



# IMPACT REPORT 2022



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund





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# **OUR CORE VALUES**

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY,  
INCLUSION, & BELONGING**

**RESPECT**

**AUTHENTICITY**

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**SYSTEMS LEVEL CHANGE**

**COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**



**DEAR FRIENDS,**

As we look back on 2022, it was a year of new beginnings for VSJF as an organization. We were pleased to hire four new staff members, increasing our capacity to deliver high-quality services to the agricultural, climate technology, and forestry sectors in Vermont. We welcomed three new board members, and the Board of Directors and Staff spent the first half of the year developing a new 3-year strategic plan to guide our work.

It was also another busy year for our programmatic work. Coming out of the pandemic, we celebrated the opportunity to meet in person again for events such as the Forest Industry Summit in June and the Farm to Plate Annual Gathering in November. Both had excellent attendance and we were thrilled to see so many familiar and new faces in person. The connections we fostered virtually throughout the pandemic were key to the warmth and excitement we felt during these events.

Over the next pages, you'll read more about our 2022 activities such as:

- Launching the Vermont Forest Economy Career Guide at the Forestry Industry Summit, which will provide high school, technical school, and college students with information about careers in the forest economy
- Welcoming the 7 cohort companies of DeltaClime<sup>VT</sup> Energy 2022 to Burlington for an in-person sprint and awards ceremony
- Relaunching the Farm to Plate Network to reflect the 2021-2030 Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan and forming new groups such as the Racial Equity Action Plan Team to pave the way for the next ten years
- Increasing our capacity to provide high-quality management coaching to businesses in our market sectors through new funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board's Farm and Forest Viability Program and the Small Business Administration/Vermont Small Business Development Center's new Community Navigator Pilot Program; and by welcoming 2 new coaches to our line-up
- Leading a major research project through a new initiative called New England Feeding New England, aimed at increasing to 30% the food that is produced and consumed in New England by 2030
- Continuing to serve on a wide range of boards, commissions, and new collaborations—bringing our networks, expertise and knowledge to bear for the benefit of an even wider circle of partners

In the theme of new beginnings, we are also excited to announce the launch of the **Discovery Fund**. This fundraising initiative will enable us to explore the creation of a potential fourth program area centered around the circular economy and its connection to the **doughnut economics** and well-being economy frameworks, a market based-approach that centers human well-being within the limits of the planetary boundaries rather than never ending GDP growth. We hope you can join us by financially supporting this important and innovative work.

We are grateful for your ongoing support in helping the people and the environment of Vermont thrive together.



Ellen Kahler  
Executive Director  
Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund



## **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COACHING**

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont entrepreneurs for growth and long-term success. Our clients include Vermont-based, value-added food and agricultural, forest-related, renewable energy, waste management, and environmental/clean technology enterprises that supply products and services to a diverse marketplace.





As part of a national initiative introduced by President Biden and Vice President Harris, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund is excited to partner with the Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) as one of 9 spokes in Vermont that receive funding support from the U.S. Small Business Administration's **Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP)**. The funding enables VSJF to expand the number of businesses that we can support in 2022 and 2023.

Through the program, we offer intensive coaching over 9-12 months to businesses owned by veterans, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and women, and rural businesses, on a mutually defined scope of work geared toward solving challenges to the business' development, including access to the right match of capital. Over the two-year life of CNPP, VSJF will provide 14 businesses in our market sectors with \$10,000 worth of business management coaching, at no cost to them.

In addition to these new CNPP clients, our group of talented business coaches have either finished or are still currently working with several other innovative, entrepreneurial businesses in Vermont through our regular 12- to 18-month deep dive business coaching service. These companies cover half the cost of a coaching engagement, made possible through funding support from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board's Farm and Forest Viability Program and the Vermont Training Program.

## DEEP DIVE BUSINESS COACHING CLIENTS

### 2022 CLIENTS

- **Upper Valley Produce:** a local and regional food distributor—White River Junction
- **Halyard Brewing:** a ginger beer brewer—South Burlington

### 2022–2023 CLIENTS

- **Global Village Foods:** a BIPOC-owned family business, maker of allergy friendly frozen meals with bold African flavor—Quechee
- **Monument Farms:** a multi-generational dairy farm and processor—Weybridge
- **VT Hempicurean:** a CBD and hemp product retailer that sells hemp/cannabis grower supplies, and just added a registered cannabis retail outlet (VT Bud Barn)—W. Brattleboro
- **Babette's Table:** a women-owned business producing locally sourced charcuterie—Waitsfield
- **Roots Farm Market:** a woman-owned retail market sourcing all local products—Middlesex



"You get to a point where you just need a fresh set of eyes. That's what business coaching did for us—it pointed out things we were missing, things we didn't even think to consider, and pointed us in the right direction."

Damaris Hall  
Co-Founder, Global Village Foods

## CURRENT CNPP CLIENTS

- **Vermont Tortilla Co.:** a woman-owned corn tortilla maker—Shelburne
- **Bobolink Yarns:** a woman-owned specialty yarn purveyor and designer supporting local farm partners—Irasburg
- **Kitchen, Restaurant, and Bar Specialists:** a consulting firm serving farm-to-table chefs in VT and across the U.S.—South Burlington
- **Green Mountain Druid School:** a woman-owned adult spiritual education center, 70-acre forest and green burial sanctuary—Worcester
- **Food Connects:** a food hub focused on increasing access to a range of markets for small Vermont producers—Brattleboro



### VSJF WELCOMES TWO NEW COACHES

In 2022, VSJF welcomed Linda Markin (former CFO of Concept2, Vermont Community Loan Fund and the Preservation Trust of Vermont) and Gabriel Cole (co-founder of Just Fare) to our roster of high-quality, C-suite business management coaches. The diversity of talent we can bring to a client is extraordinary, through support, advice, leadership training, and access to extensive network contacts all geared towards helping our clients improve the effectiveness of their business.



