

## 2018 Vermont Economic Justice Grant Recipients



### [ANEW Place](#)

\$10,000

#### 4-Phase Continuum of Care

Burlington, VT

ANEW Place provides a group home and transitional housing for 26 otherwise homeless adults in Burlington, Vermont. Our mission is to provide a holistic continuum of services for the homeless, centered in love and dignity, that foster growth, cultivate community engagement, and provide tools for lifelong change so that each person may start anew. We value the whole person and emphasize social, mental, physical, spiritual, relational, and occupational wellness to support health and growth. We connect guests with a community-wide network of resources, creating continued partnerships for shared growth. Committed to the belief that all people can change, ANEW Place creates unique paths for positive, lifelong transformation. ANEW Place respectfully requests general support to sustain our 4-Phase Continuum of Care which fosters personal long-term growth in all of the homeless persons that we serve so that each can make a successful, sustainable transition toward wellness and independence. Through a holistic, person-centered approach, we work to address the underlying causes of each participant's homelessness, helping individuals to gain the skills needed to move beyond homelessness and start ANEW. We aim to see lives changed and to see an end to the cycle of homelessness in which so many of our guests find themselves trapped.

### [Building Bright Futures](#)

\$10,000

#### Building Bright Futures Regional Early Childhood Councils

Williston, VT

Building Bright Futures (BBF) is Vermont's early childhood public-private partnership established by law to monitor the state's early care, health and education systems and to advise the Administration and Legislature on policy and systems improvements. BBF operates as a backbone organization for collective impact at the state and local level by convening stakeholders and community members with a common goal of meeting the diverse needs of all Vermont children and families. Through its council network, Building Bright Futures serves thousands of children, their families, and communities across the state. This project would support Building Bright Futures and its twelve Regional Early Childhood Councils in their work to collectively identify gaps and improve equity in access to services and supports across early care, health, and education for young children and families in their communities around the state. BBF regional councils serve as a vehicle to elevate regional concerns and systems challenges related to equity and access in state policy discussions. Funds would be utilized to help support council activities and coordination.

### [Cathedral Square](#)

\$10,000

#### SASH for Families Pilot: Montpelier Affordable Housing Family SASH Program

South Burlington, VT

SASH is a nationally recognized, team-based program of care coordination shown to improve population health, reduce the growth in Medicare expenditures and help people stay (or become) healthy and living at home. Operating from 140 affordable-housing communities in Vermont, SASH partners with 68 organizations to provide comprehensive and continuous support to about 5,000 older Vermonters and people with disabilities, free of charge and at their home. Participation is voluntary, with most participants living in the housing communities where SASH is based. SASH is part of Vermont's "Blueprint for Health" initiative to reform health care by investing in wellness and attending to the social determinants of health, including housing. We seek to expand the reach of SASH, a proven,

innovative model to assist low-income Vermonters living in affordable housing. Using the SASH platform, Family SASH will work towards the goals of increased health, increased success in remaining housed, and addressing the social determinants of health including social connections, food security, and stable employment.

### **Community Health Services of Addison County - Open Door Clinic**

\$20,000

Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos! - Creating Tools to Enhance Our Welcoming Culture

Middlebury, VT

The Open Door Clinic (ODC) provides free health care services to uninsured and underinsured members of our community in a compassionate, respectful, culturally sensitive manner until insurance is obtained and permanent medical homes are established.

The Open Door Clinic provides access to quality healthcare services, free of charge, to those who are uninsured or under-insured and who meet financial eligibility guidelines; services are provided in a compassionate, respectful and culturally sensitive manner until a permanent healthcare provider can be established. Healthcare is a human right; yet providing services across barriers that span one's culture, language and socioeconomic demographic are challenging in white, rural Vermont where there is a dearth of resources to help welcome and orient newcomers. Currently, 35% of our distinct patients are immigrants who come to Vermont to work primarily on dairy farms. We support these patients who are vital to Vermont's economy, by providing them access to quality healthcare in a compassionate, respectful and culturally and linguistically competent manner. The "Welcome! ¡Bienvenidos!" project is about creating new ways to welcome an ever-changing constellation of patients and volunteers, to foster a sense of community and to contribute to a healthier VT.

