

**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 **Vibrant ONE (Orleans & Northern Essex) Accountable Health Community** to address health inequity(s) experienced in the Newport District which were exacerbated during COVID-19, and which are described in a **Data Driven Problem Statement** as: *We are not providing the right mental health/substance misuse care, at the right place, at the right time, every time; and too many in our community are getting stuck at the wrong level of care/ wrong care location. This is frustrating, costly, and ineffective.*

**Vibrant ONE** is interested in supporting projects which help us achieve our **Vision** for a vibrant, thriving, safe and inclusive Orleans and Northern Essex and our **Aspiration** that everyone living in Orleans/No. Essex will have easy access to person-centered and coordinated mental health and substance misuse services that are timely, close to home, at the appropriate level and with the appropriate transition supports for continued success in a person's home community.

**Type of Applicant:**

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

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

**Northeast Kingdom Collaborative, as an organization and as the backbone organization for the Working Communities Challenge NEK Team**

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

**P.O. Box 4043, St. Johnsbury VT 05819**

4. **Primary Contact Person** (for project) **Name:**

**Jennifer Carlo, Executive Director**

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

**jennifer@nekcollaborative.org**

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

**540-797-9038**

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

**20-4263581**

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

**\$41,972**

**9. Schedule of Work:**

- **Start Date: 10/1/2022**
- **End Date (no later than May 31, 2023): 5/31/2023**

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

**Building Social Capital and Engagement Throughout the NEK**

**11. Project Purpose Summary –** We plan a variety of initiatives to complement the existing work of the Working Communities Challenge, which is based on reducing generational poverty through increases in social capital, community engagement, and access to health and other resources. Our project is driven by relationships and our goal is to build leadership in these communities that will then build a movement of other engaged community members working towards equitable, community-driven solutions.

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

St. Johnsbury, Barton, Newport, Lyndonville, and convenings throughout the NEK

**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 below on Page 3) (funded portion must be complete by May 31, 2023) (no more than 1,500 characters):

The NEK Working Communities Challenge Team works across sectors to reduce intergenerational poverty by increasing financial stability among NEK residents. Our goal is to work with community members across the NEK to create a network of community spaces or hubs designed by community members to meet specific, place-based needs. These hubs will mirror the collaborative work in which the WCC is engaged in with the St. Johnsbury Community Hub. Creating opportunities that are area/town specific will help community members have better access to health and wellness resources, job training, public benefits, educational opportunities, and increased social connectivity through a grassroots listening campaign, Neighbor Up Nights and Hub Huddles, community learning programs, and sector and issue convenings.

To that end, we request the following funding:

1. **\$15,300 to support NEK Organizing (NEKO) in a listening campaign in Barton.** This work is partly funded as part of the Working Communities Challenge grant; we request funds to match and extend that work. NEKO will work with organizers who live, work, and/or are deeply integrated in Barton and Orleans, making this a true grassroots effort by and for community members. NEKO's doorknocking approach to community organizing builds relationships with people often left out of decisions about their health and their community. We expect to gain actionable insights about benefits cliffs, healthcare needs, and community health needs as part of this work.

The proposal for this grassroots campaign is attached.

[WCC Grassroots timeline proposal](#)

2. **\$12,512 for a series of Neighbor Up Nights and Hub Huddles in Orleans and Northern Essex Counties.**

The St. Johnsbury Community Hub hosts Neighbor Up Nights and Hub Huddles to create space and opportunity to:

1. Reach and welcome the most vulnerable, the invisible and the shunned into community life.
2. Cultivate opportunities for action, social enterprise and entrepreneurship.
3. Better connect people to trusted resources, information, people and places that can help.
4. Activate and mobilize community around mutual interdependence, support and sharing.
5. Amplify the voices and role of those affected by poverty to influence policy and actions.

Funding from the Vibrant ONE- Health Equity Grant would allow the St. Johnsbury Community Hub, as part of the Working Communities Challenge work, to host these events as a means to bring community together with a shared meal and through activities. Neighbor Up Nights are a gathering opportunity where community members can participate in a structured exchange, share ideas and ways to "Neighbor Up" or strengthen the community. Hub Huddles will support community members in accessing services and the support they need by curating events through popup "huddles" around regional links and resources. The "huddle" becomes a *hub* of information.