Gabriel Cole



Linda Markin

### VSJF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COACHES



Front Row (Left to Right): Victor Morrison, Peter Cole, Steve Voigt; Back Row (Left to Right): Kathleen Murphy Moriarty, Carolyn Cooke, Lawrence Miller, Jean Kissner, Beth Gilpin

### BUSINESS SENSE COMING IN 2023

In addition to continuing to support existing and new deep dive and CNPP-funded clients, we will release a series of informative Business Sense briefs on a wide range of topics, all designed to provide helpful tips and tools to entrepreneurs. These resources will build skills and competency of basic business knowledge across all aspects of business operations so our clients are more well-rounded leaders and managers. These resources will also be shared widely in the Vermont business and technical assistance service provider community.

**Watch for our new series of resources in 2023!**



A group of people are gathered around a table in a meeting room. In the foreground, a man in a green jacket is looking at a laptop. Next to him, a man in a light blue shirt is resting his chin on his hand, looking thoughtful. In the background, other people are visible, some in light blue shirts. A whiteboard with some text is partially visible in the background. A clock is on the wall in the upper left. A green text box is overlaid on the top right of the image.

## CLIMATE ECONOMY

The DeltaClime<sup>VT</sup> business accelerator jump starts progress toward significant economic opportunities (i.e., bringing new products and services to market) associated with solving the challenges presented by climate change and the need to transform our energy sector to help achieve Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan goal and the new Vermont Climate Action Plan.





Through the [DeltaClimeVT Energy2022](#) Challenge Statement, we recruited companies to accelerate the drive to a zero-carbon future for Vermont by helping Vermont’s utilities increase adoption of clean energy, smart building and electric vehicle technologies that enable accelerated integration of distributed energy resources without the need for costly infrastructure upgrades. We again partnered with [ecosVC](#), who delivered a high-quality program during the 12 day-long workshops and numerous Zoom sessions between the cohort companies and the Vermont utility and energy company mentors. And after two years of online only programming, we were thrilled to bring together the DeltaClime<sup>VT</sup> Energy 2022 cohort in person for the final sprint and award ceremony in June 2022.

A survey of cohort companies participating in Energy 2022 revealed that it was another successful program, with all companies saying they would recommend it to other similar companies. Many companies also noted the opportunities for engagement with mentors and Vermont utilities was very helpful to their stage of business development.

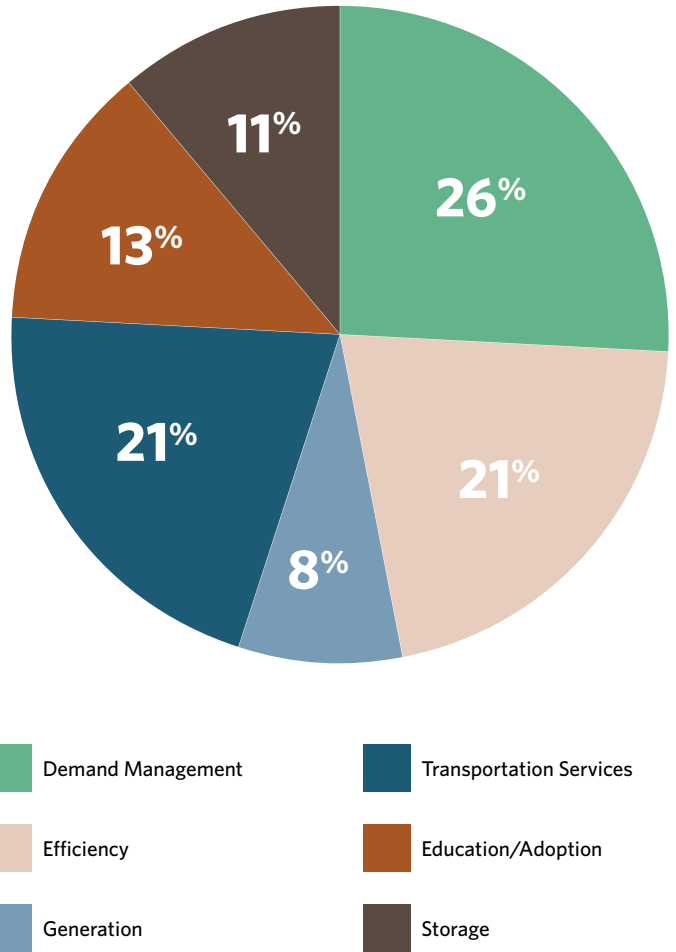
### DEI-B RECRUITMENT

We are proud of the work we’ve done to recruit a diverse set of companies from across the country to participate in the program. The advisory board and alumni engage with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) entrepreneur organizations to publicize the program and encourage participation from groups that have been historically underrepresented in the climate technology field. The virtual nature of the past two programs and the hybrid format of Energy 2022 allowed us to bring in more diverse experts and we will continue this hybrid model to enable more mentors to participate in the future.

