

Vermont Youth Council Bill

Youth make a better Vermont. Vermont values youth as they are; just by being young people living here, they enrich our communities. Young people are also problem-solvers who are eager to be engaged in making our state a stronger, healthier, and happier place to live. As Vermonters we have a collective responsibility to ensure that all young Vermonters are safe, healthy, supported, educated, and engaged. This means recognizing that young people need what we all need: community connection, opportunities to learn, access to jobs, recreation, and other activities.

Overview of H.775 - Vermont Youth Council Bill

-  Establishes a State Youth Council to advise the Governor and General Assembly on issues affecting young people living in Vermont. The State Youth Council will have 15 members between the ages of 9 and 26, one member from each county and one statewide member who shall serve as Chair.
-  The State Youth Council is authorized to hold at least four public meetings to collect input from young people across the state. Members of the State Youth Council shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses for meetings.
-  The Office of Administration and Vermont's Youth Services Advisory Council will support the State Youth Council with training on State policies and on how to formulate policy proposals.
-  The Governor shall meet with the State Youth Council at least once per year to hear and receive the Council's advice and recommendations on policies that impact the youth of Vermont.
-  The State Youth Council will also evaluate the State's progress on population-level outcomes and recommend revisions to indicators to better reflect data that impacts Vermont youths
-  The State Youth Council will report back to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations by November 2021 with recommendations on any amendments to its enabling law.

When Youth are Active, Engaged, Connected, and Heard It Benefits All Vermonters

Young People as a Resource

Young Vermonters are one of our state's most important resources. Youth represent 23% of the Vermont population (ages 9-26) and reflect Vermont's diversity (based on American Community Survey 2017). They are a group of dynamic, vibrant, and innovative individuals who are finding new ways to have their voices heard and effect the change they wish to see in the world.



Innovation and Inclusion

Multiple perspectives strengthen decision-making and policy development by encouraging innovation, creativity and change. Including the unique perspectives of young people improves state policies and programs, including youth-specific services.



Economic Vitality

Vermont's economy depends on the participation of young people and empowering them to take part will help to keep young Vermonters here. It will also diversify our economy, making it more competitive and sustainable.



Strong Democracy

Young people have the right to be heard and respected. Almost all government policies and decisions have an impact on young people's lives and youth have the right to influence those decisions, both individually and collectively. Furthermore, involving young people in political processes helps build trust in democratic institutions, in turn protecting Vermont's democracy.



YOUTH DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

VERMONT YOUTH HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

EDUCATION

- Access free classes on Basic Life Skills (signing a lease, budgeting, taxes, resumes, etc.)
- Equal opportunities and experiences in arts education before, during, and after school
- A post-secondary education no matter their financial situation
- A student-directed, safe space for afterschool support and community engagement free of charge
- Time outdoors during the school (or work) day

EQUALITY & JUSTICE

- Explore their identities in a safe environment
- Education on gun safety and to live in a gun-aware community that is educated and aware of proper gun usage
- Have their voices heard in legal decisions that affect everyone
- Be protected in all of their life circumstances, be able to have their own privacy in their environments, and to have a private profile
- Education on anything concerning self-defense

HOBBIES & ENTERTAINMENT

- Free WIFI in or out of school or work for educational purposes
- Access free entertainment and opportunities to try a variety of activities
- Important people in their lives who spend time with them, and who teach them to do things safely (mentors)
- Live with and be supported by caring adults
- Provide input to the state when rules and regulations are developed that affect youth

HOME & SHELTER

- Access an affordable shelter with heating and electricity
- A safe place with a caring family and a bed
- Access clean, weather-appropriate clothing
- To be protected from abuse of all kinds

MENTAL HEALTH

- Have access to affordable mental health care
- A personal break to handle their mental situation
- Choose their own identity, whether that be sexual orientation, religious identification, and/or gender identification
- Have people in society who support their mental well-being

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- A healthy environment that provides the basic necessities to all life
- Know about the environment, and what is being done to it
- Have a say about what happens to the environment
- Safe recreation in the outdoors and in their communities

