

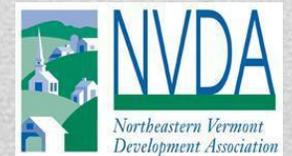
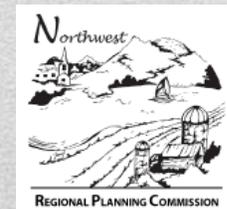
*NVEDD: Creating a thriving, resilient region through a diverse, sustainable economy*



## Northern Vermont Economic Development District

### *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021 -2025*

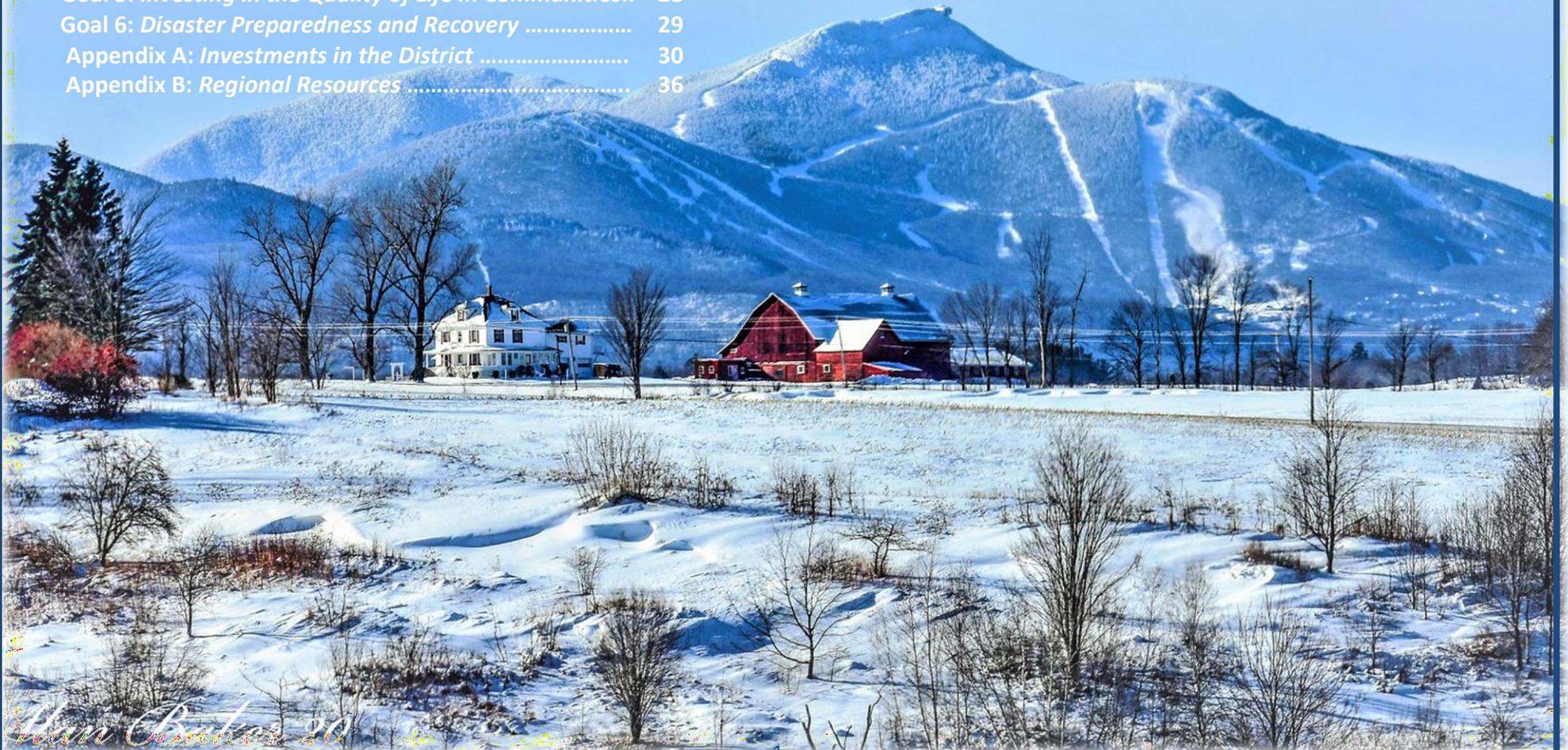
*NVEDD is a partnership between the Regional Planning Commissions  
and Economic Development Corporations of Northern Vermont*



**Approved by the NVEDD  
Board of Directors  
APPROVED 2/1/22**

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## VISION

Northern Vermont will be a thriving, resilient region with a diverse, sustainable economy.