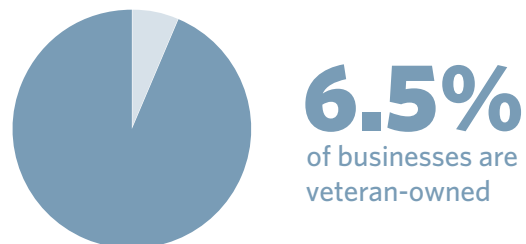
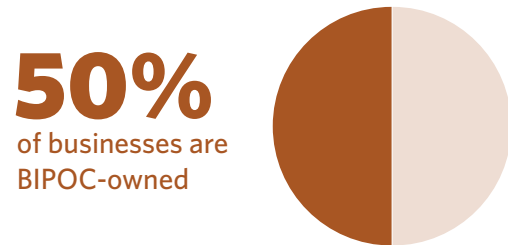
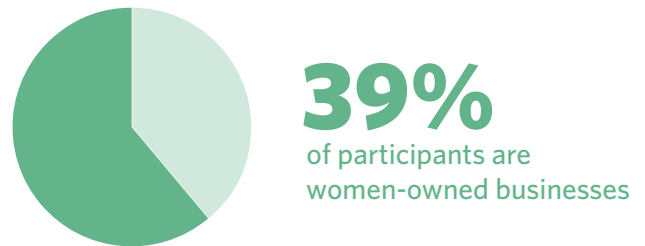
### COHORT PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN

Each cohort of 7-9 companies is competitively selected to participate in the program by an advisory board. Of the 46 companies that participated in our first six programs, we have successfully attracted companies that are women and people of color owned/managed, and a large majority of participants are under 35 years old. This is another important part of our program’s purpose.

### COHORT COMPANIES BY ENERGY SECTOR 2017-2022



### A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION







## UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS DELTA CLIME<sup>VT</sup> PARTICIPANTS

**ARC Industries** (Energy 2021 Alum), partnering with the Burlington Electric Department (BED) and Burlington International Airport, installed their Orb—a vertical axis wind turbine designed for commercial, industrial and large residential flat roofs—at the airport as a pilot project. After a year of measurement and verification of this new technology, BED has the option to purchase the unit and to purchase additional units that could ultimately help Burlington achieve its goal of becoming a Net Zero Energy City by 2030. The installed unit is ARC's first ever deployment of the technology, which they claim will require virtually no maintenance over its 25+ year life span and is expected to produce enough electricity to power 1.5 residential homes over the course of a year, the same output as 25 solar panels.

**Medley Thermal** (Energy 2020 Alum) is working on a project with Jay Peak Resort, Vermont Electric Cooperative and Efficiency Vermont to install a 3MW electric boiler to help heat the Pump House water park, the Ice House ice rink and the lodge. The boiler is projected to avoid the burning of 260,000 gallons of propane and the release of 2,500 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. The project is designed to participate in Vermont Electric Coop's flexible load management program, which allows Jay Peak and Smugglers Notch ski resorts to increase electrification while having the ability to "flex the load" and reduce electricity usage during peak events which typically require the use of fossil fuel burning generation assets and ultimately increase overall energy costs to the utility.

**GenH**, **EnviroPower**, and **MicroEra Power** (Energy 2022 Alumni) are all participating in **Greentown Labs Climatech Summit**, a deep dive into accelerating deployment through collaboration.

## DELTA CLIMEVT ENERGY 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

- 7 companies selected out of a pool of 40
- 4 sprints over 12 days
- 3 sprints via Zoom
- 1 sprint in person
- 100+ hours of instruction
- 14 hours of webinar engagement
- 21 hours of 1:1 meetings
- 19 mentors from Vermont utility companies

## PRIZE AND PILOT WINNERS DELTA CLIME<sup>VT</sup> ENERGY 2022

### PEER AWARDED PRIZE

**\$25,000:**

**Halitra:** works with financial institutions, utilities, government and building owners to uncover energy saving financial opportunities that can be profitably serviced by stakeholders

### PILOT PROJECTS

**Halitra:** Burlington Electric Department and Vermont Gas Systems

**MicroEra Power:** Burlington Electric Department; developing an on-site thermal energy storage solution to provide commercial buildings with low-cost, low-carbon heating and cooling

**Qilo:** Vermont Electric Cooperative; personalizes electricity usage data making demand side management programs easier for utilities to deploy

## WHAT'S COMING IN 2023

The recruitment phase of Energy 2023 has already begun, which will focus on **decarbonization of buildings, transportation, heating and industrial processes through electrification, biofuels or other renewables**. We're excited to welcome companies focused on technologies such as community geothermal, hydrogen power, dynamic EV charging in order to meet the evolving needs of Vermont's energy transition. Following the success of the Energy 2022 hybrid model, we will incorporate more in person time while maintaining online sessions to ensure participation from mentors from across the country.

To learn more about Energy 2023, visit [www.deltaclimevt.com](http://www.deltaclimevt.com).





## FOREST PRODUCTS

This past year has been one of renewal and new beginnings for our Forest Products Program. Moving out of the pandemic, we were excited to hold the 2022 Forest Products Industry Summit in person, launch our Forest Economy Career Guide, make new connections among industry groups, and continue our successful communications strategy.



## VERMONT FOREST ECONOMY CAREER GUIDE

Following the development of the Forest Economy Career Guide, we are now in the process of distributing it to students, guidance counselors, and parents. You can download the guide, view three short videos we produced that interview forest economy professionals, and learn more about career opportunities in Vermont's forest economy at our [website](#).



## VERMONT FOREST INDUSTRY SUMMIT

Holding the 2022 Annual Forest Industry Summit in person was a highlight of the year. After canceling the two previous summits due to the pandemic, we were thrilled to have 143 attendees come together for the two-day event. The Summit's theme of "Vermont's Forest Future" was kicked off by **keynote speaker** Terry Baker, CEO, **Society of American Foresters**, addressing the state of forestry in the U.S. and the important role that forestry and the forest products industry plays in confronting environmental challenges.