In the "next iteration" project through the WCC, we aim to meet our objectives of gathering community input as well as directly support mental and physical health in Orleans and Northern Essex counties with a focus on areas in and around Barton, Lyndonville and Newport. During the next 8 months, the [St. Johnsbury Community Hub] will work with [WCC] to create and offer to build connection and involvement. These community engagement initiatives allow for peer support and peer networking. Community members will be able to learn about their neighbors and what is available to them in a peer learning setting that is safe, relaxing and familiar. We ultimately hope all community members in this northern region of the NEK can benefit, however in particular, we will work to engage those who are

living at or below the federal poverty guidelines. By focusing on this segment of the population, we will create a foundation for a future iteration of a central community space as outlined in the WCC project funding. Building community check-ins or Huddles demonstrate followthrough, allow us to practice consistency while promoting individual voice, community stability and ultimately the financial and overall well being of the region.

**3. \$10,000 for a series of Community Learning Opportunities around Inclusion, Justice, and Community Culture**

The Working Communities Challenge NEK Team would like to provide a series of community learning opportunities around inclusion, justice, and community culture. Many workplaces in the NEK provide diversity and inclusion training to their employees, often through the lens of the workplace, but there are few opportunities to come together as community members for learning and discussion around these issues. As we identify and engage new leadership, we want to hold intentional, professional space for deep-collaboration and education around forming a restorative, trauma-informed culture that can be carried forward as the foundation of our emergent relationships with one another. We will hire consultants who specialize in holding the circle for personal and organizational growth and work with them to facilitate a series of discussions and workshops that allow new and existing leadership to come together to define the conditions of their health, labor and relationships.

**4. \$4,800 to Expand the Sector and Issue Convenings Held by the NEK Collaborative**

The NEK Collaborative regularly hosts sector convenings in which we gather professionals, industry leaders and engaged citizens to discuss areas of concern for the Northeast Kingdom. These discussions allow us to engage partners and build plans that are directly informed by the experiences of NEK citizens. We then return to the same citizens and sectors to advocate for actionable solutions and celebrate successes.

As the region emerges from the disruptions of COVID, our goal is to increase the scope and number of these convenings. We also intend to expand the number of sectors we convene, to include youth, emergency services/public safety, the creative economy, mental health/disability and chronic illness justice, and others identified through the convening process. This will allow a wider range of individuals and organizations to create solutions to health and equity challenges throughout the NEK.

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

We ultimately hope all community members in this northern region of the NEK can benefit, however by focusing on engaging those who are living at or below the federal poverty guidelines, we will create a foundation for a future iteration of a central community space as outlined in the WCC project funding lead by the people most impacted by poverty. By canvassing and holding house meetings, neighbor-up nights, and space for the rich and diverse integration of people and their stories, we hope to draw out and center new voices in creating overall well-being for the region.

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

NEKO has built relationships with leaders living at or below the federal poverty guidelines in Barton and Orleans during previous listening campaigns. Nurtured by those existing connections, the WCC team will connect with, hire, and support one or more lead organizers who have experienced the negative health impacts of poverty. By hiring impacted lead organizers, our goal is to increase the potential for neighbors to find common ground and solutions with neighbors from similar socioeconomic realities.

Working in partnership with NEK Collaborative, NEKO and the St. Johnsbury Community Hub through the Working Communities Challenge strives to fulfill the vision of the “next iteration” of a networking community space. This funding provides the community space to address the data drive problem directly. The regional work captures that people are not getting the care they need. During canvassing, to providers and at events, the same theme comes out: “I have to keep leaving messages and no one calls me back and when they do I’m scheduled with back to back appointments and my partner is unable to drive me”. This expansion is in response to the direct ask for access, coordinated services and individualized support.

