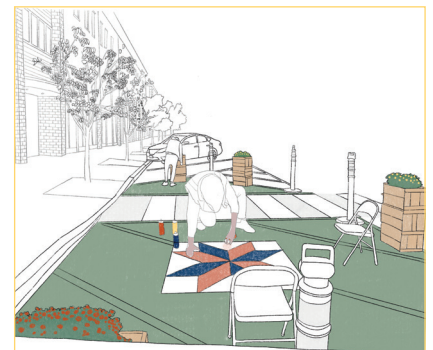
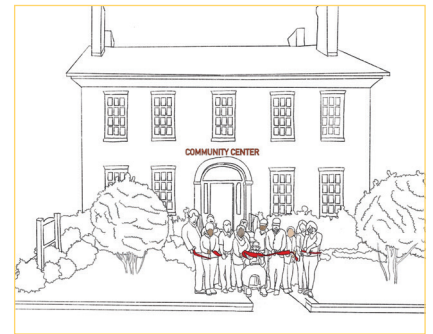


Better Places Program Guide



October 2024

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development
Vermont Community Foundation | Patronicity



Land Acknowledgement

As Vermont placemakers, we acknowledge the places we live, play, and create occupy the unceded traditional land of N'dakinna, the ancestral homeland of the Abenaki people. Our village greens, parks, community centers, main streets, murals, art installations, and other community projects sit on Abenaki land. We recognize the indigenous culture and people that existed in N'dakinna long before Europeans arrived in North America, and those here today. We acknowledge and honor with deep gratitude, the Abenaki people, the traditional placemakers and caretakers of these Vermont lands and waters.

Inclusion and Equity as a Core Value

The Better Places partners believe that all Vermonters deserve access to vibrant and welcoming public places in their lives and communities. We are committed to lifting up placemaking projects, policies, and practices which contribute to social and racial equity for a more just, inclusive, and equitable Vermont. Placemaking can be a vehicle for neighbor-to-neighbor conversations and can spur bigger social, environmental, and economic improvements. Above all, we hope this program increases access to inspiring public places for all people in Vermont, regardless of background, race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, religion, or geography. We invite you to join us in this important work, hold us to it, help us deepen it, and persevere until every Vermonter has equal access to vibrant and inclusive public places that are essential to a healthy, thriving, and democratic society.

Accessibility and Language Translation



We strongly support inclusive and integrated placemaking partnerships with programs and public spaces that welcome and engage diverse people and communities including people with disabilities and individuals from many different cultures and language backgrounds. Application accommodations are available for people with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency. Possibilities include: an interpreter, document translation, or alternative formats. To arrange these services or make an alternate request, contact Richard Amore with the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development by [email](#) or at 802.585.0061. Voice and relay calls are welcome.

The Better Places Program is Grateful for our Partners and all their Support

The Better Places program is managed by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Department of Health, and Patronicity. The program relies on the expertise and generous support of the Better Places Partners which include: the Vermont Arts Council, AARP Vermont, Local Motion, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Vermont Agency of Transportation, and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets. Special thanks to all the local placemakers across the state doing this important work and for the Vermont Legislature and Governor Phil Scott for supporting the Better Places program.



Better Places Program Guide

Program Description

[Better Places](#) is a non-competitive, community matching grant program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places serving Vermont's [designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas](#). The program is led by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), and Patronicity. The program supports community-led projects that create, revitalize, or activate public spaces, that bring people together to build welcoming and thriving communities across Vermont.

Program Goals

- Activate and revitalize public spaces to build vibrant communities
- Empower residents to play an active role in shaping their community
- Build inclusive and welcoming spaces for social connection, health, and recreation
- Increase integrity of and equitable access to green spaces
- Advance quick-build projects which boost community confidence and local pride
- Stimulate the creative economy and provide equitable access to the arts
- Spur entrepreneurship, partnerships, and public and private investment
- Connect viable projects to individual contributors and matching funds

How it Works

Better Places uses a method of grantmaking called “crowdgranting”. Crowdgranting combines crowdfunding – the practice of funding a project with small donations from a large number of people – paired with a matching grant from the State. Crowdgranting builds local awareness, excitement, and shared investment in community-led placemaking projects. Better Places participants will:

1. Complete [pre-flight check](#), then apply, and receive project approval
2. Work with a Patronicity project coach to launch crowdfunding campaign and raise 33% local match
3. Receive Better Places 2:1 matching grant from the State
4. Implement project and celebrate success

Better Places offers one-on-one consultation to interested participants to determine project readiness and compatibility for this program. All participants have access to educational tools and resources, including a personal crowdfunding coach, the [Better Places placemaking toolkit](#), [Getting Started one pager](#), [Crowdfunding Strategy guide](#), and additional [placemaking resources](#) on the Better Places webpage.

Why Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding aims to fund projects by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, enabling residents to participate and invest in projects they find valuable to themselves and their community. The Better Places program uses a web-based crowdfunding platform managed by [Patronicity](#), allowing project information to be accessible to anyone with internet access, inviting residents, businesses, and community organizations to play a part in community improvements and fostering a sense of ownership, connection, and pride in their community. The Better Places crowdfunding platform will accommodate both online and offline donations to support local fundraising needs and campaign goals.

