

Community Health Investment Fund Fiscal Year 2024 Report

The University of Vermont Medical Center's Community Health Investment Fund (CHIF) currently invests over \$1 million annually in programs and initiatives through a competitive grant process. Investments help support the priority areas identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The Fund is overseen by the Community Health Investment Committee (CHIC). This annual report includes:

- Fund snapshot and alignment with the Community Health Needs Assessment
- Organizations funded and year funded for multi-year funded grantees
- Project titles and description summaries
- Grant type and amount of funding awarded



\$1,034,134
Funding
Awarded



22
Grantees



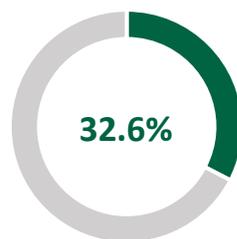
76,805*
People
Impacted

Community Health Needs Assessment Funding Priority Alignment



Percentage of Fund
allocated across
Health Priority Areas*
self-reported by grantees

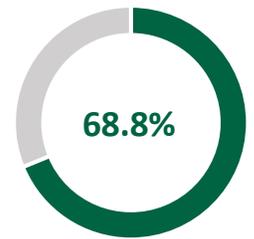
Cultural Humility and
Inclusive Health Care



Housing



Mental Health and
Wellbeing



Percentage of Fund
allocated across
Populations of Focus*
self-reported by grantees

49.7%

Black, Native
American and
People of
Color

0.5%

Non-binary,
genderqueer,
fluid, and
transgender

16.9%

People with
Language
Access Needs

9.7%

People with
Disabilities

14.7%

People who
are LGBTQ+

1.0%

Older Adults
over 65 years
of age

25.1%

Refugees and
newly
immigrated
individuals

18.1%

Youth

86.8%

People experiencing
poverty or lower
socio-economic
status



*People impacted may include duplication.

*Projects may address multiple health priority areas.

*25% or more people served or to be served by the project hold identity. Projects may serve multiple populations.

Collective Impact Grants

Chittenden County Homeless Alliance

Project: 5-Year Strategic Plan Development

Award: \$40,000, 1-Year Planning Grant

The Chittenden County Homeless Alliance (CCHA) has been working since Fall of 2022 to renew its five-year strategic plan. Over the course of the last year, a dedicated group of committee members have gathered feedback from over 100 stakeholders, including targeted outreach to people with lived experience of homelessness. The CCHA is the local Continuum of Care (CoC) and comprised of over 30 community organizations who are invested in ending homelessness. This grant will be used to increase capacity and develop a cohesive implementation plan to ensure our Alliance's sustainability.

United Way of Northwest Vermont

Project: Northwest Vermont Prevention Network

Award: \$100,000, Year 2

The Northwest Vermont Prevention Network continues to advance a comprehensive, aligned strategy for preventing substance misuse and promoting health and well-being for people of all ages. After completing a regional inventory and interactive map of current resources and services, the Network can identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities. The Network desires to advance its priorities for change and growth at the policies and systems level (encompassing local, state, and federal policies and laws, economic and cultural influences, and media). The Network also wishes to create a model for sustainable, consistent policy work to help prevent substance misuse across the Northwest Vermont region in the years to come.

Program Grants

Boys and Girls Club of Burlington

Project: Improving Equitable Access to Mental Health and Wellness Support

Award: \$50,000, Year 2

The goal of this initiative is to provide a higher level of mental health and emotional wellness support to children and teenagers who come from families that lack the resources to otherwise access such supports. This will achieve this by 1) offering youth from historically underserved backgrounds equitable access to a safe, structured, and supportive environment where they can rely on support from compassionate and engaged adults during out-of-school time, 2) hosting additional training sessions that improve Club staff's ability to identify instances when young people are struggling with mental health or emotional wellness and to provide appropriate, individualized support to these children and teenagers in response, and 3) implementing evidence-based small group and one-on-one mentoring programs for those Club members who are at highest risk of struggling with issues related to mental health and emotional wellness.