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

By May 31, we will have developed a constituency of community stewards who have chosen to participate in community driven solutions regarding health and well-being that build towards the Vibrant ONE Vision of a thriving place for all. By amplifying the stories and talents of people living with poverty-related health challenges to create solutions to those challenges and to poverty itself.

**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?**

1. NEKO will have worked with WCC Core Team to conduct a grass-roots listening campaign in Barton. Actionable items will have been identified to inform the further work of the WCC and for NEKO to take forward in campaigns to increase access to resources for community members.
2. Eight Neighbor Up Nights and four Hub Huddles will have been held, with a total of at least 150 community members participating.
3. Learning opportunities around inclusion, justice, and community culture will have been offered to community members.
4. Twelve sector and issue convenings will have been held by the NEK Collaborative, with at least 1-2 actionable items identified per convening to improve NEK quality of life and access to resources.

Throughout the course of our work, we will continually evaluate our work. The WCC Community Design work group has built reflection and debriefing time into the process, whether it's at each stage of the listening campaign, around the Neighbor Up Nights or Hub Huddles, adjusting to best engage however possible.

**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 also describe your plan to outreach and engage these partners** (no more than 1,500 characters):

The Working Communities Challenge Core Team works first and foremost with community members in our communities. The Team is led by the NEK Collaborative as the backbone organization, and has key members from the following agencies and organizations:

NEK Community Action

NEK Organizing

Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital

Northern Counties Health Care

St. Johnsbury Hub Community Leadership

Umbrella

VT Agency of Human Services

VT Department of Labor

We are continually adding members to our team and look forward to continuing to expand, particularly with community members in Barton, Lyndon, and Newport.

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

Building on a listening campaign in Barton during the early stages of the pandemic, our goal is to reveal community needs around mental health/substance misuse care, and bring people impacted by health injustice together to define for themselves what care looks and feels like: what's the right place? What's the right level of care? Where should it be located?

Because health (in)justice cannot be separated from racial, disability, housing, transportation, food (in)justice, a broad based grassroots listening campaign really works to uncover a multitude of interconnected opportunities for health. It's holistic in its approach in that it makes space for the most

impacted people to be heard, it makes space for a variety of problems to be identified, and – at its best – it brings people together to create their own solutions.

In organizing there's a saying that you never do for someone what they can do for themselves. It's not a story of abandonment. It's a way to honor someone's intrinsic ability and expertise. While we are working on healthy equity, what we're also trying to do is build people up and draw people together for the long haul with the understanding that the opposite of addiction is connection. The Neighbor Up Nights, Hub Huddles and community learning experiences will all expand on and complement this work, and bring out the voices of people who may otherwise be underserved.

The convenings held by the NEK Collaborative will engage organizations and agencies, as well as community members, in identifying common struggles, making connections, and finding solutions.

**20. (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):**

The NEK WCC team is also planning an evaluation of the startup and early work of the St Johnsbury Community Hub, funded by the WCC. This evaluation plan is not part of the work for which we are seeking this funding, but since it will be going on simultaneously, any insights gained will further inform the listening campaign and community engagement work we describe here.

Just as the NEK Collaborative is the backbone of the WCC, its people like "Sharon" are the individuals making up the backbone of the community. Sharon has joined the WCC Core team; as the meeting begins, introductions are made and every person is sharing why they want to be part of this work. It's Sharon's turn. She shares that when she first moved to the NEK she was so isolated and in poor health. She discovered the St. Johnsbury Community Hub and was able to get connected to medical support and link with a local holistic health community. Empowered by her improved wellbeing, Sharon has started nursing school and has circled back to the St. Johnsbury Community Hub looking for a way to give back to someone like herself. She is excited to be part of the WCC because she was on the receiving end of a community link by happenstance and wants to build intentional connections. Being part of the WCC, she hopes to canvas, share her story and lift up ways the community can access and coordinate in response to their own needs. She smiles nervously and takes a seat. We hope to have your support so that more "Sharons" can contribute to our vibrant region.