Program Partners

Better Places is funded and administered by DHCD in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation, and Patronicity. The program also relies on the expertise and generous support of

Better Places Partners including the Vermont Arts Council, AARP Vermont, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Local Motion, Vermont Agency of Transportation, Vermont Department of Health, and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets.

Program Timeline

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis while funding is available
- Informational Webinar – View [HERE](#).
- Project completed – within one year of executed grant agreement

Eligible Applicants

Municipalities, local community groups, and nonprofit entities with documented municipal support may apply.

Eligible Projects and Programming

Eligible projects must demonstrate they will create, revitalize, or activate (programming) a public space that is open to and accessible to all people, with no charge of admission.

Eligible projects will or have establish/ed project partners, public awareness, community support, and local momentum. Examples of eligible projects include, but not limited to:

- Public gathering spaces (e.g., parks, village greens, libraries, schools, town halls, community centers, other public spaces)
- Streetscape improvements and beautification
- Improvements to recreation amenities (e.g., riverwalks, trails, greenways)
- Temporary or experimental (pop-up) parks, pocket parks, and public parklets
- Temporary or experimental (pop-up) spaces, market spaces, and maker and coworking spaces
- Activation/programming of vacant properties, parking lots, and vacant storefronts
- Creating or enhancing farmers' markets, community gardens, and access to healthy food
- Alleyway improvements and activations
- Bike or walking path improvements
- Creation of performing art spaces that serve the community
- Winter placemaking activities (ice rinks, community fire pits, lighting installations, etc.)
- Relevance to continued COVID-19 response for public space adaptations
- Temporary, pilot, or demonstration projects (\$10,000 grant maximum)
- Public space programming, events, and other temporary activations (\$10,000 grant maximum and minimum of three (3) events in no less than three (3) months and/or have a three-month duration.)
- Public art that engages the community, including murals, must:
 - Enhance or activate an existing community gathering area that allows the public to interact and engage with the artwork in a public space
 - Foster deep connections and involvement from the community, organizations, and artists in project conception, development, and execution
- Projects must demonstrate they will create, revitalize, or activate (program) a public space that is open and accessible to all people with no charge for admission.
- For any indoor public spaces, regular public programming must be included in the plans and a portion of the grant (up to \$10,000) may be used to provide such programming.
- Projects and programming must be in, connected to, or in direct safe walking distance to state designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas.
- Projects should improve access, if possible and not remove or reduce access for people with disabilities. [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability.

- Projects that may affect properties (individual buildings/structures/sites or historic districts) listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places may require additional review from the [Vermont Division of Historic Preservation](#). Additional information about the historic review process and exempt project types are shared in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligible Location

Projects must be located in, connected to, or in direct safe walking distance to a [state designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas](#). To determine if your community has a state designation, visit the [Vermont Planning Atlas](#). Projects must have proper site control secured prior to applying to ensure permission to use the space during the project grant period. In addition:

- If an applicant does not own the land or building on which the project will take place, additional documentation will be required, including an explanation for why the property owner is not the applicant. Site control must be in the form of a signed legally binding agreement authorizing grant use from the owner of the project location that includes one of the following:
 - municipal owned property with selectboard, trustees, or city council approval, or
 - private lease or ownership of the property or building, or
 - MOU granting permission from the property owner, etc.
- If an applicant does not own the building in which its project will take place, there must be a lease in place with a minimum 12-month term or for the duration of the project.
- Projects must list all local and state permits needed and their status in relation to the project. The [Agency of Natural Resources \(ANR\) Permit Navigator](#) is a good resource to understand what ANR permits you may need to obtain for the project.
- Project should consult with the Vermont Department of Public Safety, Division for Public Safety for any state construction permits needed for access, plumbing, electrical, and fire/safety. Learn more at the [Division for Fire Safety's Permit Application Web Portal](#).
- For projects located on [town-owned right-of-way \(class 1 roadways\)](#), please contact your town manager/administrator or public works department or road's department to discuss the project prior to reaching out to DHCD.
- For projects proposed in the State (VTrans) ROW, applicants must provide a letter of support or similar communication from their applicable [VTrans District Office](#) demonstrating that the district is aware of and in support of the proposed project. Applicants will also need to contact [VTrans Permitting Services](#) to obtain a Section 1111 permit. A traffic control plan may be required as part of the Section 1111 permit stipulations. In addition, the project shall be in compliance with [VTrans demonstration projects guidance document](#), application, and permitting process.
- For public art installations on state transportation facilities, the project shall be in compliance with the [Art Installations on State Transportation Facilities Guidance Document](#).