The two days of presentations, breakout sessions, and networking were crucial in bringing together the diverse set of people who make up the forest economy for the first time in three years. Also, for the first time, we organized a meet and greet session for the Boards of the Vermont Woodlands Association, Vermont Forest Products Association, Vermont Woodworks Council, and Vermont Logger Education and Professionalism. This allowed the boards to share news, strengthen trade association ties, and look for synergies among organizations.

Two highlights from the Summit included a breakout session on mass timber and one on workforce challenges facing the industry.



*Ground-breaking ceremony on May 4, 2022 at the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury. It will be the first public museum to use mass timber as a construction component.*

## MASS TIMBER DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

In May 2022, VSJF attended the ground-breaking ceremony for Fairbanks Museum's new \$5 million addition featuring mass timber construction elements. Executive Director Adam Kane decided to pursue using this wood-based structural building material after attending a Mass Timber Meet Up in 2019 co-hosted by the Vermont Forest Industry Network (administered by VSJF) and the Vermont Green Building Network in Burlington. The mass timber components are scheduled for installation in 2023.

This will be the first public museum mass timber demonstration project in North America, and the first Vermont public building to utilize mass timber. The museum plans to make the project available for tours and professional workshops about the use of local wood and mass timber as a climate friendly construction strategy.

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"The Vermont Forest Industry Network has played an important role in bringing together key stakeholders in Vermont's forest products supply chain, as well as the building design and construction industry. Through its hosted online and in person meetings, educational-based networking events, and annual summit, we have been able to raise awareness about the possibilities of locally sourced and locally used wood products in construction. WoodWorks is happy to be an integral part of these efforts as they align with WoodWorks' goal of expanding markets for wood products through education and outreach."

Ricky McLain, WoodWorks  
Vermont Forest Industry Network Steering Committee member

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## CELEBRATING THE SECTOR

We continued to release in-depth profiles highlighting the importance of the forest economy in Vermont and the people who make it all happen, ranging from community-scale forestry to the use of local lumber to build spa grade saunas in Cambridge, VT. Over the past four years, we have released 45 inspiring stories, which are all available on the [VSJF website](#).

Our communications work received high praise at the inaugural [Women's Forest Congress](#) held in Minneapolis in October, which attracted more than 400 women from across North America and internationally. Christine McGowan, VSJF Forest Products Program Director, partnered with communications professionals at [#forestproud](#) and the Ruffed Grouse Society to develop a workshop entitled "Telling a New Story—Women in Today's Forest Economy," which showcased stories from the Vermont Forest Industry Network, many of which feature women in Vermont's forest economy.

"I was honored to be a speaker at the inaugural Women's Forest Congress, where more than 400 women from across the forest economy in North America got together to discuss issues faced by women in a very male-dominated industry. The event itself was powerful. My talk was about the importance of profiling women in the industry, and I was proud to showcase several from Vermont who have industry leadership roles. Telling a new story requires finding new voices. They are out there, if you know where to look."

Christine McGowan  
Forest Products Program Director

## WHAT'S COMING IN 2023

VSJF is pleased to join the [Forest Futures Roadmap](#) project team, led by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation, to strengthen the forest products sector and forest economy. The goal is to develop a set of recommendations for the State to implement and provide a final report to the Vermont Legislature. VSJF will support this project by drawing on our significant stakeholder engagement experience and connections to a diverse group of stakeholders across the forest economy supply chain. We look forward to supporting this project over the next year.

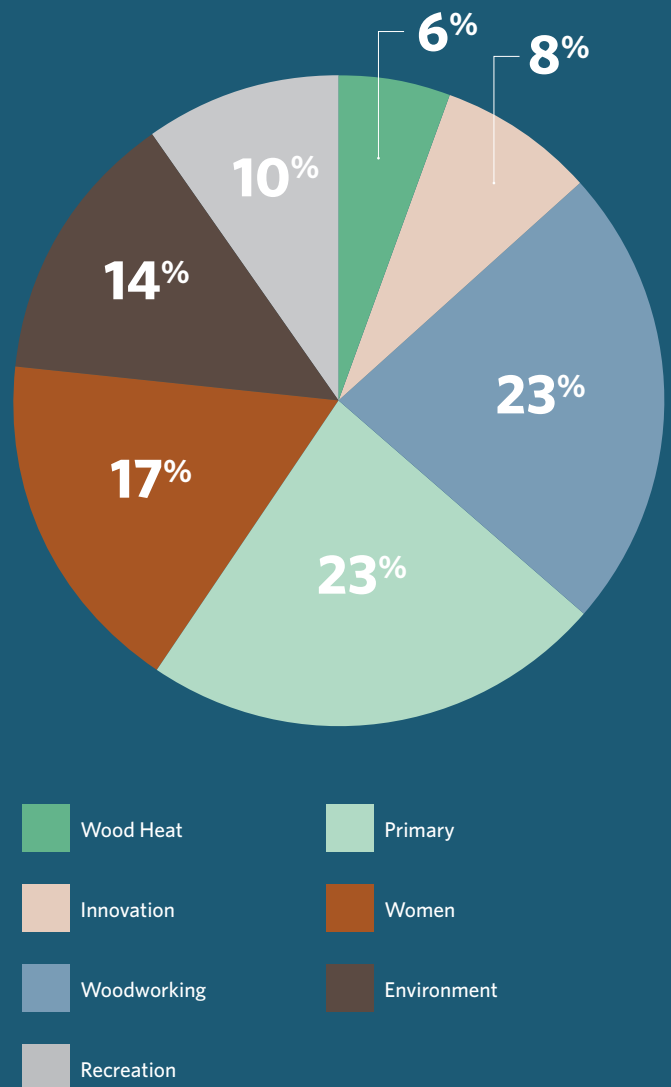
## 2022 COMMUNICATIONS REACH

- 5 stories
- 70,000 impressions
- 1,752 new visitors to VSJF site

## 2018–2022 COMMUNICATIONS REACH

- 45 stories
- 7.4 million impressions
- 30,000 unique page views
- 795 newsletter subscribers
- 12 of 14 counties represented

