

2026

VERMONT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

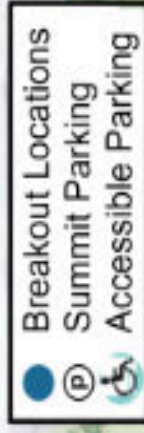


Stories. Skills. Action.

October 6th, 2026
Vermont State University
Castleton, Vermont

Vermont State University Castleton

Check-In and Summit Opening: Fine Arts Center, 45 Alumni Drive, Castleton VT



Summit
Check-in
& Opening
Plenaries



1. Old Chapel
2. Casella Theater (Fine Arts Center)
3. Leavenworth Hall

4. Calvin Coolidge Library
5. Stafford Academic Center
6. Jeffords Center

7. Campus Center
8. Huden Dining Hall
9. Hoff Hall

Welcome!

7th Vermont Community Leadership Summit

Stories. Skills. Action

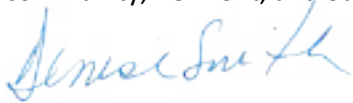
We are thrilled to welcome you and hundreds of community builders from across Vermont to VCRD's annual Vermont Community Leadership Summit, a full day of connection, learning, and inspiration for anyone working to strengthen their town. Participants and speakers represent a skillful and dedicated cross-section of Vermonters: youth leaders, municipal officials, community organizers, volunteers, technical assistance providers, and regional, state, and national partners, all committed to the vitality, resilience, and well-being of our communities.

VCRD's Community Leadership Summits have brought thousands of Vermonters together to build momentum for local leadership and advance our shared values of community-driven action. In recent years, our towns have navigated continuous change and challenge. Today offers a moment of renewal and a chance to reconnect, celebrate successes, share struggles, and look ahead together.

This year's Summit is shaped by the newly updated Vermont Community Leadership in Action Guide -- hot off the presses today -- which informs workshops, panels, and networking throughout the day. Twenty-eight breakouts offer practical skills for advancing community projects that strengthen local vitality and quality of life. Whether you're working on housing, recreation, gathering spaces, climate resilience, or other priorities, you'll gain tools and ideas to bring home. With a full lineup of workshops, panels, and networking sessions, attendees will gain new insights, tools, and relationships to help move local efforts forward.

Lunch will be available in Huden Dining Hall. And don't forget to return to the **Fine Arts Center at the end of the day for some well-deserved Ben & Jerry's ice cream** as we close out together.

A vibrant democracy depends on people like you stepping forward—in big ways and small. **Local leadership is the foundation of unity, direction, and progress.** Thank you for being here today, and for all that you do in support of your community, Vermont, and our shared future.



Denise Smith, *Executive Director*
Vermont Council on Rural Development

VT Community Leadership Award

Vermont Lifetime Leadership Award: Paul Costello



Paul Costello's leadership journey began with a simple but powerful act: someone encouraged him to run for the local school board. That invitation set him on a path of service that would shape communities across Vermont for decades to come. Paul led the Vermont Council on Rural Development for 21 years, stepping down in 2021. Through his leadership at VCRD, Paul strengthened rural Vermont in ways that will endure long beyond his tenure. He engaged communities in every corner of the state as they set priorities to build momentum and local vitality, led numerous policy councils to address issues facing the state, convened statewide summits to build unity and common purpose, and brought people together in countless other ways for the good of their communities

and for Vermont. Paul's influence extends far beyond the programs he built: he has mentored emerging leaders, inspired countless community volunteers, and modeled leadership rooted in humility, service, and belief in the power of local people. Today, he continues his commitment to community in Montpelier as a member of the Foundation for a Resilient Montpelier, a leader in the local development corporation, a member of the Montpelier City Council, and serves on multiple nonprofit boards. And when he's not working in service of community, you're likely to find him on a mountaintop, skinning his way up a backcountry slope, or paddling a stretch of river somewhere across Vermont.

