

**TO: House Appropriations Committee**

**RE: Bridges to Health FY2026 Budget Adjustment Request**

**Signed by:**

- Vermont Interfaith Action
- Hunger Free Vermont
- Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)
- Intervale Center
- Feeding the Valley Alliance (FVA)
- Salvation Farms
- Rural Vermont
- Migrant Justice
- Office of the Health Care Advocate (HCA)
- Vermont Parent Child Center Network
- Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
- Vermont Language Justice Project
- End Homelessness Vermont
- The American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont (ACLU-VT)
- Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT)
- Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN)
- Randolph Area Asylum Seeker Support (RAASS)
- Vermont Early Childhood Advocacy Alliance
- Vermont Center for Independent Living
- Central Vermont Refugee Action Network (CVRAN)

Dear House Appropriations Committee:

**We are writing to request \$167,700 be included in the FY26 Budget Adjustment Act in support of Bridges to Health. This funding is needed urgently to aid in transitioning Bridges to Health from their current home at the University of Vermont to a fiscal sponsorship with Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics.** UVM has provided bridge funding to Bridges to Health to sustain the work through the end of June contingent upon a commitment by Bridges to Health to relocate to a new organization as of July 1.

BAA funding would cover expenses related to the transition as well as 6 weeks of core operations. Transition expenses include IT set up and security systems, computer software and programs, office space and related supplies, storage space for health outreach supplies, transfer of and updates to the program database to a new secure server, telecom services, and various business and program insurances. We will have an FY2027 request also, and this BAA funding would help us to transition into FY2027 without an interruption in services.

Bridges to Health is a health outreach and care coordination program for migrant and immigrant workers and families across Vermont **who are not otherwise served by existing programs.** *Bridges to Health is filling a critical gap for migrant and immigrant families that help sustain multiple sectors of Vermont's economy. Especially at this moment, it is crucial that migrants and immigrants in Vermont maintain trusted and knowledgeable community connections to access needed services for which they are eligible in a timely manner and at appropriate levels of care.* Bridges to Health ensures that essential immigrant workers and family members in agriculture, building trades, and service industries have timely access to needed health and health related supports. Eight regionally based Community Health Workers meet needs identified by the communities they serve engaging with well over 1,000 individuals per year. They work one-on-one with families and with households to navigate an increasingly complex and complicated health care system. Bridges to Health Community Health Workers have trust and rapport with clients, employers, volunteer drivers, volunteer health providers, and community-based organizations; relationships and connections that directly address systemic and individual barriers to care to ensure as many people as possible can access needed health care services.