

**Testimony before House Appropriations**

**Monday, February 19, 2020**

**State House – Room 11**

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment upon the Governor's recommended budget for SFY 2021 and for your support of the work of the 5 Community Action Agencies.

I am here to request that the Committee reverse the cuts proposed by the Governor to the Micro Business Development Program (MBDP) and the Vermont Matched Savings program. These cuts would eliminate two critical anti-poverty programs operating throughout our state.

Community Action Agencies are known for meeting the crisis needs of Vermonters with low income; for meeting the life sustaining needs of Vermonters with low income. We have also been highly successful in assisting these same Vermonters find economic self-sufficiency through self-employment all the while contributing to the Vermont economy.

These programs are the most effective out-of poverty programs the 5 Community Action Programs offer and are uniquely structured to benefit those we serve.

The Micro Business Development program helps Vermonters develop businesses and offers financial coaching, credit counseling, as well as asset building through the Vermont Matched Savings program.

Here is the outcome of 10 years of statewide program results:

- 8,361 low income Vermonters were served
- 1,165 Business starts and expansions
- 872 Jobs created
- \$10,509,303 capital was leveraged

At an average cost per job of \$3,748

**The State-wide cost to operate these programs comes in under \$600,000 a year**

Thank you for supporting individuals the economy and our community by fully funding the important anti-poverty and economic development programs, Micro Business Development, Financial Capacity building and Matched Savings Accounts.

After 10 years as Executive Director of CVOEO I know that difference that these programs make and I am passionate about their value for those we serve.

Thank you all.

Jan F. Demers  
Executive Director  
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity  
CVOEO