## MISSION

The Northern Vermont Economic Development District exists to provide opportunities for region-wide development efforts for economic prosperity, sustainability and resilience.

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## The Economic Development District



The Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD) is comprised of the six counties along the northernmost border of Vermont: Grand Isle, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, Caledonia and Essex. NVEDD is a partnership between the Regional Planning Commissions and Economic Development Corporations of Northern Vermont.

An Economic Development District is a federally designated organization that leads a locally-based, regionally-driven, economic development planning process. This process leverages the involvement of public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic roadmap for regional collaboration leading to successful, diversified and sustainable economic development.

This roadmap, known as a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), is designed to engage individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry to collaborate in the economic development of their region by integrating or leveraging other regional planning efforts, as well as the use of available federal funds, private sector resources, and state support to achieve development goals. The CEDS outlines goals, strategies, and action items, and provides baseline data and resources to guide communities on strengthening existing key businesses while continuing to search for and capitalize on new opportunities for growth to increase economic prosperity and resiliency in their district.

## The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

In 2016 the Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD) adopted its first *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*. Based on current demographic and business data, as well as on an analysis of the region using the S.W.O.T. framework (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), the plan identified five interconnected goals

needed to achieve economic prosperity in Northern Vermont. Each goal was accompanied by a range of action items intended to help achieve the goal. A list of measurable indicators was provided to evaluate the impact of those strategies.

As the S.W.O.T. analysis and demographic profile of the region demonstrate, achieving economic prosperity and resilience in Northern Vermont requires improving the income demographic through the creation of jobs that pay livable, equitable wages (business growth). This in turn means creating an environment to support business expansion and recruitment (infrastructure improvement), preparing a capable workforce for these opportunities (workforce development), and promoting the lifestyle opportunities and unique characteristics that make Northern Vermont communities attractive, affordable, vibrant places to live, work, and play (quality of life).

These results were formalized into five goals of the 2016 CEDS as a roadmap toward achieving economic prosperity and resiliency in Northern Vermont

- Goal 1: Build Economic Resilience in the Northern Vermont region
- Goal 2: Cultivate Business Growth;
- Goal 3: Improve and Expand Infrastructure;
- Goal 4: Develop the Workforce and
- Goal 5: Promote Quality of Life in Communities.

The Northern Vermont Economic Development District's *2021-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* will continue to build on the success of its first 5-year CEDS plan by implementing proposed local strategies to support the achievement of the original five district goals.

In addition, given the increase in the number of disaster declarations in Vermont over the past 5 years, including the rapid and devastating emergence of the Covid-19 global pandemic and the magnitude of its impact on communities and the economy, a sixth goal has been added to the NVEDD *2021 CEDS*

- Goal 6: Disaster Recovery

This goal will address recovery strategies and resources for economic disasters which affect the physical, cultural and/or economic health of communities in the Northern Vermont district.

# Regional Overview

Across the district, there are encouraging new trends to support economic growth. These activities are rooted in the district's natural resources, agriculture, local culture and historical traditions.

## OUTDOOR RECREATION SECTOR

The district has adopted a strong focus on building the outdoor recreation economy, a statewide initiative that leverages local outdoor recreational assets to increase visitor traffic to the region, increase consumer spending, create new jobs, promote healthier



communities, and strengthen the stewardship and management of land and water resources that are the foundation of the outdoor recreation economy and the cornerstone of the state's identity. In Orleans County, work was completed on a multiphase four-season non-motorized recreation path that connects Newport's designated downtown to the Canadian border over a seven-mile recreation corridor along the waterfront. Meanwhile, the

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail continues its expansion, passing through 18 communities in three counties (Caledonia, Lamoille and Franklin) from St. Johnsbury to Swanton. When complete, the trail will span the breadth of Northern Vermont from the Connecticut River to within two miles of Lake Champlain. At 93-miles long, it will claim the distinction of being New England's longest rail trail.