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Hygienic products, clothing, and utilities suitable for all climates and environments
- Have access to outdoor recreational and natural spaces (e.g., parks, fields, courts, lakes, pitches, trails, paths, etc.)
- Safe and affordable health care that covers medical treatment, preventative care, reproductive health, vaccines, and intervention in the name of physical safety
- Have sports and recreational resources for the purposes of promoting physical health and activity
- Access to sustainable sources of clean water and food (fresh and healthy)—enough for at least two meals a day

SOCIAL SUPPORTS & CONNECTIONS

- Express themselves through feelings, speech, clothing, actions, creativity, and more
- Have support and education from friends, family, and community
- Have access to healthy food and water
- Connect to each other through technology and transportation
- Be respected and heard
- Be engaged in community
- A respected voice in making decisions that affect how they live

WORK & TRANSPORTATION

- Choose a safe and healthy job, while making a fair wage
- Accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation regardless of economic circumstances

VT9T026 COALITION

We make Vermonters here.

- If you grow up in Vermont, you can be ready for anything.
- Our young people will make Vermont better if we listen to and respect their voices.

Young people make a better Vermont.

- We value youth as they are. Just by being young people living here, they enrich our community.
- We can celebrate our young people being young and recognize the value of youth in our community.
- Young people are problem-solvers who are eager to be engaged.
- We have a collective responsibility to ensure that all young Vermonters are safe, healthy, supported, educated, and engaged.

Youth want and need what we all want and need.

- Vermont youth know what they need. We should listen to them and work with them to provide real opportunities for them to lead.
- We have the Youth Declaration of Rights as a starting point. Vermont youth have told us what they need in this document.
- Young and old alike want to be successful and want and need to be loved and appreciated for who they are.
- Young and old alike need community connection, opportunities to learn, and access to recreation and other activities.
- Vermont youth have a right to explore interests, connect with each other and build skills, and these opportunities should exist throughout our community.

The “third space” is where youth live, work, and play.

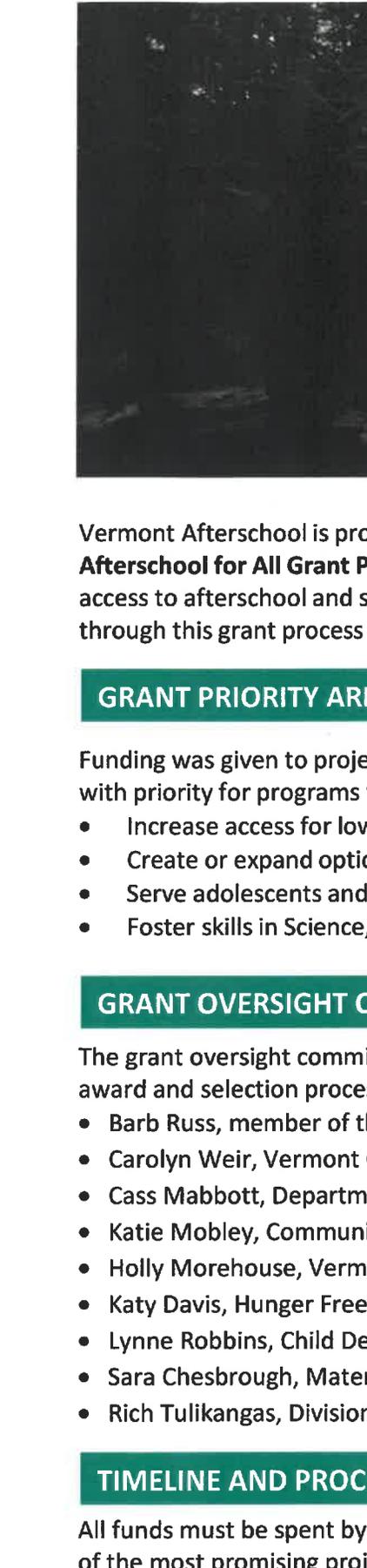
- The third space for youth is everywhere that is not home and not school.
- Young people spend lots of time outside of their homes and outside of school. This “third space” is an important place for them to get what they need as they grow up.
- As we go about our lives, we can welcome youth as part of our communities and provide opportunities for them to learn new skills and to have opportunities to play, relax and be young.

We can work with youth to provide many opportunities for young people to be young and to grow into healthy and happy Vermonters.