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**Community Project Funding to Address Health Inequities:**

**Project Budget**

<b>Organization/Group/Grantee Name: NEK Collaborative</b>			
<b>Title of Project: Building Social Capital and Engagement Throughout the NEK</b>			
<b>Expense Category*</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Please note any other secured funding or in-kind donation toward expenses for Project</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	1- Matching fund for the WCC support of the NEKO Listening Campaign	<b>\$6,500</b>	Working Communities Challenge- \$10,000
	Part-time organizer 10 hours/week at \$20/hour for 7 months	<b>\$5,600</b>	
	Part-time organizer 10 hours/week at \$20/hour for 16 weeks or 5 hours/week \$20/hour for 7 months	<b>\$3,200</b>	

<p>NEKC Bookkeeper time to support these initiatives- 2 hours/month X \$30/hour X 8 months</p>	<p><b>\$480</b></p>	
<p>NEKO Bookkeeper time to support these initiatives- 2 hours/month X \$30/hour X 8 months</p>	<p><b>\$480</b></p>	
<p>2- St. Johnsbury Hub Director time- Neighbor Up Nights- 10 hours X \$30/hour X 8 events</p>	<p><b>\$2,400</b></p>	<p>Working Communities Challenge- \$25,000</p>
<p>St. Johnsbury Hub Director time- Hub Huddles- 8 hours X \$30/hour X 4 events</p>	<p><b>\$960</b></p>	
<p>Hub Huddles- Stipends for St J Hub Community Hub Stewardship Team- 2 hours X \$25/ hour X 2 Community Stewards X 4 events</p>	<p><b>\$400</b></p>	<p>USDA- RBDG- \$3,500</p>
<p>4- NEKC Executive Director time- 10 hours X \$40/hour X 12 convenings /2 (half in-kind)</p>	<p><b>\$2,400</b></p>	<p>NEKC- In-Kind Contribution- \$2,400</p>
<p>NEKC Community Programs Assistant time- 10 hours X \$20/hour X 12 convenings</p>	<p><b>\$2,400</b></p>	
	<p><b>TOTAL STAFFING REQUEST:</b></p>	<p><b>TOTAL STAFFING MATCH:</b></p>
	<p><b>\$24,820</b></p>	<p><b>\$40,900</b></p>

<p><b>Consultants</b> (legal fees, trainers, graphic design, etc.)</p>	<p>3- Diversity/Justice Consultants</p>	<p><b>\$10,000</b></p> <p><b>TOTAL CONSULTANT REQUEST:</b></p> <p><b>\$10,000</b></p>	
<p><b>Materials &amp; Supplies</b> (printing, books, art supplies, building materials, etc.)</p>	<p>2- Neighbor Up Night supplies- \$200/8 events</p> <p>Hub Huddle supplies- \$150/4 events</p> <p>Marketing and printing for NUN and HH</p>	<p><b>\$1,600</b></p> <p><b>\$600</b></p> <p><b>\$1,352</b></p> <p><b>TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES REQUEST:</b></p> <p><b>\$3,552</b></p>	<p>Working Communities Challenge- \$3,000</p> <p><b>TOTAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES MATCH:</b></p> <p><b>\$3,000</b></p>
<p><b>Travel</b></p>	<p>2- Neighbor Up Nights- Transportation Reimbursement</p> <p>Hub Huddles- Transportation Reimbursement</p>	<p><b>\$500</b></p> <p><b>\$500</b></p> <p><b>TOTAL TRAVEL REQUEST:</b></p> <p><b>\$1,000</b></p>	

<p><b>Other</b> (fees for conferences, trainings etc.)</p>	<p>Neighbor Up Nights- Participant Incentives- \$25 gift cards + \$5 fee X 15 people per event X 8 events</p> <p>Hub Huddles- Participant Incentives- \$5 gift cards X 10 people per event X 4 events</p>	<p><b>\$2,400</b></p> <p><b>\$200</b></p> <p><b>TOTAL OTHER REQUEST:</b></p> <p><b>\$2,600</b></p>	
	<p><b>Total Request</b></p>	<p><b>\$41,972</b></p>	<p><b>Total In-Kind or Other Funding = \$43,900</b></p>