

## 2020 Vermont Economic Justice Grant Recipients



### [ANEW Place](#)

\$10,000

#### Chart ANEW Path

Burlington, VT

ANEW Place provides a group home and transitional housing for 26 otherwise homeless adults in Burlington, Vermont. ANEW Place supports their guests with a holistic continuum of services, that emphasize social, mental, physical, spiritual, relational, and occupational wellness to support health and foster growth, cultivate community engagement, and provide tools for lifelong change so that each person may start anew. Funding was provided in support of the four phase Chart ANEW Path program which annually serves an average of 86 homeless adults and includes - Phase 1: ANEW Start | Caring community for a new beginning; Phase 2: ANEW Step | Support and skills for a new direction; Phase 3: ANEW Leaf | Transitional housing for lifelong change; and Phase 4: ANEW Life | Aftercare for continued growth. This program fosters personal long-term growth in their homeless guests so that each can make a successful, sustainable transition toward wellness and self-sufficiency.

### [Building Bright Futures](#)

\$10,000

#### Early Childhood Regional 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. Funding was provided in support of BBF's 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 will help support council activities and coordination.

### [Clemmons Family Farm, Inc.](#)

\$5,000

#### African Diaspora Culinary Heritage Hoop House

Charlotte, VT

The Clemmons Family Farm, located in Charlotte, is one of the few African American-owned farms that remain in the State of Vermont. It has been owned by the Clemmons family since 1962. Over the past 5 years, the family has been planning and implementing the 148-acre farm's transition into an African American Heritage and Multicultural Center. They provide educational arts, culture, and agricultural programs through artist residencies, cooking demonstrations, arts engagements, and other cultural experiences for the community, visitors, and tourists in a working farm landscape. In 2019, the Farm received a USDA grant to build a hoop house and expand its agriculture and culinary heritage program. Funding was given toward providing reliable irrigation to the hoop house in order to facilitate the African Diaspora Culinary Heritage Program which will support farmers to grow culturally important crops and promote entrepreneurial opportunities for African-American/African diaspora/black farmers and culinary artists while supporting multicultural community building.

### **Global Campuses Foundation**

\$5,000

#### **Pathways to Understanding & Inclusiveness Program**

Williston, VT

GCF is the only organization in Vermont providing a network of educational campuses fostering advanced learning opportunities for over 200 adults who experience disability. Participants are the creators and producers of their educational experiences taking on leadership opportunities as teaching faculty, student scholars, and administrative staff. GCF helps people discover and grow their passions, develop new social networks, advance their careers, and achieve new levels of independence. Funding was provided in support of the new "Pathways to Understanding and Inclusiveness Program: Providing Opportunity, Voice, and Connection," which will allow GCF to apply its proven educational approaches, in and out of the classroom, equipping participants with the confidence, skills, and opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with community members potentially increasing opportunities for service and economic security. Community members likewise benefit. In addition, funding will help support diversity and equity training for GCF staff and board members.

### **Greater Falls Community Justice Center (GFCJC)**

\$10,000

#### **Restorative Justice Program**

Bellows Falls, VT

Greater Falls Community Justice Center is a community organization that works with community volunteers to divert criminal court cases to restorative justice processes, reduce recidivism, and educate the public and policymakers about the effects of harsh punishment and incarceration. GFCJC staff engage in "upstream" prevention, offering training programs to area schools to reduce punitive measures that disproportionately criminalize poor youth, disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline. Greater Falls Community Justice Center's Restorative Justice Program serves people in Windham County and surrounding areas who have been impacted by crime and incarceration. Restorative Justice Panels and COSAs (Circles of Support and Accountability) are composed of community members and offenders who work together to identify harm that has occurred, review actions to heal where possible, and prevent future harm. The program also includes a Family Restorative Justice Team who run Parenting With Respect classes for fathers who have previously been incarcerated, as well as participating in a multi-organizational collaborative process for pursuing Family Treatment Court as an option for Windham County.

### **Green Mountain Farm-to-School, Inc.**

\$20,000

#### **General Support**

Newport, VT

Green Mountain Farm to School (GMFTS) is a small nonprofit located in Newport whose mission is to strengthen local food systems in Vermont by promoting positive economic relationships, education, and access between schools, farms, and communities. GMFTS creates healthy communities by working across the food system with capacity building, resource development, and technical assistance through their interconnected programming including school gardens, the Farm-to-School Program, a local food hub, a free summer meal program for children, and a statewide marketing campaign. GMFTS partners with each community they serve to develop a comprehensive approach to improve access to healthy food and revitalize the local economy.