### **GBICS**

\$20,000

Life is Better with Teeth: Improving Oral Health Outcomes for Bennington Area Children

Bennington, VT

GBICS is a community-based, non-profit organization that works with people who live in or near poverty in Bennington County. Originally started as a charitable food project in 1974, we have worked toward being an organization that meets people where they are and provides needed resources to help them move on. Our goal is to help meet the basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and access to health care. We recognize that moving up and out of poverty requires not just a stream of income but also a reservoir of personal and community assets. We take actions in a way that treats others with genuine respect and in an equitable manner. We rely heavily on volunteers, many of whom are the people we serve. Since 2012, the Bennington Oral Health Coalition (BOHC) has worked on a grassroots basis to improve local oral health outcomes through education, outreach, and direct services. Bennington leads the state in cavities, untreated cavities and lack of dental sealants among kindergartners and third graders, and adults with loss of permanent teeth. BOHC proposes to establish a free preventative oral health program for Bennington children ages 3 to 10 at which an experienced dental hygienist will perform screenings, apply fluoride varnishes, place dental sealants, provide oral health and healthy diet education to children and families, and work with parents to refer children to dental homes for clinical care and ongoing services.

### **Green Mountain United Way**

\$10,000

K.E.E.P. Financial Coaching

Montpelier, VT

Green Mountain United Way fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in every community in Caledonia, Essex, Orange, Orleans, and Washington Counties. We serve a large, rural region including the poorest and most rural areas in Vermont and believe deeply in the power of collaboration. We bring partners together to solve tough problems that impact our communities, problems that none of our individual agencies could solve on our own. By sharing resources across traditional geographic boundaries we bring creative solutions which are nimble and responsive to community needs using the collective impact model. GMUW's mission is to mobilize communities to create lasting changes in local conditions that will improve lives. K.E.E.P. Financial Coaching is an innovative program training direct-service nonprofit staff within our service region in financial literacy

and individual coaching in order to empower them to address financial issues alongside other critical issues in their daily work with clients. This funding will support the expansion of this program beyond the current "pilot project" and help to train 50 more financial coaches in the five Vermont counties served by Green Mountain United Way: Caledonia, Essex, Orleans, Orange, and Washington. These 50 coaches will cumulatively engage between 80 and 800 clients (annually) in financial coaching developing goals and solutions that address the root problem of poverty.

### **HOPE Works**

\$10,000

Access to the inaccessible: a trauma-informed path to free and affordable healthcare

Burlington, VT

HOPE Works is dedicated to ending all forms of sexual violence. We are committed to serving the Chittenden County community through the continued provision of our services and to being a leading voice in the State of Vermont for meaningful change in law and society. We provide crisis counseling and advocacy for those whose lives have been affected by sexual violence. Our education outreach work strives to change attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate and condone the cycle of violence. We constantly seek to expand our efforts to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community and welcome all to our agency. Support for our mission is actively sought through fundraising, development, and the dedicated efforts of our volunteers. Free and affordable healthcare is a complex issue of both ensuring its continued existence and ensuring such services are both known and accessible to those traumatized and least likely to access care. Within this project, healthcare is identified with the lens of two key victim services: free and responsive medical response after sexual assault and trafficking victimization, and free and trauma-informed mental health and substance abuse treatment for any victim of sexual trauma and abuse. With a Ben & Jerry's Foundation award of \$20,000, HOPE Works can a) continue to provide both, b) expand free therapeutic services, and c) enhance trauma-informed wraparound advocacy and support in order to decrease barriers of accessing such healthcare.