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)

Project: Food as Medicine at Feeding the Champlain Valley

Award: \$50,000, Year 1

CVOEO's Feeding Chittenden food shelf is partnering with local Champlain Valley clinicians to help Vermonters access nutritious foods that are critical to their specific medical needs. Using a multilingual online ordering system, PantrySoft, patients are able to filter the food shelf's current inventory for foods recommended by their clinicians, order what they need, and have it delivered either to a local clinic for pickup or directly to their homes. A team of county-based food fulfillment coordinators are charged with developing connections with local food producers, local health care providers (training them in PantrySoft) and delivering completed food orders to patients on a regular basis. This grant support expanding home delivery services as well as keep the food shelf stocked with specific items, e.g. low-salt, low-fat, fresh produce, that will support dietary health.



Chittenden Accountable Community for Health**Project: Housing Health Priority Team****Award: \$25,000, Year 2**

The Chittenden Accountable Community for Health (CACH) is a collaborative partnership focused on improving the health of individuals and communities in Chittenden and Grant Isle Counties by addressing social determinants of health, with a particular emphasis on housing. Most recently, The Housing Health Priority Team collaborated with Rhiannon M. Kim, Owner of Love at the Roots, LLC. This collaboration resulted in nine individual sessions to help service providers gain insight into the impact of trauma exposure response on themselves and others. The goal is to address 1) increased stress and burnout, 2) reduced quality of care, 3) decreased job satisfaction, 4) high staff turnover rates, and 5) secondary trauma, and potential disengagement from clients' needs. Each session includes a blend of information sharing, reflection, group discussions, and embodied practices. To date, the completed five sessions have all received excellent feedback.

Chittenden Community Television Center for Media and Democracy**Project: Vermont Language Justice Project****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

The Vermont Language Justice Project (VLJP) works with trusted community members from Vermont's refugee, asylee, migrant, and immigrant communities to produce and distribute informational videos translated into 19 languages, ensuring Vermonters can make informed decisions about their health and everyday needs. As demand for VLJP's work grows, and language accessibility services become a standard best practice across public health and other fields, VLJP seeks to build partnerships and collect data to better understand and meet the needs of Multi-lingual Learners or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities, and to inform systemic language access solutions in Vermont. VLJP video topics include flood safety videos, a series on mental health resources, instructional videos on how to collect a stool sample, how to use Narcan, how to properly pick up and take prescribed medications, etc. VLJP video content is led by direct input from community members and translators as well as VLJP's Multilingual Task Force, a group of health providers, community partners, state agencies, schools, etc. VLJP translates into Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, Dari, English, French, Haitian Kreyòl, Kirundi, Maay Maay, Mandarin, Nepali, Pashto, Spanish, Somali, Swahili, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, and ASL. To our knowledge, VLJP is the only organization that produces translated videos in these languages nationwide.

Conscious Homestead**Project: Healing and Nourishing Ourselves through Community Connections with the Land****Award: \$37,000, Year 1**

This program addresses racism as a public health crisis by providing BIPOC community members with: free vegetables, fruits, herbs, and culturally important seeds; free herbal Care Packages that support BIPOC herbalists and community health; A safe space for workshops led by BIPOC educators focused on mental and physical health; and social events to combat the racial isolation many BIPOC Vermont residents face. This program works to weave a community that profoundly expands the web of community care beyond program offerings. When someone in the community is in need of support, whether it's a ride to the airport, help moving into a new apartment or a place to stay as the floods raged this summer displacing so many Vermonters. Participants of the program show up for each other. They celebrate one another. Individuals in the program wrap around each other and make living in Vermont less isolating and more sustainable/supportive for Black and Brown folks here.