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For more information, contact Holly Morehouse at Vermont Afterschool:
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AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

GRANT PROGRAM

Vermont Afterschool is proud to be working with Vermont's Agency of Human Services to establish the **Afterschool for All Grant Program**. The purpose of the grant program is to support efforts that will increase access to afterschool and summer learning programs in Vermont. Up to \$600,000 total will be awarded through this grant process over the next two years.

GRANT PRIORITY AREAS

Funding was given to projects to start or expand afterschool and/or summer learning programs in Vermont, with priority for programs that:

- Increase access for low-income children and youth;
- Create or expand options in underserved areas of the state;
- Serve adolescents and teenagers; and/or
- Foster skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

GRANT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The grant oversight committee was charged with developing the grant application and overseeing the grant award and selection process. Committee members included:

- Barb Russ, member of the ELO Working Group and former afterschool director
- Carolyn Weir, Vermont Community Foundation
- Cass Mabbott, Department of Libraries
- Katie Mobley, Community College of Vermont, member of the ELO Working Group
- Holly Morehouse, Vermont Afterschool, member of the ELO Working Group
- Katy Davis, Hunger Free Vermont
- Lynne Robbins, Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families
- Sara Chesbrough, Maternal and Child Health, Department of Health
- Rich Tulikangas, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

TIMELINE AND PROCESS

All funds must be spent by the end of FY21. Letters of Interest were collected in March 2019, with a subset of the most promising projects invited to submit a full grant application in May 2019. In June 2019, 12 projects were selected to each receive a two-year grant.

2019-2021 GRANTEES

Addison Northwest School District
Albany Community School
Bennington Center for Restorative Justice
Brookfield Elementary School
Franklin Northeast SU LEAPS
Friends for Change Youth Group of Bellows Falls

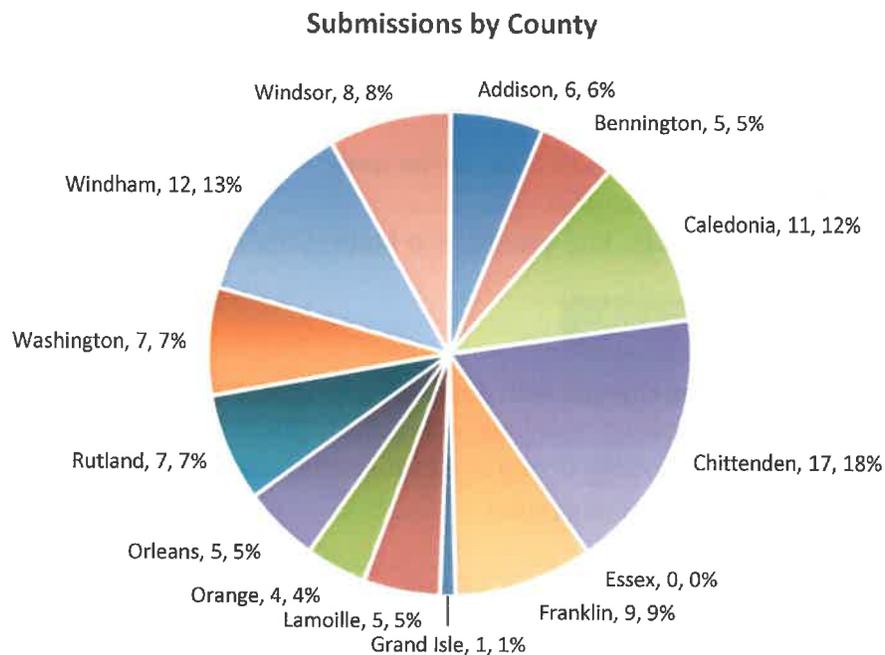
Kingdom East Afterschool
Meeting Waters YMCA
Twinfield Union School
Two Rivers SU
Upper Valley Haven
Winooski School District

OVERVIEW OF LETTERS OF INTEREST

101 Letters of Interest submitted in Spring 2019

30% were to start new programs; **66%** were to expand existing programs

Total Amount Requested by Letters of Interest is **\$5,451,587**



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THIRD SPACE FOR LEARNING

SCHOOL HOME



VT9T026 COALITION



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