### **Mercy Connections**

\$10,000

Stand by Me (SBM)

Burlington, VT

Mercy Connections mission is to nurture people toward greater self-sufficiency through education, mentoring, entrepreneurial skill-building and community-engagement opportunities. Mercy Connections is a values-driven nonprofit organization living the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy with an enduring concern for women. By nurturing self-sufficiency through education, mentoring, and community, people are empowered to make significant life changes. Our three program areas, Justice & Mentoring, Education & Transition, and Women's Small Business allow participants with formidable challenges to take advantage of our research-based programs that incorporate differentiated instruction, gender-responsivity, multicultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed practices. Beyond the individual level, we take action in our community to address injustice in our judicial and economic systems and fight for basic human rights for all. The Foundation's investment will support Stand by Me (SBM) to advance economic and social justice by working with women who are incarcerated and supporting those participating in alternatives to incarceration. By focusing on risk-reduction interventions, SBM aligns education, skill building, and self-development to maximize the efficacy and increase the humaneness of the Criminal Justice System. We accomplish this through 1) Fostering Hope & Strength (a biweekly class for women at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility that offers an opportunity for reflection, learning, and growing); and 2) Alternatives to Incarceration (supporting those under the supervision of the Department of Corrections).

### **Milk with dignity Standards Council Inc.**

\$15,000

Milk with Dignity

Burlington, VT

The MDSC's mission is to monitor the development of a sustainable dairy industry that advances the human rights of farmworkers, the long-term interests of farmers, & the ethical supply chain concerns of consumers & retail food companies through the implementation of the Milk with Dignity Program. The Program's unique problem-solving approach brings farmers and farmworkers together and ensures

compliance with workers' human rights in participating dairy supply chains. We accomplish these goals through detailed annual farm audits that consist of thorough interviews with all farm employees and ownership or management, as well as review of payroll records and visual inspections of worker housing. We also operate a 24-hour worker support line. The Milk with Dignity Program is working to resolve systemic human rights abuses of a precarious workforce excluded from many labor protections. MDSC seeks support to advance the economic justice progress of the Milk with Dignity Program, which, within a short time of launching earlier this year, has educated workers about their rights & responsibilities, investigated and resolved over 20 complaints, and begun working collaboratively with farmworkers and owners to resolve workers' rights issues. Because of the MDSC's work, farmers have agreed to resolve problems ranging from sub-minimum wages, lack of essential personal protective equipment, extremely overcrowded housing, lack of smoke detectors. and others.

### Public Assets Institute

\$20,000

#### Public Assets Institute General Support

Montpelier, VT

Public Assets' mission is to improve the well being of ordinary citizens, especially the most vulnerable, by conducting research and fiscal analysis, disseminating information, and developing and advancing policies that state government can enact. We want Vermont to be a state that works for all, regardless of skin color, gender, or zip code. In addition to our core state tax, budget, and economic work, we focus on three issue areas: education finance, health care finance, and family economic security. We are the Vermont member of the State Priorities Partnership, a national network of 42 state organizations—supported by the DC-based Center on Budget & Policy Priorities—that collaborate on behalf of low- and moderate income people. Public Assets wants the state to work for everyone. We help improve Vermonters' economic well being by researching and analyzing state tax, budget, and economic data and policy from the perspective of low- and moderate-income people. We publish clear, easy-to-read reports, op-eds, blogs, and briefs that connect historic trends and government complexities with Vermonters' daily lives in school, work, families, and communities. This general operating support will allow us to expand our capability both to defend essential public services and equitable distribution of resources and to advance formed proposals for fair and just economic and fiscal laws and practices that improve the lives of Vermonters.

### Rural Vermont

\$20,000

#### Cultivating Economic Justice through a Vibrant Working Landscape

Montpelier, VT

Rural Vermont is dedicated to building communities that embrace regenerative agriculture and wise use of all resources in meeting the needs of people and our environment. Rural Vermont believes a just transition to regenerative agriculture is essential to ensure economic viability for small-scale diversified farms in Vermont. These farms provide their communities with food security, build healthy soils which protect water quality, sequester carbon to combat climate change, and sustain our working landscape for future generations.

