

# Vermont Community Foundation Giving Recommendations

## *February 2017*

There's no question that the level of uncertainty that currently exists in our communities has caused many people to do what comes naturally in such times: get involved and donate to the causes they care about. Along those lines, many folks have been in touch to ask if we have any guidance we can provide.

The list we are sharing includes some of the organizations that we've been hearing most about recently from our constituents, our staff, and other grantmakers in Vermont and beyond. And our suggestions for local organizations drew heavily from our most recent report, *Opportunity: 11 Critical Paths for Philanthropy*.

As you might imagine, no list could be comprehensive. In thinking about what to include, we considered hundreds of possibilities, and any one person's list would undoubtedly look different. Giving is, after all, a highly personal endeavor.

So, consider these ideas a starting point and know that if you'd like more suggestions or help in thinking about your giving, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## **Anti-Discrimination/Immigration/Refugees**

### **National**

- [The American Civil Liberties Union](#)

The ACLU works in courts, legislatures, and communities with a mission of defending and preserving the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in the United States.

- [Council on American Islamic Relations](#)

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) is the largest Islamic and civic rights organization in the U.S. CAIR's mission is to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

- [Lambda Legal](#)

Founded in 1973, Lambda Legal is the oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and those with HIV through litigation, education, and public policy work. They do not charge our clients for legal representation or advocacy.

- [National Immigration Law Center](#)  
NILC is dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrants. They use litigation, policy analysis and advocacy, strategic communications, and other strategies to advance their mission.
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)  
SPLC fights hate and bigotry and seeks justice for the most vulnerable members of society, using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy.
- [United We Dream](#)  
This is the largest immigrant youth-led organization in the nation. It is a nonpartisan network is made up of over 100,000 immigrant youth and allies and 55 affiliate organizations in 26 states. They organize and advocate for the dignity and fair treatment of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status.

## Local

- [American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Vermont](#)  
ACLU Foundation of Vermont is dedicated to advancing the civil rights and civil liberties of all Vermonters. Their efforts are focused on broad range of issues including freedom of speech, criminal justice reform, racial justice, women's rights, LGBT rights, disability rights, voting rights, prisoners' rights, immigrants' rights, religious liberty, privacy, and more.
- [Migrant Justice](#)  
Migrant Justice works to build the voice, capacity, and power of the farmworker community and engage community partners to organize for economic justice and human rights, gathering the farmworker community to discuss and analyze shared problems and to envision collective solutions.
- [Samara Fund](#)  
The Samara Fund at the Community Foundation works to build healthy and vital lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities in Vermont by supporting programs and services for LGBTQ youth and adults.
- [Vermont Legal Aid](#)  
Vermont Legal Aid (VLA) strives to advance fairness and justice in the civil legal system, address the social and economic interests of their clients, and confront the underlying causes of poverty, discrimination, and inequality.
- [Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity](#)  
Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity works to strengthen inclusive and equitable practices to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. It offers assistance, support, and advocacy related to inclusion, diversity, and equity in the public sphere.
- [Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program](#)  
The Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program helps refugees in the Burlington area rebuild their lives by helping them to navigate American culture, laying solid foundations for a fresh start, and making essential connections to successfully integrate into the community.

## **Closing the Opportunity Gap for Vermonters**

### **Education**

- **[J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation](#)**

A supporting organization of the Community Foundation, the McClure Foundation supports equitable access to affordable and high-quality college and career education that will prepare Vermonters for secure and successful employment. The focus on this issue is driven by the fact that only 38% of low-income Vermont high school graduates continue on to college. They also helped establish the Access to Higher Education Fund, which gives like-minded philanthropists the opportunity to contribute to this vision.

- **[The Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children](#)**

Established as a supporting organization of the Community Foundation, the Permanent Fund has led a collaborative, focused approach to ensure that outstanding programs for all of Vermont's youngest children are launched, funded, and integrated fully into Vermont's early care and education system. Initiatives include *Let's Grow Kids* and *Vermont Birth to Five*, and the Fund's overall mission is to ensure that every Vermont child has access to high quality and affordable early care and education by 2025.

- **[Vermont State Colleges](#)**

For the benefit of Vermont, the Vermont State Colleges system provides affordable, high quality, student-centered, and accessible education, fully integrating professional, liberal, and career study that is consistent with student aspirations and regional and state needs. Institutions include: Vermont Tech, Castleton University, Lyndon State College, and Johnson State College, and Community College of Vermont. And CCV offers expanded services for veterans transitioning from active duty to the college classroom.

- **[Vermont Student Assistance Corporation](#)**

VSAC is unique in its scope and role. Created by the Vermont Legislature in 1965 as a public nonprofit agency, they advocate for students and their families to ensure that they have the information, the counseling and the financial aid to achieve their education goals.

### **Family Supports**

- *In addition to the nonprofits listed below, please consider these types of organizations in your local area: parent child centers, free health clinics, domestic and sexual violence prevention groups, mentoring programs, peer recovery centers, transportation providers, and food shelves.*

- **[NAMI Vermont](#)**

NAMI Vermont supports, educates, and advocates so that all communities, families, and individuals affected by mental illness or mental health challenges can build better lives.

