

VT Community Health Equity Partnership
Community Project Funding to Address Health Inequities:
Funding Application

Deadline: Midnight on September 9, 2022

Funding is intended to assist **NEK Prosper! Caledonia + Southern Essex Accountable Health Community** to address health inequity(s) experienced in the St. Johnsbury District which were exacerbated during COVID-19, and which are described in a **Data Driven Problem Statement** as: Due to stigma, marginalization and systemic inequalities, not everyone in Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties has fair and just opportunity to prosper (be financially secure, mentally healthy, physically healthy, well-housed and well-nourished), nor safe, accessible and inclusive opportunities to participate in planning and decision-making about the health and well-being of themselves, their families and their communities. This is true particularly for those experiencing stigma, marginalization and avoidable systemic inequalities associated with socioeconomic status; race, ethnicity and culture; sexual orientation and gender identity; visible and invisible disabilities; trauma, mental health and substance misuse disorders, and justice-involvement.

NEK Prosper! is interested in supporting projects which help us achieve a **Vision** of prosperity for all and our **Aspiration** to build our collective and community capacity to dismantle systemic inequality and marginalization, foster community leadership and community-driven solutions and ensure fair and just opportunity to health and prosperity.

1. Type of Applicant:

Non-profit Organization Group/Association^A Individual* Other (please describe):

2. Name of Applicant (organization, group, individual):

The Center for an Agricultural Economy

^AIf you operate under the umbrella of a larger organization (for example, [the Hub](#) operates under Umbrella), please provide the name of the organization:

***If an individual, please provide the name of your fiscal sponsor organization:**

3. Applicant's (organization or fiscal sponsor as applicable) **Street Address** (Street/Road, City, State, Zip Code):

140 Junction Rd, PO Box 422, Hardwick VT 05843

4. Primary Contact Person Name (for project):

Katrina Vahedi, Development Manager

5. Primary Contact Person (for project) **Email Address**:

katrina@hardwickagriculture.org

6. Primary Contact Person (for project) **Preferred Phone Number**:

(802) 472-5362

7. Tax Identification Number (organization or fiscal sponsor as applicable):

57-1201683

8. **Amount Requested** (no less than \$2,500 or more than \$50,000):

\$20,000

9. **Schedule of Work:**

- Start Date: October 1, 2022
- End Date (no later than May 31, 2023): May 31, 2023

10. **Project Name** – Provide a one-line name for your project:

Food Justice and Culture Building: A Partnership between the Center for an Agricultural Economy and the Civic Standard.

11. **Project Purpose Summary** – Provide a short three to four sentence summary of the purpose of your project:

To provide materials, food and staff time necessary for a range of food-based community programs and offerings in the town of Hardwick and at Hazen Union high school. The programs would be implemented by the Center for an Agricultural Economy in partnership with a new cultural organization, the Civic Standard. Programs would take place through an elective class at the highschool, at the Civic's community hub on Main Street in Hardwick, and at events and public venues around town.

12. **What Vermont town(s) will be directly served by your project?**

Programs will take place in Hardwick and primarily serve residents and students of Hazen Union High School (located in Hardwick). Citizens and students from the broader Hardwick region and school district will also benefit, including the towns of Wolcott, Greensboro, Woodbury, and Walden.

13. **Describe the Project** - the work you'll do, the overall timeline and how you'll use the requested funds (will also need to attach a Project Budget – see example on Page 3) (funded portion must be complete by May 31, 2023) (no more than 1,500 characters):

The Civic Standard (Civic) and the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) are excited to build on existing work around Food Justice and Culture Building in Hardwick. This project includes several community-building elements for local people across all demographics. The Covid-19 pandemic, accompanied by increased social awareness around systemic inequities, has brought long-existing systemic socio-demographic tensions to the forefront of our communities. The partnership of the Civic and CAE is a step to purposefully and openly share resources and foster a culture of abundance.