*Work in progress on the Prouty Beach Connector Trail, which was completed and dedicated in the fall of 2021, and connects the seven-mile recreation corridor between downtown Newport and the Canadian border.*

## AGRICULTURAL SECTOR



In the agricultural sector, innovative programs are being implemented to strengthen the ties between communities and local farms and foods. In the Northwest corner of the district, the Healthy Roots Collaborative (HRC) is a regional food systems program that supports growers, producers, and consumers in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. Healthy Roots provides programs and services for both consumers and producers that focus on food education, access and infrastructure. From gleaning quality vegetables and fruits from farms to redistribute to

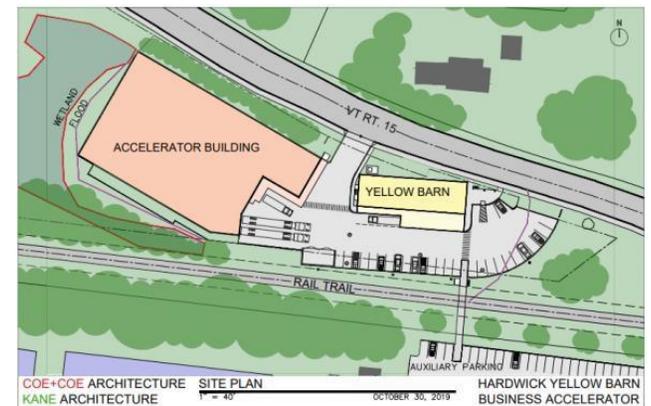
charitable food sites, to strengthening food and farm education in the classrooms through the Farm to School program, to maintaining a network of more than 160 growers and makers to source local food in markets, cafeterias and restaurants, to offering food and farm business support, and hosting tasting events for growers, makers and buyers, HRC's goal is to support a strong agricultural economy through thriving farms that connect with communities in Northwestern Vermont.

Ongoing development of specialty foods and the culinary arts through the farm-to-plate strategy are creating new products and new markets for both established and new business growth. Vermont brands like Eden Ice Cider, which produces high quality, boutique wines from traditional and heirloom varieties of apples (100% of which are produced in Vermont), and Jasper Hill Farm, producers of artisan cheeses at their onsite creamery, received national acclaim in recent years, drawing attention to products unique to the district.



In the Northeast corner of the district, history merges with the future through a state-of-the-art facility that combines one of Hardwick's historic structures with a new business accelerator campus for the farm-and-food-based economy. The Yellow Barn Business Accelerator & Corporate Campus (aka "Yellow Barn"), consists of a two-story, 40,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose processing facility and an innovative adaptive reuse of the historic 3,400 sq. ft. yellow barn — an iconic structure along the Route 15 gateway to downtown Hardwick.

The "Yellow Barn" will strengthen Vermont's farm- and food-based economy by allowing multiple establishments to grow and expand with other entrepreneurs, develop new products, and improve export to external markets. Adjacent to the Yellow Barn is the Vermont Food Venture Center, a shared-use food hub and business incubator designed to support emerging food entrepreneurs and farmers seeking to create and grow their business. The Yellow Barn campus offers the ideal next step for these emerging businesses to grow and expand. The Yellow Barn campus is also adjacent to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, ensuring high visibility and market penetration to accelerator tenants.



## CREATIVE SECTOR



Along with the outdoor natural resources and agricultural traditions and innovations, Northern Vermont has a deep and rich heritage of craftsmanship and artistic expression — whether through woodworking, metalwork, textile and fiber work, or in the performing arts of dance and music, or in the fine arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, and film. These creative activities have long been characterized as hobbies, sidelines or entertainment and their economic value has been poorly understood. The northeast region is beginning to quantify creative enterprises and



industries under the umbrella term of the creative economy to better understand the role and economic impact of creative activities on communities across the district and to design strategies to better support this economic sector.

## LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

Despite these positive trends, the district continues to face ongoing challenges that have a significant negative impact on current and future economic prosperity. Declining birthrates, youth flight and an aging population continue to drain the workforce population. Access to healthcare services in the district—for both physical and mental health—continues to lag significantly behind the state; not surprisingly, health outcomes are poorer in several counties of the district than those in counties with better health access. One of the greatest health threats to the region is increasing opioid use which is robbing communities across the district of their health, their workforce, their resources and their current and future prosperity.

## EMERGING CHALLENGES: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A new threat has emerged on the world stage as the Covid-19 virus, first identified in December 2019, has spread to infect over 3.5 million people across 187 countries, resulting in more than 247,000 deaths as of the writing of this document. In Vermont, there are 68,957 cases of confirmed Covid-19 infections with 480 deaths as of January 3, 2022. The virus is disproportionately lethal in those who are elderly and in those who have existing underlying health issues. The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, and it is contracted in one of three ways: by exposure during travel, by exposure to someone known to have the covid-19 virus, and by community spread. Community spread is the spread of a contagious disease to individuals in a particular geographic location who have no known contact with other infected individuals or who have not recently traveled to an area where the disease has any documented cases. In community spread cases, the source of infection is unknown.

Source: CDC and Vermont Department of Health

	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
US	53,795,407	820,355
Vermont	68,957	480
County	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Franklin	5,657	57
Lamoille	2,324	11
Caledonia	3,317	21
Orleans	3,924	31
Grand Isle	587	3
Essex	888	3



Vermont is experiencing community spread of COVID-19. On March 13, 2020, Vermont’s Governor Phil Scott declared a state of emergency, which ended on June 16, 2021, to help ensure that Vermont has all the necessary resources to respond to this evolving threat. Mitigation measures have been enacted to slow the community spread of Covid-19 in the state in order to protect those at greatest risk, ensure capacity at healthcare facilities and minimize the risk to the public. As of the writing of this document, these measures include the closure of schools through the end of the school year, the closure of in-person operations for all non-essential businesses, and the home quarantine of all residents and non- residents coming from outside the state for anything other than an essential purpose.

Nationwide, while these and similar measures have played an important and determining role in slowing the community spread of COVID-19, they have also created conditions for unprecedented levels of business closures and unemployment levels which are expected to hit double digits. Studies are finding that the impact is falling more heavily on lower-income adults who are less prepared to withstand a financial shock than those with higher incomes.

In general, rural economies are less diversified than urban economies, increasing the risk of widespread job loss if an industry goes under. Many of the rural counties in our district are reliant on recreation-based industries such as restaurants, bars, hotels, entertainment venues, and other hospitality venues, all of which were classified as non-essential businesses and closed or reduced in operations as part of the mitigation strategies to slow the community spread of Covid-19. Limitations on non-essential travel and the banning of public events has also served to further impact local economies dependent upon visitors to the area.

The impact of this particular economic disruptor will be felt across the district for some time and will amplify existing challenges already present in communities. The uncertainty of containment of the virus and the community spread mode of transmission make it likely that closures and limitations to businesses and limitations on physical, social and civic interactions may need to be implemented again as circumstances warrant. The 2021 – 2025 CEDS therefore has incorporated a 6<sup>th</sup> goal of disaster recovery to implement strategies to aid in short-term recovery needs of the district, as well as for long-term planning and preparation needs for economic disruptors of the future.

# REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

## THE NVEDD REGION AT A GLANCE

### POPULATION



145,192

Population

3.4%

Unemployment Rate



2.4

Average Household Size

43.4

Median Age

### INCOME & WEALTH CHARACTERISTICS



\$52,684

Median Household Income



\$28,940

Per Capita Income



\$114,227

Median Net Worth

#### HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME

Largest Group \$50,000 - \$74,000 (19.1%)  
Smallest Group \$150,000 - \$200,000+ (7.4%)

INDICATOR	VALUE
<\$15,000	11.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	11.4%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	10.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,000	13.4%
\$50,000 - \$74,000	19.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,000	13.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	13.2%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	3.7%
\$200,000+	3.7%

