Health, Wellness, and Economic Empowerment Grant

Vermont Community Foundation

Instructions

Broadly, this grant will offer two years of support for existing or new programs that center healing and wellness, and/or economic empowerment for people and communities impacted by racial injustice.

Guidelines

Health, wellbeing, and economic stability are deeply connected. Access to culturally responsive wellness resources, opportunities for financial growth, and pathways to economic mobility all contribute to healthier individuals, stronger families, and thriving communities.

Many communities impacted by racial injustice continue to experience persistent disparities in health outcomes and economic opportunity. Community-led solutions play an essential role in addressing these challenges by strengthening resilience, expanding opportunity, and creating lasting change.

The Vermont Community Foundation is proud to offer this new grant opportunity to support programs that promote healing and wellness, strengthen economic opportunity, and create pathways for long-term prosperity for people and communities impacted by racial injustice. Funding may support work focused on healthy lifestyles, mental wellbeing, workforce development, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, wealth-building, and other community-informed approaches.

The predominant purpose of these programs should be to serve and meet the needs of historically underrepresented and marginalized communities and those most impacted by racial injustice.

For this grant program, the Vermont Community Foundation requests Letters of Interest – a short way for applicants to express interest and summarize their project idea without having to complete a full application. A grant review committee will review letters and then recommend a small number of organizations whose projects best align with the funding opportunity to submit a full application.

Eligible Applicants

Nonprofit entities are eligible to apply.

Priority will be given to established nonprofit organizations with a track record of sustainable

program development who have a program or program proposal that centers healing and wellness, economic empowerment and/or entrepreneurship opportunities for communities impacted by racial injustice. Credible community evidence can demonstrate a track record even when an organization lacks formal evaluation metrics, such as:

- statements from participants,
- photos of program activities,
- samples of program outcomes, like artwork or business marketing materials.

The applicant organization must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in the state of Vermont.

Alternatively, nonprofit organizations or community groups who do not have 501(c)(3) status may apply for this grant if another tax-exempt organization acts as a fiscal sponsor, and if the grant's purpose is deemed charitable by the VCF. You can find more information on fiscal sponsorship on the National Council of Nonprofits' website.

Guidance for Proposals

Applications should describe the program, the community who will benefit from this work, whether it is a new or existing program, and how it will support and center healing and wellness, economic empowerment and/or entrepreneurship opportunities for communities impacted by racial injustice. Full applications will also require a timeline, workplan, and project budget.

Strong proposals should demonstrate how they complement existing work, collaborate with partner organizations that are led by and/or serve communities impacted by racial injustice, build shared capacity, or reduce duplication. Partnerships should be reciprocal, not symbolic or transactional.

Here are some examples of what the grant opportunity may fund:

- Health and Wellness
    - Culturally responsive support groups or healing circles
    - Opportunities that foster cultural belonging, affinity, and connection
    - Chronic disease prevention and management
    - Youth wellbeing and resilience programming
- Economic Empowerment
    - Financial literacy and budgeting support
    - Mentorship and business coaching
    - Business start-up education and access to capital

This list is not exhaustive; new, creative ideas informed by community needs are highly encouraged.

What we don't fund:

- Debt reduction or deficit funding
- Individuals (applicants must apply as part of a nonprofit organization or community group)
- Capital costs and campaigns
- Expenses that have already been incurred
- Religious instruction
- Political campaigns or lobbying
- Ongoing operational expenses that simply maintain existing programming without expanding or enhancing it
- Programs that duplicate services already available at no cost through other organizations

Grant Size

Up to $50,000, made over two years – with one installment at the start of Year 1 and a second payment at the start of Year 2. We intend to fund 6-8 projects in communities across the state.

Partial funding may be offered.

Application Deadline & Notification

Letters of Interest (LOI) will be accepted between November 1 and 5 p.m. on January 8, 2027. LOI submissions will only be accepted via the Vermont Community Foundation's online grants management platform, which can be found at vermontcf.org/OGM. (exceptions will be made for applicants submitting in a language other than English.) Following a review of all LOIs, a small number of organizations will be invited to submit a full application for funding consideration. Organizations will be notified regarding the status of their LOI by February 26, 2027. Organizations invited to provide full applications will have until 5 p.m. on April 2, 2027 to submit. We anticipate announcing funding decisions by May 2027.