Dad Guild**Project: Fatherhood Support Network****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

Dad Guild's Peer Support Network engages dads and masculine-identifying caregivers in healthy activities that promote empathy, vulnerability and healthy masculinity at a time when many struggle with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and social isolation. This peer support network provides multiple avenues for dads to connect with one another through high interest activities with minimal barriers for participation. The environments created in these spaces foster the development of healthy social connections, and participants are encouraged to connect with one



another outside of Dad Guild programming. To meet dads where they are at, Dad Guild utilizes a multifaceted approach that offers a little bit of something for everybody: basketball, running, video games, campfires, Zoom check-ins, trivia nights, new dad cohorts and more. Dads who participate in programming report an increase in confidence as a parent, an increase in the number of social connections they have and an increase in frequency discussing their own mental health.

Dismas of Vermont Inc.

Project: Transitional Housing for the Formerly Incarcerated in Chittenden County

Award: \$50,000, Year 1

Since 1986, Dismas of Vermont has provided supportive transitional housing for the formerly incarcerated and operates five houses. Residents are housed for up to two years while they work towards employment, sobriety, reconciliation, and, ultimately, independent housing. In Chittenden County, Dismas operates two houses with a paid staff and over 150 volunteers who provide nearly 3,000 volunteer hours annually; the latter is critical to the Dismas mission to reconcile former prisoners with society and society with former prisoners. As people leave incarceration, they often encounter the same factors – people, poverty, temptation of drugs and alcohol – that likely contributed to their conviction. Stable housing – paired with accountability and support from Dismas – is among the few protections that deter new criminality. Individuals recently incarcerated are subject to significant bias and rarely have the income or credit required. Dismas of Vermont is an example of the Housing First model and has impressively reduced recidivism rates among this vulnerable population. Recidivism refers to the destructive cycle of returning to prison for a new crime or a probation violation.

HomeShare Vermont

Project: Sustain and Gain Program

Award: \$10,000, Year 1

Older Vermonters and those with disabilities are faced with difficult decisions to live with the dignity they deserve. For many of these Vermonters who want to stay in their homes, the challenges can feel unsurmountable. HomeShare (HSVT) exists to provide them with better options. HSVT would like to continue to meet the needs of the Chittenden and Grand Isle communities through making matches that help people stay in their homes. Case managers facilitate the creation of a unique HSVT agreement outlining the kinds of assistance hosts may need, rent to be paid as well as shared understanding of the kind of home both parties wish to live in. With this grant, HSVT will more effectively serve historically marginalized communities in Vermont, specifically BIPOC and LGBTQ Vermonters. HSVT will engage in organization wide training to expand understanding of how best to center the experiences of a wider range of Vermonters. They will also design and execute outreach initiatives geared towards supporting, recruiting and matching hosts from these communities.

Janet S. Munt Family Room

Project: Family Strengthening Workers at the Building Strong Families Clinic

Award: \$50,000, Year 3

Family Strengthening Workers (FSW), at the Building Strong Families Clinic, provide culturally relevant support to immigrant families in Chittenden County. FSWs represent the immigrant communities they serve, creating a welcoming and comfortable environment, allowing families to be more open and vulnerable to discuss issues that may be more sensitive with their care providers. FSWs assist in providing appointment reminders, following up on referrals, and serve as liaisons to medical and other social services providers. Consistency is important to our families. Over time families develop more trusting relationships with our staff which effects how families receive medical advice and trust referrals. The Building Strong Families Clinic continues to provide food, clothing, winter gear, bike helmets, and other necessary concrete supports for families.



Pathways Vermont**Project: Chittenden County Housing First Program****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

Housing First is an evidence-based, permanent supportive housing model with the goal to reduce, and ultimately end homelessness, as well as reduce instances of chronic institutionalization by offering permanent supportive housing. Housing First immediately ends homelessness and provides clients long-term, multidisciplinary community supports, including service coordination, drug and alcohol counseling, employment support, psychiatry, nursing care, and representative payee services. Housing First Coordinators function as intermediary landlords, supporting clients to find suitable housing, create success plans, and develop skills necessary to maintain independent housing i.e. paying rent, basic maintenance, and reporting damage. Coordinators connect individuals with mainstream resources that help facilitate achieving their goals.