### BUSINESS



63,202

Total Employees



6,430

Total Businesses

10%

No High School Diploma

### EDUCATION



35%  
High School Graduate



27%  
Some College



29%  
Bachelor's/  
Graduate/  
Professional Degree

### EMPLOYMENT



57%

White Collar



26%

Blue Collar



17.7%  
Services

# Regional Data & Trends

## POPULATION

The Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD), bordered by the state of New York to the west, the state of New Hampshire to the east and the province of Quebec to the north, is home to 144,595 people. This represents an aggregate decrease in population of 1.9% since the 2016 CEDS population number of 148,000 people (2015). However, this decline does not represent the whole story of the region. Viewing the population statistics of the six counties individually reveals that the loss in population is occurring in the three northeastern counties of the district: Caledonia (-4.0%), Essex (-2.3%) and Orleans (-.7%) while there are encouraging signs of population growth in the three northwestern counties of the district: Franklin (+3.4%), Lamoille (+3.6%) and Grand Isle (+3.8%).

One clearly emerging trend in the district statistics is the increasing age of its population. Vermont has one of the oldest populations in the nation and the cohort of individuals 65 years and older is the fastest growing cohort, increasing at the rate of 3.6% per year, or an average of 3,684 people per year entering the 65+ year age cohort.

The three counties where there is population loss also have the highest percentages of people over the age of 65: Caledonia (21%), Essex (25.6%) and Orleans (22.7%) whereas the three counties showing population growth have significantly lower percentages of people over the age of 65: Franklin (16%), Lamoille 17.4%) and Grand Isle (20.8%).

	Population	Median Age (years)	% Population Age 65+
United States	327,167,439	38.2	16.0%
Vermont	623,657	42.8	19.8%
Caledonia	30,164	43.7	21.0%
Essex	6,230	50.0	25.6%
Franklin	49,025	39.9	16.0%
Grand Isle	6,998	48.1	20.8%
Lamoille	25,337	40.5	17.4%
Orleans	26,841	45.4	22.7%

The declining population growth in the region coupled with higher proportions of an aging population combine to create challenges for the region's workforce, healthcare systems, educational institutions, housing stock, and disaster recovery, while population growth in western part of District creates demand for new infrastructure.

## WAGES & PER CAPITA INCOME

The average annual wage in Vermont rose to \$47,635 in 2018, an increase of 3.1% over 2017 levels. In the district, wages continue to be highest in Franklin County, where the average annual wage of \$47,601 reflects the statewide average. The other counties are significantly lower than the state average with the lowest average annual wages in Orleans (\$37,611), Essex (\$37,345), and Grand Isle (\$35,739) counties.

	AVERAGE WAGE	PER CAPITA INCOME
Vermont	\$47,635	\$52,225
Franklin	\$47,601	\$44,320
Caledonia	\$40,903	\$39,977
Lamoille	\$40,151	\$51,558
Orleans	\$37,611	\$42,350
Essex	\$37,345	\$34,997
Grand Isle	\$35,739	\$57,258

Per capita income is a broader measure of financial well-being and tells a somewhat different story about the district. Vermont's per capita income stood at \$52,225 in 2017, a 4.5% increase from 2016. However, at \$57,258 Grand Isle County, which records the lowest average annual wage of \$35,739, significantly exceeds the per capita income of the state. At \$44,320 Franklin County's per capita income is significantly lower than the state per capita income despite having almost identical average annual wages. Essex County fares the worst across the district, with a per capita income of \$34,997.

## UNEMPLOYMENT & POVERTY

The state of Vermont continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, with the 2018 annual average rate of 2.7% noted as the lowest annual rate for the state in decades. Across the district, with the exception of Franklin County's rate of 2.5%, the remaining counties continue to have unemployment rates higher than the state's average rate of 2.7%: Grand Isle (3.2%), Caledonia (3.3%), Lamoille (3.5%) Essex (3.6%) and Orleans with a significantly higher unemployment rate of 4.4%.

	POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	POVERTY RATE
Vermont	623,657	2.7%	10.8%
Caledonia	30,164	3.3%	15.0%
Essex	6,230	3.6%	14.6%
Franklin	49,025	2.5%	8.9%
Grand Isle	6,998	3.2%	8.2%
Lamoille	25,337	3.5%	11.8%
Orleans	26,841	4.4%	15.2%

Vermont's poverty rate is 10.8% with the highest poverty rates in the District's northeast counties of Orleans (15.2%), Caledonia (15.0%) and Essex (14.6%). Both Franklin (8.9%) and Grand Isle (8.2%) are significantly lower than the state average with Lamoille County (11.8%) slightly higher than the state average.

## INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT

In FY2019 the NVEDD region contained just over 6,300 businesses employing 72,240 people.

by NAICS Codes	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	180	2.70%	949	1.50%
Utilities	26	0.40%	238	0.40%
Construction	554	8.50%	2,950	4.70%
Manufacturing	238	3.60%	5,556	8.80%
Wholesale Trade	231	3.50%	1,780	2.80%
Retail Trade	1,018	15.50%	8,050	12.70%
Transportation & Warehousing	215	3.30%	1,429	2.30%
Information	143	2.20%	1,014	1.60%
Finance & Insurance	190	2.90%	1,172	1.80%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	369	5.60%	2,228	3.50%
Educational Services	218	3.30%	6,913	10.90%
Health Care & Social Assistance	491	7.50%	8,070	12.70%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	147	2.20%	919	1.40%
Accommodation & Food Services	481	7.30%	11,276	17.80%
Accommodation	182	2.80%	7,704	12.20%
Food Services & Drinking Places	299	4.60%	3,572	5.60%
Other Services (except Public Admin)	842	12.80%	3,373	5.30%
Public Administration	501	7.60%	5,047	8.00%

Between 2010 and 2018 Vermont saw an increase in employment of 5.8%. During this time period, all counties in the NVEDD region reported job gains. The largest percent increases were in Orleans County, where the number of jobs increased by 1,304 (13.4%), and Lamoille County where the number of jobs increased by 1,349 (12.7%). Counties that saw a decline in jobs over the period include Essex County with a loss of 43 jobs (- 3.8%) and Caledonia County with a loss of 279 jobs (- 2.5%).

### Largest number of business establishments:

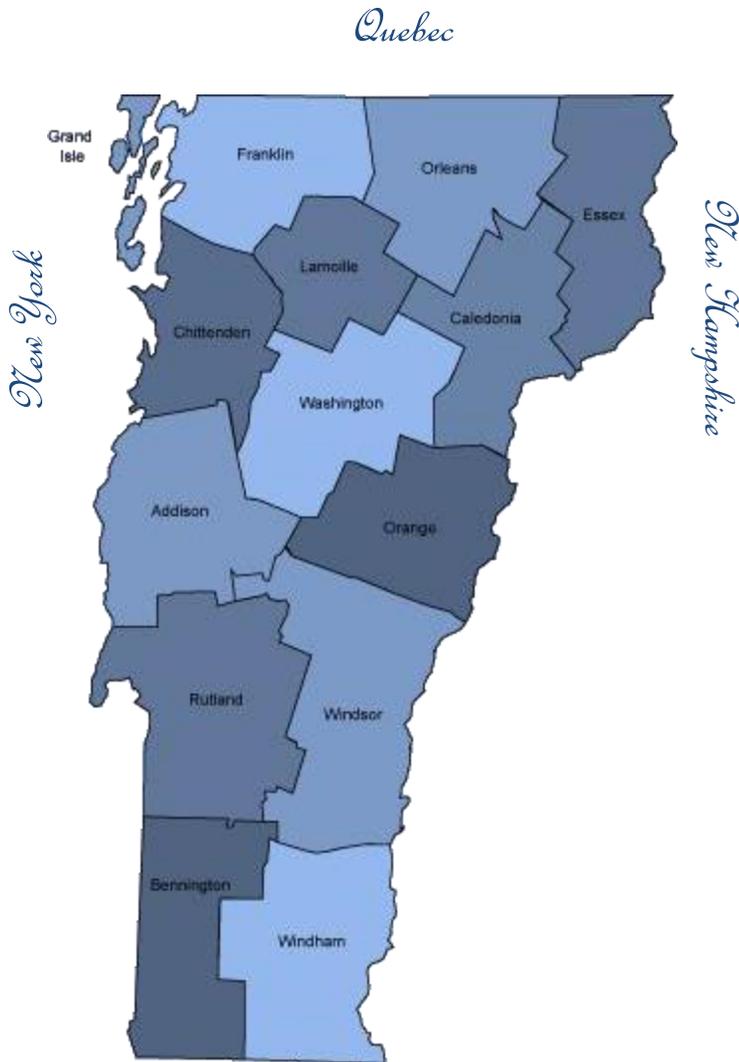
- Retail trade (1,018)
- Services (except public admin) (842)
- Construction (554)
- Public administration (501)
- Health care/social assistance (491)
- Accommodation & food/drinking services (481)