Ineligible Projects and Programming

All grant funds must be used in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The following are [not eligible uses](#) for Better Places program funds:

- Projects or programming that do not directly serve a state-designated downtown, village center, new town center, or neighborhood development area
- Previous Better Places projects that were unable to successfully solicit their local crowdfunding match
- Acquisition of land, buildings, or rights-of-way
- State or local permitting fees and associated costs
- Operational or administrative expenses incurred *prior to* the grant award including costs that may be incurred to prepare the grant application and manage the crowdfunding campaign
- General organizational support, operating costs, annual appeals, or fundraising drives

- Project planning or design-only activities
- Established and existing festivals, programming, and entertainment series
- Single day or one weekend event or programming
- Events or programming without evidence of strong community support, partnerships, and community engagement
- Artist-only led/created/executed public art projects
- Policing, public safety, trash collection and clean-up, or other activities that are not aligned with the goals of the Better Places program
- Parking facilities, parking lots, and automobile accommodations
- Travel, airfare, lodging accommodations, and other travel expenses
- Partisan, political, election, or religious related activities, projects, and organizations
- Promoting a single for-profit entity and/or its products or services
- Discrimination against persons on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, ancestry, age, creed, pregnancy, marital, parental status, familial status, sexual orientation, status as a veteran, physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law

Eligibility of activities is ultimately at the discretion of the Better Places program partners and the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Project Budget and Funding

Eligible projects must have a minimum grant award of \$5,000 (for \$2,500 crowdfunded), up to a maximum grant award of \$40,000 (for \$20,000 crowdfunded). A detailed budget must be included in the application. Budgets should identify total project cost, grant funding request, in-kind support, and any other funding sources outside of the requested grant dollars. Eligible projects shall also include and demonstrate in-kind support. However, in-kind contributions will not be counted as part of the 33% crowdfunding local match requirement, but may, of course, be accepted towards the overall project.

At least 75% of the total Better Places project budget must be used to fund capital costs and implementation. For example, for a project with a total grant award of \$20,000, only \$5,000, or less can be used for non-capital cost. Artist fabrications and design-build projects are considered as part of the implementation cost and may exceed the 25% budget threshold. A breakdown of eligible capital (minimum of 75%) and non-capital costs (maximum of 25%) may include:

Eligible expenses for the 75% capital cost may include, but not limited to:	Eligible expenses for the up to 25% non-capital cost may include, but not limited to:
Construction and implementation cost including labor and materials	Design services and fees (artists, architects, landscape architects, engineers, etc.)
Equipment, site furnishings, landscaping, and other public space amenities and improvements	Project management assistance, technical support services, event management and coordination, and construction oversight
Events, programming, and cultural activities (limited to \$10,000 matching grant)	Marketing, communication, translation services, engagement, and outreach activities
Artist fabrications, design-build, and installations	Food, supplies, and materials needed for community events and programming

Better Places implementation grants will support both permanent and temporary projects that create, revitalize, or activate a public space. However, public space activations and programming, events, music and cultural performances, temporary improvements, and demonstration projects are limited to a maximum grant award of \$10,000. Additionally:

Permanent Projects: An activation or improvement of a place for a period exceeding twelve months will be considered a permanent placemaking project. Projects that provide permanent

improvements are eligible for grants ranging from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$40,000, supporting projects with a total project cost of \$7,500 to \$60,000 (or more). Eligible permanent projects must have a minimum total project cost of \$7,500, where the recipient will crowdfund \$2,500 to receive \$5,000 of a Better Places matching grant, if the fundraising goal is met. There is no cap on project cost; however, in no event will the Better Places grant contribution exceed \$40,000.

Temporary Projects: Projects that provide temporary improvements, 12 months or less, (including events, programming, temporary demonstration, or pilot projects) are eligible for grants between \$5,000 - \$10,000 with a total project cost of \$7,500 to \$15,000. Eligible temporary projects must have a minimum total project cost of \$7,500, where the recipient will crowdfund \$2,500 to receive a \$5,000 Better Places matching grant, if the fundraising goal is met. Additionally, temporary projects must have a minimum of 3 events in no less than a 3-month time and/or have a three-month duration.

Temporary projects will be limited to 25% of total Better Places program funds. Seventy-five percent of program funds must support permanent projects.

Crowdfunding Requirements

The Better Places program requires applicants to utilize the [online crowdfunding system](#) provided by Patronicity to raise not less than 33% matching funds. DHCD and Patronicity will provide project development coaching and technical assistance for creating, launching, and marketing crowdfunding campaigns for your community project.

The following are requirements of the crowdfunding campaigns:

- Applicants must identify a target campaign start date and target completion date, generally between 30 to 60 days (maximum duration).
- The maximum donation by any one donor or entity to any one campaign is either \$7,000 or 35% of the campaign goal (whichever is the lesser amount). Any amount raised above the approved crowdfunding goal is not subject to this requirement.
- Applicants may NOT donate monies to their own crowdfunding campaign – donations need to come from the community, businesses, residents, and community partners.
- Projects should not announce or advertise their crowdfunding campaigns or their participation in the Better Places program until their project has been approved by DHCD, their campaign has officially launched, and their crowdfunding page is “live” to accept donations. You may inform key stakeholders of your interest in the program, but do not share your link with the public prior to launch.
- In-kind contributions will not be accepted as part of the 33% match requirement. However, applicants shall include any in-kind support for the project to demonstrate community support.
- Projects must meet their crowdfunding goal within sixty (60) days of the crowdfunding campaign launch to receive the Better Places matching grant funds. If the crowdfunding goal is not met within sixty (60) days, the project will not receive matching grant funds.
- If the project is unsuccessful in reaching its crowdfunding goal, it will not qualify for a Better Places matching grant. An additional Better Places campaign will not be considered on the same project in the future.
- Videos are not required for crowdfunding campaigns; however, they are helpful and recommended for higher budgets and campaign goals. If a project does decide to create a video, Patronicity will offer guidance and language to ensure the matching component is correctly explained.

