



# VERMONT PROFESSIONALS OF COLOR NETWORK

January 23, 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?

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# Staff







# 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.

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# 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



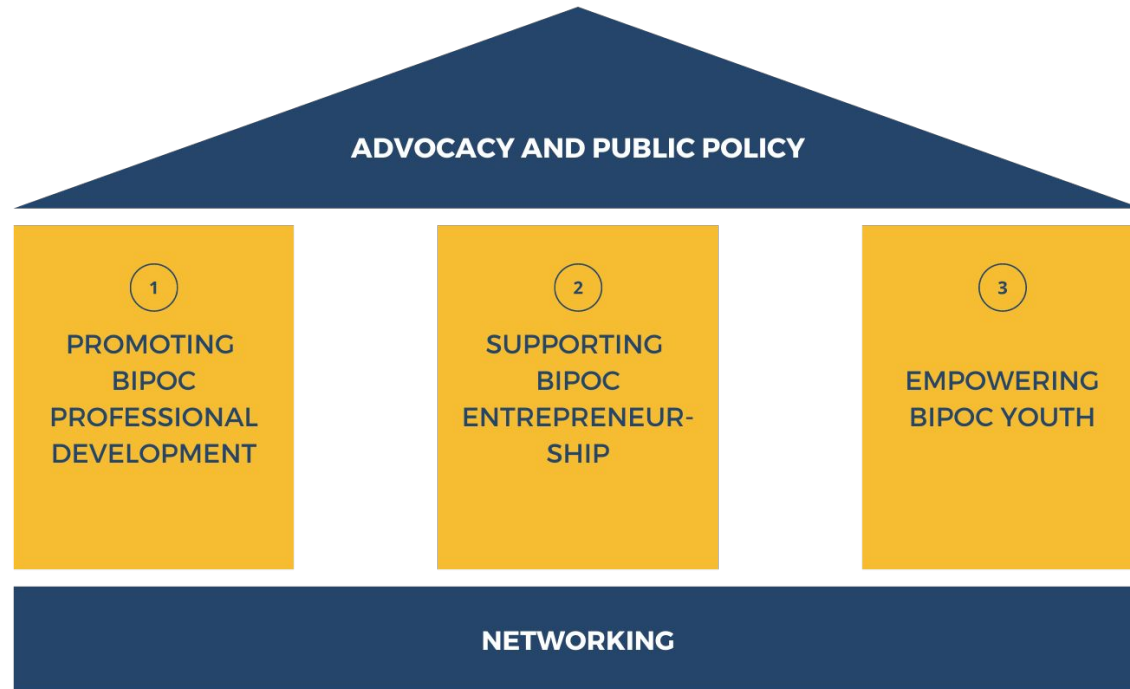
VT PoC Members talk with King Street Center ACE Program students in July 2024