Vermont Community Leadership Award: Bill Moore, Brandon



Bill Moore has been instrumental to community and economic development in Brandon, Vermont, where he serves as Deputy Town Manager and Recreation Director, and has also served as Economic Development Officer, Interim Town Manager, and Town Moderator. Working with the Recreation Department Committee and other town boards, he has expanded free and low-cost programs and events like the Brandon Carnival, supported local businesses through the Route 7 reconstruction, and championed Brandon's identity as the birthplace of the electric motor. Bill's leadership has been central to advancing the town's flood resilience infrastructure, and he

played an important role in Brandon's most recent Community Visit. Beyond his local work, Bill serves as Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Vermont Community Development Association, contributing to statewide efforts to strengthen communities and local economies.

Agenda-At-A-Glance

- 9:00 Welcome and Opening Song**
- 9:35 Spark Stories**
- 10:00 Presentation of VCRD's 2026 Leadership Awards**
- 10:35 BREAK**
- 10:45 Breakouts:** Workshops, Panels, and Networking Sessions
- 12:00 LUNCH**
- 1:15 Breakouts**
- 2:30 BREAK**
- 2:45 Breakouts**
- 4:00 Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Social!**

BIPOC Affinity Space in Leavenworth 203:

Hosted by the Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VTPoC), the space is open to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color throughout the day including lunch. VTPoC will also have a table during check-in.

Quiet Room in Leavenworth 208:

A quiet space for spending time away from noise, lights, and other stimuli.

Meditation Room in Campus Center:

A calming space for up to 2 people at a time.

Lactation Room in Stafford

#VTCommunityLeaders



For more info ~ visit vtrural.org/summit

- Speaker Biographies
- Financial Sponsors
- Outreach Sponsors
- List of registered participants with affiliations
- Slides and other info to be posted soon

Breakout Room Locations:

10:45am

- W1..... Fine Arts Center
W2..... Leavenworth 204/205
W3..... Leavenworth 104
W4..... Leavenworth 202
P1..... Jeffords Auditorium
P2(L) ... Library Media Room
P3(H)... Campus Center 1787
P4..... Jeffords 101
P5..... Stafford Auditorium

1:15pm

- W5..... Jeffords 101
W6..... Hoff Hall 105
W7(L) .. Library Media Room
W8..... Leavenworth 104
W9..... Jeffords Auditorium
W10.... Stafford Auditorium
W11.... Leavenworth 202
P6..... Fine Arts Center
P7..... Leavenworth 204/205
P8(H)... Campus Center 1787

2:45pm

- W12(L). Library Media Room
W13.... Stafford Auditorium
W14.... Hoff Hall 105
W15.... Fine Arts Center
P9..... Leavenworth 204/205
P10(H). Campus Center 1787
P11..... Jeffords 101
P12..... Jeffords Auditorium
N1 Old Chapel Great Hall

SESSION KEY

Workshop
Panel
Networking
Livestream
Hybrid



Agenda

8:00 *Registration* | **Coffee and Pastries**..... Fine Arts Building

9:00 **Conference Welcome:** Denise Smith, Executive Director, VCRD
Opening Song: Heidi Wilson

9:35 **Spark Stories:**
Max Barrows, Green Mountain Self-Advocates
Kathryn Baxter, Lunenburg
Harmony Belle Devoe, Vermont State Youth Council

10:00 **Award Presentations:**
Lifetime Leadership Award: Paul Costello, former Executive Director of VCRD
Community Leadership Award: Bill Moore, Town of Brandon

10:35 *Break*

Opening Song with Heidi Wilson



We are delighted to open our summit with Heidi Wilson, a songwriter, song leader, and community music-maker whose work is rooted in what she calls "deep listening." Her songs begin outdoors, in close attention to the natural world and to the people and moments around her, and from listening she creates music meant to be sung together -- at celebrations, vigils, or in the streets. Heidi specializes in accessible, harmony-rich music such as rounds, layered songs, and call-and-response, inviting singers of all experience levels into shared harmony. She leads the vocal trio Heartwood and the Shire Choir, and her chant "Hold On" has traveled widely, sung at gatherings for solidarity and justice around the world. Heidi will open our summit with 20 minutes of music to ground us, connect us, and bring our voices together as we begin.

Session Type Key:

- Panel

Workshop

Networking
- Livestreamed

Hybrid

10:45 Breakout Sessions

- W1

Storytelling: Bridge Divides and Build Trust.....