Community Match Requirements

All applicants are required to provide local matching funds raised through the [Better Places crowdfunding platform](#) managed by Patronicity of not less than 33% of the grant award. Once these funds have been raised, the State provides communities with a two-to-one (2:1) matching grant. To be eligible for a two-to-one (2:1) matching grant, projects must raise 100% of their crowdfunding goal within sixty (60) days of the launch of their crowdfunding campaign. Projects that do not meet their crowdfunding campaign goal by the set date will not receive any State

matching grant dollars. If a fundraising campaign raises more funds than the goal amount, those additional funds can be used to improve the project or maintain the project in the future, however, the State will only match the target campaign goal amount.

Scenario 1: Single-Source Funded Project [permanent project]

- Total project cost: \$60,000
- Crowdfunding campaign goal: \$20,000
- Better Places match, if crowdfunding campaign goal is achieved: \$40,000

Scenario 2: Leveraged Funded Project [permanent project]

- Total project cost: \$100,000
- Prior Committed Funding: \$40,000
- Financial Gap: \$60,000
- Crowdfunding Campaign Goal: \$20,000
- Better Places Match, if Crowdfunding Campaign Goal is achieved: \$40,000

Scenario 3: Temporary Project [event, programming, or demonstration project]

- Total project cost for temporary project: \$15,000
- Crowdfunding Campaign Goal: \$5,000
- Better Places Match, if Crowdfunding Campaign Goal is achieved: \$10,000

Better Places Match

Under the Better Places crowdgranting model, the State will support local crowdfunded projects through a two-to-one (2:1) match, up to \$40,000. Grant awards vary depending on the type and duration of the project. Eligible projects must have a minimum total cost of \$7,500 (\$2,500 crowdfunded + \$5,000 Better Places grant).

Projects with total costs greater than \$60,000 are eligible for the Better Places program, however, these projects must have all other prior committed funding sources secured prior to application and use the Better Places funding to fill the remaining gap in project costs.

Prior committed funding constitutes any funds provided by a project stakeholder (the municipality, a non-profit entity, a private source, or other state or federal agencies) which are necessary for the completion of the project and have been committed to the project before or at the time of application to the Better Places program. Prior committed funding is considered separate from the crowdfunding campaign and will NOT be matched by DHCD. The funding secured through the Better Places program must be the FINAL portion of funds needed to complete and activate or improve the public space.

Application Process and Project Approval

There is no deadline to apply to Better Places. Projects are accepted on a rolling basis while funding is available. Up to three Better Places grants may be funded per a calendar year within a municipality. However, the program only allows one live Better Places campaign in a municipality at a time.

All applicants must go through the Better Places project approval process and utilize the [Better Places crowdfunding platform](#) managed by Patronicity.

Applicants will be asked to complete a [project preflight form](#) and a [project campaign page](#) prior to receiving project approval. Applicants should plan for approximately three to five weeks to complete their application which includes the build out of a crowdfunding page, project review and feedback, and the State approval process. DHCD and Patronicity will provide technical support to all applicants during this time. See [How to Participate](#) for details.

Evaluation and Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Better Places projects will meet the following characteristics:

- A defined and focused community-led placemaking project that creates, revitalizes, or activates a public space with an explanation of how the project will improve the community and attract people to the public space.
- Community and organization's capacity and readiness to manage a successful crowdfunding campaign and implement a community-driven placemaking project within twelve months.
- Demonstrates community need and impact on community revitalization and economic development efforts.
- Engages and serves community members and partners in an equitable and inclusive process connecting with diverse socioeconomic groups, under-served, and under-represented populations in the community.
- Leveraging additional private and/or public investment, in-kind support, and or other community resources.
- A commitment and plan for long term maintenance and management, if applicable.
- A diverse project team, with strong community partnerships working together to help advance the project forward.
- Aligns with and advances the [Better Places program goals](#)
- Geographic diversity and project diversity will be evaluated regularly during the application process to ensure diverse projects occur across the state.

Grant Awards and Agreement

Once the crowdfunding campaign goal has been met, applicants will be notified of their grant award and initiate a grant agreement. Prior to receiving grant funds, applicants must:

1. Provide necessary materials for fund disbursement, complete [post-fundraising survey](#), and execute grant agreement with VCF
2. Upon grant execution, VCF will disburse 85% of grant funds to grantee
3. Provide quarterly updates on project as requested
4. Provide the necessary close-out materials after the project is completed (report, budget, expenditures, metrics, and before and after photos).
5. Upon project completion and submission of complete close-out report, VCF will disburse remaining 15% of grant funds.
6. Participate in future opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned with Better Places partners and local communities.

