

Vermont Women's Fund (2026)

Vermont Community Foundation

Fund Guidelines

About The Vermont Women's Fund

The Vermont Women's Fund, a component fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, was established in 1994 as an enduring resource for our state's women and girls. The Fund remains the largest philanthropic resource dedicated exclusively to this mission. A council of people from around Vermont advises the Fund and participates in its grantmaking, fundraising, and leadership work.

Recognizing that definitions and language around gender are constantly evolving we use an inclusive understanding of women and girls. We welcome those who identify as women in a way that is significant to them, including trans women and those that are nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and gender expansive.* We recognize, too, the disproportionate marginalization of the voices of BIPOC individuals in Vermont.

*We are indebted to our core partner, Vermont Works for Women, for the clarity of their definition.

Our Vision

Vermont is a place where all women and girls thrive.

Our Values

- Shared Power
- Revolutionizing Systems
- Equity for All

Our Mission

We fund structural change to advance gender equity and justice in Vermont.

Our mission acknowledges the very different experiences women and girls have in Vermont related to race, gender identity, sexuality, class, age, and ability. We are committed to sustaining systems change and movement building to address the root causes of gender inequality. We believe economic security is a critical pathway to success for women and girls in the state. We engage in statewide partnerships, targeted philanthropic giving, research, and program support that addresses the fundamental needs of women and girls.

What We Fund

We support programs that seek to address systemic barriers to economic well-being, and those that recognize the disproportionate impact of these barriers on women and girls by race, gender identity, sexuality, class, age, and ability.

We are also invested in the sustainability of the organizations we support and seek to determine how best our funding can contribute to long-term viability, creativity, and generative change. We award single or multi-year grants that support programmatic expenses for pilot or established programs and/or general operating costs. We consider funding proposals that support work at any phase of development (including pilots).

The Vermont Women's Fund is committed to addressing the needs of women and girls across all areas of the state and prioritizing statewide geographical representation. The Fund will also be attentive to projects or programs that engage with the arts.

Guidance for Proposals

Outcomes & Strategies

The Vermont Women's Fund will consider general operating support and programmatic proposals, including those designed to meet essential needs and those focused on long-term structural change, that contribute to the following outcomes:

- Make pathways to economic well-being (e.g., livable wage jobs, career development, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy) more visible, accessible, and affordable for all women and girls,
- Invest in the economic security and career prospects of unemployed women or those earning less than a living wage,
- Advance strategies that address systemic barriers to economic well-being and thriving in Vermont (e.g., education/training, childcare, transportation, access to health care, paid family leave, living wages, etc.), and/or
- Enhance the capacity of the organization to achieve its mission and practice stated values.

Critical Components

Proposals that include the following components will be prioritized:

- Desired outcomes aligned with the Fund's mission and focus areas, listed above
- Commitment to working with women and girls who are disproportionately impacted by systemic racism and sexism (BIPOC individuals, trans women and non-binary people, women living with disabilities, older women)
- Demonstration of how the proposed work will influence change and address systemic barriers and root causes
- Strategies grounded in research or best practices

- Projects that exhibit a collaborative approach
- A clear description of the desired vision for the program at the end of the grant term, and what questions will guide reflection and evaluation
- Regional representation across Vermont

What we do NOT fund:

- Personal financial support given directly to individual women/girls
- Individuals applying for scholarships or to attend school
- Endowments
- Campaigns to elect public officials
- Programs with religious instruction
- Projects that will be completed before the grant is awarded
- Businesses, business start-up funds, or loans
- Fundraising events
- Organizational debt
- Capital campaigns
- Indirect expenses over 10% of the project budget

Who May Apply

Grant applications will be accepted from organizations located in or serving the people of Vermont. Organizations must be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or be a public agency, school, or municipality in the state of Vermont. Nonprofit organizations or community groups who do not have 501(c)(3) status may apply for grant awards if another eligible organization acts as a fiscal sponsor.

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political affiliation, military service, physical or mental ability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available (meaning any funds having a competitive application process) by the Vermont Community Foundation, and any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, and other assistance administered by the Foundation.

Grant applicants must employ staff and provide services without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in paragraph 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political affiliation,

military service, physical or mental ability.

Full guidelines are available online by [clicking here](#).

All Applications must be submitted electronically through the Vermont Community Foundation's Online Grants Manager. Visit the [Online Grant Center](#) to learn how to use the Grants Manager, including accessing your existing account or registering for the first time. The electronic application form will be available after logging into your account. With questions, please contact grants@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 opt. 6.

The grant deadline for 2026 is 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. No late applications will be accepted so please make sure to plan accordingly and submit early to ensure receipt. Applicants will be notified of final decisions in May.