Fine Arts Center,

PRESENTER: Madison Murphy Barney, The Center for Story & Strategy

This interactive workshop explores how storytelling can transform difficult conversations or processes into pathways for trust and collaboration. Gain insight and skills to listen differently, design programs more justly, and build trust in your community. The solutions to our biggest challenges are already here in the stories of your community. Our work is to hear them, honor them, and act accordingly.
- W2

Best Practices for Meeting and Event Facilitation

Leavenworth 204

PRESENTER: Jessica Savage, Vermont Council on Rural Development

This session will cover the basics of framing a process of engagement, meeting planning, agenda design, facilitation 101, setting priorities, and effective follow-up.
- W3

Wild Belonging

Leavenworth 104

PRESENTER: Jeanette Langston, Social Roots Studio

Working on community resilience, strategic planning, economic development – or just want to sharpen your networking skills? Social connection can seem like a nice-to-have, but a closer look proves it’s essential to a thriving community. Investing in growing meaningful social connection doesn’t only reduce isolation and loneliness and improve health; it’s the foundation a resilient and regenerative community stands on. Dive deeper with Jeanette Langston of Social Roots Studio, a leader in the emerging field of social connection. She serves as US Regional Ambassador to the global Social Connection Collective and brings eight years of work, grounded in research, practice, and lived experience. You’ll leave with a deeper understanding of connection, why it matters to your community’s goals, and how to cultivate it intentionally – with practical grounding and fresh inspiration to start or continue your own social connection work.

Agenda

W4 Mental Health Literacy for Communities..... Leavenworth 202r

PRESENTER: Cari Kelley, Hopeful Minds

Learn how to support community members in times of uncertainty. Gain tools to start conversations, identify needs, resources, and support the individual to develop coping and resiliency for future mental wellness.

P1 Community Housing: Borrowing Brilliance..... Jeffords Auditorium

MODERATOR: Jessica Hyman, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity

PANELISTS: Joe Camaratta, Waterbury Housing Taskforce; Sue Coakley, Putney Planning Commission; Marcella Eversole, Putney Housing Solutions Taskforce; and Jeff Pratt, New Haven Housing Taskforce

Creating more attainable housing is a priority in many communities: come hear from people just like you on how to get started, what is possible and what resources exist to create housing that fits your community’s needs. Panelists will tell their stories and answer your questions so that you can take home new ideas and peer connections to help your community take its next steps.

P2(L) School Building Transformations..... Library Media Room

MODERATOR: Alyssa Johnson, Vermont Council on Rural Development

PANELISTS: Shannon Barsotti, Town of Bennington; Kathryn Schenkman, Valley Hub Inc – RHS Repurposing Project; and Meg Streeter, Old School Enrichment Council

The closure of a local school is a challenge many communities are facing or experiencing. Come learn from towns that have navigated this transition and have completed or are in the process of repurposing former school buildings to serve new community purposes.

P3(H) Safe Streets, Accessible Recreation, andCampus Center 1787
Inclusive Mobility

MODERATOR: Sharon Plumb, Vermont Trails and Greenways Council

PANELISTS: Nate Besio, Vermont Center for Independent Living; Caitlin Cusack, Vermont Land Trust; Felicia Fowler, Vermont Adaptive Sports; and Randy Richardson, Upper Valley Trails

Hear from experts and community members who are working to increase the accessibility of recreation in Vermont communities including playgrounds, interpretive trails and more.

P4 Boosting Local Democracy Without Picking Sides Jeffords 101

MODERATOR: Sarah Henshaw, Nonprofit Helpdesk

PANELISTS: Robyn Palmer, Secretary of State’s Office; Shanna Ratner, Braver Angels; and Dottye Ricks, League of Women Voters of Vermont

How can organizations and community leaders support democracy without becoming branded as politically divisive? In this facilitated discussion, participants will hear from a panel of organizations working on non-partisan projects that support democratic systems. Participants will then break out in small groups to reflect on a dilemma in their community and practice skills for inquiry and advocacy. At the end, we will regroup for some debriefing and panelist reflections.