### **Green Mountain United Way**

\$5,000

#### **Working Bridges Women & Racial Equity Focus Project**

Barre, VT

Green Mountain United Way serves a large region including the poorest and most rural areas in Vermont and believes deeply in the power of collaboration. GMUW brings partners together to solve tough problems that impact our communities, problems that none of our individual agencies could solve on our own. Working Bridges is a partnership between United Way and employers that provides support, stability and opportunities for employees by focusing on resources that employees need to

gain and maintain stable employment. They do this by bringing social services, resources and support on-site to employees at the workplace, including confidential, one-on-one resource coordination, income advance loans, classes or workshops, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance services. Funding was provided in support of the Working Bridges Women & Racial Equity Focus Project, which will support structures and services within the program to specifically focus on the needs of low-to-moderate income women and work to review and revise the program's framework to address racial inequity within the program to better serve BIPOC employees.

### **Inclusive Arts Vermont**

\$13,500

Inclusive Arts Vermont's Start With The Arts

Essex Junction, VT

Inclusive Arts Vermont (IAV) is a statewide organization whose mission is to use the magic of the arts to engage the capabilities and enhance the confidence of children and adults with disabilities. IAV partners with community organizations of all kinds, in all regions of the state to engage thousands of participants in arts education, professional development, training, and exhibition programs. Continued funding was provided in support of Start With The Arts, IAV's award-winning program focused on improving the quality of early childhood education in Vermont. Start With The Arts gives Vermont children of all abilities the literacy and creative learning strategies needed to succeed in school while helping low-income childcare providers advance in skills, recognition, and access to increased subsidies. New in 2020, they have launched a virtual version of the program, to serve childcare providers unable to accept visitors due to the pandemic, and an offshoot for parents home with their children during the pandemic.

### **Lamoille Housing Partnership, Inc.**

\$5,000

Housing Awareness and Education Outreach Program

Morrisville, VT

Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) develops, rehabilitates and maintains safe, decent, energy efficient affordable housing through rental, home ownership, or other means to low and moderate income persons and families living within Lamoille County and the Town of Hardwick. LHP provides such assistance without discrimination or prejudice using a combination of private and public funding partnerships. LHP supports families, members of the workforce, aging and disabled Vermonters, veterans and the formerly homeless with safe, affordable homes and apartments. Continued funding was provided for their Housing Awareness and Education Outreach Program, which seeks to proactively address homelessness and evictions, eliminate the stigma and NIMBYism surrounding housing insecurity and homelessness, address the disparity between incomes and rents, and work with communities to ensure that affordable housing is an integral variable within community planning.

### **Mercy Connections**

\$17,000

The Justice Initiative

Burlington, VT

Mercy Connections works to nurture women toward greater self-sufficiency through education, mentoring, entrepreneurial skill-building and community-engagement opportunities. Through three program areas, Justice & Mentoring, Education & Transition, and Women's Small Business, participants with formidable challenges are helped to take advantage of research-based programs that incorporate differentiated instruction, gender-responsivity, multicultural sensitivity, and trauma-informed practices. Mercy Connections also works beyond the individual level, taking action in the community to address injustice in the judicial and economic systems and working for basic human rights for all.

The Justice Initiative is embedded in Mercy Connections' Justice and Mentoring Program and operates in collaboration with Vermont's criminal justice stakeholders. By leveraging volunteers to serve as mentors and focusing on risk-reduction behavior interventions, the project provides gender-sensitive, trauma-informed education and community that engage and support incarcerated and criminal-justice involved women as they transition to community and work to restore or build healthy

and sustainable lives. This project provides alternatives to incarceration for women, reduces recidivism and increases successful life change. With COVID-19 and the rapid release of incarcerated women, Mercy Connections has expanded the geographical reach of their work.

**Milk with Dignity Standards Council Inc.**

\$10,000

**Milk with Dignity**

Burlington, VT

The Milk with Dignity Standards Council (MDSC) is an independent organization set up to implement, monitor and enforce the Milk with Dignity Program which was developed by farmworkers in order to realize a sustainable dairy industry that advances the human rights of farmworkers, the long-term interests of farmers, and the ethical supply chain concerns of consumers and retail food companies. The Program's unique problem-solving approach brings farmers and farmworkers together and ensures compliance with workers' human rights in participating dairy supply chains. MDSC accomplishes 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. They 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. Since its launch, MDSC has educated workers about their rights and responsibilities, investigated and resolved over 20 complaints, and begun working collaboratively with farmworkers and farm 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.