Rural Vermont is a statewide membership organization that educates, organizes and advocates for family farmers and supports their vital role in sustaining rural communities while creating a fair and resilient food system for everyone.

Our work is to inform farmers, and the people they feed, about public policies that affect their lives and livelihoods and help empower them to participate effectively in the decision-making processes that create those policies and change them when necessary.

We address issues at the local, state, and national level that affect the economic viability of family farms, impact the land and other natural resources on which they depend, or hinder community-based control of our food systems. Time and again, we hear Vermonters calling for an equitable food system that ensures all farmers have equal opportunity to prosper. Rural Vermont's work is being largely guided by this call from our members, and includes an ongoing series of deep dialogue events to delve into the issues that our farmer constituents have identified as barriers to economic viability; working groups to determine solutions to the most pressing and urgent issues, as well as action plans to achieve meaningful progress; continued advocacy on behalf of community-scale farmers and the

people and communities they support; and participation in ag- and justice-oriented coalitions to build our collective power in pursuit of broad social justice.

**The Seedlings Program**

\$15,000

**Seedlings Program Community Collaboration**

Bennington, VT

Seedlings provides a nurturing after-school environment for children in poverty living in Bennington County. Students enter the multi-year program in first grade and remain in the program through the transition into middle school. The program provides consistent programming to build academic and social skills, creativity and resilience through one-on-one academic tutoring, enrichment activities, and mentoring. While the program works primarily with children, families are provided support and resources as needed. Through our work with volunteers and the greater community, we are able to increase understanding of the impact poverty can have on the lives of children and families and provide avenues to address these issues. The Seedlings Program is entering its fifth year and will be graduating the first class of students that began as first graders in 2014. This multi-year program provides consistent programming to build academic and social skills, creativity and resiliency. We have affiliated with a number of local and state-wide programs that benefit our students and their families, including The Tutorial Center that directly links Seedlings parents and siblings to academic resources. We are requesting continued staffing support, funding to allow additional academic enrichment or tutoring for children who are not eligible through Title 1 or who have unmet academic need, and for support to formalize the 5 year curriculum that we have developed.

**Total \$ 250,000**

## Grant Recipients



### **Vermont Farmers Food Center**

\$15,000

Farmacy Project - A Continuation of VFFC's Community Integration Project  
Rutland; VT

Vermont Farmers Food Center (VFFC) increases access and availability of locally produced food in the Rutland Region by expanding markets and market access, aggregation, and distribution of locally produced and value added agricultural products. VFFC began as a grassroots, volunteer-led project and is spearheading the rebuilding of infrastructure necessary for agriculture to serve as a regional economic engine through development of 2.93 acres of industrially zoned land with four existing buildings in the heart of Downtown Rutland. VFFC increases access and availability of locally produced food through educational programs and markets necessary for the growth of a vibrant and sustainable regional agricultural system that has capacity to feed its citizens regardless of economic status, increase health of the population, and add to economic wellbeing of the community. VFFC is a place to be supported in sustaining an economically viable, way of living for farmers and consumers alike. Vermont Farmers Food Center's (VFFC) Community Integration Project has expand memberships, enhanced cultural and social opportunities, on-site training, and year 'round support for our anchor initiative Farmacy Project (newly renamed). Farmacy Project provides free farm shares to those living in or on the edge of poverty and suffering from diet-related disease. Now in it's fourth year of operating at the VFFC facility, a refurbished industrial space in the heart of Rutland City, Farmacy Project is known for it's support of emerging farmers, the health and dignity of our most vulnerable citizens, and reclamation of our neighborhoods. Requested grant funding will provide continued support for the Farmacy Project and integrated programming. [www.VermontFarmersFoodCenter.org](http://www.VermontFarmersFoodCenter.org)

### **Vermont Workers' Center - Jobs With Justice, Inc.**

\$15,000

General Support

Burlington; VT

The Vermont Workers' Center (VWC) is a democratic, member-run organization dedicated to organizing for the human rights of the people in Vermont. VWC seeks an economically just and democratic Vermont in which all residents can meet their human needs and enjoy their human rights, including dignified work, universal healthcare, housing, education, childcare, transportation and a healthy environment.

