



Micro Business Development Program

A Program of the Vermont
Community Action Agencies

The Micro Business Development Program of the Vermont Community Action Agencies provides training and counseling for low to moderate income Vermonters who are planning to start or expand a microenterprise.

MBDP has a vital role to play in a down economy because we start businesses, and new businesses are the primary source of new jobs.¹

Also, we create jobs for people who need them most. Low income people tend to have significantly higher unemployment rates in a downturn than middle and high income individuals.²

Our program works: With a small investment from the state, our program creates enormous returns for low income Vermonters and our communities.

Since 1988, MBDP has helped to strengthen the economic self-sufficiency of more than 10,000 Vermonters and the vitality of our communities. We have launched or expanded more than 2,000 Vermont businesses, created thousands of jobs, and helped entrepreneurs leverage more than \$14 million in financing.

Celebrate Microenterprise in Vermont! (See reverse)

Average Annual Outcomes 2010-13

- **97 businesses starts or expansions**
- **91 new FTE jobs created**
- **\$880,152 in business capital accessed**
- **Cost per job = \$3,284 (VT General Fund)**

A 2008 Evaluation by UVM's Center for Rural Studies found:

41% of clients started a business while working with MBDP. 31% were already in business (starting up or established).

91% of the businesses MBDP helped to start were still in business. (range: 16 m—8.5 yrs.)

Of those who started the program with an established business, 94% remained in business.

26% of business owners hired part or full time employees to work for them.

Almost three quarters said that self-employment provides income to their household as they take an owner's draw from business revenue.

Almost half (48%) of clients said their business revenue has increased since working with MBDP.

32% indicated that their business is their primary source of income.

64% indicated that at one time they have relied on some form of public assistance, with 52% of self-employed clients saying their reliance has decreased to little or no assistance.

¹ From a study by the Marion Kauffman Foundation released in July 2010.

² From a study by Andrew Sum, an economist at Northeastern University, cited by "Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity," April 14, 2010.

Celebrate Vermont Microenterprises!

Alpha Green Cleaning Services, LLC, Robert Achinda, Owner

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
(CVOEO)

Robert arrived in the US with political asylum status after his life was threatened! Once in the U.S., he started life over.

He began working with MBDP Counselor Simeon Geigel in June 2013 with the dream of starting a cleaning business. His desire to succeed was evident. He wanted to learn as much as possible about business. For eight months, Robert's counselor educated him on business, helped him create a comprehensive business plan, connected him with the Growing Money Program to improve his credit and helped him access a loan from Community Capital of Vermont.

Robert opened the business in 2014. He secured a contract with an area business, and new customers began contacting him regularly. As a result, he has hired 16 part-time employees.

His goal is to grow some full-time positions, while generating a full-time income for himself.

Robert faces many personal and business challenges while adapting to the Vermont business landscape, but he continues to work hard to build his business and to ensure his customers are pleased. He is extremely grateful for the help MBDP provided as he rebuilt his life in a new country.



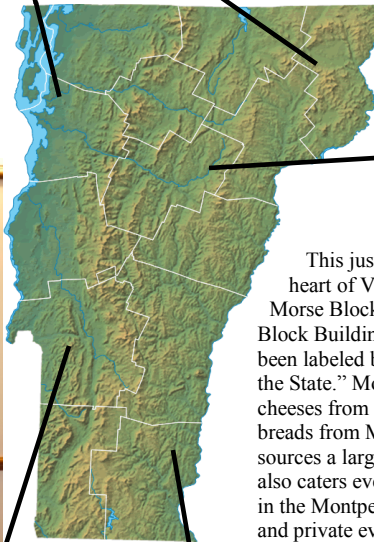
VT Chevon
Vermont can develop a
whole new (goat meat)
industry.



Vermont Chevon
Shirley Richardson, Owner
Northeast Kingdom Community Action
(NEKCA)

Vermont dairy goat farms have an international reputation for producing superb milk and cheese. This success resulted in a surplus of high-quality livestock that was not used as a food source. Shirley Richardson recognized the potential for added value and sustainability for our state's dairy goat farms. Her business reflects her commitment to the goat meat industry's focus on maintaining high agricultural standards, including raising animals humanely, respecting the land, and insuring a sustainable source of chevon for chefs, butchers and consumers.