P5 AI for Rural Leaders..... Stafford Auditorium

MODERATOR: Neale Lunderville, AI Taskforce

PANELISTS: Brian Lowe, Assembly Theory; Cass Madison, Center for Civic Future; Tino Rutanhira, Vermont Professionals of Color; and AnGayle “AJ” Vasiliou, Middlebury College

AI is here and is having a real-world impact on VT’s rural communities and businesses. This panel, moderated by Neale Lunderville, Chair of Vermont’s AI Task Force, will help participants understand what the State is doing to plan for this technology, and feature panelists with different expertise on the use and impacts of AI. This session is intentionally designed to bring multiple perspectives and to answer your questions about AI.

12:00 Lunch..... Huden Dining Hall

1:15 Breakout Sessions

W5 Facilitating in Demanding Moments Jeffords 101

PRESENTERS: Andy Robinson, Andy Robinson Consulting, LLC and Jessica Savage, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Explores techniques for a more complex or difficult meeting or convening facilitation.

Agenda

W6 Funding Your Project – Institutional and Individual Giving Hoff Hall 105

PRESENTER: Jenn Hayslett, Jenn Hayslett Coaching & Consulting

Every community project needs a plan for where the money comes from, and that plan usually involves more than one kind of funder. This session walks through the essentials of building a case for support and shows how that case shifts depending on your audience: what grantors and institutional funders need to see versus what motivates individual donors in your community to give. You'll leave with a clearer sense of your funding landscape, the building blocks of a strong case for support, and a simple framework for setting realistic goals across different revenue streams

W7(L) Planning Accessible Public Engagements Library Media Room

PRESENTER: Peter Johnke, Vermont Center for Independent Living

Learn fundamental skills to plan a public event, municipal process, or community project welcoming to all. Learn how to integrate accessibility and inclusion into the core of your project, from pathways for participation to inviting and responding to ADA accommodation requests. Leave with skills that will break down barriers and get more of your community engaged!

W8 Youth and Adults Leading Together Leavenworth 104

PRESENTERS: Lauren Brady, Vermont Council on Rural Development; and Pat LaClair, UP for Learning

How can communities create and expand opportunities for young people to engage in civic leadership and local decision-making? In this interactive session, participants will explore the relationships, structures, and supports necessary to meaningfully engage young people in local decision-making. Participants will help create a training cohort model based on outcomes from Vermont's "Leading Together" initiative.

W9 Leadership as a Creative Practice Jeffords Auditorium

PRESENTER: Kris Gruen, The Creative Campus at Goddard

Creativity is a Leadership Skill: Successful leadership requires creative thinking, creative skills, and a creative approach. This workshop will help you understand where the creative version of yourself lives, where and how to access it, and help you use your creativity as a necessary leadership skill.

W10 Capital Projects 101: Vision to Planning to Stafford Auditorium Implementation

PRESENTER: Nicole Gratton, Preservation Trust of Vermont

Join this workshop for an introduction to project management for a community revitalization project that requires extensive capital. Learn how to organize around an initial vision, define goals and priorities, navigate funding considerations, and move your project from idea to implementation.

W11 EVERYDAY — Big and Small: A Conversation..... Leavenworth 202 with the Filmmaker

PRESENTER: Bess O’Brien, American Film Producer and Director

Join filmmaker Bess O’Brien for a viewing of a segment of her new documentary EVERYDAY – Big and Small, which highlights Vermonters creating connection, resilience, possibility, and joy in their communities. After the screening, O’Brien will lead a discussion on how Vermonters pull together and create miracles to create positive change. The full film will tour Vermont from September 15 to October 11.

P6 Small Town Economies: Models for BusinessesFine Arts Center and Beyond

MODERATOR: Sarah Furman, Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region

PANELISTS: Ryan Nakhleh, Local Maverick; Mike Solimani, Killington Resort and Pico Mountain

Thayer Tomlinson, Friends of Algiers; and Andy Vermilyea, Friends of Castleton Parks and Recreations, Inc.

Creative models for strengthening community and business development go hand in hand. This panel will explore examples where small towns have built out Community Trusts, cooperatives, town-led redevelopment, or partnering with major employers. We will hear how efforts got started, adapted to (or overcame) challenges, and how successes have led to vibrant small towns across the state.