- [United Way of Northwest Vermont – Working Bridges Program](#)  
Barriers such as childcare, reliable transportation, and an acute need for emergency financial assistance get in the way of continuous employment and derail good employees. Working Bridges seeks solutions for job retention and decreased absenteeism and uses the workplace as a platform for social services. Through shared resources, employers minimize employment barriers for their low-to-moderate wage workers and maximizing the supports employees need to be successful and improve their lives.
- [Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition](#)  
VAHC is a statewide membership organization dedicated to ensuring that all Vermonters have safe, adequate, physically accessible and affordable housing, particularly the state's low and moderate-income residents, people with disabilities, the homeless, elders, and families with children.
- [Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs](#)  
VCRHYP is a coalition of 14 service providers working together to guarantee the existence of a statewide safety net for runaway and homeless youth. They use a national service delivery model that ensures access to services for youth throughout the entire state rather than just those in a small number of towns, cities, or locales.
- [Vermont Foodbank](#)  
The mission of the Vermont Foodbank is to gather and share quality food and nurture partnerships so that no one in Vermont will go hungry.
- [Vermont Legal Aid](#)  
Vermont Legal Aid (VLA) provides civil legal services for those living in poverty, with a disability, or over age 60. VLA also serves anyone who is discriminated against in housing decisions and all who face challenges related to health care insurance or services.
- [Vermont National Guard Charitable Foundation](#)  
Founded in 2005, the organization's mission is to provide emergency financial support to Vermont military members and their families, as well as support activities and programs run by the Vermont National Guard that benefit the general public. The foundation makes grants to appropriate and deserving service members without obligation for repayment.

## **Environment & Climate Change**

### **National**

- [Earthjustice](#)  
Earthjustice is a public interest law firm dedicated to protecting places, natural resources, and wildlife and to defending the right of all people to a healthy environment. It does this by enforcing and protecting environmental laws on behalf of hundreds of community and environmental groups, providing legal services free of charge.

- [Natural Resources Defense Council](#)

NRDC advocates to ensure the rights of all people to the air, the water, and the wild, combining the power of its members and online activists with the expertise of scientists, lawyers, and policy advocates across the globe.

## Local

- [Conservation Law Foundation](#)

The Conservation Law Foundation aims to protect New England's environment for the benefit of all people, using the law, science, and the market to create solutions that preserve natural resources, build healthy communities, and sustain a vibrant economy.

- [Vermont Land Trust](#)

The Vermont Land Trust works to protect the land that gives Vermont its rural character by providing technical and legal assistance to individuals, communities, and local land trusts to help them achieve their conservation objectives.

- [Vermont Natural Resources Council](#)

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares the state for future challenges and opportunities.

## **Journalism & Media**

### National

- [Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

CPJ is a nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide. They defend the right of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. When press freedom violations occur, CPJ mobilizes a network of correspondents who report and take action on behalf of those targeted. They report on violations in repressive countries, conflict zones, and established democracies alike.

- [National Public Radio](#)

NPR is a mission-driven, multimedia news organization and radio program producer. It is a network with a strong base of member stations and supporters nationwide. NPR is also the leading membership and representation organization for public radio.

- [ProPublica](#)

ProPublica is an independent, nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest.

### Local

- [Center for Media & Democracy](#)

Founded in Burlington in 1984 to launch community access TV across Vermont, the Center for Media & Democracy opens the door to local government and enables activists to access equipment and airtime to cover important community issues. The Center also runs Common Good Vermont, a statewide information clearinghouse and convener for Vermont's nonprofit sector.

- [Vermont PBS](#)  
Vermont PBS educates, informs, entertains, and inspires Vermonters to be lifelong learners and engaged in their community.
- [Vermont Public Radio](#)  
VPR provides an essential and trusted independent voice for news, information, music and cultural exploration for the people of our region.
- [VTdigger.org](#)  
VTDigger.org is a statewide news website that publishes watchdog reports on state government, politics, consumer affairs, business, and public policy.

## **Women's Issues**

### **National**

- [Planned Parenthood Federation of America](#)  
This organization provides high quality affordable sexual and reproductive healthcare, educates, advocate, and partners with similar organizations globally. PPFA works with millions of women, men, and young people worldwide.
- [Ultraviolet](#)  
UltraViolet works on a range of issues including health care, economic security, violence, reproductive rights, racial justice, and immigration by putting the voices of all women, especially women of color and LGBTQ women, front and center.

### **Local**

- [Planned Parenthood of Northern New England](#)  
PPNNE provides, promotes, and protects access to reproductive health care and sexuality education so that all people can make voluntary choices about their reproductive and sexual health. It is the largest reproductive health care and sexuality education provider and advocate in northern New England, serving patients at 21 locations across Vermont, New Hampshire, and southern Maine.
- [Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence](#)  
Together with its member programs throughout the state, the Network represents the collective voice for social change on behalf of domestic and sexual violence survivors. Their purpose is to ensure that survivors are supported and empowered in getting their needs met and communities are working toward eliminating domestic and sexual violence.

- [\*\*The Vermont Women's Fund\*\*](#)

The Women's Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation focuses its grantmaking on Vermont women and girls ages 12-25, with a strategic emphasis on programs that offer financial literacy and job and life-skill training, ensuring that every woman and girl in Vermont can rise and thrive.

- [\*\*Vermont Works for Women\*\*](#)

VWW helps women and girls recognize their potential and explore, pursue, and excel in work that leads to economic independence. They do this by focusing on three types of programming: moving women into employment success; investing in girls, the next generation; and advocating for large-scale culture change for women and girls.