**Newport Community Justice Center dba Orleans County Restorative Justice** \$7,500

**A Different Future: Kids with Incarcerated Parents**

Newport, VT

Orleans County Restorative Justice Center (OCRJ) provides alternatives to court and incarceration for adults, and helps re-entering individuals to succeed. OCRJ conducts projects that build the larger community and assists with conflict resolution and equity. Their work is accomplished by trained volunteers, representing a cross-section of the community. Funding was provided to support the implementation of a plan to address the needs of children with incarcerated parents. They will use the funding to hire and support a part time, trained facilitator who can draw decision-makers to the table, share policy examples, encourage discussion and action.

**Public Assets Institute**

\$17,000

**Public Assets Institute General Support**

Montpelier, VT

Public Assets is a research and advocacy organization whose 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. In addition to their core state tax, budget, and economic work, Public Assets focus is 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 Vermont to work for everyone, no one excluded. Funding for general operating support will help them to adapt to the new reality and work for equitable distribution of both state resources and the special federal funding this year.

**Rural Vermont**

\$15,000

**Cultivating Equity, Access, and Opportunity for Farmers and their Communities**

Montpelier, VT

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. 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 and believes that a just transition to regenerative agriculture is essential to ensure economic viability for small-scale diversified farms in Vermont. Rural Vermont works to inform farmers, and the people they feed, about public policies at the local, state, and national level 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.

General Operating support was provided as Rural Vermont continues their work in transitioning Vermont's food and agriculture sectors toward increased equity, access, and opportunity for farmers and consumers alike through community organizing, public policy, citizen activist training, strategic planning, coalition building, and, for the foreseeable future, support to farmers and related community groups (farmer's markets, etc.) as they cope with increased demand and an abrupt transition to COVID-safe protocols.

### **Steps to End Domestic Violence**

\$15,000

#### **Steps to End Domestic Violence Economic Justice Program**

Burlington, VT

Steps to End Domestic Violence (Steps) provides trauma-informed, culturally relevant services to survivors of domestic violence (DV) in Chittenden County, Vermont, allowing them to transition to financial and emotional independence. Steps works to promote a culture that fosters justice, equity, and safety.

Many fleeing DV have suffered economic abuse along with physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse, which can leave them with poor employment, credit, and housing histories. Steps' Economic Justice program develops tools and connects with systems that support survivors as they reestablish personal finance, build employment readiness, and secure housing. Funding was provided to help underwrite the costs of program planning and development for this work.

### **United Way of Lamoille County**

\$7,500

#### **New Foundations Supportive Housing Program**

Morrisville, VT

The United Way of Lamoille County (UWLC) is not a traditional pass-thru agency but a direct service/ community impact organization administering many of its own programs. UWLC also invests in community programs run by other agencies which meet their funding criteria. UWLC advocates for Lamoille County Families by developing new programs which empower people and lead them towards a life of self-sufficiency; funding programs run by other agencies which meet identified community priorities, identifying the needs of the community by continually analyzing local data; encouraging the community's participation and generosity; and evaluating the impact of these efforts. Continued funding was provided in support of New Foundations (NF), an innovative, residential program designed to provide educational and employment opportunities to low-income, single parents to enable them higher wages to support their families. While in the NF program, participants receive a furnished apartment for up to two (2) years while they work on furthering their education and gaining employment to their maximum potential.

### **Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children**

\$7,500

#### **VTAEYC Workforce Support**

Shelburne, VT

The Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children is the Vermont affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. VTAEYC is a professional membership organization made up of early childhood professionals and has over 500 members. VTAEYC is dedicated to improving the quality of early care and education, improving the professional practice of early educators, and building public understanding and support for high quality early childhood programs. Their Advancing the Profession Project helps give early educators a voice for systemic change by developing leadership. COVID-19 has catalyzed significant grassroots efforts launched and led by

early childhood professionals. Funding was provided to help support VTAEYC increase their reach and level of communication with their workforce, key stakeholders, state agencies and funders.

