

Hello,

My name is [Nikhil \(Nik\) Khosla](#) and I live in East Montpelier. I am the Board Chair for the [Vermont Professionals of Color Network](#) and not only has it given me purpose, belonging, and a network of professionals that I could lean on but more importantly give back to. I know firsthand the power of support and generosity that I received during the July 2023 flood as a new member. Being there for someone you just met matters, and it certainly left an imprint on me.

I am writing to ask you to please support the Vermont Professionals of Color Network budget request of \$200,000 for FY 2027, to continue support for business and workforce development across the state. This funding specifically supports our ability to be a **force multiplier** for this community and the future success of VT – **as the fastest growing demographic within VT's workforce** the time is now to seize on the opportunity to secure VT's future.

VT PoC works with business owners, employers and workforce across experience level.

We create access to resources, to employment and business opportunities, and to economic prosperity for individuals and for the state.

The work we do in partnership with [CVOEO](#) and the state treasurer's office, [Lunch with Lenders](#) – provides vital access to not only resources for finances, but also, we provide the technical and language support to make it happen.

I often think about new Americans (I once was too), some struggle with not only the language & our norms, but also the in's and ours of our financial system. Yet they are hungry, eager and bring untapped talent that we need right now!

Our work is particularly important at this time - there is a lot of instability and businesses and individuals need to feel that they have a SAFE, reliable and consistent resource to turn to.

Since last January, the new norm has been challenging and rather unpredictable, I for one have felt the need to carry my passport card at all times. I share this, because most of the BIPOC community feels the need to do it in kind. That creates additional hurdles and barriers. For now, larger gatherings have become entirely too risky, being nimble and adaptive to socioeconomic headwinds requires funding to match our intent and goals. We need support now, so we have the ability to **meet our members where they are at**.

“Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free!”

– recognize this?

This promise is woven into the fabric of our great nation. Now is not the time to turn our attention away from a community that is busting at the seams to contribute,

right here, right now is the time to lean in and watch this community give back. **If not now, when? If not us, then who?**

The 2 biggest needs in the eyes of many for VT – are housing and workforce. Our work helps to make both those a reality; not only are we fostering, connecting and enabling workforce opportunities we also play a instrumental role in VT's population growth commitments. If "WE "can't work here, "WE" won't stay here, as a state cannot afford to miss this opportunity. As President Kennedy once said, "**A rising tide lifts all boats**".

Thank you for your time, your service and consideration for this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nik Khosla', written in a cursive style.

Nik Khosla
Board Chair, VT Professionals of Color Network
East Montpelier, Vermont