Vermont Evaluation of Rural Technical Assistance (VERTA)

Core Team Members:

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A Town on the Brink – Why This Work Matters

Meet Maple Hollow, VT (A Fictional, But Familiar Story)

- Population: 1,200. A dedicated town clerk, a volunteer selectboard, and a part-time road crew.
- Their town hall needs repairs, but they missed the grant deadline—they didn't have time to apply.
- Their aging water system needs upgrades, but navigating funding sources is overwhelming.
- A flood last year damaged the library and general store—residents worry about rebuilding.
- They rely on their regional planning commission for help, but it's stretched thin.



A Town on the Brink – Why This Work Matters

This is not just Maple Hollow—it's a reality for many Vermont communities.

- Municipal leaders are doing more with less, often struggling to meet state & federal requirements.
- Funding and technical assistance resources exists, but accessing it requires capacity that not all towns have.

This project will help assess Vermont's technical assistance system to help communities like Maple Hollow



Project Introduction

Purpose: To develop actionable recommendations for enhancing Vermont's municipal technical assistance model.

Collaboration: Led by UVM's Center for Rural Studies in partnership with DHCD, and other key stakeholders.

Alignment: The project aligns with Act 181 of 2024, Section 67.

Project Goals

Provide	Provide a comparative analysis of Vermont's current model against other states.
Engage	Engage at least 50% of Vermont's municipalities to identify challenges and successes.
Foster	Foster collaboration among policymakers, TA providers, funders, and municipalities.
Host	Host a statewide summit to build consensus.
Develop	Develop strategic recommendations to improve municipal technical assistance.

Timeline

1

Phase 1: Literature review and stakeholder engagement (Jan - Mar 2025).

2

Phase 2: Comparative system data collection, surveys, interviews, and listening sessions (Apr - Jul 2025).

3

Phase 3: Comparative analysis and best practices research (Aug - Oct 2025).

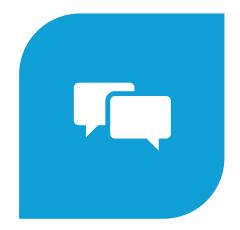
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Phase 4: Summit and final report drafting (Nov - Dec 2025).

Stakeholder Engagement







SURVEYS: TARGET 50% OF VERMONT MUNICIPALITIES.

INTERVIEWS: COLLECT QUALITATIVE DATA FROM POLICYMAKERS AND TA PROVIDERS.

LISTENING SESSIONS: REFINE SURVEY FINDINGS AND IDENTIFY ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS.

How Your Communities Can Get Involved



Participate in upcoming surveys and listening sessions

Coordination assistance provided by regional planning commissions



Attend and participate in the summit (date TBD)

How Can You Help?

Legislative Advocacy

- Raise Awareness Among Colleagues –
 Share information with legislators to highlight how this initiative helps under-resourced communities
- Champion Policy and Budget Support

 Advocate for policy changes and
 funding based on project findings
- Host a Public Event Organize a press conference or legislative briefing to showcase final recommendations
- Host a Legislative Briefing or Regional Meetings – Convene discussions to keep leaders informed and engaged

Community Engagement

- Encourage Participation Share project details with town officials and local organizations to boost engagement
- Join Listening Sessions Participate in forums and focus groups to hear directly from rural communities
- Engage Beyond the Legislature –
 Connect with municipal leaders,
 regional organizations, and community
 groups
- Gather Public Support Request letters of support or endorsements from municipalities and organizations

Project Steering Committee

- Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)
- Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)
- Preservation Trust of Vermont
- USDA Rural Development
- Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)
- Vermont Community Foundation (VCF)
- Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA)
- Land Access and Opportunity Board
- State Treasurer's Office



Disclaimers

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