Primary elements of the project are supporting regular community meals in Hardwick, co-teaching the Recipe for Human Connection Class at Hazen Union School, and establishing the capacity and programming for the Civic's cultural events and collaborations to operate out of a central, physical space for the first time.

The Civic's central mission is to create inclusive cultural events– small but meaningful pieces in building a cohesive local identity and a functional civic life. This project includes a focus on using the Civic as a hub to support local youth, particularly needed due to the cancellation of OSSU's afterschool program for the fall due to lack of staff. This aligns with CAE's longstanding place-based education work in partnership with the after school program.

This grant would provide timely support for the continuation of these project elements through the present school year.

14. **Describe the Focus Population** (who will benefit?) (no more than 500 characters):

Programs at the Civic are open to all members of the greater Hardwick community. The Hazen Recipe for Human Connection class benefits high school students from Hardwick and the towns within the OSSU district. After school support benefits the students of Hardwick Elementary and their families. CAE and the Civic have partnerships with the local supervisory union that operates six schools at the intersection of four counties, serving 1,100 students.

15. **Describe how this project was identified or designed by the intended beneficiaries** (no more than 500 characters):

The Civic and CAE currently collaborate to co-teach the Recipe for Human Connection class created during the pandemic center connection, care, creativity and joy. Now in its 5th semester, students are interested in supporting the local community meal. Recently the Civic opened a headquarters on Main Street in Hardwick, offering cultural programming and drop-in hours. This project sustains and expands our collaboration, building connections between food, culture, education, and community spaces.

16. Describe the Project Goals and Desired Results (what will success look like?) (no more than 500 characters):

This project builds on CAE's food justice work by partnering with a cultural organization. The Civic's new community hub offers different avenues for providing food and connecting across differences in this politically fractured, socially and economically insecure time. Inclusive gathering spaces help us build a shared civic and cultural life. And food is more than a basic need— it is a means by which neighbors can build trust and good will, key measures of collective wellness and resilience.

17. Identifying milestones provides a way to monitor the progress of your project and make course corrections, if needed. When and how will you identify milestones for this project? (no more than 1,500 characters):

An initial milestone this fall will be engaging in community listening to identify a specific schedule of offerings in addition to ongoing activities (which include the Hardwick Community Lunch and Recipe for Human Connection class). This will look like engaging community members at drop-in events, asking students what they want to see in Hardwick and involving them in that vision, and taking suggestions from Hardwick residents in-person and online. We expect this process to help shape a schedule of offerings and activities that are broadly accessible.

A Recipe for Human Connection class is offered in the fall and spring terms of the 2022-2023 school year. This fall there are 20 students enrolled. Students are key partners in designing the class, so milestone projects emerge in collaborative design with the students. Student reflections throughout the class will help us understand the connectivity and culture-building impact. Students are key partners in designing the class, so milestone projects emerge in collaborative design with the students. Student reflections throughout the class will help us understand the connectivity and culture-building impact.

This project partners with the United Church of Hardwick to support a free, weekly community meal. This project will support 8-10 out of 16 meals from October through May.

18. Describe your team (the project champions and any community partners you are working with / intend to work with to achieve these results). **If not yet working with these partners, please describe your plan to outreach and engage these partners** (no more than 1,500 characters):

CAE's community-centered efforts are based in the greater Hardwick area and have existed since its founding in 2004. Community programming is focused on food sovereignty efforts, community organizing and leadership development, and strengthening school-community connections with place-based education support in our local school district. CAE owns a 15 acre community green space which is home to the local farmers market, community gardens and orchard, an open air pavilion used for many community gathering events and a range of recreational opportunities.

The Civic Standard is a new organization that works collaboratively with disparate citizens of the Hardwick area to create cultural activities and programs that allow for the simple and profound act of sharing space. The Civic seeks the input and participation of neighbors in all projects, and oftentimes, the Civic is simply the conduit for organizing and manifesting others' original ideas. The Civic strives for moments of human connection in both the planning and creation of events, and in the events themselves. Food is an essential aspect of all the work that the Civic does.