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.**



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# What we do



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



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# Why we do it

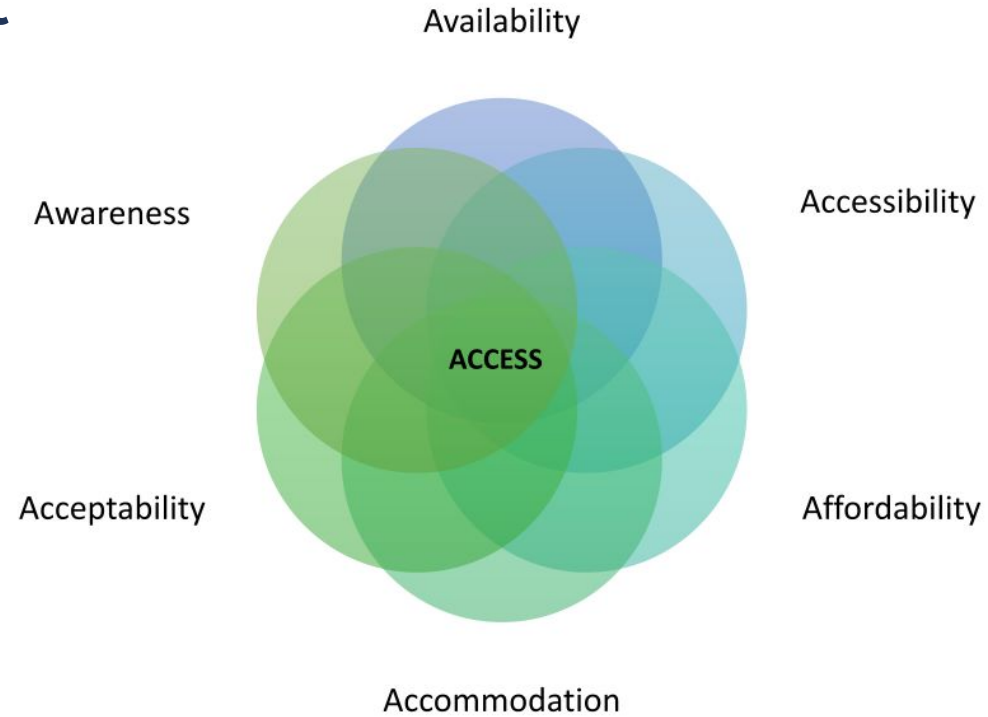
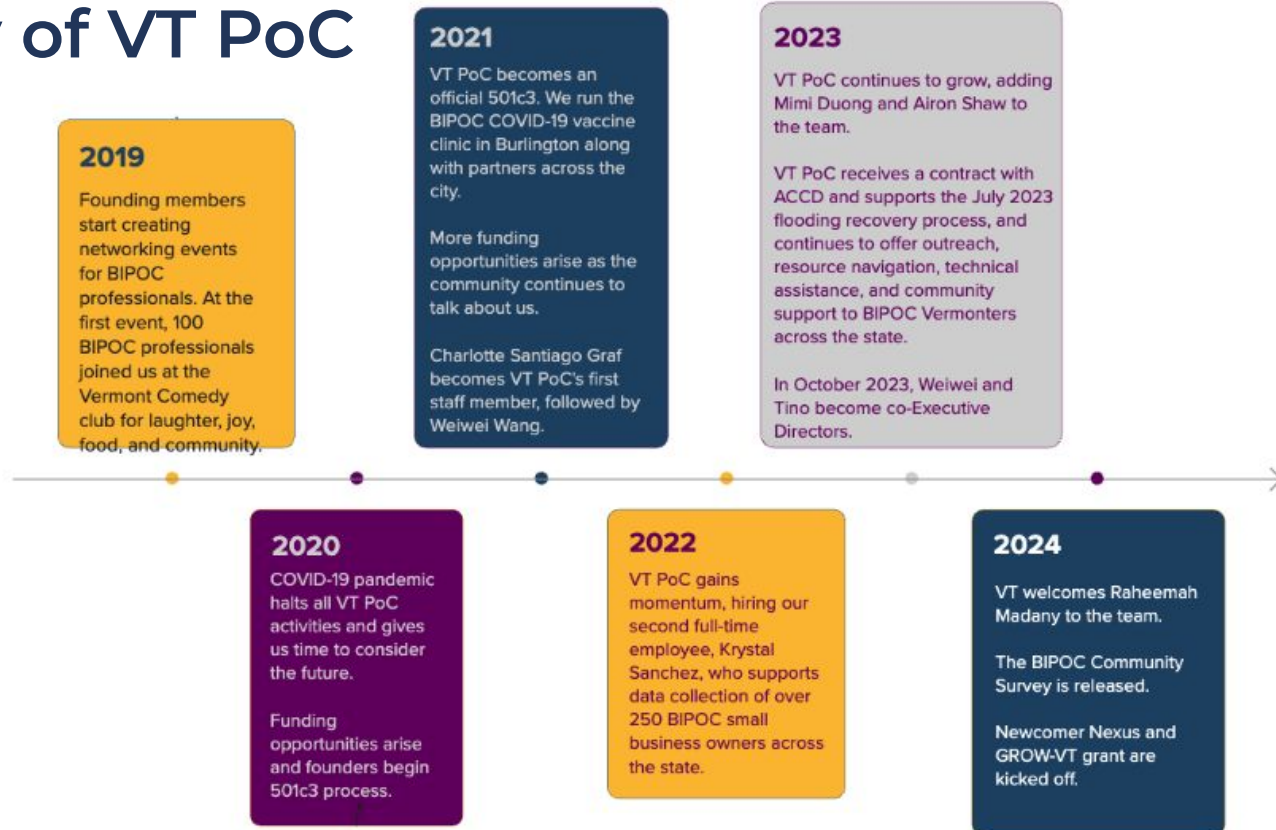


Figure 1. Dimensions of accessibility, adapted from Penchansky and Thomas (1981) and Sauerman (2015) by Weiwei Wang.

# History of VT PoC



## 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*



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## Our Work

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



**1,355** Followers



**3,153** Followers



**1,675** Followers



**326** Followers



**1,383** Subscribers

Combined Total Following =

**7,892**

Increase +133 since 10/7/24

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.



# Research and Data Collection



## Vermont Small Business Environment Assessment for Underrepresented Communities

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR PILOT PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBMITTED BY



2025 Report Forthcoming  
Funded by ACCD BIPOC  
Business Development  
contract

# 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.

- Intake - what is the situation?
- Resource research
- Identifying the best match
- Walking through the options
- Additional support to connect with resources
- Additional support as needed
- Not duplicating existing programs

# Workforce and Business Development

- Career exploration/introductions
- Career advancement opportunities
- Website opportunities
  - Job Board and Internship Board
  - Civic engagement board
- Grant and loan application assistance
- For employers: Newcomer Nexus




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.



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## Purpose of our work

- Develop community to reduce isolation
  - Increase awareness of opportunities to advance in Vermont
  - Supporting businesses to start and scale to support job creation
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## Relevant Links

VT Professionals of Color Network website: [www.vtpoc.net](http://www.vtpoc.net)

Job and Internship Board: <https://www.vtpoc.net/jobs-board/>

Newcomer Nexus: <https://www.vtpoc.net/about/our-work/newcomer-nexus/>

BIPOC Business Directory: <https://www.vtpoc.net/bipoc-business-directory/>



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# Thank you!

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