Agenda

P7 Reinventing Social Connection..... Leavenworth 204/205

MODERATOR: Henry Botzum, Shires Young Professionals

PANELISTS: Sarah Blizzard, Shires Young Professionals; Will and Jennifer Condry, Juniper Creative Arts; HB Lozito, Out in the Open; and Gretchen Schimelpfenig, Huntington Block Party

Creative and new ways to increase social connections demonstrate the opportunities to bring joy and connection to our lives. Local groups are re-inventing how to gather: from shutting down streets for neighborhood block parties, social groups around a common theme, and connecting people through skillshare, song, or meals.

P8(H) How Farmers and Foresters are Building.....Campus Center 1787 Community

MODERATOR: Jon Ramsey, Center for an Agricultural Economy

PANELISTS: amber arnold, SUSU CommUNITY Farm; Megan Browning, Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN); and Kate Forrer, Vermont Woodlands Association

While many Vermonters value our working landscape, farmers and foresters have faced many challenges in recent decades. This panel will explore how the people behind our working lands build networks among businesses and strengthen themselves and their communities. This panel will ask what can community leaders learn from their collaboration and how can communities and working lands businesses work together?

2:30 Break

2:45 Breakout Sessions

W12(L) Fundraising Conversations: Building Library Media Room Relationships That Lead to Giving

PRESENTER: Jenn Hayslett, Jenn Hayslett Coaching & Consulting

Raising money in your community starts with relationships. This session focuses on the person-to-person side of fundraising: how to identify the people in your community who care about your project, how to open a conversation with them, and how to move that relationship toward an

invitation to give. Relationships also matter in seeking grant support. Using a simple model for donor conversations, you'll explore how to frame your project's story and leave with next steps for who to talk to next and how.

**W13 From Crisis to Opportunity: Rethinking the Stafford Auditorium
Big Issues**

PRESENTER: Dru Roessle, Wellbeing Economy Alliance of Vermont

Housing, population, healthcare, affordability... Many Vermonters agree that these are existential issues. But at the statewide down to the local level our communities struggle to find common ground on solutions and then take concrete action. How can we call on community-level experience, think creatively, and move forward together? Join this hands-on creative workshop to think with your peers and leave with tools to have these discussions in your community.

**W14 Finding “Both/And” Solutions to Your..... Hoff Hall 105
Community’s Hard Questions**

PRESENTER: Susan Clark, Community Development Professional

Attend this workshop if you have ever left a local meeting feeling discouraged about how the conversation went and wanting more inclusive, productive, and empowered community dialogue. Learn why things often go wrong and gain a tool to help groups work towards outcomes that honor diverging viewpoints.

**W15 Engagement By Design: Crafting Processes..... Fine Arts Center
that Work**

PRESENTER: Rebecca Sanborn-Stone, Community Workshop

Great projects have great engagement, from ideas to implementation and beyond. That means bringing people in early, keeping them involved, and creating opportunities that work for everyone. But great engagement doesn't happen by accident. In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore practical ways to design processes that get diverse people involved at all stages of a project or planning process. We'll look at community case studies and ideas worth borrowing. Then we'll roll up our sleeves and work in small groups to design a community engagement process for a mock project. Come ready to share your experiences, experiment, and have some fun.

Agenda

P9 Building Community Climate Resilience Leavenworth 204/205

MODERATOR: Maggie O’Brien, Rutland Regional Planning Commission

PANELISTS: Lena Greenberg, Community Resilience Organization; Kate O’Neill, Center for an Agricultural Economy; and Marian Wolz, Climate Action Office

As climate-related disasters become more frequent and severe, how do communities prioritize climate resilience? Years after the storm, volunteers have moved on, roads are rebuilt, and displaced residents have found housing. But planning for and implementing resilience requires a continuous, focused effort, especially during calmer “blue-sky” periods. This panel explores various tools available for analyzing community vulnerabilities, integrating those with lived experiences into decision-making processes, and ensuring municipal procedures prioritize reducing or eliminating risks to critical infrastructure, facilities, and people. Despite the ongoing challenges of limited local capacity, leave with a clearer understanding of how to advance resilience forward.

