



Pilot Program Overview

The Better Places pilot program provides “placemaking” grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 that improve the vitality of state designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas. The Better Places partnership is a place-based economic development program that:

- Revitalizes and improves public spaces in support of local economic and community development efforts
- Empowers residents to play an active role in shaping their communities, building social capital, and local pride
- Supports local COVID-19 response and recovery efforts
- Advances “quick build” projects that boost confidence, builds partnerships, and sparks momentum
- Improves public health, reduces social isolation, and increases physical activity
- Stimulates the creative economy and supports public art projects

The program is funded and supported by the Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Vermont Arts Council, National Life Group Foundation, and the Preservation Trust of Vermont. The program relies on the expertise and generous support of the Better Places Partners that include AARP Vermont, Local Motion, Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Agency of Transportation, and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets. Learn more about placemaking efforts in Vermont communities on our [blog post](#).

Website: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>

By the Numbers [2021]

\$989K

in grant
funds requested

63

applications
received

54

Vermont
communities

\$90K

in grant
funds awarded

5-10

better places
grants awarded
(TBD)

Grant Recipients

To be announced in late February 2021



For more information, please contact:
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Better Places

Create Better Places Grant Program to Spark Recovery and Revitalization

Better Places will advance local recovery efforts by providing grants and resources to restore consumer confidence, rebuild local economies, strengthen community pride, and reconnect Vermonters to one another – critical elements that help communities recover quickly.

WHY: The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated our economy through business closures, job loss, and physical distancing requirements have exacerbated social isolation and negatively impacted Vermonters quality of life. Vermont's downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods increasingly depend on public spaces that are robustly programmed to advance local recovery efforts, rebuild community life, restore our sense of place, strengthen community pride, and attract businesses, jobs, and talent. Investments in public spaces are essential for supporting economic activity and health and well-being throughout the pandemic and for building engaged, equitable, and resilient communities in the future.

WHO: The Better Places proposal will help empower local leaders to play an active role in rebuilding their communities, strengthening the economy, instilling consumer confidence, by creating safe, accessible, and vibrant public spaces needed to restart local businesses and advance community recovery efforts. The new funding platform is aimed at smaller 'quick build' projects, that create a shared community focus, inspire local leaders to collaborate, and bring diverse people together to make the places they call home more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant. Tackling small projects together can restore confidence, build unity, boost local capacity, and renew local pride of place – critical elements that help communities recover quickly and thrive in the future.

WHAT: Establish a community grant program that strategically coordinates the efforts of several funders supporting place-based economic development projects to improve and revitalize public spaces, whether that is a new walking or cycling path, turning vacant buildings into pop-up markets, improving community gathering spaces, increasing outdoor dining opportunities, expanding cultural programming, or testing a street closure to make more room for pedestrians and retailers or for farmers markets to operate safely.

HOW: Through a partnership between state, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, the Better Places proposal utilizes an innovative 'crowdgranting' funding model to support community development efforts in Vermont's downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods. The Better Places proposal will advance local recovery efforts by creating a one-stop-shop for funders to collaborate and provide communities a more nimble, flexible source to quickly fund and launch local 'placemaking' projects that improve and revitalize community gathering spaces. Specifically, the proposal:

- Establishes enabling legislation to create the Better Places program to accelerate local projects that improve streets and parks, walking and biking trails, and vacant properties.
- Streamlines and integrates grantmaking of multiple funders so residents, businesses, and community organizations achieve more immediate results.
- Empowers local leaders to play an active role in recovery efforts, shaping their communities, building social capital, local pride, and community leadership.

FUNDING: \$5 million (proposed)



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Better Places

Create Better Places Grant Program to Spark Recovery and Revitalization

Locally-Driven Placemaking Projects to Rebuild Community Life and Support Economic Recovery



Public Art



Demonstration Projects



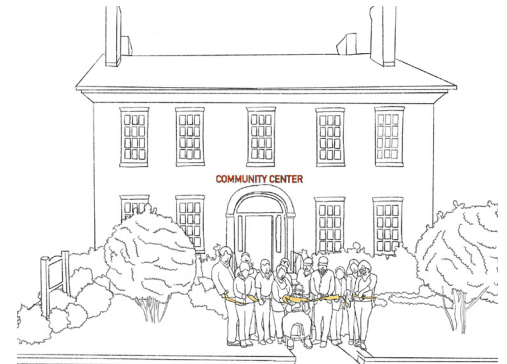
Pop-Up Galleries



Farmers Markets



Pocket Parks



Community Centers



Walking and Biking Trails



Downtown and Village Events



Parklets

