



Vermont Community Foundation VT COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

As I'm writing this, more than 50% of Vermonters over the age of 16 are fully vaccinated. There's a tangible sense of hope in the spring air—families are reuniting, youth activities are coming back, and expectations are high for a more typical Vermont summer fueled by Governor Scott's plans to fully re-open by the Fourth of July, if not sooner.

But even as we get back to what we all enjoy, we must also hold on to the realities of what we witnessed over the last year plus—and the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable neighbors.

The last year showed the power of what we can do together.

To date, Foundation fundholders and other donors have contributed nearly \$10.4 million to the VT COVID-19 Response Fund. More than \$8.7 million has been granted to over 800 organizations, beginning with basic needs and adapting to ensure nonprofit partners had the resources they needed to meet the challenges at hand, particularly when federal aid was not yet available.

Thank you for your contributions, your care, and your trust.

Together, we have once again proven our strength as a community by showing up when it matters most, and we're humbled to partner with you—our fundholders and other donors across the state and beyond—in these endeavors.

The work is far from finished. To create a Vermont at its best and support Vermonters to be their best, we need to dig in on the weaknesses that the pandemic exposed and that we are starting to address through our recovery initiatives. It's a big ask, yet we have an opportunity to rewrite the script for Vermont communities and create fundamental changes that lead to a vibrant, equitable, healthy, and diverse future.

We are truly better together, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to make this future a reality.

Onward,

DAN SMITH,
President and CEO



**VT COVID-19
Response Fund
Donations:**

**\$10.39
Million**

58%
Foundation Fundholders

42%
Other Donors

**VT COVID-19
Response Fund
Distributed:**

**\$8.72
Million**

**1070
of grants out**

**814
of organizations that
received grants**

RESPONSE GRANTMAKING



BASIC NEEDS and **COMMUNITY SUPPORT** to community action agencies for housing, clothing, and food support

SENIOR SUPPORT through senior centers, meal sites, and home health and hospice centers

SAFE SHELTER and access to housing and legal resources for families, women, and children, including statewide networks for victims of domestic and sexual violence and child abuse

Support for **YOUTH** including parent-child centers and K-12 schools, particularly those with higher populations of vulnerable students

Support for historically **MARGINALIZED** and **UNDER-SUPPORTED** Vermonters including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

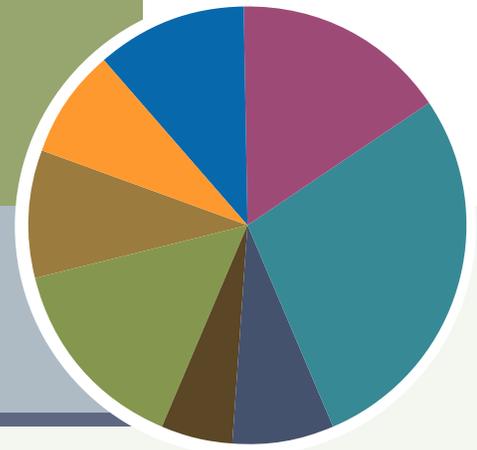
RESPONSIVE grants to organizations that shifted focus to mask/hand sanitizer production and for expanding nonprofit capacity due to greater demand of services

HEALTH and **WELL BEING** to support mental and physical health, and medical support for Vermont's uninsured

Total % COVID-19 Fund Grants Allocated

8.2%	Basic Needs/ Community Support
11.1%	Senior Support
15.7%	Safe Shelter
28.1%	Youth
7.6%	Marginalized Populations
5.3%	Responsive
14.7%	Health and Well Being
9.3%	Food Access

Since March 2020 **\$5,166,451** to support essential, urgent needs arising from the pandemic



EXAMPLES

A \$60,000 grant to the **Vermont Foodbank** initiated a partnership with the **Vermont Agency of Agriculture** to **RESCUE SURPLUS MILK TO BE PROCESSED FOR THE FOOD ASSISTANCE SYSTEM**—a win-win-win for food waste prevention, nutritious food for the food insecure, and support for dairy farmers.

Vermont's seniors have been among our most vulnerable neighbors throughout the pandemic. Since March 2020, **MORE THAN \$300,000 HAS BEEN GRANTED TO SENIOR MEAL SITE PROVIDERS**, including **Meals on Wheels** and other senior meal support services.

During the early months of the pandemic another priority population we supported included the increased number of housing-insecure individuals transitioning from incarceration. At the advice of the **Department of Corrections**, **GRANTS WERE MADE TO ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE STATE THAT PROVIDE TRANSITIONAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING** to this population, including **Dismas of Vermont** (\$10,000) and **Burlington Housing Authority** (\$10,000).

