



The Micro Business Development Program

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

Since 1988, MBDP has helped to strengthen the economic self-sufficiency of more than 10,000 Vermonters as well as the economic vitality of our communities. We have **launched or expanded more than 2,100 Vermont businesses**, created thousands of jobs, and helped entrepreneurs leverage more than \$15 million in financing.

We are unique:

“MBDP clients have unique needs, including physical disabilities, negative credit history, criminal records, mental health needs, and extremely low income. Our MBDP coaches across the state are uniquely skilled to serve them. Our MBDP teams collectively have training in social work, trauma, and working with special needs populations. We help clients find their strengths, build their soft skills, and develop their businesses successfully, even with the heightened stressors they face. With MBDP’s help, clients who often get stuck in unemployment or entry level jobs find financial success and personal dignity in self-employment.”

Outcomes 2018 & 2019

**206 business starts
and expansions**

**159 new jobs
created**

**\$2,004,913 business
capital accessed**

How we make a difference:

Our clients count on us to provide individualized, focused support on their journey to self-sufficiency. **25% of our clients averaged over 22 hours of 1:1 business counseling.**

Our MBDP counselors are experts in business counseling and technical assistance. They also offer the financial education, credit building, and savings programs necessary for micro-business success. We partner with other organizations, such as business lenders and social services, to ensure that participants have the resources needed to realize their dreams.

“I am very grateful to have a completed business plan. I learned so much about myself, my business and my goals through this process.”

~Abby Skidmore, single mom, Owner Studio Gratitude

Outcomes of the Last 10 Years:

**8,361 LOW INCOME
VERMONTERS WERE
SERVED BY MBDP**

**1,165 BUSINESS
STARTS and
EXPANSIONS**

**872 JOBS WERE
CREATED**

**\$10,509,303
CAPITAL LEVERAGED**

**\$3,748
COST PER JOB**



“Business ownership is a proven pathway out of poverty, helping to increase income, create wealth, and move people off public assistance.”*

**Source: The Vermont Department of Children and Families - Outcomes for 2018, Agency of Human Resources - Department for Children and Families*

For more information about MBBDP:

Tyler Jokinen - BROCC in SW VT (775-0878)
Margaret Ferguson - Capstone in Central VT (477-5214)
Kathryn Baudreau- CVOEO in NW VT (860-1417)
Amy Robinson - NEKCA in NE VT (748-6048)
Denise Mason - SEVCA in SE VT (722-4575)



Micro Businesses are Everywhere in Our Communities!

Northeast Kingdom Community Action

Crooked Mile Cheese

Roberta Gillott and her family started Crooked Mile Cheese, an artisan small batch goat cheese business on their farm in 2011. They are dedicated to keeping their land open and undeveloped, as well as practice sustainable agricultural practices which enrich their fields and forests.



Roberta came to MBDP to discuss record keeping and marketing. This past year, she has grown the business substantially. They added a new tasting shop as a means to connect with tourists and offer direct sales from the farm. ***Her wholesale accounts have tripled and she now has a presence in Boston, New Hampshire and throughout Vermont.***

She is an advocate for artisan cheese makers and often networks with other organizations that support policy decisions that help small farms and value-added products across the state.

BROC-Community Action in Southwestern Vermont

Sheldrick's Hardwood Flooring

Jacob Sheldrick discovered BROC's Micro Business Development Program through DCF's Work 4 Kids Program. When he first met with BROC's business counselor, he discovered the complexity involved in a business plan and developed a better understanding of financial management and the resources available to him. ***"(My business counselor) Annette helped me gain perspective. She was able to provide a process that worked well for me to write my business plan. I looked forward to working with Annette. I have better control in targeting the clients I wish to serve."***

As a result of a well-developed business plan, Jacob was able to garner support dollars from Voc Rehabilitation which aided in his business suc-

cess. Sheldrick states, "I highly recommend the Micro Business Development Program. It opened my eyes to all aspects of sustaining my own business that I never would have thought about."

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity

Soul Vibration Wellness

Drea Tremols began working with Financial Futures in 2016. At the time, she was living in a HomeShare Now situation, unable to save money, or keep ahead of her bills. After working with her financial coach, she developed the skills to track her spending, budget her money, and start to save for those "unexpected" expenses. She also found her stress levels decreasing. Once she became comfortable with saving, she began working with a Micro Business Development counselor and enrolled in the Vermont Matched Savings (IDA) program to invest in a business.

She became certified in Massage Therapy and is now working as the sole proprietor for Soul Vibration Wellness. She has a personal checking and savings account, and a separate business account. Thanks to her good credit, she has a new-to-her car with a manageable monthly payment, and she is living with roommates in a market rate apartment. ***"(My) Micro Business coach showed how valuable a business plan is to the way I perceive the business, which helped inspire greater forward motion."***

Southeastern Vermont Community Action

Janet's Pottery Studio

Janet C. was enrolled in SEVCA's Vermont Matched Savings Program (IDA) and had identified business for her savings plan. She attended all the required classes and saved the full amount of \$1,000 over the course of the two-year savings period. It was matched with \$2,000 to give her a total of \$3,000 for her business.

Since Janet had identified business as her goal, SEVCA's Micro Business counselor began working with her on her business plan. She want-

ed to start a pottery business in her home and had some of the necessary equipment but not all she needed. Although she has a MFA in pottery and is an intelligent woman, she was struggling with writing her plan.

She confided that she was in recovery from an alcohol addiction and was having a difficult time. After multiple meetings and a lot of encouragement, she was successful in finishing her business plan. She was able to identify what she needed for materials and had a realistic plan on what her initial production would be.

She called SEVCA recently and was so excited that she has her studio all set and is working hard. ***She expressed her gratitude for all the help and encouragement that she received in both the VMS and Micro Business programs.***

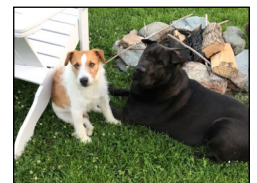
Capstone Community Action

A Cut Above The Rest

Nermina Beslagic met Capstone's Financial Coach while on Reach Up in 2014. After developing a spending plan and building her credit and working with her coach over several years, she decided to use her skills as a dog groomer at a chain store to open her own business. She enrolled in the Micro-Business Development program and the Vermont Matched Savings to invest in her business.

At first saving money was a challenge. ***"(But) once I reached my halfway point of \$500 it was clear to me I could save, so I planned ahead more and kept saving more. It was a learning process that has helped me where I can now save to purchase a home."***

Nermina is off Reach Up and receives a very small rental subsidy and 3Squares benefit for her and her daughter. She



makes a living as sole proprietor of A Cut Above the Rest Pet Grooming, and continues to use Capstone for classes, 1:1 financial coaching, and tax preparation.