



2/18/2025

Dear Chair Marcotte and Members of the Vermont House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development:

Thank you for taking the time on Tuesday morning to learn more about the Vermont Community Action Partnership's Financial Capabilities programming, for which we are requesting additional money beyond the current base budget. Per your request, I have reached out to each of the agencies to better understand the data behind the "need" for our Financial Coaching/Counseling supports and our Micro Business Development coaching supports. Each agency is presented a little differently based on how they collect/manage data. Additionally, depending on the year and the capacity, agencies seek other grants and funding opportunities to support the work not covered by the State awards. This varies greatly by agency and its capacity to fundraise, and isn't guaranteed.

The following data has been compiled from each of the agencies:

Capstone Community Action (Washington, Lamoille, Orange)

Financial Coaching

208 online requests (12 months; excludes untracked calls/emails)

301 unduplicated clients served (219 1:1; 107 workshops)

State funding: **\$34,000 (0.30 FTE)** supports 45 people

Gap: 256 more people served than funded

MBDP

166 online requests (12 months; excludes untracked calls/emails)

135 unduplicated clients served

State funding: **\$98,600 (0.90 FTE)** supports 75 people

Gap: ~60 more people served than funded

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (Chittenden, Addison, Franklin, Grand Isle)

Financial Coaching

71 requests in 4.5 months (excludes untracked calls/emails)

266 unduplicated clients served (144 1:1; 122 workshops)

State funding: **\$34,000 (0.30 FTE)** supports 45 people

Gap: ~221 more people served than funded

MBDP

44 requests in 4.5 months (excludes untracked calls/emails)

264 unduplicated clients served (117 1:1; 196+ workshop participants)

State funding: **\$98,600 (0.90 FTE)** supports 75 people

Gap: ~189 more people served than funded

BROC Community Action (Bennington, Rutland)

Financial Coaching

- 89 people served (Rutland only; Bennington unserved due to funding)
- State funding: **\$34,000 (0.30 FTE)** supports 45 people

- **Gap: ~44 more people than funded**
- **Additional unmet need in Bennington County: ~75 people**

South East Vermont Community Action (Windsor, Windham)

Financial Coaching

- 90 served last FY; 101 served in first 6 months this year
- State funding: **\$34,000** supports 45 people
- **Gap: ~45+ more people than funded**

MBDP

- 360 unduplicated participants (168 1:1; 192 cohort/workshops; expanding regionally)
- State funding: **\$98,600 (0.90 FTE)** supports 75 people
- **Gap: ~285 more people than funded**

Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Essex, Orleans, Caledonia)

Financial Coaching

- 65 families served (153 sessions) at 0.30 FTE
- Capacity with 1.0 FTE: 120 families
- **Gap: ~55 more families than funded**

MBDP

- 136 unduplicated people served
- Additional FTE could serve 100–120 more people

Statewide Impact

Current state funding levels:

- **\$170, 300: \$34,000 per agency (0.30 FTE)** for Financial Coaching (45 people/agency or 225 people/VCAP network)
- **\$493, 335: \$98,600 per agency (0.90 FTE)** for MBDP (75 people/agency or 375 people/VCAP network)

Based on the data above, our Community Action Agencies are serving more Vermonters than the current State funding supports. And documented on-line requests from CVOEO and Capstone show that demand continues to grow. The Vermont Community Action Network is ready to expand its reach in Financial Coaching and Counseling, which directly supports low- and moderate-income Vermont families and aspiring entrepreneurs, as well as in Micro Business Development services that provide practical, one-on-one business guidance and education to self-employed Vermonters. We hope you will agree that an increased investment by the State of Vermont in families and microbusinesses is essential to meet this demand and to ensure more Vermonters can live and thrive in an increasingly expensive state.

Respectfully,

Liz Scharf
 Director of Community Economic Development
 Capstone Community Action

