

## 2016 Vermont Economic Justice Grant Recipients



### Center for an Agricultural Economy

\$15,000

#### Grow Your Own

Hardwick, VT

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) is a non-profit organization, with a mission to engage the public in building a regenerative, locally based, healthy food system through collaboration opportunities, educational outreach, providing infrastructure, and through 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. The CAE's programs range from a revolving loan fund for farmers and food producers, community garden classes and networking, processing local agricultural products for schools and institutions, as well as working with food service directors to purchase and source more locally grown products. Funding was provided for the Grow Your Own program which increases food independence, health and wellbeing through shared knowledge and experience. This project is run by the Center for an Agricultural Economy, the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and NEK Kids on the Move with a community-led steering committee. The work has developed with monthly workshops and events, based on the mission of food independence, health and well-being through shared knowledge. For this coming year the project will: double the number of garden mentors in 2017, increase local business sponsors to reduce dependence on grant funding, and double the membership in the program from 56 individuals to over 100, with a particular focus on families with children.

### Clarina Howard Nichols Center

\$20,000

#### Be the Change

Morrisville, VT

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. Be the Change recognizes that the most effective advocates for affordable housing are those who most appreciate having it - those whose lives have been at risk for lack of it. Once housed, these survivors of sexual and domestic violence will develop the leadership skills to further advocate for wide-spread change that will make housing affordable for all. Be the Change builds on Clarina Howard Nichols Center's work advocating for affordable housing focusing on the critical need for trauma-informed leadership development.

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

\$15,000

#### Expanding ODC's Visibility: Creating More Success Stories through New Approaches in Communications

Middlebury, VT

The Open Door Clinic (ODC) provides free health care services to uninsured and underinsured members of the community in a compassionate, respectful, culturally sensitive manner until insurance is obtained and permanent medical homes are established. Latino migrant farm workers comprise 60% of their total patient population and face profound language and

cultural barriers. Through their outreach program, ODC provides flu clinics on upwards of 35 local farms, and have launched a new dental program involving seven volunteer dentists. ODC is working to make the Open Door Clinic a household name throughout Addison County in "stage two" of their Strategic Communications Initiative. Last year, ODC created a new communications staff position that focused on developing the clinic's outward face in the community. They produced their first professional, institutional video which is increasing awareness of who they are, what they do and who can benefit from ODC's services. This year, ODC will invest further in their identity, logo, branding, and website to create consistent messaging for the diverse audience of patients, volunteers and donors.

### [Green Mountain Farm-to-School, Inc.](#)

\$15,000

Promoting the Health of the Northeast Kingdom through Food

Newport, VT

Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS)'s mission is to restore and strengthen local food systems in Vermont by promoting positive economic and educational relationships between schools, farms, and communities. GMFTS creates healthy communities by working across the food system with capacity building, resource development, and technical assistance through GMFTS' multiple initiatives. Funding was provided as Green Mountain Farm-to-School addresses the economic, social, and environmental impacts of poverty by increasing access to healthy and affordable foods in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. In the coming year, GMFTS will reach more Vermonters than ever before through school gardens; farm to school programs with nutrition and agriculture education; Green Mountain Farm Direct, a regional food hub distributing local foods to various institutions; The Lunchbox, a summer meal program through a food truck; and the Vermont Harvest of the Month, a statewide marketing campaign to promote local, seasonal foods.

### [Rural Vermont](#)

\$15,000

Leading a Just Transition to Regenerative Agriculture for All Vermont Farmers

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 the 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 the working landscape for future generations. Building on a 30-plus-year history of public education, community organizing, and advocacy for economic justice for family farmers, Rural Vermont will build grassroots support for adopting public policies that reward farmers who practice regenerative agriculture and provide economic incentives and educational opportunities to help other farmers adopt regenerative practices.

### [Salvation Farms](#)

\$20,000

Vermont Commodity Program: Access to Education and Nutrition

Morrisville, VT

Salvation Farms (SF) increases resilience in Vermont's food system through agricultural surplus management by fostering collaborative cross-sector partnerships that create efficient management practices for Vermont's farms. SF builds greater food system independence by managing edible crops that Vermont's farms do not send to market. In a recent study conducted by SF, it was found that an excess of 14 million pounds of wholesome crops are estimated to never leave Vermont Farms.

By aligning investments, partnerships, and infrastructure, SF increases the availability of nutrient dense foods to individuals who rely on charitable and institutional food programs. These institutional meal sites include prisons, nursing homes, and schools.

