

2015 Vermont Economic Justice Grant Recipients



[Center for an Agricultural Economy](#)

\$15,000

Grow Your Own

The Center for an Agricultural Economy's (CAE) mission is to engage the public in building a regenerative, locally based, healthy food system through collaboration opportunities, educational outreach, providing infrastructure, and assisting in hunger relief and local food access projects. The CAE acts to create opportunities and partnerships that allow for more local food to be grown and consumed locally. Funding was provided for the Grow Your Own program, designed to increase food independence, health and wellbeing through shared knowledge and experience. The project is run by the Center for an Agricultural Economy, the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and NEK Kids on the Move, and is led by community and food pantry members. Through the project, CAE shares seeds, vegetable starts, and gardening information with low-income folks at the pantry, and host a series of monthly gatherings on topics from whole chicken processing to wild edibles, to food preservation and home composting. In recent months, this project has grown and funding will assist with coordination, materials and stipends.

[Clarina Howard Nichols Center](#)

\$15,000

Building Safer Communities through Economic Justice and Affordable Housing

Clarina Howard Nichols Center works to end domestic and sexual violence in Lamoille County through advocacy, outreach and social change. Clarina provides survivor centered support for individuals and families affected by sexual, dating and domestic violence, stalking and trafficking as well as training and technical assistance to community partners. Funding was provided as Clarina Howard Nichols Center seeks to further the work begun with Safety Beyond Shelter funded last year. Clarina will continue to follow survivors' lead while broadening the scope of our economic justice work related to affordable housing for survivors of domestic and sexual violence to include: Systems change work, emphasizing the intersection of oppression and violence with economic injustice; Building an ally network to support the survivors' caucus; Deepening the commitment to housing equity and working to ensure all survivors have a safe, sustainable roof over their heads; and all Lamoille housing and service providers as well as legislators are engaged.

[Community Health Services of Addison County - Open Door Clinic](#)

\$15,000

Strategic Communications Initiative

The Open Door Clinic (ODC) provides free health care services to uninsured and underinsured members of Addison County and nearby communities, including migrant farmworkers and their families, in a compassionate, respectful, culturally sensitive manner until insurance is obtained and permanent medical homes are established. Funding was provided as ODC develops and implements strategies and innovative ways to further engage volunteers, patients, donors and partners, including marketing and fundraising initiatives. Strengthening communications will include developing outreach materials and providing communications support, creating materials to strengthen the organization's institutional image, cultivating story-telling capacity, and creating consistent, bilingual messaging for their diverse audience and constituencies.

Pathways Vermont, Inc.

\$15,000

Housing First Housing Contingency Fund

Pathways Vermont is committed to creating access to choice, connection and home for Vermonters struggling with mental health and other life challenges, including homelessness, addiction and poverty. Funding was provided for Pathways Vermont's Housing First program in supporting individuals with chronic behavioral health issues, and long histories of homelessness and/or institutionalization, to find and maintain permanent housing through the Housing Contingency Fund. This Fund supports individuals by providing assistance in accessing, or in maintaining housing, for needs such as security deposits, utility deposits, short-term rental assistance, cleaning services and repairs. The Housing First program is composed of interdisciplinary support teams that provide community-based support services that are client-driven and non-coercive.

Spectrum Youth & Family Services

\$10,000

Spectrum Multicultural Youth Program

Spectrum Youth and Family Services helps vulnerable youth transform their lives by addressing basic needs, supporting growth and development at times of transition, and preparing them for adult independence. Spectrum is committed to serving youth amid housing failures, dropping out of school and returning, relapses, justice system involvement, and other U-turns as they develop the confidence, skills, and motivation to take on adult responsibilities. Spectrum received funding support for its new Multicultural Youth Outreach Program (MYP) to help youth ages 14-26 from New American families in Chittenden County connect to community supports, with an emphasis on educational and vocational training opportunities, job skills and employment readiness activities. MYP will provide job and life skills classes at area high schools, will connect with youth from immigrant and refugee populations in community settings and through Spectrum's Drop-In Center and other programs, and will provide direct supports that lead to long-term community integration and independence.

United Way of Lamoille County

\$15,000

New Foundations

The United Way of Lamoille County is a direct service/community impact organization administering a wide variety of programs that strive to provide optimal physical and mental health, children that will enter school ready to succeed, and families able to achieve financial stability and independence. The United Way of Lamoille County works one-on-one with individuals and families to get to the root cause of what has been keeping them from being successful. Funding was provided for the New Foundations (NF) initiative which is an innovative residential program designed to provide educational and employment opportunities to low-income, single parents with children age 5 and under to enable them to earn higher wages to support their families. While in the NF program, participants receive a furnished apartment for up to two years while they work on furthering their education and gaining employment. Participants receive all the supports necessary to prevent a cycle of poverty that can be passed on to the next generation.

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition

\$10,000

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition (VAHC) is committed to ensuring all Vermonters have decent, safe and affordable housing, particularly Vermont's low- and moderate-income residents, elders, and people with disabilities. VAHC pursues their mission to; encourage resident participation and control in their housing; advocate for preservation of existing housing, renter protection, and development of new perpetually-affordable housing; promote recognition of housing as a basic right; and encourage use of innovative means to preserve and increase VT's affordable housing stock. The Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition received renewed general support funding for some of VAHC's core programs; education and policy development at the federal and state levels;

collaboration with the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH); low-income community engagement and leadership development; and generating support for affordable housing through a collaborative housing awareness campaign. These activities will help create real change for low-income Vermonters by increasing access to safe and affordable housing, reducing homelessness, and creating a more resilient network of resident leaders across the state who can work toward positive changes in their communities.

Vermont Works for Women

\$10,000

Transitional Jobs for Women

Vermont Works for Women (VWW)'s mission is to help women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue and excel in work that leads to economic independence. VWW's programs provide a unique combination of coaching and skill-building aimed to prepare women and girls for economic stability. A renewal grant was provided in support of Vermont Works for Women's Transitional Jobs (TJ) program which helps women with barriers to employment such as a history of incarceration or those transitioning from public assistance connect to Vermont's economic vitality by equipping them with the skills, confidence, and support to succeed. Using a hands-on work crew model, women work as a team on site at local community organizations gaining employability skills in real-world settings. With a strong record of success, TJ sees 60% of graduates moving on to permanent or transitional employment.

VSA Vermont

\$20,000

Start With The Arts (SWTA) Preschool Literacy Program

VSA Vermont (VSA VT) uses the magic of the arts to enhance the capabilities and increase the confidence of children and adults with disabilities. With sites in every county, VSA VT provides arts education programs, professional development workshops, and cultural access services to hundreds of Vermonters each year. Renewed funding support was provided for the Start With The Arts (SWTA) program which combines arts-based literacy activities for Vermont's most isolated low-income children, by providing professional development for childcare providers in rural registered childcare homes and small licensed centers across Vermont. SWTA gives children of all abilities the literacy and creative learning strategies they will need to succeed in school, while helping low-income childcare providers advance in skills, recognition, and access to increased subsidies. By the end of the program, childcare providers will have created and delivered their own arts-based literacy activities, ensuring confidence, skill, and habit in providing quality early education long-term. SWTA is considered a statewide model for literacy education.