### Businesses with largest number of employees:

- Accommodation & food/drinking services (11,276)
- Health care/social assistance (8,070)
- Retail trade (8,050)
- Educational services (6,913)
- Manufacturing (5,556)
- Public administration (5,047)

## EMPLOYMENT COMMUTING PATTERNS

A *commuting flow* is generated when information about workers' residence location and workplace location are coupled. The origin-destination flow format informs our understanding of the interchange of people, goods, and services, as well as the interconnectedness between communities. The flow of workers between where they live and where they work is helpful in assessing transportation issues and options. It is also helpful for establishing a geographic range of potential employment locations among households in the district.



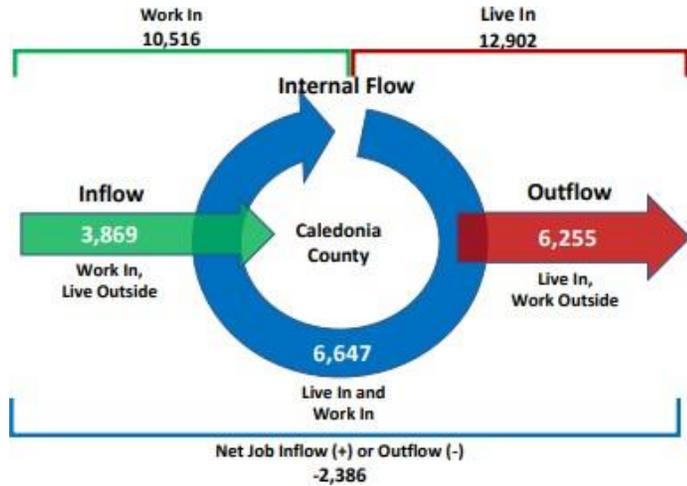
The commuting flow also highlights a persistent economic challenge of rural life: that while housing may be more affordable in smaller communities, employment that pays a livable wage often involves traveling long distances from those communities to work.

The primary mode of transportation across the district is by automobile. Aside from the impact on the environment, long commutes by automobile incur increased costs for vehicle maintenance needs and fuel prices. For rural families, these transportation costs can be a major expense.

COUNTY	MEAN COMMUTE TIME (MINUTES)
Grand Isle	34.1
Essex	26.7
Lamoille	25.2
Caledonia	24.9
Franklin	24.7
Orleans	24.3

The following tables track the commuting patterns in each of the counties across the northern Vermont economic development district. With the exception of Lamoille County, all counties in the district demonstrate a significant job outflow. Combined, the outflow equals 13,812 workers who leave the counties in which they reside and travel a minimum mean commute time of 24.3 minutes to the county in which they are employed. This represents 19.1% of the district's employed population.

## CALEDONIA COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERN



Caledonia County		2015	
	Count		
Work in county	10,516		
Live in county	12,902		
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-2,386		
<b>Work In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Work in county	10,516	100.0%	
Work in and Live in county	6,647	63.2%	
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)	3,869	36.8%	
<b>Live In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Live in county	12,902	100.0%	
Live in and Work in county	6,647	51.5%	
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)	6,255	48.5%	

