

# HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES BEST AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICES



## SUMMARY

Health in All Policies recognizes that health is determined not only by genetics, health care, and individual behaviors but by a complex set of social, economic and environmental factors. HiAP is a collaborative approach to engage all sectors and branches of government to ensure that the potential health consequences are identified and considered during decision-making processes.

### THE GOAL OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document draws upon the best practices and innovative approaches in the agricultural sector that advance positive health outcomes.

The document describes current action in Vermont and outlines approaches for future planning to synergistically meet agricultural and health goals.

### WHY THIS MATTERS

A vibrant and viable agricultural community will support equity and a high quality of life for all Vermonters. Access to local food supports our rural communities and builds a culture of investing in Vermont agricultural business viability. Eating healthy food, especially a variety of nutritious foods including fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy, is essential to promoting and maintaining good health. Local, regional, and state policies can help people access healthy, local food and maintain our working landscape. Adequate access and availability of safe nutritious food to all Vermont communities remains an aspirational goal for this next year.

#### CONTACT:

Abbey Willard  
[Abbey.Willard@Vermont.gov](mailto:Abbey.Willard@Vermont.gov)

## Sector - AGRICULTURE

### MISSION

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets facilitates, supports and encourages the growth and viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment.

**BUDGET**

**COMMUNITY  
AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

\* Increase financial and technical assistance support to independent retailers and distributors to increase offerings of local Vermont products.

\* Establish marketing resources for promotion of Vermont agriculture and food businesses and products.

\* Expand financial assistance and service provider support to small businesses in the agricultural/forestry sector which helps support the local economy and a viable working landscape.

Oversee grant programs that enhance food safety, protects natural resources, and improves efficiency and capacity of critical agricultural industries, including dairy, meat, produce, maple, specialty crops, and value-added products.

Administer grants to help provide decent paying jobs/training and new economic development opportunities for rural Vermont.

Aid in the development and marketing of Vermont agricultural products which builds communities and supports the local economy.

Participate in federal programs that reimburse organic farmers for a percentage of their organic certification costs.

**INSTITUTIONS AND  
HEALTHY FOODS**

Continue to fund healthy food procurement programs with a specific focus on K-12 schools, colleges, hospitals, and state of Vermont facilities.

\* Increase investments in creating a healthy and local food culture in preK-12 schools.

Increase investments in nutrition education and agriculture literacy in preK-12 school environments.

Incentivize service of local fluid milk in Vermont's correctional facilities. Build on successful pilot at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility and expand to other facilities in 2020-2021.

**REGIONAL  
FOOD SYSTEMS  
AND  
AGRICULTURE**

Continue to provide financial support and regulatory technical assistance around processing and distribution of local product to access regional markets.

\* Connect Vermont agricultural businesses to resources and market opportunities to meet new consumers and convene with buyers and other food system stakeholders.

**POLICY**

**COMMUNITY  
AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

Encourage partners to consider healthy food retail in community development plans and land use decisions.

\*Support accessory on farm business development as a mechanism for supporting farm viability, diversification, and agritourism.

\* Explore a pilot program and metric tracking mechanism to offer eligible agricultural producers a payment for the ecosystem services they provide to our communities.

\* Develop an agricultural strategic plan to support the stabilization, diversification, and revitalization of Vermont's agricultural industry.

Continue to regulate Required Agricultural Practices which promotes clean water in Vermont.

Continue to promote innovative accessory businesses and land use approaches to support a viable agricultural economy.

Remain committed to educating the agricultural community on new laws and regulations that take effect, which includes protecting the health of our community, and the environment.

**INSTITUTIONS AND  
HEALTHY FOODS**

\* Continue to encourage schools, colleges, hospitals, and state facilities to purchase foods that promote health, nutrition, and stewardship for the environment.

\* Continue to orchestrate technical assistance support to schools and other institutions to assist in increasing local food procurement.

Explore nutrition standards for meals and snacks served in early childhood and after school settings as well as nutrition education programs for day care workers.

Explore nutrition standards for foods sold in vending machines on government owned property, including libraries, recreation center, and government work sites.

\* Establish healthy food procurement policies that encourage government agencies and institutions to purchase foods that promote health, nutrition, and stewardship of the environment.

Collaborate with Agency of Education on new initiative to track and capture annual reporting of % estimates of local food purchases by Vermont schools, beginning in the 2020 school year.

Encourage local agriculture and food purchasing through the Health Care Shares, Workplace CSA and Buy Local Market models.

Engage with partners in conversations about addressing food security and food access issues on college campuses.

**REGIONAL FOOD  
SYSTEMS AND  
AGRICULTURE**

Continue to conserve and support access to agricultural land that helps support the increased availability of affordable, healthy, local food throughout the state.

Establish and enforce policies that support the health and well-being of farm workers.

Increase worker protection and housing standards awareness that improves appropriate housing for laborers and farm worker safety.

Support local, municipal, and regional government and planning agencies in designating certain areas primarily for farming through agricultural protection zoning, including specific protections such as limiting the density of residential developments and allowing growers to sell at roadside stands.

\* Continue to enforce pesticide labeling laws and work to ensure standards meet or exceed fair labor practices.

Support local or state food policy councils to develop strategies that focus attention on the entire regional food system.

**PROGRAM**

**COMMUNITY  
AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

\* Assist state and federal nutrition programming to ensure that all retail stores, farmers' markets and interested CSAs are well equipped to accept SNAP and WIC benefits.

Coordinate with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and municipal planning officials to ensure public transportation is available to connect neighborhoods to grocery stores and farmer's markets.

Maintain programs and funding opportunities that promote local food and markets that support local farmers.

Maintain efforts to conserve farmland which preserves Vermont's rural communities and cultural heritage.

Explore opioid workforce development opportunities for agriculture and food-based occupations.

Explore partnership opportunities to expand agriculture and food manufacturing jobs within Vermont's rural communities.

**INSTITUTIONS AND  
HEALTHY FOODS**

\* Expand and continue to support farm to school programs to provide students with foods grown locally and regionally.

Support Agency of Education in administering federal nutrition programs in promoting nutrition education and the incorporation of local food in healthy food policies.

\* Increase amount of local food served in Vermont schools, colleges, healthcare, and state institutions.

Expand outreach and simplify application procedures to increase participation in SNAP and make resources available in other languages.

\* Ensure Electronic Benefit Transfer access, Farm to Family and Crop Cash outreach at farmers' markets of all sizes.

\* Expand access to federal child nutrition programs, including school breakfast, national school lunch, summer food service, and child and adult care programs.

Provide technical assistance to vendors contracted to sell food on State of Vermont property on compliance with state policies on healthy food, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health.

Continue to support public health and safe food initiatives as more Vermont produce operations align practices with the Produce Safety Rule of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

**REGIONAL FOOD  
SYSTEMS AND  
AGRICULTURE**

Support equitable business assistance to small and mid-sized farmers, farmers of color, and women through grants, technical assistance, and marketing.

\* Establish incentives and resources for growers to produce healthy and safe products including fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and other food products available to consumers with values-based buying preferences.

Ensure that all Vermont farms, nurseries, and greenhouses are prepared to meet or exceed the revisions to the Worker Protection Standard, which went into effect January 2, 2017. Strengthen enforcement of these regulations.

\* Educate and encourage farmers to use integrated pest management practices, follow nutrient management plans, and be compliant with the Required Agricultural Practices to protect human, animal, and plant health.

\* Provide financial resources, technical assistance, and logistics services for food producers who are expanding to regional and international markets.

Continue to support public health and safe food initiatives as more Vermont produce operations align practices with the Produce Safety Rule of the Food Safety Modernization Act.