

Vermont Capacity Building Grant Recipients



Rural Vermont / REAP

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Consultation and Strategic Planning

Montpelier, VT

Rural Vermont is a 20-year old statewide, farmer-led organization that is working to promote and achieve their vision for a sustainable, thriving Vermont agriculture, which supports small farms and in turn local communities. A three year Capacity-Building Grant was awarded to provide consultation and strategic planning work helping to shift funding base from foundation support to individual member support, and to build the membership base in order to increase numbers of small donors, rather than relying on a few large donors. Grant was made in 2007.

Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Towards financial sustainability and statewide expansion

Brattleboro, VT

Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity (Vermont Partnership) is a statewide non-profit, research, education and advocacy organization dedicated to building inclusive and equitable communities in Vermont. Vermont Partnership provides training, technical assistance, coaching and advocacy services to individuals and institutions in the areas of civil rights, diversity, anti-bias education and multiracial education. Funds were provided to support Vermont Partnership's statewide expansion and it's transition from a direct service provider to an organizer for systemic change within Vermont's institutions. Grant was made in 2008.

Highfields Institute, Ltd.

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Close the Loop Vermont

Hardwick, VT

Highfields Institute was selected for the Ben & Jerry's Foundation Capacity Building Grant for 2009. Highfields works to close the loop on community-based sustainable food and agricultural systems, thus addressing soil health, water quality, solid waste, farm viability, and climate change. Their program, Close the Loop Vermont, for which funding was granted, has a goal to capture 100% of food waste in Vermont by 2017 through effective educational, behavioral and infrastructural change strategies and engaging local community members as agents of change at the community and municipal level. Grant was made in 2009.

Vermont Workers' Center

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Healthcare is a Human Right

Burlington, VT

The VWC is building a statewide grassroots movement for change by organizing low-income and working Vermonters to create a sustainable network of leaders and organizing committees in communities across the state through a coordinated fight to win real healthcare reform in Vermont. By organizing to make healthcare a public good in Vermont, through the Healthcare is a Human Right Campaign, they empower low-income and working Vermonters to build power for change on a range of issues affecting working people. Grant was made in 2010.

Vermont Journalism Trust / VT Digger.org

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Building Capacity & Development

Montpelier, VT

VTDigger.org is a statewide online-only nonprofit news organization dedicated to coverage of Vermont politics, consumer affairs, business and public policy. VTDigger.org publishes original news reporting, video, audio and photos, in addition to raw information in the form of press releases and government documents. Funding was provided for the ongoing development of the

VTDigger.org website to enhance access to news, information and their unique, interactive newsgathering platform, Tipster. Additionally, VTDigger.org plans to create and maintain a database of documents from state government and the legislature that pertain to news issues. Lastly, VTDigger will create a member-subscriber donor system that will enable them to financially support ongoing tech development into the future. Grant was made in 2011.

Vermont Community Garden Network

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Capacity Building **Burlington, VT**

Vermont Community Garden Network (previously Friends of Burlington Garden) is a statewide organization whose mission is to increase public access to community gardening resources; develop outreach, education, and service-learning programs to cultivate and sustain community-based gardens; ensure that underserved groups have equal opportunities for community, school, and neighborhood gardening; cultivate political support for community-based gardening through networking, advocacy, and activism. Organizational capacity support was provided to help VCGN to take the next step as a leader in garden-based food education and community building throughout Vermont. The Vermont Community Garden Network Root & Grow Project will use the funding to complete their strategic planning process, focus their messaging by embracing the Vermont Community Garden Network program name as the organizational name, and increase staff and leader capacity through leadership development training programming. Grant was made in 2012.

Vermont Watersheds United

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Capacity Building **Montpelier, VT**

Watersheds United connects community-based watershed groups in Vermont with the knowledge, tools, and networks needed to more effectively enhance and protect the health of Vermont water resources. By facilitating collaboration between state-wide watershed groups, increasing communication, building capacity, and expanding the effectiveness of local watershed groups Vermont Watersheds United will advance the health, resiliency, and integrity of Vermont's watersheds. Coordinated statewide workshops, trainings and communication forums will enhance the 34 community-based watershed groups' ability to collaborate on projects, gain skills and capacity to respond effectively and efficiently to critical watershed issues, and partner strategically across watersheds to improve water quality and flood resiliency. Tropical Storm Irene exposed the lack of coordination and communication between watershed groups, and the non-existence of organized groups in some watersheds. The seeds of Watersheds United were sown in the wake of that disaster. Multiple planning sessions with stakeholders helped develop a prioritized list of watershed group needs and goals and preferred strategies to accomplish them. This Capacity Building grant will help launch and staff this timely startup. Grant was made in 2013.

Migrant Justice

3 year \$25,000/yr.