## STORIES BY TOPIC

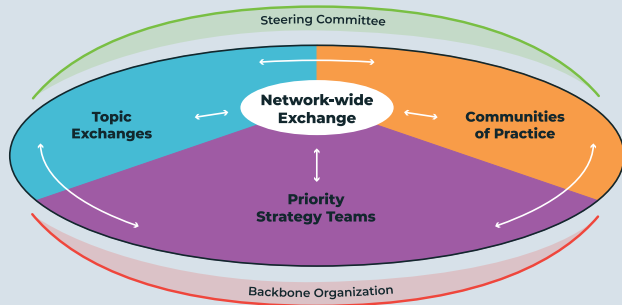




## AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

This past year was an opportunity for the Farm to Plate Network to reconnect, renew, and relaunch in the wake of the pandemic. We were thrilled to host the 2022 Annual Gathering in person for the first time in three years. We also launched the second iteration of the Farm to Plate Network, introducing a new Network structure, and a new website that will provide more opportunities for connection and collaboration, all of which is vital to realizing the vision and goals of Vermont's new 10-year food system plan.





## NETWORK RELAUNCH

VSJF and VAAFM conducted a robust stakeholder planning process in 2019–2020 to create a new 10-year strategic plan. In total, over 1,500 Vermonters were engaged in developing a shared vision, 15 new goals, 34 priority strategies, and hundreds of recommendations, all aimed at strengthening our local and regional food system.

**The Vermont Agriculture and Food System Plan 2021–2030**, released in February 2021, also reflected input from food system subject matter experts and includes 54 product, market channel and issue briefs. In 2022, we launched the **Farm to Plate Network 2.0** in order to begin implementing the new Plan, forming new Priority Strategy Teams, Topic Exchanges, Communities of Practice all aligned around achieving the Plan’s 15 goals by 2030. There are currently 19 groups in the Network supported by Farm to Plate.

### PRIORITY STRATEGY TEAMS

- Vermont Food Security Plan Team
- Meat Supply Chain Team
- Agroforestry Team
- Retail Grocers Team
- Policy Team
- Aggregation, Distribution, & Storage Infrastructure Team
- Racial Equity Action Plan Team
- Food/Ag Literacy Team
- Financing for Farmland Access Team
- Regenerative Agriculture Investment Solutions Team

### TOPIC EXCHANGES

- Production, Processing, & Market Development
- Education, Workforce, & Labor
- Food Security
- Land Access and Land Use
- Climate, Soil, & Environment

### COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

- Agritourism
- CSA and Healthcare
- Farm Viability Indicators
- Food Cycle Coalition

While we celebrate these accomplishments, we also recognize the many challenges that the food and agriculture sector face due to ongoing supply chain issues, workforce and farm labor housing shortages, and too many Vermonters who are experiencing food insecurity. The new structure of the Network is poised to address these challenges, and our continued work on projects such as the Independent Grocers, Beef on Dairy, and the Food Security Plan advance key priority strategies and recommendations from that Strategic Plan that will benefit Vermonters for years to come.



## 12TH ANNUAL FARM TO PLATE NETWORK GATHERING

The theme of this year’s Gathering was **“Cultivating Connections,”** which reflects the desire to reconnect in person coming out of the depths of the pandemic. The Farm to Plate Network recognizes the importance of bringing people together to strengthen the environmental, social, and economic fabric of our food system against the background of global events.

Nearly 290 people gathered at the Killington Grand Resort for a full day of reconnecting through breakout sessions, topic exchanges, and shared meals. We covered topics such as food security, supporting beginning and young farmers, understanding the state of migrant farmworkers, and financing regenerative farming systems, among many others. Attendees came away connected, energized, and recommitted to advancing Vermont’s statewide food system goals.

“Appreciated the acknowledgment that the Network has changed over time, especially post-pandemic and the great resignation. So many new faces. So appreciated just acknowledging that and providing time and space to reconnect with old colleagues and meet new ones.”

2022 Gathering Attendee



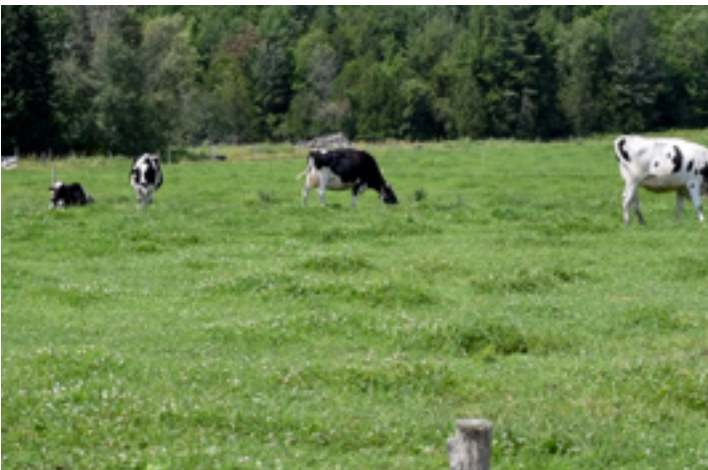
### FOOD SECURITY PLANNING

With a 30% increase in food insecurity during the pandemic, there has been an urgent call to create a resilient local food system that serves all Vermonters. The Vermont Farm to Plate Network is producing an [action-oriented roadmap to food security](#) in Vermont that will be complete with solutions.