The Vermont Workers' Center is a statewide organization of low-income and working people with the shared goal of an economically just and democratic Vermont. Our methodology is to bring people together into organizing committees that carry out new organizing, campaign activities, political education, and group reflection. We have organizing committees in six counties, with approximately 200 active members who carry out the bulk of our activities - carpooling to public hearings, hosting workshops and meals, participating in group studies, and organizing rallies and marches. Our work is

coordinated through statewide base-building and political education committees, as well as our elected Coordinating Committee and volunteer Coordinators team. To support the VWC in developing the political clarity, commitment, and confidence of low-income and working people in our state through a campaign for publicly financed healthcare. More specifically, to enable our staff organizers to support volunteer members in carrying the work forward while they juggle jobs, child- and elder-care, and other commitments.  
<http://www.workerscenter.org/>

## **Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform**

\$20,000

### **Re-Imagining Justice**

Burlington; VT,

Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform works for a more restorative and effective criminal justice response with a vision for a coordinated criminal justice system that values the humanity in all people, aims to restore relationships and communities, and uses incarceration as a last resort for public safety.

VCJR is an education and advocacy organization committed to transforming Vermont's criminal justice system into one that is more fair and effective. We seek to limit collateral consequences of criminal convictions and incarceration that too often contribute to inter-generational cycles of trauma and poverty.

VCJR uses a range of grassroots strategies including public advocacy, education, outreach, coalition building, media campaigns, and leadership development (among directly-affected individuals). We use these strategies to address systemic issues like mass incarceration, racial disparities, gender inequities, inadequate mental health and drug treatment services, and inadequate opportunities for education and job training. Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform will continue our unrelenting focus on ending unnecessary incarceration in Vermont (incarcerating more people for longer periods of time than necessary to ensure public safety). We will continue our work to reduce over incarceration among low-income Vermonters, Vermonters of color, non-violent offenders and Vermonters struggling to live with and overcome mental illness and addiction. We will be building on our groundbreaking drug policy reform work addressing the opioid crisis in Vermont. And we will be shining a light on how unnecessary incarceration especially hurts parents, their partners and children as we implement our new incarceration diversion program for parents. [vcjr.org](http://vcjr.org)

## **Voices for Vermont's Children**

\$15,000

### **Choosing Equity: Advancing Policies that Help All Kids Thrive**

Montpelier; VT,

Voices for Vermont's Children (Voices)'s mission is to promote public policy that enhances the lives of children and youth in Vermont.

Voices for Vermont's Children is the only independent, multi-issue, non-profit children's research and policy advocacy organization in Vermont. We collect, analyze and share data on child wellbeing as the Vermont KidsCount grantee. Based on this research, we advance policies that support VT's children and youth in the domains of economic justice, education, health, & community/families. Voices seeks continued general support funding to fight income inequality through policy advocacy and education. Rather than emphasizing the need for kids and families to develop "grit" and "resilience" Voices challenges inequitable social and legal structures that disadvantage too many Vermonter children.

Voices has a number of economic equity initiatives planned for the coming year, notably: 1) a campaign to improve the lives of the thousands of children who rely upon Reach Up cash assistance by demanding a cost-of-living adjustment which hasn't happened since 2004; and 2) an advocacy conference to expand the capacity of youth, parents, providers and other activists to push legislators to advance anti-poverty and pro-child policies.

<http://www.voicesforvtkids.org/>

**Total \$**