Organizational Questions Part I

Please share the mission of the organization.*

Character Limit: 500

From the list below, choose one category that best describes your organization's work.*

Choices

- Arts, Humanities, Collections
- Basic Needs, Food Access
- Childcare, Early Education
- Climate, Environment, Forest Health, Land Preservation
- Family Supports, Youth, Mentorship
- Health, Mental Health, Recovery Supports
- Housing, Homelessness, Shelter
- Racial Justice, Immigration, Equity
- Workforce Development, College, Career Training
- Other (respond below)

Other:

Character Limit: 250

What is your organization's annual operating budget?*

Character Limit: 20

Did you receive a grant from the Community Foundation in either 2024 or 2025?*

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: 5000

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

Project Information

Vermont Women's Fund - Program Alignment*

Does your project or programming prioritize women and girls as indicated in the [fund guidelines?](#)

Choices

Yes
No

Grant Report (If Applicable)

If you received funding from the Vermont Women's Fund in the last three years, please upload your most recent grant report. You can find your grant report in your online account as a "Follow-up" form connected to your application on your account dashboard. From the report form, please select the option at the top of the page to create a "Follow Up Packet" and upload it here. ***If you received funding for May 2025-May 2026, but you have not spent all of the funds yet, you may complete the report as an interim update on how the grant funds have been or will be spent, and upload that to this application.**

File Size Limit: 4 MB

Proposal Title*

If requesting general operating support, please note that here.

Character Limit: 125

Proposal Statement*

Provide a brief 2-4 sentence description of the what, why, and how of the work being proposed. *Note: this may be shared with other potential funders.*

- ***Example 1 (if general operating request): ORGANIZATION works to reduce food insecurity by ensuring individuals and families have reliable access to nutritious food.***

We do this by addressing immediate needs through food distribution while also strengthening long-term solutions, like community partnerships, resource coordination, and support services that promote stability and dignity.

- **Example 2 (if specific program/project request):** ORGANIZATION increases access to the arts through a family scholarship program that reduces financial barriers to participation in creative classes and activities. By covering program costs and partnering with community organizations, the program ensures families can engage in enriching arts experiences regardless of income.

Character Limit: 500

Years of Funding Requested*

Please note that the majority of competitive grants are awarded for one-year terms. In response to proposals that include compelling evidence that multi-year support would catalyze greater change, grants may be awarded for two-year terms.

Choices

- 1-year
- 2-year

Amount Requested per Year*

You may request up to \$15,000/year

Character Limit: 20

From the list below, choose up to three categories that best describe the work being proposed.*

Choices

- Arts, Humanities, Collections
- Basic Needs, Food Access
- Childcare, Early Education
- Climate, Environment, Forest Health, Land Preservation
- Family Supports, Youth, Mentorship
- Health, Mental Health, Recovery Supports
- Housing, Homelessness, Shelter
- Racial Justice, Immigration, Equity
- Workforce Development, College, Career Training
- Other (respond below)

Other:

Character Limit: 250

Stage of Program Development*

Select the most accurate option.

Choices

- Research / Ideation
- Product / Model development

Demonstrating effectiveness
Expanding delivery of proven program
Above choices not applicable; this is a General Operating Support request
Other (respond below)

Other:

Character Limit: 250

Stage of Development - continued*

Please explain your answer. If requesting general operating support, please indicate why this type of funding is most critical for your organization at this time.

Character Limit: 500

Geographic Area Served*

Briefly explain the geographic area that will be served by your project and/or organization in the space below. If appropriate, list town names, but it is not necessary to list all towns for county-wide projects.

Character Limit: 200

This is a proposal for a program that:*

Check all that apply.

Choices

makes pathways to viable careers more visible, accessible, and affordable for young women and girls.
invests in the economic security and career prospects of unemployed or low-income employed women.
advances strategies that address systemic barriers to economic well-being and thriving in Vermont.
enhances the capacity of your organization to achieve its mission and practice stated values
N/A; this is a general operating support request.

Number of women and girls directly served or indirectly impacted by your project or organization.*

Must enter an integer (ex. 18). If you are unsure, please provide your best estimate.

Character Limit: 100

Timeline*

Briefly state the timeline for this proposal. The grant period begins May 2026.

Character Limit: 750

Project Budget - Total Expenses*

Project budget not required if requesting general operating support, please enter 0.

Character Limit: 20

Project Budget - Percentage*

Please calculate the amount requested in this application as a percentage of the total project budget. Project budget percentage not required if requesting general operating support, please enter 0.

Character Limit: 100

How is your organization supporting this project?*

Are project expenses included in the organization's annual operating budget? If so, in what capacity? **If requesting general operating support, please enter N/A.**

Character Limit: 750

Partial Funding*

Sometimes we choose to award partial grants that are less than the applicant's requested amount. If you are awarded a partial grant from the Vermont Women's Fund, what would the impact be on your ability to complete the project? Have or will you secure other funding from different funders? **If requesting general operating support, please enter N/A.**

Character Limit: 750

Grant History

If you received a grant from the Vermont Women's Fund in the last five years, please list the years, amounts, and what the grants were for.

Character Limit: 750

Proposal Narrative

Community Need*

Describe the community need and/or systemic barrier you are trying to address and how it aligns with the Vermont Women's Fund priorities, including how it prioritizes women and girls.