### INDEPENDENT GROCERS PROJECT

The Independent Grocers Project aims to increase the number of local products sold at independent grocers in the state. To do this, we have provided store owners with training and merchandizing support, technical assistance in their stores, and connected them through our [Small Bites e-newsletter](#) and in person events.



### BEEF ON DAIRY PROJECT

This project aims to bridge the gap in the supply chain of farmers sending dairy calves out of state for processing and importing beef calves into the state. By crossbreeding certain dairy animals for several genetic factors, this [beef on dairy project](#) will increase marketability as well as open new markets for calves for Vermont dairy farmers. It is currently being funded through a Working Lands Enterprise Fund contract that VSJF is administering and providing project management support for.



### AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is increasingly recognized as an innovative climate change adaptation that expands farms' productivity, improves animal health, and helps to mitigate environmental harms. This [Priority Strategy Team](#) held a field trip to a farm in Vermont with good agroforestry practices onsite. In the coming months, the Team plans to take an in-depth look at supply, including availability of local nursery stock and opportunities to use storytelling.





## NEW ENGLAND FEEDING NEW ENGLAND PROJECT

VSJF provided important leadership for a new initiative called **New England Feeding New England**, aimed at increasing to 30% the food that is produced and consumed in New England by 2030. During 2022, 17 researchers from around the region calculated the economic impact (sales and jobs) of New England’s food system, explored current eating patterns and considered what a regionally resilient eating pattern would involve. They also conducted a regional self-reliance assessment of our current land- and sea-based production in the region and calculated production increases that would be required to achieve the 30% goal, and considered what changes to existing market channels will need to occur in order to achieve our regional goal. The reports from this extensive research effort will be available starting in January, 2023 and will be shared widely through a series of convenings and presentations across the region.



## NEW FARM TO PLATE WEBSITE

The release of the new Plan and launching the Farm to Plate Network 2.0 meant that we needed a new Farm to Plate website. The new site gives Network members and the public alike comprehensive access to all things Farm to Plate and food system related, including:

- A **new plan page** that provides quick and organized access to the Plan and its constituent parts including individual product, market, and issue briefs
- New data visualizations for the **15 Strategic Goals**
- A **new network page** to learn about the history of the Network, the distinct types of network groups introduced by the new structure, and the ability to access individual group pages
- Existing services carried over from the previous site including: resources created by Network members and groups, job listings, events, news announcements, and the food system map

To see the changes, visit [www.vtfarmtoplate.com](http://www.vtfarmtoplate.com).

## RACIAL EQUITY IN OUR FOOD SYSTEM

The Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan is built around four foundational goal categories, including Racial Equity. In 2022, Farm to Plate conducted 18 interviews with key individuals meant to inform the process and creation of a racial equity action plan. **The Racial Equity Action Plan Team** is organizing a January 2023 kick-off meeting to begin the process of creating an action plan centered on the lived experiences, leadership, and input of BIPOC Vermonters.

In the coming months, this process will continue to unfold, drawing from in-depth research, data collection, and a deeper exploration of racial inequity within the Vermont food system. In addition to the team, the 2022 Annual Gathering held a session on the lived experiences of migrant farmworkers and is exploring the creation of a strategy team to further engage in this work.

## WHAT'S COMING IN 2023

2023 is shaping up to be another busy year as we begin working on the following projects:

### FOOD SECURITY PLANNING

The formal writing process for the Food Security Plan will commence in 2023, with the aim of officially publishing the plan in January 2024.

### BEEF ON DAIRY PROJECT

The first group of crossbred calves will be born in 2023 and we will start to see results from our efforts to align the supply chain and improve genetic selection.

### INDEPENDENT GROCERS PROJECT

In 2023, business coaching and technical assistance focused on retail will be provided to three business cohorts—a farmer cohort, a value-added producer cohort, and a retailer cohort.

### ALTERNATIVE FARMLAND ACCESS FINANCING MODELS

With a rapidly changing agricultural landscape, the need to address farmland access in Vermont is increasingly urgent. **The Financing for Farmland Access Team** is working to create technical assistance resources addressing key questions and issues emerging around alternative land access models.

### POLICY ROADMAP

**The Policy Priority Strategy Team** is working to implement Priority Strategy #30 of the Strategic Plan, with the goal of having a multi-year policy roadmap developed in advance of the 2024 session that can aid proactive and strategically aligned food system policy-making.



# RACIAL EQUITY IN LAND, ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE, AND FOODWAYS

## FISCAL SPONSORSHIP: VERMONT RELEAF COLLECTIVE

Launched in the summer of 2020, the Vermont Releaf Collective was born out of the isolation of the pandemic that was compounded by the erasure and limited visibility of BIPOC contributions in Vermont. For almost two years, the organization was supported by a team of dedicated, part-time volunteers who served on the Organizing Squad. Recently, the organization formed a Board of Directors, received non-profit status from the state of Vermont, and hired their first employee.

The **Vermont Releaf Collective** works to cultivate connection, share resources, and uplift the voices of people of color in Vermont within their focus areas of Land, Environment, Agriculture, and Foodways.

The Vermont Releaf Collective—a membership-based network created by and for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in Vermont with shared interests in land, environment, agriculture, and foodways—is proudly a fiscally sponsored project of the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund since early 2022. Through this partnership, we have been able to grow our capacity to hire a Network Manager to deepen relationships, share resources, and build power for our vibrant network of BIPOC in Vermont. With this strong foundation and VSJF's generous support, Releaf has exciting plans for continuing to build upon this work.