Spectrum Inc.**Project: Warming Shelter for Homeless Youth****Award: \$37,000, Year 1**

Spectrum's Burlington-based Youth Warming Shelter, which previously operated only during the winter, is transitioning to year-round operations. Amid rising rates of homelessness and a shortage of affordable housing, Chittenden County has a continuous need for a year-round, low-barrier, youth-friendly shelter. Located downtown, close to Spectrum's Drop-In Center and other programs for homeless and at-risk youth, the shelter is open during overnight hours and has a 10-bed occupancy (with extra cots available when needed). The shelter offers bedding, basic toiletries, snacks and other supplies for clients. During daytime hours when the shelter is closed, the Drop-In Center serves as a resource for meals and support for homeless youth.

The DREAM Program**Project: Dream Program – Adult Mentorship****Award: \$25,000, Year 3**

DREAM serves historically marginalized populations by working with youth living in affordable housing and rural communities. The program's goals are to counteract four components of the opportunity gap disproportionately affecting underserved youth: (1) trusting relationships, (2) summer enrichment, (3) out-of-school experiences, (4) post-secondary support. To address these, DREAM offers: 1) Weekly after school "Village Mentoring" during the academic year; 2) After School Enrichment time including homework help, space, and adult support for focused academic engagement; individual and group enrichment activities; and support to youth and families in connecting with their schools; 3) 8 weeks of Summer Enrichment Programming focused on four learning objectives: building competent readers, fostering problem solvers, inspiring artists, and creators, and boosting healthy minds and bodies; and 4) Residential overnight camp experiences at Camp DREAM.

Turning Point Center of Chittenden County (TPCCC)**Project: Outreach and Recovery Coaching Program****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

The Outreach and Recovery Coaching (ORC) program offers A) facilitated substance use disorder (SUD) recovery groups, called "All-Recovery groups", B) informal support and rapport development with target populations, called "Peer Support Interactions," and C) individual recovery coaching. A low barrier program, ORC provides services to individuals actively using, entering recovery, or maintaining recovery. Coaches navigate throughout the emergency, temporary, and subsidized housing systems. The ORC program works among 13+ different residential and community locations that are comprised of hotels, motels, shelters, and housing services agencies. ORC is dedicated to maintaining critical connections with vulnerable persons identified as housing at-risk. Among all of Vermont's objectives for healthy, safe communities, substance use and housing are major priorities that require enhancements and innovation. The ORC program provides a positive impact to both priorities while introducing lasting and sustaining change for individuals and families affected by SUD.



University of Vermont and Agricultural College**Project: New American Youth on the Rise****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

New American Youth on the Rise (NAYR) is a pathway program for middle and high schoolers, from immigrant communities, designed to prepare students for successful transitions into college careers in health sciences. The overarching mission of NAYR is to enhance health equity for immigrant communities by 1) increasing representation in the healthcare workforce that reflects their racial/ethnic backgrounds and lived experiences, and 2) increasing collaboration and trust between the academic health center and the local community. With a three-pronged approach focusing on the student, the family, and school staff, NAYR “cocoon” the students with mentoring activities, courses for skills development, research experiences, and facilitation support to ensure a smooth transition into the health sciences at the college level.

Vermont Racial Justice Alliance (VRJA)**Project: Wellness Working Group and Richard Kemp Center**

Award: \$50,000, Year 2 The VRJA Wellness Working Group (WWG) was created to establish and manage a program to ensure that African Descendants of Slavery and Black, Indigenous and other People of Color are enabled to live daily, enjoying their highest levels of wellness. This work involves creating and managing disruptive initiatives and developing a long-range strategy for black-led alternative approaches. The Richard Kemp Center (RKC) was envisioned through the work of the VRJA WWG to address Black and Brown folks’ wellness, support youth, enable economic advancement, and ensure cultural empowerment to move towards greater racial and social equity in wealth distribution, health, and prosperity.