Expense Documentation

Grantees receiving awards through the Better Places Program must maintain back up documentation for all specific expenditures. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Receipts for services and purchases;
- Paid invoices;
- Timesheets and/or other accounting to show staff time if covered by Better Places grant funds.

If the grantee has any questions about the expense documentation process, please contact the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

Grant Terms and Conditions

Projects with multiple funding sources must demonstrate that they have the needed funds to begin the project as proposed. All projects must commence within six (6) months of signing a grant agreement and be completed within twelve (12) months. In addition:

No community, municipality, or nonprofit organization shall receive more than three Better Places grants in a calendar year. Only three grants will be funded per calendar year within a municipality. However, the program only allows one live Better Places campaign in a municipality

at a time. Additionally:

- Communities must launch their crowdfunding campaign within 60 days of receiving conditional approval through the preflight consultation. (Conditional approval only occurs when your project has been deemed ready to begin crowdfunding. We welcome anyone to initiate the preflight check no matter what phase of project planning you're in.)
- All crowdfunded and matching grant funds must be used for costs directly related to the project itself. The crowdfunded and matching grant funds shall not be used to pay for the applicant's organizational operating funds, general administration, managing the crowdfunding campaign, or for programming and uses not related to implementing the Better Places project.
- The State will only match donations made by check, money order, or online. In-kind donations will not be accepted towards achieving the fundraising goal to receive the match.
- For offline donations, contributions are eligible when added to the crowdfunding amount shown on the on-line campaign page. Scanned copies/pictures of checks, money orders, or bank deposits slips can be submitted to Patronicity for verification.
- A commitment and plan for long term maintenance and management, if applicable. Better Places grant funds may only be used for maintenance during the duration of the grant agreement (up to 12 months). Future years maintenance is at the responsibility of the applicant and community.
- Projects may use a fiscal sponsor to accept Better Places funds. The entity that acts as the fiscal sponsor will be considered by VCF as the program applicant and must abide by the [fiscal sponsor agreement](#). As the applicant/grantee, the fiscal sponsor must sign the grant agreement for the grant funds to be released. Any understanding or agreement between the fiscal sponsor and the entity managing the project is between those organizations alone; the only agreements VCF have will be with the fiscal sponsor, as the program applicant.
- The VCF, DHCD, VDH, Patronicity, and the Better Places Partners reserve the right to use project photos, grant information, and program materials for marketing and promotion.
- Provide 2 week notice for any public project opening events or press events to coordinate DHCD's attendance.
- All project outreach and public communications must acknowledge funding from the Better Places Program, administered by the DHCD in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation and Patronicity.
- Until your project is fully complete – **you are expected to post monthly** to your project page's (on the Patronicity platform) "Updates" tab by clicking the "Update Donors" button on your campaign page (upper right-hand corner of page). These are intended to be brief and general updates regarding your project's progress or people. You can post press, events, general movement, construction updates, or donor reward updates in these posts.
- DHCD and VCF reserve the right to not fund any projects, or award less than the amount requested, based on the availability of funds.

Close-Out Requirements

- Grantee must work with VCF to meet program close-out requirements and share the impact of the project in the community.
- Within 60 days of project completion, the grantee must submit high resolution before and after photo(s) of the project (4-8 photos), a project close-out report as required by the grant agreement.
- Projects located in the state right of way must comply with VTrans' evaluation, close out, and clean-up process as detailed in [the Demonstration Project Guidance Document](#).
- Better Places is made possible by Vermont Legislature and the Governor Scott Administration and administered by DHCD in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), Vermont Community Foundation, and Patronicity. Financial records must be maintained and provided for inspection upon the request by DHCD, VDH, and VCF.

- Grantees receiving awards through the Better Places Program must maintain back up documentation for all specific expenditures. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Receipts for services and purchases;
 - Paid invoices;
 - Timesheets and/or other accounting to show staff time if covered by grant funds.

How to Participate

1. Apply

Step 1 – Tell Us About Your Project

Applicants should reach out to DHCD to discuss project ideas and fill out the [Better Places pre-flight form](#). This form can be completed before or after you speak with DHCD. The preflight form helps to determine project readiness and eligibility for the Better Places program.

1. Contact Gary Holloway with DHCD: Gary.Holloway@vermont.gov
2. Go to www.patronicity.com/BetterPlacesVT and click on the link provided ‘[Step 1 – Pre-Flight Form](#)’
3. Receive email correspondence from DHCD connecting applicant with project coach

Step 2 – Develop Crowdfunding Page

Once DHCD determines Better Places is a good fit for your project, applicants work with a Patronicity project coach to further develop project structure and complete a crowdfunding page (this is the equivalent of a grant application and will help to structure your crowdfunding campaign).

1. Go to www.patronicity.com/BetterPlacesVT and click on ‘[Step 2 – Apply Now](#)’ to initiate your crowdfunding page with assistance from a Patronicity project coach
2. Work with your project coach to complete a crowdfunding page to market your project and meet program eligibility requirements
3. Crowdfunding page is reviewed by your project coach for completion

Step 3 – Project Approval

Once your project coach completes a final review of the project campaign page, the State will review and may reach out with questions as needed. Some projects may be approved at a lesser amount than requested. The State review process will be approximately one week.

