

## EXERCISE 1

# Your Giving Compass

Take a moment to reflect on the causes that matter most to you.

Consider:

- What issues keep you up at night?
- What news stories move you to want to take action?
- What experiences in your life have shaped your view of what's important?



**Now, list 3-5 broad areas of interest (e.g., Education, Environment, Arts) and then narrow each down to specific issues or populations you'd like to impact.**

**EXAMPLE:** *Broad Area: Education, Specific Issues: Early Childhood Literacy, STEM Education for Girls, Adult Job Retraining*

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“Philanthropy isn’t just about giving. It’s about growing something together. When people choose to invest their generosity with us, that gift keeps working. It grows over time, in trust, relationships, and impact. That’s what lets us show up for Vermont when it matters most, now and for generations to come.”

— Felipe Rivera, Vice President Strategy, Vermont Community Foundation

## EXERCISE 2

# Love Letter to Vermont: Exploring Your Giving Motivation

At its core, giving is an act of love.  
Love for a place. Love for people.  
Love for the world you hope to leave behind.

This reflection is your chance to write a love letter to Vermont—or whatever place or purpose lives in your heart. Let this be a moment to slow down and name what's behind your giving. The memories. The values. The dreams.



### TRY THIS:

**Take a quiet moment and write a short letter that begins with:**  
**“Dear Vermont, I give because...”**

Write freely. Let your words come from the heart. You might reflect on:

- A moment when giving felt deeply meaningful
- A tradition or belief that shapes how you show up
- Whether you give quietly or publicly—and why
- How your children, family, or community factor in
- The change you want your giving to help make possible
- How you hope Vermont will look or feel, because of your care

**EXAMPLE:** *Dear Vermont, I give because I want every child in this state to feel like they belong, no matter where they come from or who they are. I give because my grandfather always said, “You take care of your neighbors.” I give because I believe in beauty, in resilience, and in second chances.*







*Dear Vermont, I give because...*

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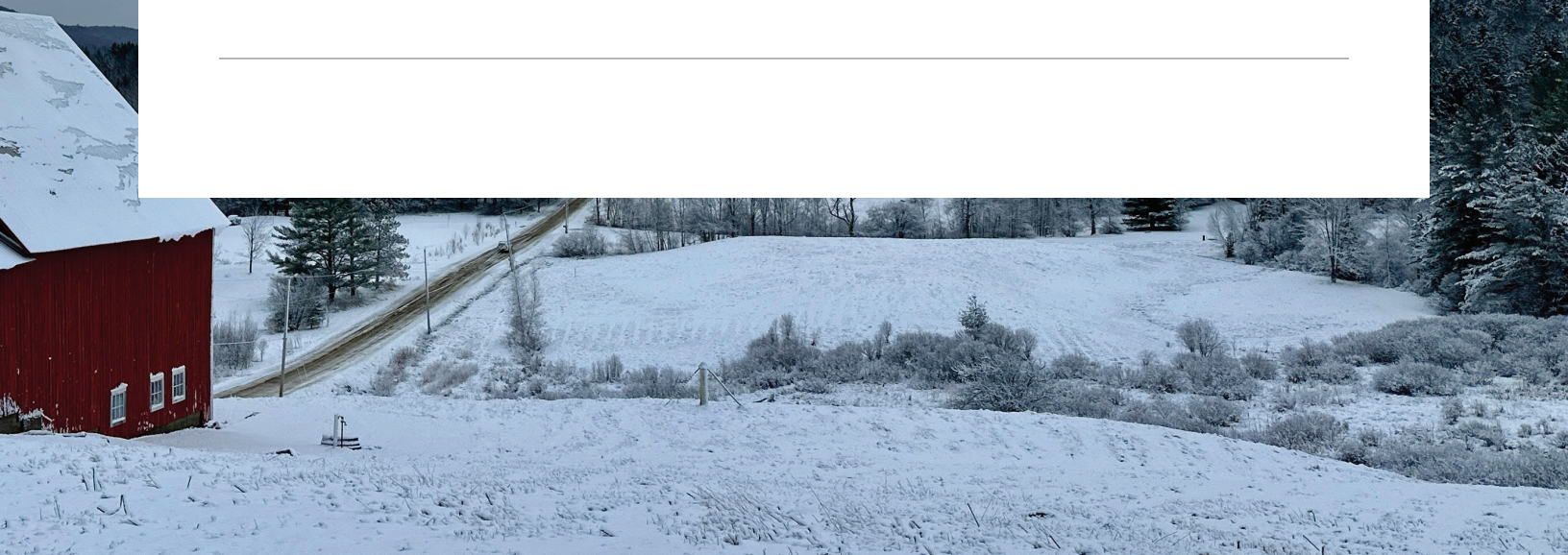
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### EXERCISE 3

## Mapping What Matters: A Place-Based Giving Reflection

Vermont isn't just where you live. It's where your stories unfold.  
Where your people are. Where your roots (or chosen roots) live.

Grab a pen or simply close your eyes and imagine  
a map of Vermont in front of you.

Think about:

- Where do you feel most connected?
- Where have you made memories that shaped you?
- Where do you see beauty?
- Where have you witnessed need or resilience in a way that moved you?
- Where do you want to make a difference?