The WWG collaborates, advises, and consults with various ongoing initiatives in Burlington and statewide. They collaborate with the VRJA Data Team to develop and monitor a data dashboard that reflects high impact and high discretion racially disaggregated data. The WWG will produce a comprehensive report on health (and wealth) including racially disaggregated data on land and home ownership in conjunction with an outside agency. This work will inform planning and research in the development and implementation of a strategy that will provide Black and Brown folks direct access to ownership of homes and land.

Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform (VCJR)**Project: Re-entry and Recovery with Contingency Management****Award: \$50,000, Year 2**

In August 2022, Vermont’s first specialized, low-barrier reentry and recovery center for justice-involved people was opened in downtown Burlington. Services include professional case management, peer supports, and contingency management – an innovative drug treatment program using an evidence-based behavioral intervention. VCJR is looking to expand their patient capacity for this program to enroll an additional twenty-five participants. Furthermore, increased program staffing will allow for implementation of the contingency management program and other re-entry and recovery center offerings.

Emerging Need Grants**Pride Center of Vermont****Project: Emergency Funding to Support Health and Wellness Team****Award: \$5,000, One Time Only**

The Health & Wellness Team, while holding paramount importance in the Pride Center’s mission, currently faces significant underfunding due to gaps in grant funding and changes in grant administration models. Funding will help support staff members who directly serve some of the most impacted communities in Vermont: trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people, and queer and trans people of color. The Thrive Team continues to forge community bonds through dynamic social programming that engages Black, Indigenous, and other Vermonters of color in peer-



driven health education and skill sharing. Concurrently, the Trans Program diligently cultivates an environment of connection and joy, catering to the needs of trans, non-binary, intersex, and gender non-conforming Vermonters. Through an array of support groups and social events, these affinity spaces foster authentic connections to create a sense of belonging and camaraderie.

The Thrive and Trans Program Teams extend beyond community building, as staff work to break down barriers impeding access to vital health and wellness services. This comprehensive approach involves collaborating with healthcare providers, facilitating access to gender-affirming care, guiding individuals through the intricate processes of legal name and gender marker changes, and offering education so more health care providers can offer identity competent care. Supporting the infrastructure of these programs in the short term will allow for planning and fortification of processes and connections, to ensure these programs are sustainable and flexible in the long term.

Wobanaki Inc. in partnership with Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Vermont Abenaki Arts Association

Project: Graphic Novel to Support Abenaki Mental Health

Award: \$5,000, One Time Only

Historical and intergenerational trauma is a contributing factor in the high rates of chronic disease, substance use, depression, and poverty in the VT Abenaki community. It is critical that VT Abenaki understand the source and effects of this trauma and find culturally appropriate ways to address it. Creation of a graphic novel (one in a series of four) will depict the life and challenges of a Vermont Abenaki family at different points in time in Vermont history. The novel will serve to educate VT Abenaki with the goal of improving the educational, health, social, and economic status of Indigenous Peoples living in, or having their historical heritage, or some significant part thereof in the Vermont Abenaki territory. Furthermore, the novel will serve to educate the broader community of the historical traumas unacknowledged and unrecognized by the Vermont healthcare system. By sharing the experiences of an Abenaki family over generations, we hope that programs and resources will be created that are culturally appropriate.

Annual Awards

Community Health Centers (CHC)

Health Access Sliding-Fee Scale and Patient Support

Award: \$100,000

Grant funds are used to support the Patient Assistance Program, which offers a full array of support services available to all CHC patients and community residents in need of access to care and financial assistance programs.

United Way of Northwest Vermont

Strategic Investments in Health Improvement

Award: \$100,000

Funds are used to support investment in a diverse portfolio of strategies to support the health and wellbeing of the community. These include: a foundation of strong programs; nonprofit and cross sector collaboration; community-wide volunteer mobilization; and strategic initiatives to create systems-level change.

For more information contact:

Justin Graham, Community Health Project Coordinator

Justin.Graham@uvmhealth.org

Community Health Improvement

UVM Health Network

