

### VERMONT PROFESSIONALS OF COLOR NETWORK

January 21, 2025



The Vermont Professionals of Color Network acknowledges that the space we take up is on lands that have been a site of convergence and cultural exchange, nurtured and stewarded by ongoing generations of Indigenous communities, including the Western Abenaki.

The Western Abenaki refer to this land as **Ndakinna** [in-DAH-kee-NAH], which translates to "homeland." We recognize the trauma caused by the violence and forced displacement inflicted upon these communities due to colonization.

With humility, we understand ourselves as guests on this land. We hold deep reverence for the profound Indigenous knowledge ingrained in this space. Our commitment lies in uplifting and honoring the presence of Indigenous voices, histories, peoples, and cultures within our community. We express gratitude for the opportunity of enjoying this beautiful land and are dedicated to its protection and preservation.





# Agenda

- 1. Who is VT PoC?
- 2. What do we do?



## Staff











### History of VT PoC

#### 2019

Founding members start creating networking events for BIPOC professionals. At the first event, 100 BIPOC professionals joined us at the Vermont Comedy club for laughter, joy, food, and community.

#### 2021

VT PoC becomes an official 501c3. We run the BIPOC COVID-19 vaccine clinic in Burlington along with partners across the city.

More funding opportunities arise as the community continues to talk about us.

Charlotte Santiago Graf becomes VT PoC's first staff member, followed by Weiwei Wang.

#### 2023

VT PoC continues to grow, adding Mimi Duong and Airon Shaw to the team.

VT PoC receives a contract with ACCD and supports the July 2023 flooding recovery process, and continues to offer outreach, resource navigation, technical assistance, and community support to BIPOC Vermonters across the state.

In October 2023, Weiwei and Tino become co-Executive Directors.

#### 2020

COVID-19 pandemic halts all VT PoC activities and gives us time to consider the future.

#### Funding opportunities arise and founders begin 501c3 process.

#### 2022

VT PoC gains momentum, hiring our second full-time employee, Krystal Sanchez, who supports data collection of over 250 BIPOC small business owners across the state.

#### 2024

VT welcomes Raheemah Madany to the team.

The BIPOC Community Survey is released.

Newcomer Nexus and GROW-VT grant are kicked off.



## Mission

VT PoC is a nonprofit organization that works to **advance the social and economic prosperity** of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community in Vermont.



# **Organizational Values**

**Community** || Creating opportunities to provide **structure**, **relationships**, **affinity**, **safety**, and **openness** resulting in a **network** all to advance the prosperity of BIPOC in the state of Vermont.

**Growth** || Growing relationships with community members and organizations by **engaging in mutual learning, challenges, risks, and personal development** all to advance the prosperity of BIPOC in the state of Vermont.

**Leadership** || Using what we learn to advocate and lead by example, foster respect, and earn trust from the community all to advance the prosperity of BIPOC in the state of Vermont.

**Equity** || Disrupting traditional norms to build and **dismantle oppressive systems** because we are not free until we are all free.

**Service** || Meeting the needs of the community with **care**, **joy**, **respect**, and **humility** all to advance the prosperity of BIPOC in the state of Vermont.



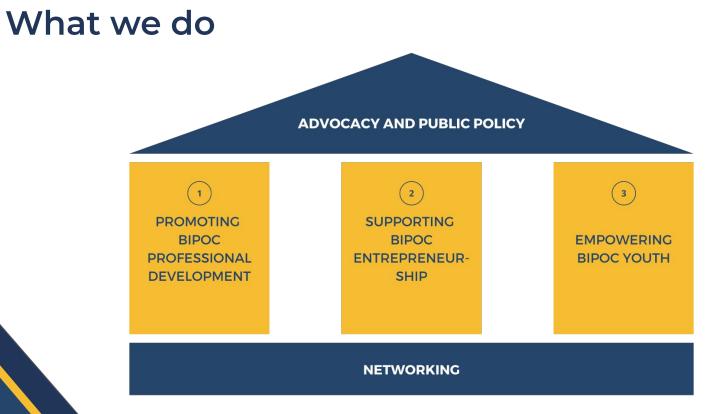
### **Revisioning Professional**



VT PoC Members talk with King Street Center ACE Program students in July 2024

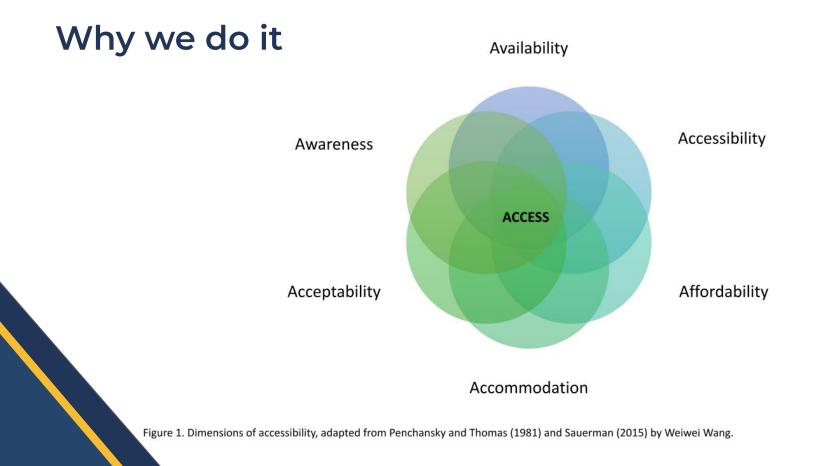
VT PoC defines a professional as any individual **dedicated to developing expertise in a skill or craft** that **contributes to personal growth and/or societal improvement**.





#### Prosperity starts with opportunities to climb the economic ladder







### **Our Work**

I deeply resonate with [VT PoC's] vision, mission, and values. Joining VT PoC has allowed me to **connect with like-minded individuals** and has provided me with **a sense of belonging and community**. - Tony Tukai



## **Our Work**

- Outreach
- Community Building
- Resource Navigation
- Research and Data Collection
- Workforce and Business Development



### Outreach



VT PoC outreach includes digital, printed and in-person activities to ensure we are meeting people where they're at.



### **Community Building**



VT PoC regularly hosts community-based events for remote workers and young professionals to connect with each other.



#### **Resource Navigation**



VT PoC partnered with CVOEO, US SBA, and SOV Treasurer's Office on the Lunch with Lenders event in February 2024, bringing over 100 immigrant, refugee, and BIPOC identified business owners together to meet with lending institutions. This February 8 will be our 3rd annual event.



### **Research and Data Collection**



#### Vermont Small Business Environment Assessment for Underrepresented Communities

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR PILOT PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER 2023

MAIN STREET alliance

SUBMITTED BY



2025 Report Forthcoming Funded by ACCD BIPOC Business Development contract



### Workforce and Business Development



VT PoC Business Networking event in St. Johnsbury in December 2024 brought together **30 BIPOC and Allied** business owners. This event was supported by **ACCD BIPOC Business** Development **Contract** and USDA Rural Development.



# Thank you!

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