P10(H) Community Gathering Spaces Campus Center 1787

MODERATOR: Richard Amore, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation

PANELISTS: Shannon Barsotti, Town of Bennington; Bebe Bullock, Arlington Common; and Jasmine Yuris, Johnson EATS

Small towns have opportunities for developing community gathering spaces for community connection, trust building, belonging, and neighborliness. This panel will showcase local leaders creating flexible spaces that often must take on many different forms within the span of a week. From community meals to music and recreation, examples will highlight the partnerships for success and the power of social infrastructure in small towns that utilizes the buildings and spaces already there.

P11 Outdoor Recreation Economies..... Jeffords 101

MODERATOR: Jackie Dagger, VOREC

PANELISTS: Martha DeGraf, City of Vergennes; Gary Fox, Town of Rockingham; and Nic Stark, Rutland Regional Planning Commission

Strong outdoor economies rely on intentional partnerships across agencies, nonprofits, towns, volunteers, and businesses. This workshop introduces the Vermont CORE Toolkit, shares lessons from pilot communities using

data to strengthen projects and partnerships, and guides participants through identifying data, partners, and goals for their outdoor recreation economy work.

P12 Steady Leadership in a Changing World..... Jeffords Auditorium

MODERATOR: Amy Cunningham, Vermont Arts Council

PANELISTS: Kristen Getler, Town of Roxbury; Jon Ramsey, Center for an Agricultural Economy; Rick Ufford Case, City of Newport; and Barbara Vacarr, The Creative Campus at Goddard

“Change Leadership” matters now more than ever. Vermont communities are navigating a shifting landscape – from college closures to changes in federal funding to decisions about protecting the built environment from harm. This panel brings together skilled change leaders to help participants understand how to prepare and what it takes to support people through challenging times.

N1 Community Project Help Desk with Old Chapel Great Hall
Resource Providers

RESOURCE PROVIDERS:

- Nicole Gratton, Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Sarah Kearns, Vermont Small Business Development Center
- Elisabeth Nance, Agency of Commerce & Community Development
- Devon Neary, Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- Karen Scott, Vermont Community Foundation
- Jules Shackman, Vermont Economic Development Authority
- Laura Sibilia, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp

A networking opportunity to share your community project/initiative/idea with peers and resource providers and ask for advice, resources, and strategies to move forward. Talk directly to a resource or technical assistance provider about legal compliance, accessibility, outreach strategies, funding stacks, etc. for municipalities, nonprofits, and volunteer community groups.

4:00 Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream Party!..... Fine Arts Center
Free ice cream, with dairy free and gluten free options

Acknowledgements

Outreach Sponsors

- Action Circles
- Addison County Economic Development Corporation
- Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions
- Capstone Community Action
- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce
- Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region
- Chittenden County Community Justice Center
- Common Good Vermont
- Community Resilience Organizations (CROs)
- Energy Action Network
- Governor's Institutes of Vermont
- Jen Hayslett Coaching & Consulting
- Lake Champlain Chamber (Leadership Champlain & Burlington Young Professionals)
- Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation
- Lamoille Chamber of Commerce / Lamoille Economic Development Corporation
- Leaves of Change VT
- Liberation Ecosystem Local Motion
- MENTOR Vermont
- NEK Collaborative
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – NOFA VT
- Our Hopeful Minds
- Outright Vermont
- Social Roots Studio
- The Snelling Center for Government
- Rutland Area NAACP
- Springfield Regional Development Corporation
- Two Rivers – Ottauquechee Regional Commission
- United Ways of Vermont / Vermont 211
- Urban & Community Forestry Program
- UVM Center for Rural Studies
- Vermont Agency of Education
- Vermont Association of Conservation Districts
- Vermont Commission on Women
- Vermont Community Development Program
- Vermont Community Loan Fund
- Vermont Department of Historic Preservation
- Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) – Leadership Program
- Vermont Green Building Network
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)
- Vermont Library Association
- Vermont School Boards Association
- Vermont Small Business Development Center
- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation – VSAC
- Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund
- Vermont Trails and Greenways Council
- Vermont Works for Women
- VT 250th Commission
- Windham Regional Planning Commission

