

VERMONT

working

communities

challenge



Jessica Savage, Vermont Council on Rural Development

VERMONT WORKING COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE



A **partnership** between Vermont, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, private sector, philanthropy and communities



A 3-year funding competition to **strengthen Vermont's rural towns, regions and small cities**



Goal is to support **ambitious collaborative efforts** that build strong economies and healthy communities with a focus on residents who have lower incomes

TIMELINE



VERMONT STEERING COMMITTEE

- Katrina Badger, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Rumeli Banik, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
- Ted Brady, Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Kevin Chu, Vermont Futures Project
- Tom Donahue, BROCC Community Action
- Ben Doyle, Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Rebecca Foster, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation
- Gary Holloway, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- Molly Lambert, Lambert Consulting and Mediation
- Vikas Mangipudi, Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
- Emma Marvin, Butternut Mountain Farm
- Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, EML Consulting
- Beth Rusnock, National Life Group/National Life Group Foundation
- Dan Smith, Vermont Community Foundation
- Joan Straussman Brandon, NeighborWorks America
- Sarah Waring, USDA Rural Development

Vermont Funding Partners – Total Commitments \$4.1 M



VT WCC TEAMS AND GOALS

Greater Barre: Lower the rate of single female head of households in poverty by 15% in 10 years. [Backbone: [Green Mtn United Way](#)]

Lamoille: Build sustainable systems of collaboration to reduce systemic barriers to employment. [Backbone: [United Way of Lamoille County](#)]

Northwest VT: Attract and retain talent by addressing regional housing challenges. [Backbone: [Northwest RPC](#)]

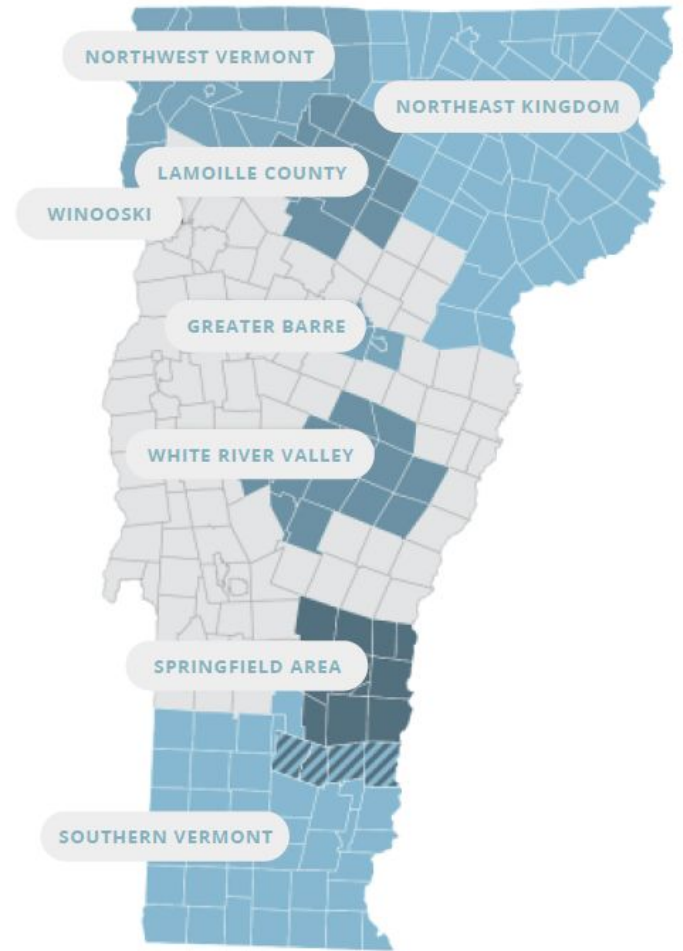
Northeast Kingdom: Reduce intergenerational poverty through hubs of financial stability. [Backbone: [NEK Collaborative](#)]

Southern Vermont: Attract and retain a new workforce through building a diverse, welcoming community. [Backbone: [Brattleboro Development Credit Corp](#)]

Springfield Area: Increase workforce participation in the Springfield region by creating a sustainable, collaborative workforce development pipeline to focus on recruitment and retention. [Backbone: [Springfield RDC](#)]

White River Valley: Attract and retain entrepreneurs and young workers through housing. [Backbone: [Vital Communities](#)]

Winooski: Ensure that the people making community decisions accurately reflect the demographics of our community by bringing new voices to the table throughout decision-making. [Backbone: [City of Winooski](#)]



KEYS TO SUCCESS: WHAT MAKES WCC DIFFERENT

Civic Leadership and Sustained Focus on Economic Development Goals

- Long-term **systems change solutions** are developed **in partnership with people with lived experience** (experts by experience)
- Solutions to problems are **created with a learning agenda** by providing **patient and flexible capital** for experimentation
- Collaborative teams are **provided with the necessary resources** (staff, time, expertise and focus) to work across sectors (public, private, and nonprofit) and **across boundaries** (towns, regions) to support **community-driven economic development.**

Foundational Research:

[Boston Fed Research on Resurgent Small Cities](#) (Kodrzycki and Muñoz 2009)

Boston Fed Commissioned Lit Review on Rural Resurgence (Rosenfeld 2019)

WCC Approach



Local leadership in Vermont is more collaborative, inclusive, and focused on long-term economic well-being of their communities.

Economic development & community development systems achieve better economic outcomes for their residents (especially those w/ low-incomes) and are more resilient in a changing economy.