

EARLY EDUCATORS

More Local Food for Vermont's Earliest Learners

APPLY BY MARCH 8!

The Vermont Agency
of Agriculture, Food
& Markets (VAAFM)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Grants Program

Details &
Application

Applications due
Friday, March 8, 2024

Who: Early childhood
education providers and
after school programs

What: Grants of up to
\$1,500 are available to
reimburse programs for
65–80% of the cost of a
CSA or farm share

What is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)?

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a sales model where customers (CSA members) pay in advance for a share of a farm's upcoming harvest. The upfront payment helps farmers pay for seeds, equipment, soil amendments, labor, and other necessities for the growing season. In addition to having a steady supply of in-season produce, CSA members directly support local farmers and typically spend less money than when buying local produce from a store.



Common CSA Models

Farmer's choice: The most common and traditional CSA model, in which a farm selects a small variety of items and packs them into a box for each CSA member to be picked up at the farm on a weekly basis.

Customizable box: A spin on the farmer's choice CSA with a more customizable model, which allows members to choose some or all items each week. Farms may also offer weekly add-on subscriptions sourced from other local farms, like fruit, bread, eggs, and meat.

Credit-style CSA: Some farms offer a spend down account model, where you pay up front for farm credit, which you can spend throughout the season, usually at the farm's store or farm stand, on whatever local food items you want, on your own schedule.

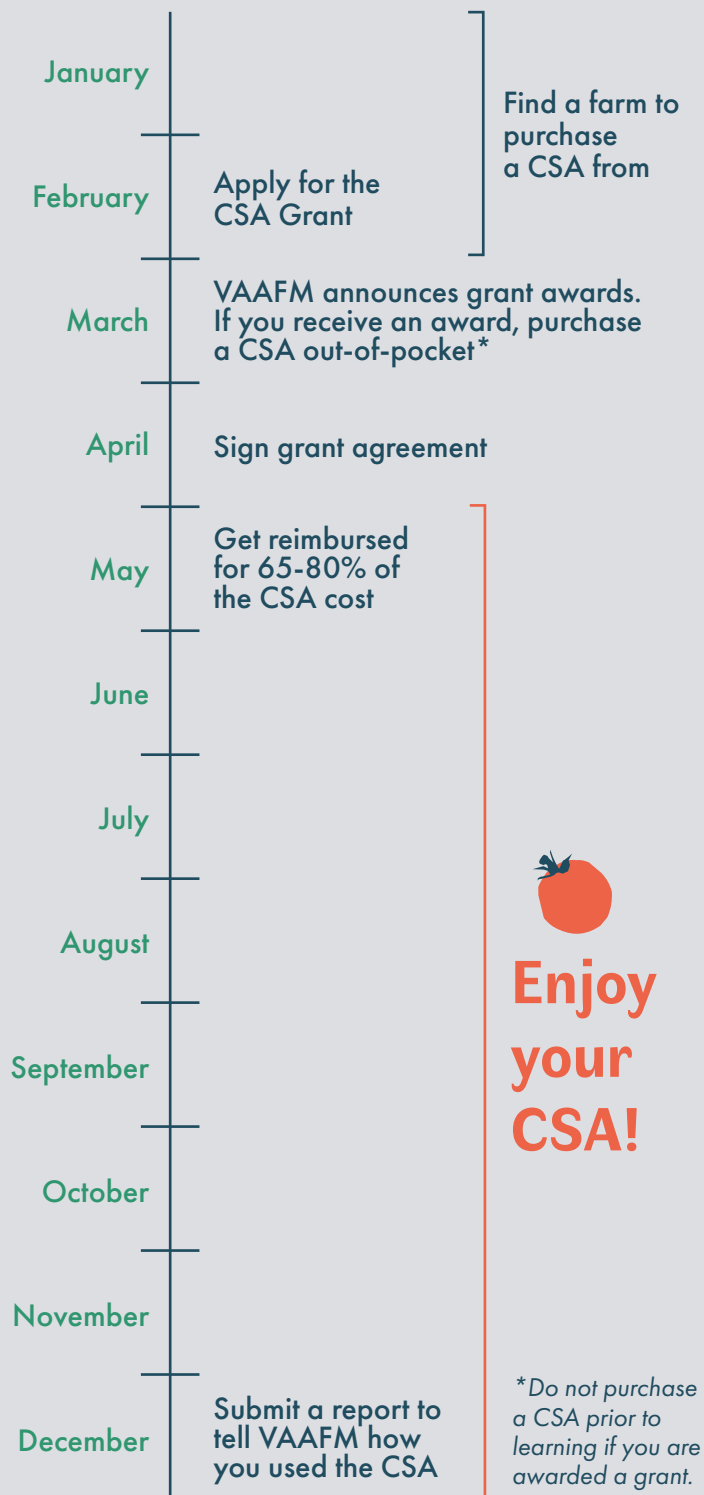
// **Farmer Christine sends recipes every week to use with the CSA, which has been so helpful. I didn't know what a salad turnip was or that you could eat it raw! We're all learning about food, and I know the kids are eating things they wouldn't otherwise.**

—**Laura Butler**, educator and owner of a Milton home-based childcare program, Imagination Island

Laura is a 2022 recipient of the CSA grant, which she used to purchase a weekly CSA from Blue Heron Farm in Grand Isle

[Read Laura's story](#)

Community Supported Agriculture Grants Timeline



Finding the Right CSA

Location: [Use this map to find CSA options near you.](#) Select “CSA” from the “Features” dropdown to filter for farms offering CSAs. Please note this is not a complete list of all CSA providers in the state. Consider the CSA pick-up location or whether you need a CSA that can be delivered.

Share size:

Smaller shares (\$300–500) are great for snacks for family home-based childcare programs and food-related curriculum and nutrition education for center-based education and afterschool programs.

Larger shares (\$500–800) may supply enough food for snacks in an early childhood center or afterschool program, or even breakfasts or lunches in family home-based childcare programs.

Double shares (\$800–1,500) may provide enough food for in-program snacks, lunches, classroom cooking, and/or a family backpack program.

Timing: This grant can support programs in buying summer CSA shares (typically May–August) and/or fall CSA shares (typically September–December). Fall shares may be a better fit for programs that are closed in the summer months.

Food options: This grant is flexible in the types of local foods that can be purchased. CSAs offering vegetables, fruit, dairy, meat, and eggs are all allowed.

Resources to Support Your CSA

Tips for storing produce for longevity:
[The Fruit & Vegetable Storage Guide](#)

Recipe and cooking inspiration:
[Vermont Harvest of the Month](#)
[Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
[Vermont Harvest Calendar](#)

Dig deeper into sourcing local:
[Vermont Farm to Early Childhood Local Purchasing Guide](#)