This fall, Salvation Farms launched the Vermont Commodity Program (VCP), focused on managing large volumes of surplus Vermont grown crops and operating as a workforce training program for individuals seeking transitional support into the workforce. Funding will support the VCP in its early stages, and help to stabilize this new community-based facility in order to yield employable individuals, engage and educate eaters, and facilitate critical resource management while bolstering access to local foods by those most vulnerable.

### Spectrum Youth & Family Services

\$10,000

#### Multicultural Youth Program

Burlington, VT

Spectrum Youth and Family Services (Spectrum) 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's mission is to empower teenagers, young adults and their families to make and sustain positive changes through prevention, intervention, and life skills services. Spectrum's Multicultural Youth Program (MYP) brings multicultural youth (ages 14-24) primarily from Vermont's refugee population, together as peers who can support each other. The MYP introduces youth to community resources and increases their visibility and voice within Spectrum and in the community-at-large. MYP's primary objectives are to support MYP youth to meet basic needs for housing, education, employment, health, and community connections, in ways that ensure that every young person has the opportunities and preparation for adult independence.

### Vermont Farmers Food Center

\$20,000

#### 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. Funding was provided for VFFC's Community Integration Project which will enhance their established people-centered farm, along with food and community programs, all anchored by the Health Care Share initiative. Working in partnership with hospitals and health care providers, the Health Care Share Program provides 12 weeks of CSA shares to those living in or on the edge of poverty. In addition to socio-economic need, participants have been identified as either at risk of, or already suffering from, food related health issues. The HCS program is expanding to include more participants, offer more in depth supplemental programming, provide on-site training, and year round support. Operating within the VFFC, the HCS program supports emerging farmers and the health and dignity of the most vulnerable citizens.

### 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. Funding was provided to support VWC's work to mobilize and build power and voice among working families and low-income people in Vermont. VWC's work continues to organize people across race and class divides, support collective bargaining rights, stand up to corporate attacks on universal healthcare, engage communities in grassroots base-building using a Human Rights framework in order to advance policy changes

that help families and communities, and foster anti-oppression leadership development among the working class.

### 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. Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform will focus its political education and outreach work on ending not just mass incarceration (i.e. too many people, especially poor people, people of color, those with mental illness and addictions, non-violent "offenders") but also hyper-incarceration (i.e. for too long). Addressing length means working to prohibit incarceration for "technical violations" of conditions of release; increasing parole for older, low-risk inmates; and implementing Second Look policies, whereby people with long sentences may petition for re-sentencing based on a cultural shift and recognition that long sentences are often both unnecessary and harmful.

### Voices for Vermont's Children

\$15,000

#### The Best of All Possible Worlds: Creating a State Where All Children 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. Funding was provided to support Voices' work to advance policies that address the profound needs of Vermont's most disadvantaged young people. Child poverty continues to grow in Vermont while the very programs that help reduce or mitigate the impacts of poverty are targeted for cuts or elimination. To highlight the system-wide impacts of growing income inequality, Voices released two reports: "Difficult Choices: Housing for Vermont Families"; and "Education Matters: The Impacts of Systemic Inequity in Vermont". Voices will share their data and reports in community meetings in support of their goal to build a grassroots coalition ready to advance better policies and budget priorities for kids and families.

### VSA Vermont

\$20,000

#### Start with the Arts (SWTA) Preschool Literacy Program

Essex Junction, VT

VSA Vermont (VSA VT) is a statewide organization that uses the magic of the arts to enhance the capabilities and increase the confidence of children and adults with disabilities. VSA VT serves 1,000 Vermonters each year, from birth to seniors, at 70 sites in every county, providing arts education programs, professional development workshops, and cultural access services. Every program is collaborative and supports the goals of partnering organizations, enhancing their skills in providing inclusive education programs. Start with the Arts (SWTA) delivers arts-based literacy activities for 285 of the most isolated, low-income children at rural registered childcare homes and small centers across Vermont, and professional development for one of the lowest paid groups of workers – home day care providers. SWTA gives Vermont children of all abilities the literacy and creative learning strategies they need to succeed in school, and helps low-income childcare providers advance in skills, recognition, and access to increased subsidies. This year, VSA is expanding their piloted Family & Community Engagement program, providing a second-tier of professional development to SWTA alum. Providers create and deliver their own activities, ensuring confidence and skill to provide quality education.

**Total \$200,000**