1. The State and Better Places partners will review on a rolling basis and may respond with questions if needed
2. The State approves the project and notifies the applicant and Patronicity to initiate crowdfunding campaign

2. Launch Crowdfunding Campaign

Step 1 – Prepare to Launch Crowdfunding Campaign

Once approved, Patronicity’s project coach will assist applicants to polish off their project page, determine best marketing strategy, and build out the crowdfunding campaign.

1. Finalize plans for crowdfunding campaign and marketing strategy
2. Patronicity drafts press release for review by project team, and then DHCD distributes

Step 2 – Project Goes Live

Start crowdfunding! Your project coach will provide crowdfunding, marketing, and technical assistance throughout the campaign. Campaigns generally last 30 to 60 days. This timeline is established on a project basis prior to the crowdfunding launch.

1. Patronicity works with applicant to launch and market crowdfunding campaign
2. Patronicity supports applicant and donors during crowdfunding campaign with technical assistance and offers help with marketing and outreach strategy

Step 3 – Crowdfunding Success

The applicant and the project raise the appropriate 33% local matching funds through multiple donors via crowdfunding to secure the Better Places grant.

1. Celebrate campaign success and thank donors
2. Patronicity works with applicant to close-out crowdfunding campaign
3. Patronicity notifies DHCD of successful crowdfunding campaign and provides supporting documentation to DHCD, VDH, and VCF

3. Initiate Project

Step 1 – Grant Agreement and Project Implementation

Applicant works with DHCD and VCF to initiate grant agreement and receive grant award. Project implementation must begin within three (3) months and be completed within twelve (12) months of executed grant agreement.

1. Applicant will execute grant agreement with VCF
2. VCF will disburse 85% of grant funds to grantee upon grant execution
3. Grantee will provide quarterly updates on project to DHCD and VCF
4. Once project is complete, grantee will notify DHCD and VCF and initiate grant close-out process
5. Grantee will complete close-out report and work with VCF to share project data, photographs, and metrics
6. VCF will disburse remaining 15% of grant funds upon receipt of close-out report

Step 2 – Project Documentation and Shared Learnings

The Better Places team will work closely with grantees to document and market local project success. Project teams may be asked to present to and advise other Vermont communities working to implement similar projects.

Program Manager Contact

For questions regarding the Better Places Program, contact:

Gary Holloway | Downtown Program Manager

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development

(802) 522.2444

gary.holloway@vermont.gov

APPENDIX 1

Historic Preservation Review/Consultation Process and Exempt Project List

Better Places projects that are listed in the State Register of Historic Places may require additional review from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation (VDHP), as required with the use of State funds. This extra step does not apply to all Better Places projects. The first step is to find out if your project area is listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Please visit the [State's Online Resource Center](#) or contact [Devin Colman](#) to learn if your project is located within or impacts a historic district or property.

If Historic Preservation (HP) review is required, please plan for allowing additional time for HP project review and consultation prior to receiving project approval and launching a Better Places campaign. Please do not be dissuaded by working on projects located in historic districts; the Better Places team and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation are committed to helping advance your community project. We encourage you to be proactive and reach out to the Better Places team and VDHP early in your project planning so that we can work together and reduce the opportunity for delay because of this additional requirement.

Project examples listed below are **EXEMPT** from HP review and will be discussed during the pre-flight check-in call.

1. Building/structure less than 50 years old.
2. Resource/property NOT listed in the State Register of Historic Places individually or as part of an historic district.
3. Resource/property listed as non-contributing to State Register historic district.
4. Interior alterations to buildings in State Register historic districts.
5. Temporary staging, rigging, artwork, tents or other equipment for markets, craft shows, festivals, performances, winter activities, film screenings, etc. that requires ground disturbance to a depth of six (6) inches or less within an area of 100 square feet or less, such as digging, anchoring, or trenching for stages/tents, equipment, etc.
6. Permanent installation of benches, picnic tables, planters, staging, artwork, signage, etc. that requires installation of supports/securing bases such as concrete block that requires ground disturbance to a depth of six (6) inches or less within an area of 100 square feet or less.
7. Plantings of grass, flowers, shrubs, bushes, or trees in existing gardens or landscaped areas. Replacement trees set within existing tree wells or landscape shoulders/medians.
8. Improvements to paths, trails, riverwalks, etc. within the existing footprints.
9. Improvements to existing playgrounds, ice rinks, recreational facilities, etc. within their existing footprints.
10. Streetscape, parking lot, and alleyway improvements and beautification within the existing footprints.
11. Wayfinding signs located in existing rights-of-way and paved areas.
12. Murals painted on siding such as wood or synthetic materials that can be repainted. Murals must not be painted directly on masonry such as brick, stone, or historic concrete. See [Signage and Public Art on Masonry Buildings](#) for further guidance.
13. Anchoring painted panels or canvas to a historic masonry such as brick or stone with mortar anchors or attached to wood detailing. Murals must not be attached directly into the brick, stone, or historic concrete. See [Signage and Public Art on Masonry Buildings](#) for further guidance.
14. Repair or replacement of existing elements such as stairs, stages, landscape, and village green features, etc. with inkind/same materials, dimensions, and design.
15. Public space programming, events, and temporary activations
16. Project management, community engagement, design-related activities to support project implementation.

