

Land Access and Opportunity Board

Overview, Highlights, Future Programs, FY25 Request



Overview of the Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB)

The LAOB was created by the Vermont General Assembly through Act 182 of 2022 to promote racial and social equity in land access and home ownership. The Board was established with 11 appointing organizations and additional administrative support from Vermont Housing Conservation Board (VHCB). Today, the LAOB has grown to include legal counsel, facilitators, and two co-directors.

2023 Activities & Accomplishments

1) Governance

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding with VHCB

2) Capacity Building

- Increased Board involvement
- Engaged Facilitation Team
- Hired Co-Directors

3) Community Engagement Events

- Introduced the LAOB to our growing network
- Hosted two Focus Groups: Gathered community expertise to inform future research and programs

4) Advisory Powers Learning Journey

- Outreach to related agencies and programs for Information gathering and future partnerships

Our Community Engagement events identified the following needs

Financial Resources

- Purchasing supports: help accessing loans, diversifying qualifying requirements, appraisal and inspection
- Climate adaptation resources and supports
- Supports to help lower income individuals maintain homes
- Down payment assistance programs

Navigation Accessibility

- Language accessibility
- Legal and advisory support
- Catalog of available state programs
- Technical assistance-support navigating town permits, laws, and ordinances.
- Liaison with banking and financial institutions

Welcoming & Safe Communities

Future Work

1) Equity Assessment: establish an inventory of government and nonprofit programs and resources intended to facilitate equitable access to housing, land access, and land based enterprise and engage in public education and outreach.

2) Grant Programs: advance the goals of Act 182 with grants (>\$50,000) executed to organizations to support technical assistance and bridge the wealth gap in home and land ownership.

3) Partnerships and Relationship Building to inform and establish Advisory Powers

4) Community Engagement and outreach to design community-informed programs and connect individuals and groups with resources

LAOB Board & Nominating Organizations

Advisory Powers 10 V.A.S sec 325

1. **Xusana Davis**, State Office of Racial Equity
2. **Dan Coutu** & Rich Holschuh, Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs
3. **Britaney Watson**, Vermont branches of the NAACP
4. **Pastor Arnold Thomas** & Reverend Mark Hughes, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance
5. **Ana Mejia** & Shingai Kagunda, Vermont Every Town Project
6. **Brian Cina** & Ashley Devereaux; National Association of Social Workers, Vermont
7. **Raheemah Madany**, Pride Center of Vermont
8. **Pacifique Nsengiyumva** & Laurie Stavrand, U.S. Committee for Refugees & Immigrants, Vermont
9. **Susan Aranoff** & Kirsten Murphy (alt), Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
10. **Samantha Langevin** & Jennifer Morton-Dow, Vermont RELEAF Collective
11. **Walt Wade**, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors

- Provide recommendations to implement policy developments & programs that promote racial, social, economic, & climate justice.
- Develop metrics relevant to historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities to understand disparities & track progress
- Develop strategies & plans to more effectively reach out & provide access to resources that can overcome structural barriers
- Recommend options to provide advantageous tax treatment to properties owned by Vermonters who come from historically marginalized & underrepresented communities
- Review, monitor and recommend options & opportunities to redress State policies, procedures, practices, laws, & rules related to racial & social equity in property ownership.... [&] recommend programs and related rules to provide loans, grants, & financial assistance to individuals from historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities.
- Make recommendations to redress the limitations & problems associated with existing laws, rules, programs, & services

FY 25 Request: \$1,970,000

\$325,000	Staffing	Payroll, payroll tax & benefits, mileage, professional development for Director of Community Engagement and Advocacy & Director of Program Development
\$1.25M	Grant Programs <i>Continuation and Expansion of FY24 pilot Grant Program</i>	<u>Reparative Grants</u> to support organizations assisting individuals, families and collectives from traditionally marginalized and disadvantaged communities to navigate housing and land access, etc. <u>Technical Assistance Grants</u> : Consultant contracts with technical assistance providers, including housing and land access navigators and translator services.
\$150,000	Outreach & Community Engagement	Community engagement including interpretation and translation.
\$245,000	Administrative & Overhead Costs	Board Compensation, Supplies and VHCB fiscal agent fees

Contact & Information

Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement Ornella@vhcb.org

Jean Hamilton, Director of Program Development Jean@vhcb.org

Meeting Calendar, Agendas, Minutes & Publications at
www.vhcb.org/our-programs/land-access-and-opportunity-board