Character Limit: 1500

Project Goals*

Describe the specific goals of your project, including how they relate to the need above that you propose to meet and how they prioritize women and girls. **If requesting general operating support, please provide specific examples of how your organization's programs align with the Vermont Women's Fund priorities.**

Character Limit: 1200

Strategies*

How will you achieve the goals listed above? Describe the strategies and their purpose. Are there national or local statistics, research, or information about needs and strategies that lead you to believe that the approach you're taking will be successful in meeting identified needs?

Please include how your strategies will prioritize women and girls, and how voices of lived experience inform your strategies.

Character Limit: 3000

Demographics of women & girls directly served or indirectly impacted by your project or organization*

Please describe the population, including age and demographic, of the women and/or girls this project will serve and how it has been specifically designed to address their current needs. Include the input you have received from your target population and how that informs the design of your project and/or organizational mission. Utilize quantitative data if available (ex. % of those served who qualify for free/reduced lunch; % of those served who are 12-18 years old; % of those served who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latina, or as a Person of Color).

Character Limit: 1200

Equity*

Please describe the ways in which your organization, or specifically this proposal, is centering equity in goals and methods. For instance: how do you acknowledge and respond to the different barriers facing the women and girls you work with and employ on staff? How are your organizational practices designed to support inclusivity and diversity?

Character Limit: 1200

Impact*

What are the desired short term and long-term impacts on the lives of women and/or girls as a result of their participation in this project? Please explain how people served will be better off. How will this project catalyze change in their lives and/or in the environments and systems in which they live, study, work, play, parent, etc.? **If requesting general operating support, please describe your organization's short- and long-term impacts on the lives of women and/or girls as a result of the work you do and/or services you provide.**

Character Limit: 1200

Measuring Success*

How will you know if the project is successful? Explain how your organization will gather and utilize the following information about specific program activities and/or the project as a whole:

- Program participation (rates, retention, barriers to success, etc.)
- Participant feedback (surveys, interviews, etc.)
- Measurable outcomes (success and goal attainment by individual participants)
- Reflection and revision – how do you envision the outcomes from this project being incorporated into future work?

Character Limit: 1200

Collaboration*

Please explain any collaborative relationships you have developed with other organizations, community partners, businesses, state agencies, etc. that will contribute to the success of your organization and/or this project, and result in less duplication of services.

NOTE: Letters of support from these partners are strongly encouraged and may be included in the "Attachments" section below.

Character Limit: 1200

Tell us a story about your project*

Paint a picture that brings your work to life. Be as descriptive as possible and tell us a story that makes it personal. We invite you to explore alternative methods in sharing your story: this could be written, shared in a video, photograph, or a combination thereof. *Please utilize the prompts below if sharing a video or photo(s).*

Character Limit: 1200

If sharing a video, insert link to video here.

Please use this space to provide a link to the video from the video sharing service. Videos should be no longer than 3 minutes. Programs such as Windows Movie Maker and iMovie, among others, work well for creating videos at home or in the office. Once created, videos can be uploaded to a video sharing service, such as YouTube or Vimeo.

Character Limit: 2000

If sharing a photo, upload photo file here. You may upload no more than 2 photos.**Photo upload #1**

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

Character Limit: 500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

If sharing a photo, upload photo file here.**Photo upload #2**

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

Character Limit: 500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Attachments

Project Budget - Itemized (Required for ALL but general operating requests)

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. 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

Budget Narrative (OPTIONAL)

You can use this space to provide additional information or content on your project budget. If you are seeking multiple years of support, please explain how your budget will change in 2-3 years.

Character Limit: 800

We strongly encourage letters from constituents and/or collaborative partners such as other nonprofits, state agencies, businesses, especially if those relationships are a key component of your project and/or organization.

Letter of Support (Optional)

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Letter of Support (Optional)

File Size Limit: 1 MB

Attach a Photograph

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. Images of women and girls involved in activities similar to your proposal are usually the most compelling. Providing an image is optional, but we would be grateful. Ideally we look for JPG and PNG files that are at least 6" x 4" in size and 300 dpi resolution. Not sure how to check for these settings? Ask our Communications Manager: Zoe Pike, zpike@vermontcf.org

Please attach your photograph in a .jpg or .png file that is a minimum of 100KB and a maximum of 2MB. Indicate photographer credit and/or photo description in text area.

Character Limit: 500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Photograph License and Release (if applicable)

If you are attaching a photograph, please indicate your acceptance of the terms below:

- You hereby grant to the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) an unrestricted license to use and publish your photograph in VCF communications material in any and all manner and media.
- You hereby represent that you have permission to grant these rights (please make sure you have a signed photo release on file for any identifiable subjects in the photograph you submit).
- You hereby release the VCF and its employees from any and all claims and/or liability related to your photograph.

Choices

I agree
I do not agree

Organizational 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 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

Save and Submit

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.

The grant deadline for 2026 is 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. No late applications will be accepted so please make sure to plan accordingly and submit early to ensure receipt. Applicants will be notified of our decision in May 2026. Visit www.vermontcf.org/VWFGrantmaking to learn more.