Other partners include The United Church of Hardwick, Hazen Union students, administrators, and Jen Olson and Lynn Patenaude of Hazen's Work-Based Learning and Pathways programs, local volunteers, community members and support from local farms and businesses.

19. Please explain how the intended work may positively impact the data driven problem statement and/or help NEK Prosper! achieve our Vision and Aspiration described above (no more than 1,500 characters):

This project connects individuals and strengthens the social fabric of the greater Hardwick community through the simple act of being together - fun, accessible, enriching activities that embody our connectedness and overcome perceived division. We believe that food is a powerful connector and fundamental to culture-building.

CAE is invested in ongoing learning around antiracism, equity, and cultural humility. CAE and the Civic recognize that not all people or entities have resources or time to invest in this kind of learning, and individuals are at different places in their own journeys. We hope to create a baseline of connection, widen these conversations within our communities, and seek engagement around systemic inequities. Our goal is not to present a 'right way', but to share curiosity, invite others on a learning journey, and co-create a more equitable and collaborative future. The communities of rural Vermont have multigenerational resilience and adaptivity, as well as economic, social, and transformational challenges. Political tensions and the influx of pandemic and climate refugees have increased divisions and disenfranchisement of established residents. We want to provide the resources and connections to help people navigate and create the cultural shifts of the next generation. We are excited to combine CAE's resources around food and agriculture with the Civic's community organizing and cultural expertise to create spaces for community healing and empowerment.

- **(Optional) Feel free to provide additional information you think may be useful to the reviewers in evaluating this application. What else should we know about the project that we didn't ask? (no more than 1,500 characters):**

Through CAE's food hub enterprises we have relationships with dozens of local farms, many of whom are engaged in initiatives to provide produce at food pantries or to local institutions. These connections will benefit the activities described in this project, by incorporating fresh, nutritious food that is also connected to this community. CAE has a close relationship with the Hardwick Area Food Pantry, having partnered to offer food independence workshops, additional local produce, and storage space to support pantry activities. Learn more at www.hardwickagriculture.org

The Civic has recently begun to work out of their new headquarters located in the former Hardwick Gazette building. This space, graciously donated by the owner of the newspaper, is now a home base for the Civic's local culture-building work that has been impacting the community for over a decade. The absence of the Gazette's 100 year presence in town has left a gap, and it feels fitting that the Civic is working to keep the community informed and connected in new ways. The process of creating a physical hub unlocks a significant opportunity for deepening and diversifying engagement in the Civic's ongoing collaborative projects. Learn more at www.thecivicstandard.org

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Project Budget

Organization/Group/Grantee Name: Center for an Agricultural Economy			
Title of Project: Food Justice and Culture Building: A Partnership between the Center for an Agricultural Economy and the Civic Standard.			
Expense Category*	Description	Request	Please note any other secured funding or in-kind donation toward expenses for Project
Staffing	CAE staff capacity (Place-based education coordinator) - \$2000 Community Partner Stipends at \$1000/month for 8 months - \$8,000	\$ 10,000	An existing NBRC grant through Hazen Union currently supports stipends for co-teachers from the Civic and CAE's Place-based Education Coordinator, but ends on September 30. CAE has \$14,000 in secured funds to support complementary Place-Based Education programming offered parallel to this project.
Consultants (legal fees, trainers, graphic design, etc.)			
Materials & Supplies (printing, books, art supplies, building materials, etc.)	Materials and food for community food events and workshops at: The Civic Standard - \$6000 Community Meals - \$1200 Hazen Union School - \$2500	\$ 10,000	\$1000 secured contribution
Travel			
Other (fees for conferences, trainings etc.)			
	Total Request	\$ 20,000	Total in kind: \$15,000
*If a category is not applicable, please leave it blank			