#### **NOW TRY THIS:**

**Sketch a rough outline of Vermont or use the one on the opposite page. Place a heart, star, or dot in the places that matter most to you. Write a word or short phrase next to each to describe why it's meaningful.**

#### **EXAMPLE:**

*Brattleboro – “Where I first got involved in the arts.”*

*Barre – “Saw how flood recovery brings neighbors together.”*

*Island Pond – “Where we vacationed growing up. Still feels like home.”*



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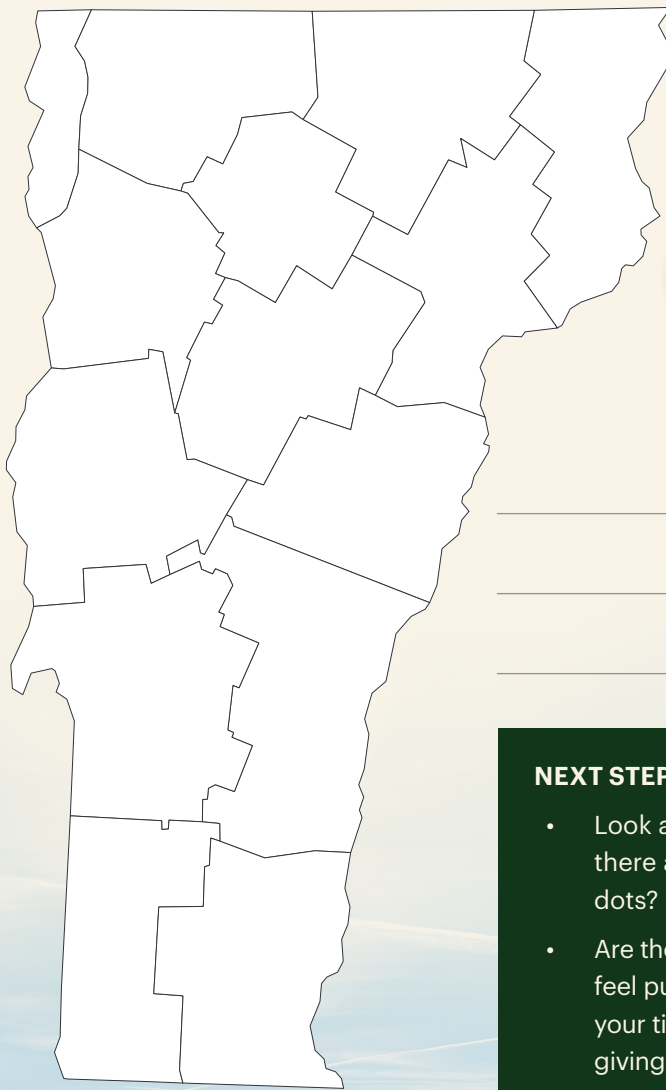
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**NEXT STEP:**

- Look at the map. Is there a pattern in your dots?
- Are there places you feel pulled to invest your time, attention, or giving?
- Circle one that feels like a good place to begin.

## EXERCISE 4

# Your Giving Soundtrack

If your philanthropy had a playlist... what would be on it?

Music holds memory. It stirs emotion. It captures a moment in time or a vision for the future. Sometimes a single song says what a whole mission statement can't.

This exercise invites you to connect with your giving through feeling, memory, and rhythm.



### TRY THIS:

**Pick three songs that represent how you feel about giving, what you want to change, or what inspires you to act. These could be childhood favorites, protest anthems, lullabies, or something you heard yesterday that just clicked.**

For each one, jot down:

- Song Title + Artist
- What it evokes
- What cause or value it connects to for you

### EXAMPLES:

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**Song:** "Stand by Me" – Ben E. King

**Evokes:** Solidarity. Showing up.

**Connects to:** Community support, neighbors helping neighbors

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**Song:** "Fast Car" – Tracy Chapman

**Evokes:** Longing for opportunity, starting fresh

**Connects to:** Economic mobility, education, housing

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**Song:** "Here Comes the Sun" – The Beatles

**Evokes:** Hope, healing

**Connects to:** Mental health, recovery, resilience

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**Song:** "The View Between Villages" – Noah Kahan

**Evokes:** Coming home, finding peace in familiar places

**Connects to:** Belonging, rural renewal, creating safe and welcoming communities for all

## YOUR SOUNDTRACK:

1 *Song:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evokes: \_\_\_\_\_

Connects to: \_\_\_\_\_

2 *Song:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evokes: \_\_\_\_\_

Connects to: \_\_\_\_\_

3 *Song:* \_\_\_\_\_

Evokes: \_\_\_\_\_

Connects to: \_\_\_\_\_

Now take a look at your playlist.

- Is there a shared theme or feeling?
- What values are coming through?
- Is there a cause or community that this music nudges you toward?

Let your soundtrack be a guidepost. You can share it with your family or even play it at your next giving conversation.







## EXERCISE 5

# Before I Die: Vermont Edition

Inspired by the global chalkboard movement, this simple prompt brings your hopes into focus.



### FILL IN THE BLANK:

"Before I die, I want to help Vermont..."

Let the sentence lead you. You might write about land conservation, youth opportunity, housing, the arts, or something deeply personal. There are no wrong answers.

Want a bonus round? Invite loved ones to share their answers, too.

*Before I die, I want to help Vermont:*

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## EXERCISE 6

# Future Headlines

It's the year 2035. A local newspaper is writing a story about a transformation you helped spark in Vermont.

What's the headline?

Write it boldly across the page.

Then add a subhead: What did you do to help make it happen?

This exercise pairs well with a cup of tea, a big dream, and maybe a friend to brainstorm with.

VERMONT NEWS

2035

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