



# Vermont Farmers Food Center 2024 Annual Report

## *Gratitude and Impact*

*Dear Friends,*

*In 2024, VFFC made significant strides in building the infrastructure needed to support our local food system. We continued renovations and completed remediation in Farmers Hall, secured funding to construct the Produce Packing Center, and also to develop comprehensive operating, marketing, and staffing plans to guide our growth.*

*At the same time, we deepened our commitment to education and food access, continuing to deliver on our mission across the region. Some highlights from the year include:*

*Celebrating the 10th anniversary of Farmacy*

*Reopening Farmers Hall for the Winter Market*

*Hosting annual statewide Farm-to-School gathering in Rutland*

*Securing funds for the Produce Packing Center's construction*

*Participating in Local Futures' World Localization Day*

*Our vision for a thriving local food system—and all it nourishes—is stronger than ever, because it is more necessary than ever.*

*Thanks to your support, we are making a real difference for local growers, food producers, and our wider community. Together, we continue the vital work of strengthening our local food web.*

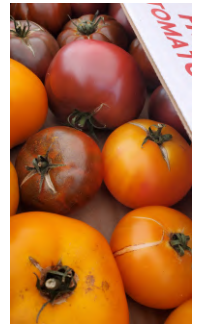
*With our sincere gratitude,*

*The Board and Staff of the Vermont Farmers Food Center*



## *Your support makes so much possible!*

With your support, we expanded access to local food and boosted sales for farmers throughout Rutland County. We raised awareness about the importance of a localized food system and reopened Farmers Hall—creating essential market infrastructure for growers and a welcoming gathering space for the community.



### ***Education***

---

As an outgrowth of our Farm-to-School pilot project, VFFC joined and immediately became involved with the Vermont Farm-to-School network. VFFC co-hosted **Vermont FEED's (Food Education Every Day)** annual **Vermont Farm-to-School and Early Childhood Network's statewide Farm-to-School** gathering in Rutland.



Gathering participants toured VFFC's facilities and learned about VFFC's resources to educate children about their food sources to increase the availability, quantity, and distribution of locally grown and produced food.

*“Thank you for a wonderful experience, and I look forward to future collaboration”*

*- Director, Allen Street Campus*

The ***Summer Educational Workshop Series*** was held again this year in partnership with the Rutland Recreation and Parks Department! **Sixteen** people attended **four** workshops on subjects gardening, preserving the harvest, and cooking home-grown food.



***World Localization Day*** is an annual event convened by the international nonprofit, Local Futures. VFFC was honored to participate in 2024 and amplify the many efforts and initiatives that foster ecological economies, thriving communities, and healthy local food systems.





## ***Food Access***

---



***Online Market*** added six new farmers and food producers in 2024, purchased **\$63,356** local produce for Farmacy, sold **\$54,725** in local food and products to **228** individual consumers, and **\$57,132** in bulk sales to **23** businesses, schools, and institutions. Our distribution of local food from Rutland to other Vermont food hubs expands the market for our county's growers!

***Farm to School*** completed its six-school pilot project in June which laid the foundation for the program's expansion. The 2023 Local Food for Schools grant came from USDA through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

VFFC staff worked with the School Food Authorities to administer the pilot project: **80%** of the revenue went to producers and **20%** to VFFC for local food aggregation and distribution.

***Farmacy: Food as Medicine*** celebrated its **10th anniversary** in 2024, having reached more than **4,192 people** since its inception in 2014.

In 2024, the program enrolled **250 participants**, with over **37,500** pounds of locally grown food packed into Farmacy bags. For 15 weeks, food shares were distributed to seven sites across Rutland County. The program partnered with **24** healthcare clinics, **16** local farms, and **two** nonprofit farms to make this possible.



*Workplace Wellness* continued in 2024 with **four** business sites participating. Each week, employees made purchases through the Online Market and VFFC delivered to their workplace. The program gained momentum and popularity with employers and employees!



*Rutland County Eats* operated for **26** weeks in 2024, serving a total of **1,794** prepared meals. Nearly **90%** of the ingredients were sourced locally, strengthening our regional food economy. Thanks to generous donations of local eggs, cheese, flour, and surplus from Farmacy shares, we saved an estimated **\$8,000** in food costs.



VFFC distributed nearly 16,500 pounds of local food to five senior centers across Rutland and Bennington Counties as part of the **Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging's *Locally Yours*** program, formerly known as VFFC's *Eat at Home* initiative.

## ***Infrastructure***

---

Farmers Hall reopened in November for the return of the Winter Farmers Market.

Interior renovations on the community and commercial kitchens and the installation of a new biomass heating system began in preparation for re-occupancy.

In 2024, VFFC received the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative's Supply Chain Impact Grant to develop the Center's Operating and Marketing Plans, and pilot produce packing and storage in the commercial space in Farmers Hall.



## Volunteers make all the difference

From bagging Farmacy shares, and delivering to homes and distribution sites, to caring for the campus grounds and tending our community gardens, our **volunteers make it happen at VFFC**.

Last year, our volunteers dedicated around **481** hours of their time making the value of VFFC's volunteer efforts worth **\$16,734!**

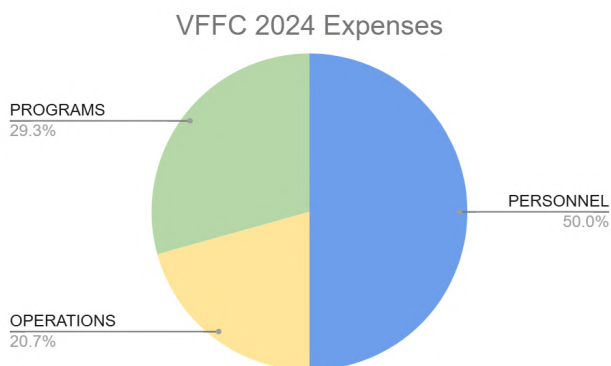


*Our wholehearted thanks to each of you!*

---

## Your generosity in action in 2024

We value your gift and we're making sure it goes as far as possible for the local food community.



*The chart above represents VFFC's 2024 Operating Budget total of \$550,334.*

*Separately, the 2024 budget for the capital infrastructure project to renovate our buildings was \$538,058*

### By Grant Type:

- Corporate: 1%
- Government: 30%
- Private Foundation: 51%
- Non-Profit: 18%

### Other Revenue Sources

- Sales and Fee Services: 32%
- Individual/Corporate Donations: 4%
- Rental Income: 2%
- Fundraising and Events: 1%

*Your generosity powers so much good work for local food and we can't thank you enough.*