VHCB Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
VHCB & REDI

- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board - formed in 1987
  - Affordable housing development & conservation of land and historic properties to improve quality of life for Vermonters and ensure resources are available for the next generation
- Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program - created in 2003 under VHCB’s Conservation Program
  - Focus on improving economic viability of working lands businesses
- REDI - created by VT Legislature in 2017, managed by the Viability Program
What is REDI?

- **Goal:** Promoting and facilitating community economic development in the small towns and rural areas of the State

- **How:** REDI provides targeted capacity to rural communities & small businesses to access funding for community & economic development
  
  - Funds can be used to hire a grant writer, complete a necessary step to make a grant application more competitive (such as a business plan or engineering), and in some cases to help make a fundraising plan
Priority Project Areas

- Working lands projects
  - Ex: dairy, meat processing, value-added food enterprises, forest products, phosphorus removal technology, composting facilities
- Outdoor recreation projects
  - Trail development, downtown connectivity
- Community-based economic development
  - Historic preservation, downtown revitalization, community infrastructure
- Projects that are focused on implementation / federal grants

*REDI complements assistance provided by Regional Development Corporations, Regional Planning Commissions, and other partners*
Eligibility Requirements

- Project located in or serving communities under 5,000 in population
- Project fits within project falls within REDI priority areas or
- Project demonstrates “REDI-ness”
- Municipal approval/support
- Housing focused projects are usually not a fit for REDI as it is not a statutory priority. VHCB’s Housing Program has resources focused on affordable housing.
“REDI-ness”

- Connected with potential grantor, confirmed project is eligible and a good fit
- Connected with other relevant support organizations (RDCs, RPCs, etc.) to access available resources
- Municipal support (approval of selectboard, town, etc.)
- Community engagement/planning processes completed
- Applicants do not necessarily need to have a grant or consultant determined
Process:

- Applicant/consultant connect with VHCB staff to discuss project
  - Determine if best fit for REDI or partner resources
- VHCB staff make referrals or provide REDI application
- Consultant and applicant develop Scope of Work
  - Consultant may be identified by VHCB or applicant
  - Projects focus on applying for federal/implementation grant, may include fundraising mapping and other necessary steps for grant application
  - VHCB reviews/approves SOW & creates contract
- VHCB funds the consultant’s work on the project
  - Project totals range from $1,000 - $6,000+
  - VHCB remains in touch with applicant/consultant about grant process and requests feedback
Examples of REDI Projects

**Working Lands:**

- *Sweet Rowen Farm, Glover, Expansion of added-value dairy* ($114,000 USDA VAPG)
- *Agricola Farm, Panton, Expansion of Monti-Verdi Salumi* ($204,000 USDA VAPG)
Examples of REDI Projects

Community & Economic Development

- *Albany General Store, Albany Community Trust*  
  ($89,999 USDA Rural Business Development Grant)

- *Bridgewater Community Center at Historic Village School, Bridgewater Area Community Foundation*  
  ($430,000 Community Development Block Grants)
Examples of REDI Projects

Outdoor Recreation

- Recreation Area on Hoosic River, Pownal Trails Association/ Empower Pownal ($24,000 Recreation Trails Program Grant)
- Slate Quarry Park, Poultney ($104,000 Land & Water Fund Grant)
Examples of REDI Projects

Other projects include:

- Adaptive reuse of historic buildings for community infrastructure
  - Including childcare/ community center development
- Broadband infrastructure
- Trail/park infrastructure
- Working lands/ food system supply chain infrastructure
- Water/wastewater infrastructure
- Composting
Partner Organizations & Key Resources

- Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)
- Regional Development Corporations (RDCs)
- Agency of Commerce & Community Development
  - Community Planning & Revitalization Team, VCDP
- State Agencies relevant to project (Ex: ANR for Outdoor rec)
- Vermont USDA staff (Rural Development)
- Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD)
- Vermont League of Cities & Towns
- VHCB Housing, Conservation, and Viability Programs
- Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Local planning bodies & community organizations
- Common Good VT
- Vermont Small Business Development Ctr
- UVM Extension
- Vermont Community Foundation & Foundation Directory
- AARP
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