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"I am very grateful to have joined the Vermont Releaf Collective since it has allowed me to find a family away from home. It continues to empower Black, Indigenous, and People of Color to reimagine a Vermont where anti-racism is not just verbally promoted but inscribed into policy. As people from underserved backgrounds, many of us have moved here to be closer to nature but yet are unfamiliar with how to explore different outdoor activities. Attending their various events has convinced me that we too can become nature dwellers, farmers, homeowners and outdoor enthusiasts even in one of the most ethnically homogeneous states in our country."

Harly R., Winooski  
Member, Vermont Releaf Collective

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“Vermonters of color are looking for safety, community, and opportunities to grow, play, see, and do. The Vermont Releaf Collective has the unique privilege of pointing as well as facilitating experiences for our membership that impacts us wholly.”

Aaron Carroll, Underhill  
Board Chair, Vermont Releaf Collective

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As our work has grown, our community remains true to our roots. Our in-person community dinners are a staple offering that support member connections while our email listserv is one of the most vital connection platforms for our community. With direct access to reach out to folks in the Releaf community, members use the email list for a variety of topics, including grant opportunities, local mental health resources, and other community supports. The email list has also contributed to broad scale change in the greater Vermont community by encouraging employers to share salary ranges for transparency, staff demographics, and internal racial equity practices in their workplaces when conducting a hiring process. Our initiatives continue to center and prioritize the needs and hopes of our community members as a guiding star of our work.

This summer, Releaf celebrated our second birthday with a festive gathering at Zen Barn Restaurant in Waterbury, bringing together over 50 members from around the state, and featuring delicious food from community members and local BIPOC owned businesses. Releaf greatly values supporting BIPOC community businesses and organizations, be it through partnering with local caterers of color, or purchasing products from peer organizations for giveaways or free care packages for community members. At the state level, Releaf is an active participant in the newly formed Land Access and Opportunity Board and holds a seat on the board

to support actions and initiatives to strengthen BIPOC land access and housing opportunities.



In October 2022, with the support of VSJF, Releaf brought on the first full-time Network Manager, Samantha Langevin. A long-time member, Samantha brings a thoughtful approach to fostering community and facilitating connections and opportunities to support the membership.

## WHAT'S COMING IN 2023

The Vermont Releaf Collective looks forward to bringing new voices and perspectives to serve on our board in the coming months. We plan to relaunch the Organizing Squad, a team of subject matter advocates across the four focus areas who will support Releaf community building efforts. We also plan to hire a Technical Assistance and Resource Manager to serve as a connector of knowledge and resources for community members. Finally, as Releaf offers more events and community convenings, members will continue to be invited to join planning teams to shape these powerful community-centered spaces.

To learn more, visit [www.vtreleafcollective.org](http://www.vtreleafcollective.org).

# BOARD, STAFF, & FUNDERS



From Left to Right: Geoff Robertson, Kelly Nottermann, Ellen Kahler, Janice St. Onge, Kelly Dolan, Jake Claro, Becca Warren, Christine McGowan, Jill Mennona, Anthony Mennona

## FY22 VSJF STAFF

Ellen Kahler  
*Executive Director*

Janice St. Onge  
*Deputy Director*

Anthony Mennona  
*Finance Director*

Jill Mennona  
*Business Manager*  
(left 12/22)

Kelly Nottermann  
*Communications Director*

Christine McGowan  
*Forest Products Program Director*

Geoff Robertson  
*DeltaClime<sup>VT</sup> Managing Director*

Jake Claro  
*Farm to Plate Director*

Sarah Danly  
*Farm to Plate Network Manager*  
(left 2/22)

Kelly Dolan  
*Farm to Plate Network Manager*  
(joined 3/22)

Becca Warren  
*Food Security Plan Project Manager*

Sarah Axe  
*New England Feeding New England  
Project Manager*  
(left 4/22)

Beret Halverson  
*Program Coordinator*  
(left 4/22)

Esther Erbe  
*Office Manager & Events Coordinator*  
(joined 6/22)

Sydney Lucia  
*Grants and Fund Development Manager*  
(joined 7/22)

Laura Brill  
*Bookkeeper and Contracts Manager*  
(joined 10/22)

Maisy Anderson  
*Communications Intern*  
(6/22-12/22)

## FY22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nathan Hausman  
*World Resources Institute  
Chair*

Shelly Severinghaus  
*TrueNorth Collective  
Vice Chair*

Robin Scheu  
*State Representative  
Secretary/Treasurer*  
(left 6/2022)

Noelle Mackay  
*Regulatory Assistance Project  
Secretary/Treasurer*  
(as of 7/2022)

Tayt Brooks  
*Deputy Secretary, Agency of Commerce and  
Community Development*

Anson Tebbetts  
*Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food  
and Markets*

Dustin Degree  
*Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department  
of Labor*

Andrea Cohen  
*Vermont Electric Cooperative*

Aditi Datta  
*Breef*  
(joined 7/2022)

Sara Gilbert  
*Vail Resorts*  
(left 6/2022)

Jean Hamilton  
*Skinny Pancake*  
(joined 7/2022)

Allison Hooper  
*formerly of Vermont Creamery*

Laura Sibilia  
*Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation*  
(joined 9/2022)





## VSJF FY22 FUNDING SOURCES

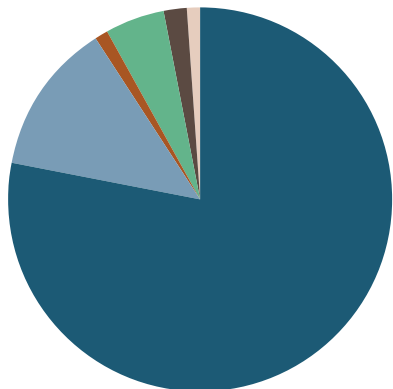
VSJF could not continue without the generous support of our many funding partners including:

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development	Coronavirus Relief Funds (via VT Agency of Commerce)	U.S. Department of Agriculture	Various Client Fees for Service
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets	Henry P. Kendall Foundation	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/HRSA	Various Corporate Sponsors supporting VT Farm to Plate and DeltaClimateVT
Vermont Housing & Conservation Board	High Meadows Fund	U.S. Small Business Administration	<i>VSJF also provided fiscal sponsorship services for the Hunger Mountain Food Coop Fund and the Vermont Releaf Collective.</i>
Vermont Training Program	Jane’s Trust Foundation	Vermont Community Foundation	
U.S. Centers for Disease Control (via VT Department of Health)	John Merck Fund	Anonymous Foundation & Individuals	
	Northern Border Regional Commission		
	Sandy River Charitable Trust		

**Photo Credits:** Front cover: photos courtesy of Erica Houskeeper, Hunger Free Vermont, Ellen Kahler, Pete’s Greens, Kelly Nottermann, Kelly Dolan, UVM Extension, Vermont Foodbank, Vermont Community Garden Network, Fat Toad Farm, Kevin Channell, Salvation Farms, NVU Upward Bound, Neothermal Energy Storage, Cat Buxton/Strafford Village Farm, Butternut Mountain Farm, Over the Hill Farm; Inside front cover, clockwise from top left: Kelly Nottermann, Erica Houskeeper, Kevin Channell, Erica Houskeeper, Kelly Nottermann, Erica Houskeeper; Page 4: Ellen Kahler; Page 5: Erica Houskeeper; Page 6: Kelly Nottermann, top right photo: Scott Sparks; Pages 7-9: Kelly Nottermann; Page 10: Erica Houskeeper; Page 11, left column: Erica Houskeeper, right column: Fairbanks Museum; Page 13-14: Kelly Nottermann; Page 15, clockwise from top left: Rob Strong/Vital Communities, Annie Harlow, Kelly Dolan, Kevin Channell; Page 17: Isora Lithgow; Page 18: Isora Lithgow; Page 19: Kelly Nottermann

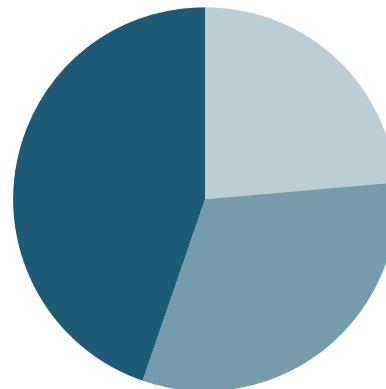
# FINANCIALS: FY22

## FY22 VSJF REVENUES BY SOURCE



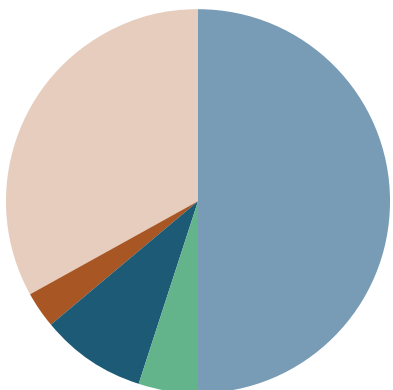
FY22 VSJF REVENUE BY SOURCE		
Grant Revenue	\$1,452,425	79%
Fees for Service	\$235,202	13%
Special Events	\$12,240	1%
Corporate Sponsorships	\$87,750	5%
Contributions	\$43,847	2%
Interest & Misc. Income	\$9,489	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,840,953</b>	

## FY22 GRANT REVENUE BY SOURCE



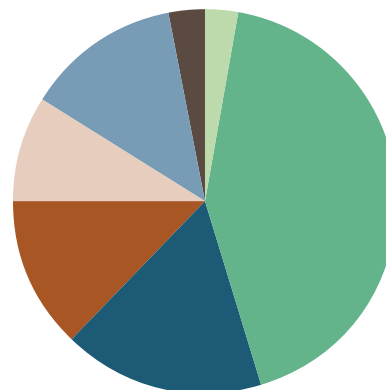
FY22 VSJF GRANT REVENUE BY SOURCE		
Federal	\$343,427	24%
State	\$461,792	32%
Foundation	\$647,206	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,452,425</b>	

## FY22 VSJF EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



FY22 VSJF EXPENSES BY CATEGORY		
Personnel	\$850,206	50%
Grantmaking	\$79,523	5%
Operations	\$149,385	9%
Occupancy	\$54,868	3%
Professional Services	\$568,202	33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,702,184</b>	

## FY22 VSJF EXPENSES BY INITIATIVE



FY22 VSJF EXPENSES BY INITIATIVE		
Operations	\$48,824	3%
Farm to Plate	\$735,272	43%
Forests Products	\$287,265	17%
Climate Economy	\$217,568	13%
Business Assistance	\$151,588	9%
Flex Cap Fund—Fund Manager	\$215,184	13%
Fiscal Sponsorship	\$46,483	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,702,184</b>	

**Note 1:** Federal Grant Revenue Sources include the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), USDA and Small Business Administration. Foundation grants represent private philanthropic foundation funds received in FY21 but expensed in FY22.

**Note 2:** Professional Services include accounting, audit, and legal expenses as well as special projects conducted by consultants which are related to specific market development initiatives and/or are connected to specific grantee and/or business client support services.



# Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development



## Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

3 Pitkin Ct #301E  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
802-828-1260

**VSJF.ORG**



**VERMONT FOREST PRODUCTS NETWORK**



**DELTA CLIME<sup>VT</sup> BUSINESS ACCELERATOR**



**FARM TO PLATE NETWORK**



**ROOTED IN VERMONT**