Better Places Historic Preservation Consultation

For community projects that **are not exempt** from HP review, applicants will need to consult with the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation to obtain project approval prior to launching your Better Places crowdfunding campaign. Applicants will need to provide additional information

listed below. Once applicants submit the documentation noted below, VDHP should approve your project for HP review within ten calendar days; the review calendar is paused if additional materials are needed to complete the review.

Consultation with VDHP will require:

1. Review of Better Places application
2. Location maps
3. Site plans or maps noting staging areas, construction projects, and access routes
4. Photographs and renderings
5. Scopes of work, budget, and schedule

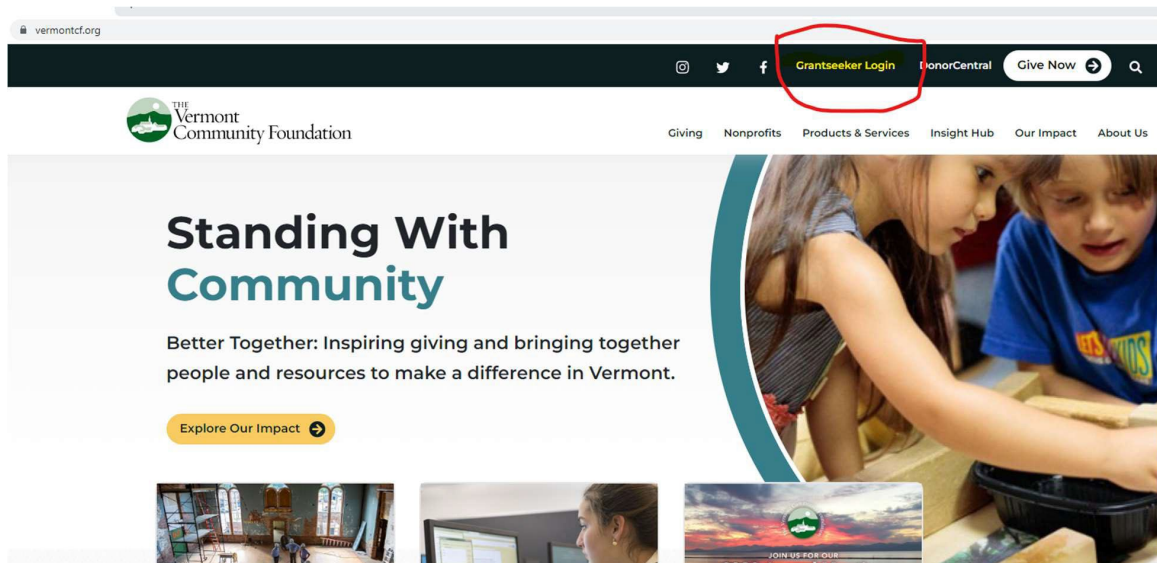
Although the HP review process may seem daunting, the Better Places team, the State Historic Preservation Officer, VDHP, and Patronicity are committed to providing technical assistance for all prospective Better Places projects and will guide each applicant through the process if it is necessary for funding. If, at any time, you have questions or concerns regarding the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation review and consultation, please reach out the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), [Laura Trieschmann](#) and we will help guide you through this process.

APPENDIX 2

Vermont Community Foundation Online Grants Management Tutorial – Final Report

If you have any questions regarding the VCF Online Management System (OGM), please contact Karen at kscott@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 x267.

1. To access the Online Grants Management System at the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), please start on the website and click the Grantseeker Login. You may also access the portal by visiting www.vermontcf.org/OGM



2. At the logon page, use the email address and password provided in your Better Places VT grant award letter, sent to you by the VCF. Click “Log On”.



Logon Page

Email Address*

Password*

[Forgot your Password?](#)

Welcome to the Online Grants Manager - where you can apply to the Vermont Community Foundation's grant programs.

Con Hogan Nomination? If you are submitting a nomination for the Con Hogan Award, please create a new individual account. Please do not login using your organization's account.

First time here? Click "Create New Account." Be sure to keep this login information for your organization's records.

Been here before? If you have already used the Online Grants Manager, but have forgotten your password, please click "Forgot Your Password?" and follow the instructions.

Not sure? If you believe your organization may already have a profile but you are unsure of the login information, please do not create a new profile. Instead, please contact us at 802-388-3355, Ext. 222 or via email at grants@vermontcf.org.

For additional support and FAQs, please visit our website by clicking [HERE](#).

- You will be prompted to reset your password. Please be sure to write the new password down—the temporary password that the VCF provided to you will no longer be active.

If the contact for completing the grant report needs to be updated or changed, please notify the VCF.

- Once you've saved your new password, you will be redirected to your Applicant Dashboard. Please note the house symbol in the upper left corner. You can come back to this Dashboard at any point by clicking on the house. Your Active Requests will show here as well.