Capacity Building **Burlington, VT**

Migrant Justice builds the voice, capacity and power of the migrant farmworker community and engages community partners to organize for economic justice and human rights. Migrant Justice's Human Rights for Food Justice Campaign organizes Vermont communities to advance the uncompromising belief that there is no such thing as 'fair food' or 'food justice' without human rights for farmworkers. A three year capacity grant was awarded to Migrant Justice to hire additional organizing staff as they seek to build alliances with Vermont dairy farmers to adopt a set of "Milk with Dignity" standards. The work will secure immigrant and worker's rights to safe and humane working and housing conditions on Vermont's dairy farms as part of a fair economy and food system. Migrant Justice will continue their successful grassroots community organizing to cultivate an economy and food system where immigrant rights and worker's rights are secured and recognized as fundamental human rights. Grant was made in 2014.

Vermont FEED

Vermont Farm to School Network: Catalyzing Change

Shelburne, VT

3 year \$30,000/yr.

Vermont FEED raises awareness about healthy food, the role of VT farms and farmers, and good nutrition. VT FEED acts as a catalyst for rebuilding healthy food systems and to cultivate links between classrooms, cafeterias, communities, and local farms. Catalyzing Change is centered on the VT Farm To School (FTS) Network goal of engaging 75% of VT schools in integrated food system education, nourishing meals and local purchasing by 2025. The project builds from a strategic mapping process that was used to identify a systems level strategy for scaling FTS to every community in Vermont. The project supports the re-organization of the FTS Network to a “self-organizing” structure with shared leadership and decision making centered around five Strategic Action Teams and a leadership circle, with frequent feedback loops for sharing learning and adjusting strategies. Grant was made in 2015.

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

Youth Recruitment Initiative

Richmond, VT

3 year \$30,000/yr.

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) is a non-profit conservation and education organization with the mission of teaching young people personal responsibility through meaningful work that connects them to the land, community, and one another. VYCC believes that every person, regardless of background, has the ability to work hard, make meaningful contributions to a group, and take responsibility for themselves, and believes youth need opportunities to connect with and appreciate the natural world. VYCC also believes that conservation and agricultural work are ideal platforms to teach leadership, interpersonal, and professional skills. As demand for VYCC’s services grows, funding was provided in support of VYCC’s efforts to enhance their recruitment capabilities. The Capacity-Building grant will help to support a new staff position that leads and organizes all recruitment efforts for the organization. Success will ensure that VYCC serves youth who will benefit most from their programs. Grant was awarded in 2016.

Changing Perspectives

Disability Awareness in Schools

Bradford, VT

3 year \$30,000/yr.

Changing Perspectives works to provide schools with high-quality disability awareness training, curriculum and programming as a pathway for students to understand differences and develop empathy. Changing Perspectives engages students and educators in disability awareness through active dialogue, hands-on learning and reflection designed to build on the natural curiosity of all children and to support educators in developing skills that support inclusivity and respect in their classrooms. Over their first two program years, Changing Perspectives’ K-8 curriculum has been implemented in 30 elementary and middle schools, reaching more than 3,000 students and dozens of educators. They are now engaged in development of high school and preschool level curricula, which will be piloted during the 2017-18 school year. The Capacity Building funds will be used to increase staffing and support staff and board development as demand for their services continue to grow. Grant was made in 2017.

Salvation Farms

Strengthening Salvation Farms

Morrisville, VT

3 year \$30,000/yr.

Salvation Farms works to build increased resilience in Vermont’s food system through agricultural surplus management. They do this by fostering collaborative, cross-sector partnerships that create efficient management practices for Vermont’s farm surplus through the engagement and utilization of available resources, skills and knowledge. Founded in 2005 as a grassroots gleaning collective, their approach to on farm surplus food management has grown to include aggregation, processing, workforce development, technical assistance, research, and advocacy. Among their achievements are: the creation of an online platform to support gleaning coordination and to track impact; operating Vermont’s first surplus crop food hub in tandem with a workforce development initiative; and conducting the nation’s first, state-focused food loss on farms study. SF has gained national recognition as a leader in addressing on-farm food loss through innovation and partnerships. Capacity Building grant funds will be used to engage consultants support organizational and leadership development. With the commitment of staff

and board SF will make progress in the following areas: Board Development; Leadership & Organizational Culture Development; Succession Planning; Improving Administrative Systems – Financial & Constituent Management; Refining Impact Metrics (Results Based Accountability); and Advance Fundraising Planning. Grant was awarded in 2018.

Outright Vermont

3 year \$30,000/yr.

Outright Capacity Building

Burlington, VT

As the go-to resource for LGBTQ+ youth across Vermont, Outright Vermont works to build safe, healthy, and supportive environments for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth ages 13-22. Founded in 1989, Outright Vermont (Outright) operates under an organizational model built on youth-adult partnerships which create mutual opportunities for growth, learning, and skill development. Outright's comprehensive initiatives help youth develop self and peer connections, strengthen families, and transform schools, communities, and systems. The three-year capacity-building grant will help enable Outright to increase the accessibility of its programs and services for youth, their families, and communities. In the next three years, Outright plans to expand and strengthen its statewide reach, with a focus on improved and enhanced service delivery for the most at-risk LGBTQ+ youth of color, youth in rural regions, and other LGBTQ+ youth most disproportionately impacted by adversity. Grant was made in 2019.