



Request for Proposals (RFP)

Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership

Regional Coordination Support

Release Date: May 15, 2026

Proposals Due: June 5, 2026

Contact for Proposals:

Julia King, VAWQP Coordinator (julia.king@vacd.org)

Introduction and Purpose

The Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership ([VAWQP](#)) is composed of nine agencies and organizations that provide education, technical and financial assistance to the Vermont farming community to address water quality and other natural resource concerns on farms, and signed an MOU committing to collaboration in 2012, which was renewed in 2018 and 2024. The purpose of the Partnership is to coordinate efforts to improve water quality and wildlife habitat on farmland; deliver educational, technical and financial assistance in the most efficient way possible; provide the best possible service experience for land stewards; and help the Vermont public understand the water quality achievements of the agricultural community and supporting partners. Coordination efforts include regular meetings and trainings, collective learning and problem solving, and communication through a website, newsletter, shared file system, and other technologies.

The purpose of this agreement is to build on current Regional Coordination services to support the mission and strategic plan of the Partnership at the local level. This coordination will encourage information sharing, collaboration and coordination among technical and financial assistance providers in order to help farmers achieve measurable water quality results and protect habitat in the most high-quality, cost-effective and positive way possible. The Vermont Association of Conservation Districts seeks Regional Coordinators in five regions through Vermont including:

- Northeast: Orleans, Essex and Caledonia Counties
- Northwest: Franklin, Grand Isle and Lamoille Counties
- Central: Chittenden, Washington and Addison Counties
- Southeast: Orange, Windsor and Windham Counties
- Southwest: Rutland and Bennington Counties

Funding for VAWQP regional coordination is provided by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets – Agriculture Clean Water Initiative Program (VAAFMI), through an agreement

with the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts (VACD). VACD will develop and manage subagreements resulting from this RFP.

Scope of Work

The Regional Coordinator will build upon past efforts to promote regional collaboration to advance the mission and strategic plan of the VAWQP at the local level. A detailed Scope of Work is outlined below.

Activities of the Regional Coordinator will include, but are not limited to:

1. **Serve as an Ambassador of the VAWQP Partnership:** Act as an ambassador for staff, organizations, and media in their region, providing information regarding the purpose of the Partnership, and encouraging participation in regional VAWQP initiatives. This includes –
 - o Maintain an active email listserv for coordination within the region that will be hosted on the VAWQP shared file system. New staff will be added to this listserv to ensure that they receive invites to regional meetings and orientation information from the VAWQP Coordinator.
 - o Include information about VAWQP on their website.
 - o In coordination with the VAWQP Coordinator, reference VAWQP when appropriate in press releases, media, and educational materials.

2. **Organize Regional Coordination Meetings:** Regional Coordinators, in collaboration with the VAWQP Coordinator, will develop regional and statewide themes for regional discussion that can be pursued statewide and will be incorporated into regional coordination meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to facilitate information exchange and coordination of efforts to support the water quality and habitat protection efforts of the agricultural community. This includes –
 - o Convene a hybrid meeting of regional Partner staff annually between September and January.
 - o Elicit local staff recommendations regarding agricultural water quality and habitat protection programs. These recommendations will be communicated to the VAWQP leadership via meeting summary notes.
 - o Utilize a post meeting participant evaluation survey provided by the VAWQP Coordinator to capture information in a standardized format to support statewide and regional data analysis. These survey evaluations will occur after each meeting.
 - o VAWQP regional coordination meetings may dovetail with other regional water quality meetings such as Local Working Groups or Tactical Basin Planning meetings to avoid duplication, but must have a unique focus on the VAWQP mission and strategic plan.
 - o Regional coordination meetings must include time for updates from each

organization in attendance. For those unable to attend, the Regional Coordinator should request written organizational updates in advance of the meeting to be shared with the group.

- o Regional coordination meetings may also include time for confidential sharing of information regarding assistance to and work with specific farms for non-regulatory purposes, in compliance with Farm Bill 1619 requirements (optional, as determined by the Regional Coordinator).

3. **Facilitate a breakout session of regional Partner staff at the VAWQP Annual Meeting:** Regional Coordinators, in collaboration with the VAWQP Coordinator, will facilitate a breakout session at the VAWQP Annual Meeting usually held in March. The VAWQP Coordinator will develop materials for the breakout session.

This includes –

- o Attend and participate in the VAWQP Annual Meeting
- o Provide a report of the discussion to the VAWQP Coordinator

4. **Provide Regional Data to Support Evaluation of VAWQP Coordination.**

This includes –

- o Engage with VAWQP Coordinator and other Regional Coordinators to develop and review a report summarizing the key topics and themes addressed in the regional meetings, and any identified needs, next steps.
- o Attend joint meetings with statewide Regional Coordinators a minimum of twice per year to support training, coordination and problem solving at the local level.
- o Attend VAWQP Steering Committee once per year to collaborate and share experiences about Regional Coordination efforts including a once-annual presentation of activities and recommendations.