### **Vermont Works for Women**

\$15,000

#### **Step In to Work: Employment Support for Women**

Winooski, VT

Vermont Works for Women (VWW) is a local economic justice nonprofit with a mission to help women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue and excel in work that leads to economic independence. VWW's innovative approach promotes employment success through career exploration, work readiness, and specific sector-based skill development programs. In addition, VWW strives to implement systemic change by working with employers, policy makers, and collaborative partners to address the root causes of pay inequity, bust gender stereotypes, and expand access to financially viable jobs and careers so that all women and girls in Vermont have the opportunity to thrive.

VWW offers programs statewide that are especially aimed toward women who have barriers to employment, and all girls, who benefit from early opportunities to think about who they are and who they want to become. Funding will support enhancements and necessary program adaptations in response to the COVID-19 crisis for Step In to Work (SITW), a work readiness and job placement program that engages women who face a unique set of barriers to financial independence, providing highly personalized support, and ensuring each woman is successfully placed at employment where they feel fulfilled and financially secure. Vermont Works for Women (VWW) works to address both individual women's needs and gender equity efforts with employers to improve the workplace culture for women.

### **Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform**

\$20,000

#### **Re-Imagining Justice**

Burlington, VT

Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform (VCJR) is a statewide education, advocacy and direct service organization committed to transforming Vermont's criminal justice system into one that is more fair and effective by ending unnecessary incarceration in Vermont (defined as incarcerating more people for longer periods of time than necessary to ensure public safety). VCJR uses a range of grassroots strategies including public advocacy, education, outreach, coalition building, media campaigns, and leadership development among directly-affected individuals 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. General support funding was provided as VCJR pays particular attention to issues effecting racial justice and gender equity in Vermont's criminal justice system and as they continue to build on their groundbreaking drug policy reform work addressing the opioid crisis in Vermont. VCJR will shine a light on how unnecessary incarceration especially hurts parents, their partners and children.

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

\$12,500

#### **End Child Poverty – Vermont**

Montpelier, VT

Voices for Vermont's Children (Voices) is the only independent, multi-issue, non-profit children's research and policy advocacy organization in Vermont. Voices collects, analyzes and shares data on child wellbeing as the Vermont KidsCount grantee. Based on this research, they advance policies that support Vermont's children and youth in the domains of economic justice, education, health, and community/families. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed both Vermont's inadequate safety net as well as our capacity for real, substantive change. Funding was provided as Voices for Vermont's Children plans to work with impacted communities to better understand the ways public institutions and policies create and maintain economic inequities and racial injustice. Voices will engage its partners around the state to lift up the needs of children, youth and families in Vermont, including housing, food, childcare, safety, access to paid time off, and adequate income from work and/or assistance

programs. Through research, story collection and advocacy Voices will advance economic justice through a race equity lens for every child and youth in Vermont.

**Women's Justice and Freedom Initiative, Inc.**

\$10,000

**General Support**

Burlington, VT

Women's Justice and Freedom Initiative (WJFI) is a new organization founded and led by Vermont women directly impacted by incarceration. Using a racial and social justice lens, WJFI addresses the inequitable systems and policies that disproportionately impact women, girls, and members of the LGBTQ+ community including but not limited to incarceration, child welfare, mental health/addiction, violence, and reproductive health. WJFI achieves its goals through several strategies including community organizing, public education, advocacy and direct service and works across issue areas to address the glaring gaps in systems and services that are amplified by economic, racial, and social inequities. WJFI partners with other grassroots organizations, allies, policymakers and others who support their mission and goals.

**Youth Services**

\$7,500

**Demographix - Youth-led Screen-printing Business**

Brattleboro, VT

Youth Services provides transformative prevention, intervention and development programs for young people and families in Windham County communities by offering nineteen different programs that focus on Youth Development, Restorative Justice, Clinical Services, and Workforce Development. Youth Services helps people learn how to grow, both as individuals and as a family, so they can learn to rely on themselves and their own networks to face future challenges.

Continued funding was provided in support of Demographix, a youth-led screen-printing business that uses vocationally oriented case management services. The business is client/youth driven, incorporating youth input and participation in every aspect of the business: design, printing, marketing, and accounting. This supportive vocational program allows youth the opportunity to address factors that contribute to their challenges: they learn workforce development skills, develop communication and leadership skills, receive support and referrals to overcome other barriers in their life (homelessness, lack of education, medical/mental health services), learn how to be a member of a team and foster their sense of empowerment and self-efficacy.