

VT Ecosystem Collaboration

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Empowering Vermont's Economies Through Strategic Ecosystem Alignment

Our region's landscape boasts a wealth of resources and talent that empowers entrepreneurs to build impactful businesses here in Vermont. However, in many cases the fragmentation of this same ecosystem creates significant barriers to accessing these resources when and where they are needed most. **We propose that by facilitating collaboration between organizations that share a common goal, we can unlock significant opportunities for entrepreneurs to build and thrive in Vermont.** This contributes to a more coordinated, welcoming, and resilient economy in line with the [Vermont Futures Project's Economic Plan](#) recommendations for collaboration, with the goal of inclusive economies and increased participation in equitable growth.

Ecosystem Coordinator - Core Objectives:

- **Statewide Collaboration** by building partnerships and coordinating shared projects between hubs (Hula, BRIC, DoNorth, CoWorks, etc), business support organizations (VTTA, CWE, VTPOC, etc), and funders
- **Aligned Funding Efforts** to strengthen grant applications and raises, building stronger proposals through collaborative applications (consortiums), and delivering a more effective impact with these resources
- **Improved Resource Accessibility** by supporting shared resources such as mentor networks, training programs, capital pipelines, and policy alignment to grow access for underserved and rural entrepreneurs
- **Long-term Sustainability & Impact**, building a sustained and funded role aligned within the ecosystem

This 10-month pilot is being led by the **Vermont Venture Network**, a 501(c)(3), in collaboration with regional partners to implement the Ecosystem Coordinator Initiative in the Spring of 2025. The immediate focus is coordinating efforts across existing organizations that enhance support for entrepreneurs, improve access to capital, and strengthen collaboration between hubs, universities, and incubators to drive inclusive economies.

This pilot aims to maximize the impact of the Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships' [\\$40,000 grant supporting coworking and innovation hubs](#) and build on the momentum of this opportunity to deliver the strategic coordination that we have heard again and again from stakeholders as a crucial missing piece. A key project of this initiative is to align a coalition in the proposal for a [\\$250,000 Leahy Partnership Grant](#) to further accelerate the development and implementation of statewide partnerships and shared ecosystem resources in 2026.

Beneficiaries

- Hubs & Incubators: Collaborative efforts/resources to support portfolio businesses and org fundraising
- Business Owners & Entrepreneurs: Access to funding, business resources, and equitable support
- Investors & Lenders: Opportunity to invest in a pipeline of well-supported businesses with reduced risk

Investment and Traction: We have secured commitments for \$21,000 of a \$65,000 fund, and the Vermont Venture Network is contracting Will Jeffries of Blumenthal Enterprises to deploy this pilot, acting as Ecosystem Coordinator to foster a more robust entrepreneurial community and accessible economic opportunity.

Please reach out to learn more or discuss how we can engage in this work to build Vermont together!