market together and have since strengthened it, but support from the town would go a long way toward making the market a more secure and dependable presence.

We apply for grants through the state and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and the Vermont Farmers Market Association as they come up, but these grants are often one-time offerings and are not always available. We also receive sponsorships from several town businesses who are promoted on our website and marketing. Representatives from NOFA and from the VT Agency of Agriculture have strongly urged us to form a fiscal relationship with our town. They said support from a market’s town is one of the best ways to create a stable and strong market. Other towns have this relationship with their farmers markets. For example, the Jericho Farmers Market receives annually \$4,000 from the town of Jericho and \$1,000 from the town of Underhill, covering the majority of its expenses.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

1. Describe your agency’s capability to provide the program including its history, previous experience providing this service, management structure and staff expertise.

Richmond’s market was founded in 2003 and is one of the longest running markets in the state. We have an unpaid 5-member volunteer board of directors with a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Board members are elected by vendors in a vote during our annual vendor meeting. The market employs a manager and an assistant

manager who are paid a stipend and are responsible for the day-to-day running of the market.

2. How will you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you will assess program outcomes. Your description should include: what (what kind of data), how (method/tool for collecting the data), from whom (source of data) and when (timing of data collection).

The board holds annual review and budget meetings to review the successes and problem areas of each year. We also hold an annual vendor meeting where vendors share feedback, ideas and reviews.

Vendor revenue and EBT spending are also collected to give an idea of market attendance.

3. Summarize or attach program and or service assessments conducted in the past two years.

Vendor revenue increased in 2019, but was slightly down in 2020 (largely due to COVID). We expect it to increase this year. EBT spending was up in 2020 due to expanded programming. We hope to see an increase in 2021 due to expanded programming and a stronger effort to get the word out.

The market itself does not bring in revenue — this is revenue brought in by our vendors. Any money raised goes directly back into the market or programs for residents, such as our expanded EBT benefit program.

4. Does your organization have a strategic plan and a strategic planning process in place? Not a formal strategic plan. - If yes, please attach your plan.

The strategic plan should include a mission statement, goals, steps to achieve the goals, and measures that assess the accomplishments of the goals.

5. What is the authorized size of your board of directors? 5
How many meetings were held by the board last year? 4 formal meetings : an end-of-season review, a budget meeting, an annual vendor meeting, and a vendor selection meeting. But we had approximately 10 meetings this year for various issues that arise.

I, the undersigned, confirm the information contained herein is accurate and can be verified as such. I understand and agree that if the requested funds are approved, the disbursement of funds are subject to all conditions established by the Richmond Selectboard.

Signature of Applicant _____  _____ Date _____ 10/3/21 _____

____ Stephanie Choate, Board president _____
Print Name of Applicant and Title