Application Format

You are welcome to respond to application questions in short-form or bulleted writing, video, or audio.

If choosing to use a video or audio file, please note that you will still need to provide written answers to questions in the "Organization Information" and "Application Questions Part 1" sections below. Once you arrive at "**Application Questions Part 2**," you will find a space to share a LINK to an audio or video file.

Here are instructions on how to create a link to your video/audio submission.

Helpful Hints

- Character limits include spaces and punctuation.
- Be sure to save your work frequently by clicking the "Save" button at the bottom of the page as the system will log out after 90 minutes of inactivity.
- The size of text boxes can be adjusted by dragging on the lower right corner.
- Create a PDF version of your application via the "Application Packet" button at the top of the page. All content and attachments will be included.

All applications must be submitted electronically to the Vermont Community Foundation through the application form in the Online Grants Manager, which can be accessed at www.vermontcf.org/OGM.

If you have questions about the Online Grants Manager, please send an email to grants@vermontcf.org, or contact Emma Johnson at ejohnson@vermontcf.org at 802-828-7893. With questions related to the Health, Wellness & Economic Empowerment Grant program, please contact Haley Pero at hpero@vermontcf.org or 802-828-7917.

Organization Information

What is your organization's annual operating budget?*

Character Limit: 20

What status best describes the applicant?*

Our grants must be paid to a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. If your organization or group does not fall into this category, you will need to use a fiscal sponsor. If you have questions, please contact 802-388-3355 opt. 6 or grants@vermontcf.org. We are happy to talk through your options.

Choices

Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit
Other - Please provide details in your answer to the next question.

Use this space to provide additional information about the applicant's status. (If Applicable)

If you have a fiscal sponsor—or if you operate under the umbrella of a larger registered nonprofit—provide their name below.

Character Limit: 500

Application Questions Part 1

Program Name*
Character Limit: 100

Total Amount Requested*
Maximum grant amount: $50,000

Character Limit: 20

Program Type*
Are you proposing a new program, or expanding an established program?

Choices
New Program
Expanding Established Program

Optional: If available, please include a link to your organization and/or program webpage.
Character Limit: 2000

Application Questions Part 2

If you choose to submit your LOI in the form of a video/audio file, upload a link here:
Please upload your video/audio to YouTube.com and share a private link to view it here. In your video, be sure to address all of the questions included in the section "Application Questions Part 2"

Here is a link to instructions for how to upload a video to YouTube and create a private link.

*** If submitting a video or audio file, please type "see video" in any required questions that are addressed in the video/audio file. Please note that you won't be able to submit your LOI until all required fields (*) have text in them.**

Character Limit: 2000

Organization Summary*
Please tell us about your organization, including the year founded, and your mission, vision, and goals.

Character Limit: 1000

Previous Organizational Impact*
Please tell us about your success developing programs related to health and wellness, economic empowerment and/or entrepreneurship opportunities and their impact.

Character Limit: 1000

Program Summary*

Please provide a summary of your program.

Character Limit: 1000

Geographic Area Served*

Where will your program take place and what towns and/or counties will be served?

Character Limit: 750

Program Leadership*

Who will provide leadership for this program? How will their background or experience help them meet the needs of communities impacted by racial injustice?

Character Limit: 1000

Intended Impact*

What impact do you intend to have on Vermonters from communities impacted by racial injustice as a direct result of your project? How will you know you are making a difference?

Character Limit: 1000

Partial Funding*

If you were awarded partial funding, how would you amend your proposal? Please include a minimum amount needed to carry out a revised plan.

Character Limit: 1000

Collaboration with Programs and/or Partners*

Please tell us about the ways that you collaborate with community programs and/or partners that support historically underrepresented and marginalized communities.

Character Limit: 1000

Save and Submit

Letters of Interest (LOI) will be accepted between November 2 and 5 p.m. on January 8, 2027. LOI submissions will only be accepted via the Vermont Community Foundation's online grants management platform, which can be found at **vermontcf.org/OGM**. Following a review of all LOIs, a small number of organizations will be invited to submit a full application for funding consideration. Organizations will be notified regarding the status of their LOI by **February 26, 2027,** and **applications will be due by 5 p.m. on April 2, 2027.** We anticipate announcing funding decisions by **May 2027.**

By submitting your application to the Vermont Community Foundation, you give us permission

to share your application and information about your project with other potential funders, both individuals and foundations.