Town Nominees

Alburgh: **Amanda Costello**
Alburgh: **Danielle James Choiniere**
Barnard: **Kassie Hull**
Bolton: **Dania Allowan**
Bradford: **Jean Carlan**
Brattleboro: **Nell Mayo**
Burlington: **Nicole Losch**
Calais: **Jamie Moorby**
Charlotte: **Rachel Moyer**
Corinth: **Patrick Martin**
Danville: **Chelsea Hewitt**
Essex: **Karen Adams and Kent Johnson**
Fayston: **Madison Vasseur**
Franklin: **Jay Hartman**
Georgia: **Doug Bergstrom**
Glover: **Tabitha Armstrong**
Grafton: **Clayton Thompson**
Grand Isle: **Ellen Howrigan**
Guilford: **Jeannette Tokarz**
Hartford: **Gail Ostrout**
Johnson: **John Sutherland**
Lunenburg: **Kathryn Baxter**
Mendon: **Sara Tully**

Middlesex: **Brigid Browning**
Monkton: **Adrienne Raphael**
Montpelier: **John Odom**
Morristown: **Maggie Cleary**
Northfield: **Mary Smith**
Norwich: **Emily Myers**
Orwell: **Andrea Treadway**
Pittsford: **Alicia Malay**
Plainfield: **Jaime Hammack**
Ripton: **Bill Hunsinger**
Royalton: **Ryan Britch**
Rutland: **Barbara Noyes Pulling**
Sharon: **Troi Perkins**
Sheffield: **Erik Lavallee**
Shoreham: **Greg Borah**
South Burlington: **Maddi Sousa**
Tinmouth: **Judy Gilmore**
Topsham: **Megan Clark**
Waltham: **Darcy Tarte**
Waterbury: **Graci Zeiger**
West Haven: **Kerry Ellis**
Westfield: **Jacques Couture**
Wheelock: **Kim Crady-Smith**
Wilmington: **Sarah Kociela**

Volunteers

- Chris Callahan
- Julia Connell
- Jenn Hayslett
- Sarah Henshaw
- Joyce Judy
- Bill Lucci
- Julie Moore
- Sam Pierce
- Andy Robinson
- Liz Schlegel
- Steven D. Shaw
- Tracy Zschau

Acknowledgements

Summit Advisory Committee

Richard Amore, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
Shannon Barsotti, Bennington Community and Economic Dev. / VCRD Board
Susan Clark, Community Engagement Consultant
Summer Colley, UVM Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships
Julia Connell, Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development
Susan Evans McClure, Vermont Arts Council
Jenn Hayslett, Leadership & Fundraising Consultant
Sarah Henshaw, LeARN Long Term Recovery Group
Heather Holter, Roxbury Selectboard & School
Dana Kaplan, Outright Vermont
Sarah Launderville, Vermont Center for Independent Living
Abby Pelton, Windham - School Closure
Haley Pero, Vermont Community Foundation
Andy Robinson, Plainfield Selectboard, fundraising consultant
Dru Roessle, WEAV
Tino Rutanhira, Vermont Professionals of Color Network
Liz Schlegel, Alchemist Foundation
Mia Schultz, NAACP - Rutland Area Branch
Chad Simmons, Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont
Brianne Smith, Vermont Afterschool Youth Engagement Coordinator
Dave Snedecker, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
Lindsey St Amour, Laura Cushman, and Ian Horn, Disability Rights Vermont
Shalini Suryanarayana, Office of Racial Equity
Kayla Veilleux, Young Professionals Network
Tracy Zschau, Vermont Land Trust

The 6th Vermont Community Leadership Summit is produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development. From local, citizen-led efforts to policy councils that build collaboration between state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector leaders, VCRD brings Vermonters together across political lines and organizational boundaries to create a better future.



Vermont Council on Rural Development
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One word that describes a successful community leader



2026 VERMONT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

FINANCIAL SPONSORS

DIAMOND

PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



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 Building Community. Inspiring Action.

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