Applicant Dashboard

Applicant:
 Karen Scott
 kscott@vermontcf.org
 (802) 355-2145
 3 Court Street
 Middlebury, VT 05753

Organization:
 Vermont Community Foundation
 22-2712160
 802-388-3355
 3 Court Street
 Middlebury, VT 05753

Contact Email History

If your organization information does not appear correct, please contact the funder. Thank you.

Active Requests (1) Historical Requests (1)

You do not have any Active Requests. Click [Apply](#) to begin the application process.

- To access the final report, make sure you are in the Active Requests tab. Look for the “Better Places Program 2022 – Final Report” underneath Follow Up Forms. The report can be accessed and edited by clicking on the blue “Edit” hyperlink underneath EDIT/VIEW on the far right.

Applicant Dashboard

Applicant:
 Karen Scott
 kscott@vermontcf.org
 (802) 355-2145
 3 Court Street
 Middlebury, VT 05753

Organization:
 Vermont Community Foundation
 22-2712160
 802-388-3355
 3 Court Street
 Middlebury, VT 05753

Contact Email History

If your organization information does not appear correct, please contact the funder. Thank you.

Active Requests (1) Historical Requests (2)

Process: Better Places Program 2022

Application Submitted
 Decision Approved

[View Application](#)

Follow Up Forms

FORM NAME	ASSIGNED TO	AWARD / INSTALLMENT	DUE DATE	STATUS	EDIT/VIEW
Better Places Program 2022 - Final Report		Overall Award		Assigned	Edit

6. To maneuver through the report, click on the arrows to the left of the section titles (this will allow you to open or collapse sections of the report). There are seven sections. You may keep all sections open while working and scroll, if preferred. If you would like to print a PDF of the full question list, click on the button on the right, "Question List".

Follow Up

Process: Better Places Program 2022

[Return to Application Submitted](#)

Contact Info **Request**

Applicant: **Organization:**

Contact Email History

If your organization information does not appear correct, please contact the funder. Thank you.

[Application](#) [Follow Up](#) [Follow Up Packet](#) [Question List](#)

Due by

Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

Grant Report Instructions

If you are viewing a PDF version of the report questions, please note that the report must be submitted electronically through VCF's online grants manager (OGM).

Follow these steps to complete the report online:

- Using the login credentials provided in your grant award letter, log in to your online account
- Go to the account dashboard and locate the Better Places grant record.
- The report will be available to edit in the "Follow Up Forms" section of the grant record. "Edit" will be visible to the far right of the form section.
- Choose "Edit" to begin working on your report questions.

7. Below is the first section of the report. This is the "Instructions" page; it contains information about how to complete the report and the deadline it needs to be completed by.

[Application](#) [Follow Up](#) [Follow Up Packet](#) [Question List](#)

Due by

Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

Grant Report Instructions

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- The report will be available to edit in the "Follow Up Forms" section of the grant record. "Edit" will be visible to the far right of the form section.
- Choose "Edit" to begin working on your report questions.

If you require accommodations to complete the report outside of the OGM, please contact Karen Scott at kscott@vermontctf.org or 802-388-3355 ext. 267 to discuss available options.

Helpful Hints:

- Character limits include spaces.
- Be sure to save your work frequently by clicking the "Save" button (bottom of page).
- The size of text boxes can be adjusted by dragging on the lower right corner.
- To create a PDF version of your report form (to save or print), click the "Follow Up Packet" link (top of page).

If you have technical questions, please contact 802-388-3355 ext. 222 or grants@vermontctf.org.

Reporting Deadline: This final report will be due within 30 days of when the grant funds were expended or within one year from the date the grant was made, whichever comes sooner. The grant recipient may be asked to provide updates on project progress as requested by DHCD and VCF throughout the course of this grant. In addition, a site visit may be requested by DHCD and/or VCF upon project completion.

Organization Information

Organization Name

8. Once you have completed the report questions, you will finish the report by choosing “Submit Follow Up” at the end of the report and providing your signature and confirmation.

The screenshot shows a web form for submitting a grant report. It includes three sections for uploading photos (Project Photo #1, #2, and #3), each with an 'Upload a file' button and a '[5 MIB allowed]' label. Below these is a note: 'If you wish to send additional photos, please send by email to Richard Amore at richard.amore@vermont.gov'. The next section is 'Project budget breakdown*' with a link to a sample and an 'Upload a file' button labeled '[2 MIB allowed]'. A 'Submission Confirmation' section follows, containing a statement about sharing information with other funders. Below this is a 'Signature*' field with instructions to enter full name, job title, and date, and an example: 'Example: Anne Smith, Executive Director, 1 September 2013'. A 'Confirmation*' section has two radio buttons: 'I agree' and 'I do not agree'. At the bottom, there is a 'Due by' field and two buttons: 'Save Follow Up' and 'Submit Follow Up'.

9. We require that report questions are completed in the VCF’s Online Grants Manager unless other accommodations have been arranged with Foundation staff. If you require accommodations to complete the report outside of the OGM, please contact Karen Scott at kscott@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 ext. 267. Please know that you are not required to submit the report questions until your project is complete.

If you have any questions regarding the VCF Online Management System (OGM), please contact Karen at kscott@vermontcf.org or 802-388-3355 x267.