



Vermont Housing &
Conservation Board

VERMONT FARM & FOREST
VIABILITY PROGRAM

March 1, 2018

Rural Economic Development Initiative

Credit: Kane Architecture

The iconic yellow barn on Route 15 in Hardwick is the centerpiece of a redevelopment project to create a showcase for local businesses in the Northeast Kingdom. REDI is supporting the Town of Hardwick and local partners to study the project's feasibility and apply for federal funding to implement the project.

In 2017, the Legislature created the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) "to promote and facilitate community economic development in the small towns and rural areas of the state and increase access to federal and other funding for such efforts." To date, Viability staff have supported 6 projects to identify grant funding opportunities available and contracted for technical assistance in preparing grant applications. REDI is intended to complement, not replace, the assistance Regional Development Corporations and Regional Planning Commissions already provide. Our team has collaborated with these partners to identify projects.



Credit: Empower Pownal

REDI provides grant writing and other forms of assistance for businesses and municipalities to prepare for and access larger funding opportunities. A local group in Pownal received assistance from REDI to access funding to transform a former Superfund site on the Hoosic River into an outdoor recreation location with trails and parking.

Rural Economic Development Projects

Yellow Barn Project, Hardwick – The Town of Hardwick received support to fundraise for the development of a multi-use business incubator and manufacturing facility from several federal sources including a USDA-Rural Development (RD) Rural Business Development Grant.

Windham County Solid Waste Management District, Brattleboro and surrounding towns – REDI supported an application to the USDA-RD Community Facilities Grant Program to acquire equipment for expanding composting infrastructure to meet Act 148 requirements.

Pownal Trails Association & Empower Pownal Recreation task force – REDI funds supported a Recreation Trails Program grant application to develop a trail and recreation site on the Hoosic River.

Runamok Maple, Cambridge - Funding from REDI assisted Runamok with an application to the USDA-RD Value Added Producer Grant to expand the business and move production from Brattleboro to Fairfax.

Southern Windsor/Windham and greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Districts – REDI supported an application to the USDA-RD Solid Waste Management District grant program to implement Act 148 requirements.

Clemmons Family Farm, Charlotte – Grant writing support enabled the farm to receive a \$350,000 grant from the nationally competitive ArtPlace America Grant program to establish an arts & cultural center on the farm focused on African American heritage.