



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DATE OF ISSUE: NOVEMBER 4, 2019

PROPOSALS DUE: DECEMBER 31, 2019

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), is seeking tenants to lease space in the Hardwick Yellow Barn Business Accelerator & Corporate Campus (aka “Yellow Barn”), which is expected to be ready for occupancy in late spring of 2021. Approximately 3,000 square feet of ground-floor industrial processing space and about 6,000 square feet of second-story multi-purpose space are available.

Yellow Barn will strengthen Vermont’s farm- and food-based economy by allowing multiple establishments to grow and expand with other entrepreneurs, develop new products, and improve export to external markets. The project will consist of a new two-story 36,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose processing facility, and an innovative adaptive reuse of the historic yellow barn along the Route 15 gateway to downtown Hardwick.

The Yellow Barn Business Accelerator is a unique public-private endeavor between the Town of Hardwick and the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) to offer best-in-class production and administrative space to new and expanding businesses at highly competitive rates. The CAE operates the Vermont Food Venture Center, a business incubator for farm- and food-based businesses immediately adjacent to the site, making Yellow Barn an ideal next step for incubator graduates. The site is also adjacent to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, ensuring high visibility and market penetration to accelerator tenants.

The food businesses (cheese producers) that will serve as long-term anchor tenants will occupy about 70% of the new building and all of the existing Yellow Barn. This offers a unique opportunity for a business to be co-located within the same facility as emerging and new agricultural products. About 3,000 square feet of ground-floor production space and 6,000 square feet of second-story multi-purpose space remains available to qualified accelerator tenants, which includes:

- **Former users of the Vermont Food Venture Center**
- **Small and emerging businesses.**
- **Organizations that are education-based, support farm and food businesses, conduct research, and/or provide leadership for local community development and entrepreneurship.**

Accelerator tenants will be able to take advantage of Business Advisory Services provided by CAE. **Specifically, CAE will expand to the Yellow Barn Business Accelerator its program of providing Business Advisory Services to tenants.** CAE’s Business Advisory Services include assistance with branding and marketing, production, and business planning. CAE’s assistance will also help tenants pursue innovation and synergies.

We are looking for tenants who are interested in having secure space for industrial food processing, administrative offices, food product research, storage and other uses within the Yellow Barn Business Accelerator building.

Construction is planned to begin in the spring of 2020. The space is expected to be available

The mission of the CAE is to engage the public in building a regenerative, locally based, healthy food system through collaboration opportunities, food access and hunger relief, educational outreach and providing critical infrastructure. Ideal tenants will be mission-aligned and open to collaboration as appropriate.

Facility

Description

The new Business Accelerator facility will have production space on the ground floor and multi-purpose space on the second floor. The ground floor will include shared use loading docks, polished concrete floors with floor drains, and all utility services. New tenants will be responsible for any equipment necessary to operate the proposed business. The second-floor space can be fitted to a number of different configurations dependent



upon tenant needs. The facility will be located adjacent to the existing Yellow Barn on Route 15 entering Hardwick from the west. Tenants will have access to onsite parking and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is located adjacent to the property.

Hardwick, and the surrounding towns of Greensboro, Craftsbury and Wolcott, are home to some of Vermont's award-winning food businesses, such as *Cellars at Jasper Hill*, *Hill Farmstead Brewery* and *Sweet Rowen Farm*. In addition, many food system enterprises are firmly rooted in this region of the state, such as *High Mowing Organic Seeds*, *Lost Nation Brewery*, *NEK Processing Facility*, *Black Dirt Farm* and more.

Characteristics/Utilities

- Up to 3,000 s.f. of first floor production space
 - Up to 6,000 s.f. of second floor multi-use space
 - Municipal water supply
 - Municipal wastewater service
 - Sub-metered single phase and three phase electrical service
 - High speed broadband
 - HVAC zoned per tenant
 - Polished concrete floors – floor drains
 - High performance thermal building shell
- 15' first floor ceiling height
- 11' second floor ceiling height
- Loading dock access
- Common amenities include restrooms, locker rooms, and meeting/conference room
- Loading dock accessible through shared-use facility
- Ability to be used for a wide-range of production needs such as distillery, meat processing, brewery, dairy products, beverages, canned foods, as well as storage potential for refrigeration, frozen, or dry
- Versatile administrative office space including multi use areas and conference rooms.

Lease Terms

The CAE is looking for a growing food businesses or organizations that are interested in locating an operation or a part of its operation in Hardwick. The gross lease rate is projected to be a favorable \$9.80 per square foot annually, paid on a monthly basis.

Lease terms will be tailored to the unique needs of each accelerator tenant.

Proposals

We recommend that any potential applicants:

1. Schedule a site visit with CAE to tour the site and review construction plans.
2. Submit a PROPOSAL to the CAE Rental Advisory Board by **close of business December 31, 2019**. This proposal should include:
 - Proposed use of space and any equipment needed to operate the business.



- The amount of space you want to use (approximate square footages from the ground floor production space and/or the second floor space).
- A description of the use, current and anticipated future products or goals for the business or organization.
- Food or farm business or organization history, current and anticipated future products, relevant financial information, and goals and plans for the business. Describe in what ways you are interested in taking advantage of CAE's Business Advisory Services, and how you think such services can help you meet your goals.
- Any additional build-out needs.
- Timeline and needs for move-in.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be considered and evaluated based on the potential of the proposed tenant to advance:

The project goal of accelerating the growth of a small or emerging farm or food business, taking into account all relevant information, including but not limited to:

- The proposed use of the space and how the business proposes to take advantage of CAE's Business Advisory Services.
- How proposed use of the space furthers the mission of the CAE.

As we evaluate proposals, the CAE will follow up with applicants as needed.

Responses* and inquiries:

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*Emailed responses are strongly preferred.