

Empty Arms Vermont FY25 Budget Request

Empty Arms Vermont is filling a gap in the system of care for perinatal loss throughout the state. We provide support to a family when a baby dies during pregnancy or in the first year of infancy. 1 in 4 pregnancies end in loss, and we know this places parents at much greater risk for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. Bereaved birthing parents are at 4x greater risk of major depression and 7x more likely to screen positive for post-traumatic stress disorder compared to non-bereaved birthing parents. Empty Arms Vermont provides peer support groups, which is an evidence-based approach to buffer the effects of trauma. In just over two years, Empty Arms Vermont has served over 100 individuals and the need is outpacing the capacity of an all-volunteer team.

Empty Arms currently receives a portion of funding from a State Dept. of Health federal grant, but it does not provide enough to scale up capacity to the extent it is needed. The VDH 2024 Maternal Mortality Review Panel Report specifically calls for the state to “sustainably invest in statewide resources...through Empty Arms Vermont.”

Our one-time funding request of \$40,000 will support operational capacity to scale up services. This budget request would fall under the VDH Family & Child Health Division, and was given the highest recommendation for funding by the House Human Services Committee.

**For transparency's sake, we will be asking for two years of one-time funding, but this \$40,000 request is for FY25.*

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