DELIVERABLES

1. **Regional Coordinators Connect Meeting #1 – September/October 2026**

Engage with the VAWQP Coordinator, Regional Coordinators and other VAWQP staff to provide recommendations and share needs regarding core themes among regional coordination meetings happening statewide.

2. **Regional Partnership Meeting #1 - Fall/Winter 2026**

Report and Invoice including a summary of the meeting, a list of staff attended, costs incurred for hosting the meeting including catering, action items and next steps, notes, and results of survey uploaded to the shared file system.

3. **Regional Coordinators Connect Meeting #2 – January 2027**

Engage with the VAWQP Coordinator, Regional Coordinators and other VAWQP staff to provide recommendations and share needs regarding core themes among regional coordination meetings happening statewide. Discuss VAWQP Annual meeting and facilitation of the regional partnership breakout session.

4. Regional Partnership Breakout Session #1 – March 2027

Report including a summary of the breakout session, a list of staff attended, action items and next steps, and notes uploaded to the shared file system.

5. Regional Coordinators Connect Meeting #3 – May/June 2027

Engage with the VAWQP Coordinator, Regional Coordinators and other VAWQP staff to provide recommendations and share needs regarding core themes among regional coordination meetings happening statewide.

6. VAWQP Steering Committee Meeting – June 2027

Attend the VAWQP Steering Committee meeting to share updates, recommendations and engage in dialogue with VAWQP partners in reflection of the FY 2027 year of regional coordination services and looking ahead to the next year.

7. Regional Partnership Meeting #2 – Fall/Winter 2027

Report and Invoice including a summary of the meeting, a list of staff attended, costs incurred for hosting the meeting including catering, action items and next steps, notes, and results of survey uploaded to the shared file system.

8. Regional Coordinators Connect Meeting #4 – January 2028

Engage with the VAWQP Coordinator, Regional Coordinators and other VAWQP staff to provide recommendations and share needs regarding core themes among regional coordination meetings happening statewide. Discuss VAWQP Annual meeting and facilitation of the regional partnership breakout session.

9. Regional Partnership Breakout Session #2 – Winter 2028

Report including a summary of the breakout session, a list of staff attended, action items and next steps, and notes uploaded to the shared file system.

10. VAWQP Steering Committee Meeting – June 2028

Attend the VAWQP Steering Committee meeting to share updates, recommendations and engage in dialogue with VAWQP partners in reflection of the FY 2028 year of regional coordination services and looking ahead to the next year.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must be a member of the VAWQP. (Natural Resources Conservation Districts are eligible to apply as members of the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts). The Partnership strongly encourages collaborative proposals between organizations and welcomes creative approaches to achieving regional coordination goals.

Performance Period

Regional Coordinators will serve two-year terms beginning July 1, 2026, with the possibility for renewal pending progress and availability of funding.

Funding and Budget

This RFP for FY 2027 - FY 2028 Regional Coordination services seeks proposals for the five Regional Coordinator contracts for two years. The award will consist of funding for the staff time doing the administrative tasks associated with the deliverables and funding to support the expenses for the regional partnership meeting itself.

FY 2027

- \$3,000 for the administrative tasks
- \$2,500 to cover costs for the regional partnership meeting itself when attendance in the region has averaged less than 40 people over the previous four meetings. This amount will increase to \$3,000 when average attendance exceeds 41 people.

FY 2028

- \$3,250 for the administrative tasks
- \$2,750 to cover costs for the regional partnership meeting itself when attendance in the region has averaged less than 40 people over the previous four meetings. This amount will increase to \$3,250 when average attendance exceeds 41 people.

Grantees may request upfront payment of 20% funding, after which funding will be dispersed twice annually upon receipt and approval of progress report and invoice.

Proposal Content

Proposals may be up to three pages, single-sided in length and should include the following content:

- Contact person for the proposal with full contact information;
- Description and work plan of how the application will meet the requirements as outlined in this RFP, including how the work will advance the mission and strategic plan of the VAWQP and interface with other regional initiatives;
- Description of how the applicant plans to host the meetings, encourage attendance and participation, and potential topics and speakers
- Proposed personnel; and
- Description of capacity and relevant experience of the applicant to serve as Regional Coordinator, if they've held this contract before also provide information about previous meetings, attendee experience, and attendance numbers.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by several VAWQP agency leaders.

Recommendations for the award will be submitted to the VAWQP Steering Committee for approval. Selection of the grantee will be based on the following criteria:

- Proposed activities and work plan (33%)
- Demonstrated capacity and past experience with hosting regional coordination meetings or similar events and trainings (33%)
- Past experience with VACD or NRCC held grants including successful completion of all grant requirements, timely reporting, and invoicing (33%)

Proposal Award Timeline

- **Proposals Due:** June 5, 2026
- **Notification:** June 18, 2026