More information:

To learn more about our response grantmaking, here are some of the press releases we recommend. To read these releases and learn more, visit: [VTCOVID19Response.org/stories](https://vtCOVID19Response.org/stories)

- [The Vermont Community Foundation Announces First Grant Recipients from VT COVID-19 Response Fund](#)
- [The Vermont Community Foundation Announces an Additional \\$529,000 in Grants from the VT COVID-19 Response Fund](#)
- [The Vermont Community Foundation Grants \\$622,334 in Third and Largest Round from VT COVID-19 Response Fund](#)
- [The Vermont Community Foundation Grants \\$380,500 in Fourth Round of Funding from the VT COVID-19 Response Fund](#)
- [The Vermont Community Foundation Announces \\$555,000 in Fifth Round of VT COVID-19 Response Fund Grants Focused on Basic Needs](#)

We believe now is the time to make headway on structural economic and social weaknesses that hold people in place and make Vermont uniquely vulnerable to future disruptions like the pandemic. The five recovery initiatives advanced by the VT COVID-19 Response Fund are a framework for building more resilient communities over the long term.

Since September 2020 \$3,392,393 has been distributed towards the following five Recovery Initiatives.

Rural Connectivity	\$533,000
Rural Entrepreneurship	\$780,000
Food Systems Resilience	\$790,503
Learners in Transition	\$675,000
Welcoming Equitable, Anti-Racist Communities	\$613,890

THE FIVE RECOVERY INITIATIVES

RURAL CONNECTIVITY: Connecting to the internet is now more than ever a basic need. Solving the broadband challenge means addressing affordability for families and small business as well as the limited infrastructure that leaves some regions unserved.

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: The pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities of concentrating economic activity in a particular place. Expanding rural business creation throughout the state is critical for recovering from an economic downturn.

FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE: At a time of national disruption, our local food system stepped up to ensure all Vermonters were fed. We need to capture and expand on the lessons learned to support the long-term viability of our farms and ensure our families are fed.

LEARNERS IN TRANSITION: Dislocated workers in low-wage jobs and recent graduates were hard hit by the pandemic. We see an opportunity to provide clarity around pathways to education and career training that lead to promising jobs in today's market.

WELCOMING, EQUITABLE, ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITIES: As demographic trends show more diversity in Vermont's future, we recognize the importance of creating communities where current and new Vermonters feel welcome and set up for success.



EXAMPLES

RURAL CONNECTIVITY: A \$25,000 grant to **Do North Coworking's Communications Union District (CUD) Accelerator Program**, to teach volunteers about the importance of community broadband, the process of forming a CUD, and the steps to developing a strong foundation for the deployment of a network that serves local families and businesses.

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A \$250,000 grant to the **Center on Rural Innovation** to support tech-based entrepreneurs and create local tech jobs.

EXAMPLES

FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE: A \$265,000 grant to support the launch of the **Food Hub Collaborative**, a collaboration between **Vermont Housing and Conservation Board**, the **Intervale Center**, **Center for an Agricultural Economy**, **Food Connects**, and **Green Mountain Farm to School**, that reinforces the connections between the local food system and sets up businesses for growth and market expansion.

LEARNERS IN TRANSITION: Grants totaling \$340,000 to **Vermont Technical College** (\$145,000) and **Community College of Vermont** (\$195,000) to make the seven **Best Bet career training programs** identified by the **McClure Foundation** affordable and accessible for Vermonters in 2021. This also provided a valuable and credible framework for expansion support from the American Rescue Plan.

WELCOMING, EQUITABLE, AND ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITIES: A \$150,000 grant to the **Vermont School Boards Association**, the **Vermont Principals' Association**, and the **Vermont Superintendents Association** to facilitate learning around equity, power, and privilege so they can support individual members to implement best practices on the ground. A \$50,000 grant to the **Vermont League of Cities and Towns** to support similar work with municipalities.

More information:

To learn more about our five recovery initiatives, we recommend these blog posts and videos which you can find at vermontcf.org/InsightHub.

- [The Vermont Community Foundation Announces Five COVID-19 Recovery Initiatives](#)
- [What We've Learned from the VT COVID-19 Response Fund Recovery Initiative Q+A Series](#)
- [How can libraries foster community connectivity? Our partnership with the Vermont Department of Libraries](#)
- [WATCH: A Year of Pandemic – What did we accomplish together? What did we learn? Where do we go now?](#)
 - [WATCH: 5 Minutes with Dan Smith on the Five COVID-19 Recovery Initiatives](#)
 - [WATCH: How will the American Rescue Plan impact philanthropy in Vermont?](#)
 - [WATCH: Highlights from "A Year of Pandemic" Panel with Jean Hamilton, Holly Morehouse, and Ted Brady](#)



The VT COVID-19 Response Fund remains active.

If you are interested in supporting Vermont's recovery from the pandemic by making a contribution to the fund or exploring other ways in which we can support your philanthropy, please contact **Stacie Fagan**, Vice President for Philanthropy at sfagan@vermontcf.org or 802.388.3355 ext. 252.

Whether you are an individual, a family, a foundation, or business, we offer customized guidance and support, back-office services, and world-class investments across a spectrum of charitable giving—whether that's opening a donor advised fund, creating an annual giving plan, or designing your giving with a bigger vision.

We would love to learn more about your charitable goals and interests. Together we can do more.