Vermont Chevon sees its role as the developer of systems for growing a VT-branded meat-goat industry. To that end, Shirley regularly converses with farmers who are interested in diversifying their operations with value-added products, such as raising meat goats from the many surplus goats. Shirley is enrolled in a course at Langston University for training and certification as a meat goat producer. She is learning about development of record keeping, as well as feed, facility, and herd health standards and protocols. She will be trained to fully implement the standards/protocols in order to raise the goats efficiently and cost effectively, thereby gaining the best return on her investment, and the highest yield of meat for the end users.



Farm to Table Deli, Dustin Smith, Owner
Capstone Community Action

This just in! New farm-to-table deli opens in the heart of Vermont's thriving culinary scene. The Morse Block Deli is located in the historic Morse Block Building on North Main Street in Barre, and has been labeled by some as the "Best Sandwich Shop in the State." Morse Block Deli uses premium meats and cheeses from Boars Head Provisions, locally baked breads from Manghis Breads in Montpelier and sources a large portion of its produce locally. The deli also caters events ranging from office board meetings in the Montpelier/Berlin/Barre area, to football parties and private events. For more information, check out www.morseblockdeli.com, call (802) 476-2131, or swing in and visit the beautiful Morse Block Deli at 260 North Main Street in Barre. Plenty of parking in the back!

Owner Dustin Smith worked with MBDP Counselor Margaret Ferguson to develop his business plan, submitted to Community Capital of Vermont, to acquire funding for this business venture. He renovated the space and is using part of the historic bowling alley for his deli counter. Morse Block Deli is a welcome addition to Barre. Dustin has two full and four part time staff.



Rays of Sunshine, John Ray III, Owner
BROC-Community Action in Southwestern Vermont

When John Ray III went through a divorce in 2010, he became a single parent raising two children. Although working as a baker on the swing shift at Price Chopper, he needed additional income to meet the expenses of raising children by himself.

Wanting to stay motivated, John began studying herb gardening and growing his own herbs and spices. Once his skills were perfected, he combined his love of baking bread with growing herbs and spices at home, creating a line of specialty breads. John began test marketing his creations at the local farmers' markets and developed a strong customer base. He knew that he could not continue working late nights while single-handedly raising his children, so he wanted to see if baking would allow him to quit his night job.

During this transition, John requested the support of BROC's MBDP to help him understand what it would take to be self-employed and to develop his business plan. In April 2013, he opened his business working out of his home, and within a few months, was able to quit his 14 year job and sell his bread full time.

As John's business grew, his children now older, he felt it was the right time to expand and achieve his dream of owning a brick-and-mortar bakery in downtown Rutland. Once again, he asked for the assistance of MBDP to guide him through the process and working with the business counselor, a new plan was developed. In June, 2014, Rays of Sunshine opened its doors on Center Street. John comments, "I am so grateful for the assistance provided, and will continue to utilize MBDP services as needs arise."



Flat Iron Exchange Coffee House
Jana Bryan & Mark Kenney, Owners
Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)

Named for the historic building that offers a panoramic view on downtown, the Flat Iron Exchange Coffeehouse opened in downtown Bellows Falls. Jana Bryan and her husband, Mark Kenney, purchased the Flat Iron Building in August, and opened the coffee house in May, which they hope will function both as a source of caffeine and as a "third place" for the community. It features a high proportion of couches and easy chairs arranged within in the sunny space in clusters that encourage people to commune with their cups.

In November 2013, Jana and Mark came to SEVCA's MBDP to work with Counselor Karen Perlberg on a business plan. After numerous meetings and emails, a formal plan was completed in March. The Rockingham Select Board approved a five-year loan for \$17,545 from the town's revolving loan fund, which funded renovations, operating costs, and inventory for the new venture. They have exceeded all initial financial projections!

The business remains a coffee-and-baked-goods place by design. Coffee is supplied by Precision Valley Coffee Roasters in Springfield and dairy product supplier is McNamara Dairy in Plainfield. The couple procures a variety of goods from home-based bakers, with some experimentation to determine the popularity of various items. They encourage local musicians to come in and perform, rehearse, and experiment.

