Spark Connecting Community (2024)

Vermont Community Foundation

Spark Connecting Community Guidelines

Spark Connecting Community grants put building and nurturing community front and center. We aim to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital—the connective tissue of our communities. Social capital can be described as the value developed from working together, connecting across differences, and sharing common place-based experiences. Higher levels of social capital are correlated with better health outcomes, higher educational achievement, increased civic engagement, and greater resilience—all of which help build community vitality.

In 2024, applications received from Essex, Grand Isle, and Franklin counties will receive priority consideration.

When the committee receives multiple applications for projects that clearly meet the stated goals of the Spark Connecting Community program, they will then consider the size of the organization's operating budget. Applicants with budgets under $500,000 will receive highest priority for available funding.

Please read the full application guidelines online by <u>clicking here</u>.

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 <u>www.vermontcf.org/OGM</u>. Applications will not be accepted by mail or email. If you have questions about the Online Grants Manager, please contact <u>grants@vermontcf.org</u> or 802-388-3355 opt. 6.

Organization Questions Part I

Please share the mission of the organization.*

Character Limit: 500

Issues your organization works to address (words not sentences).*

Ex. homelessness, food insecurity, carbon emissions, forest fragmentation, childcare, substance misuse.

Character Limit: 500

What is your organization's annual operating budget?*

Character Limit: 20

Did you receive a grant from the Community Foundation in either 2022 or 2023?*

Choices

Yes
No
Unsure

Financial Statements - Completed Fiscal Year*

Please upload a copy of your organization's profit/loss statement and balance sheet from its most recently completed fiscal year. Sample documents can be downloaded from the Community Foundation's website - visit our Online Grants Center FAQ for more details.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Financial Statements - Current Fiscal Year*

Upload a copy of your organization's budget to actual, including both revenue and expenses, from its current fiscal year. Sample documents can be downloaded from the Community Foundation's website - visit our Online Grants Center FAQ for more details.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

What status best describes the applicant?*

Our grants must be paid to a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, place of worship/religious group, or town/municipal agency. If your organization or group does not fall into one of these categories, you will need to use a fiscal sponsor. If you have questions, please contact 802-388-3355 opt. 6. We are happy to talk through your options.

Choices

Municipal entity (i.e., town, public school, or other municipal department or agency)
Registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit
Place of worship or religious group
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: 200

Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Form (If Applicable)

Download a blank Fiscal Sponsor Agreement Form (**click here to download the form**) and forward it to your fiscal sponsor to print, fill out, and sign. The form must be filled out completely and you must use the official VCF form. Please call 802-388-3355 opt. 6 if you have questions.

Upload the form here.

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Which areas of the state does the organization serve?*

Choose all that apply.

Choices

Statewide
Addison County
Bennington County
Caledonia County
Chittenden County
Essex County
Franklin County
Grand Isle County
Lamoille County
Orange County
Orleans County
Rutland County
Washington County
Windham County
Windsor County

Which of the following strategic focus area(s) aligns best with the work of your organization?*

Choose all that apply.

Choices

Economic Equity
Climate & Environment
Health & Wellbeing
Education & Training
Democracy, Trust, & Community Leadership

Spark Connecting Community Application Questions

Project Name*
Character Limit: 100

Total Amount Requested*
Minimum $500 / Maximum $5,000

Character Limit: 20

Previous Spark Funding*
Has your organization received support from the Spark program in the last three years? *Please note that Spark cannot provide repeat support for the same program/project.*

Choices
Yes
No

If you answered yes above, please provide the grant amount, grant purpose, and year awarded.
Character Limit: 500

Project Summary*
Provide a concise overview of the project and what it will accomplish in one or two sentences. *Please use complete sentences – this description may be used in publications.*
Character Limit: 850

Project Description*
Describe your project, your project partners, the work you will do, and the overall timeline.
Character Limit: 2750

Community Buy-In*
Provide evidence of community buy-in, interest, and/or engagement in the planning for your project.
Character Limit: 1250

Project Outcomes/Community Benefit*
Tell us how this project will build social capital in your community and who it will benefit.
Character Limit: 1250

Project Budget*
Attach a copy of your itemized project budget showing both expenses and revenue, with a narrative description for each expense line included in the budget document. Note: Administrative costs related to the project (such as staffing, rent, and gas mileage) are acceptable. *Sample documents can be downloaded from the Community Foundation's website - visit our Online Grants Center FAQ for more details.*

File Size Limit: 3 MB

Attach a Photograph (OPTIONAL)

Quality photos can be very helpful and inspiring. Sometimes we have opportunities to share your proposal with other potential funders and sometimes we want to promote the good work you are doing through social media and web posts. Providing an image is optional, but we would be grateful.

Please indicate photographer credit and/or photo description in text area. *File types supported: png, jpeg, or jpg.*

Character Limit: 500 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Photograph License and Release (if applicable)

Do you wish to give the VCF permission to use your photo in communications? Please indicate below how you'd like it used.

Option 1: Please only use my photo internally if relevant to this application (to be shared among VCF staff only)

Option 2: Please use my photo internally and externally as determined by the VCF (this may include external communications, such as press releases, social media, or communications with potential funders of your project) Your organization &/or the photographer will be credited as the source of the image.

Select option below.

Choices
Option 1
Option 2

Organization Questions Part II

Which of the following populations does your organization serve? Please check all that apply.*

Choices
Children and youth
Families
Older Vermonters (age 65+)
Small, rural communities
Low-income or those living in poverty
Black, Brown, or other People of Color
Indigenous People
LGBTQ+
Women and girls
People with disabilities or special needs
No special populations
Unsure
Other, describe:

Other:
Character Limit: 500

Approximately how many people do you serve on a regular basis during the course of a year?*

If your service level varies from year to year, you can use an estimate of the number you served in the last year.

Choices

Fewer than 100
100-499
500-999
1,000-4,999
5,000-24,999
25,000-50,000
More than 50,000
Unsure

How many years has your organization existed?*

Choices

Less than 5 years
5-10 years
11-20 years
21-50 years
More than 50 years
Unsure

How many paid full-time employees or the equivalent does your organization have?*

Choices

no paid employees
1-2 full-time employees (or equivalent)
3-10 full-time employees (or equivalent)
11-20 full-time employees (or equivalent)
21-30 full-time employees (or equivalent)
31-50 full-time employees (or equivalent)
51-100 full-time employees (or equivalent)
More than 100 full-time employees (or equivalent)
Unsure

What are the demographics of your organization's leadership? Please check all that apply.*

Choices

BIPOC led organization (Executive or Assistant Director, CEO, etc.)
BIPOC members on the Board of Directors
LGBTQ+ led organization (Executive or Assistant Director, CEO, etc.)
LGBTQ+ members on the Board of Directors
People with disabilities lead the organization (Executive or Assistant Director, CEO, etc.)
People with disabilities are members of the Board of Directors
Woman led (Executive or Assistant Director, CEO, etc.)

Members of the Board of Directors are women
None of the above
Unknown or prefer not to say
Other, describe:

Other:
Character Limit: 500

Save and Submit

Applications must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, to be considered.

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.