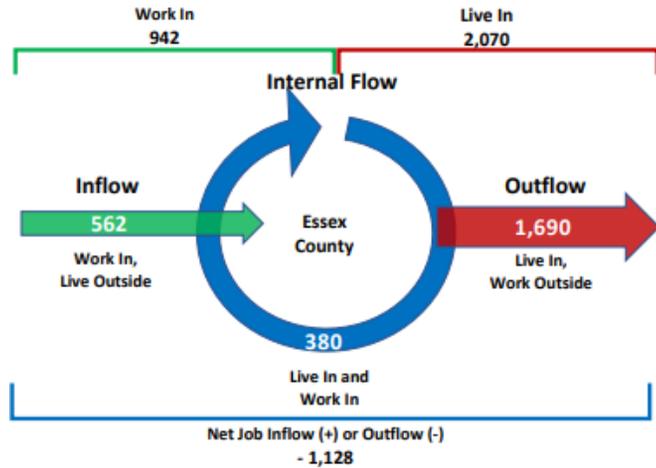
Work in Caledonia County and Live In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Work in Caledonia County</b>	10,516	100.0%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Live</b>		
Caledonia County, VT	6,647	63.2%
Orleans County, VT	772	7.3%
Washington County, VT	498	4.7%
Essex County, VT	429	4.1%
Grafton County, NH	340	3.2%
Chittenden County, VT	314	3.0%
Lamoille County, VT	312	3.0%
Coos County, NH	135	1.3%
Rutland County, VT	121	1.2%
Windsor County, VT	98	0.9%
All other locations	850	8.1%
<b>Live in Caledonia County and Work In or Outside</b>		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Live in Caledonia County</b>		
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Work</b>		
Caledonia County, VT	6,647	51.5%
Washington County, VT	1,003	7.8%
Orleans County, VT	866	6.7%
Grafton County, NH	773	6.0%
Chittenden County, VT	769	6.0%
Lamoille County, VT	578	4.5%
Windsor County, VT	493	3.8%
Orange County	400	3.1%
Franklin County, VT	206	1.6%
Essex County, VT	181	1.4%
All other locations	986	7.6%

Caledonia County has a workforce of 12,902 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 6,647 (51.5%) workers also work in the county leaving 6,255 (48.5%) workers who work outside of the county. The locations of workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Washington County (1,003, 7.8%), Orleans County (866, 6.7%), Grafton County, NH (773, 6.0%) and Chittenden County (769, 6.0%).

Caledonia County has a workforce of 10,516 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 6,647 (63.2%) workers also live in the county leaving 3,869 (36.8%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Orleans County (772, 7.3%), Washington County (498, 4.7%), Essex County (429, 4.1%) and Grafton County, NH (340, 3.2%).

Caledonia County has a net job outflow of -2,386 workers.

## ESSEX COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERN



Essex County		2015	
	Count		
Work in county	942		
Live in county	2,070		
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-1,128		
Work In			
	Count	Share	
Work in county	942	100.0%	
Work in and Live in county	380	40.3%	
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)	562	59.7%	
Live In			
	Count	Share	
Live in county	2,070	100.0%	
Live in and Work in county	380	18.4%	
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)	1,690	81.6%	

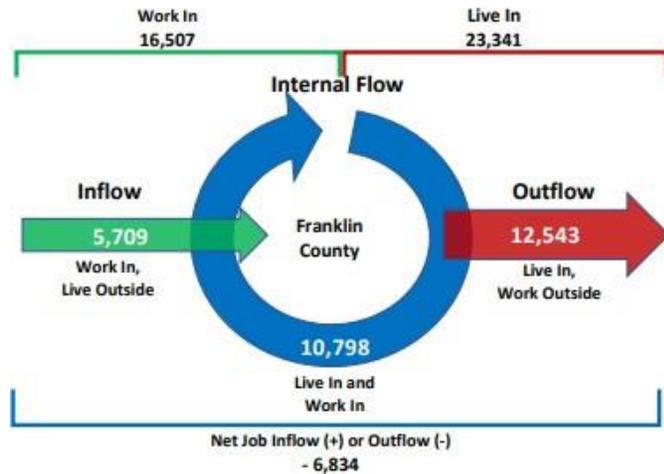
Work in Essex County and Live In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Work in Essex County</b>	942	100.0%
Top 10 counties Where they Live		
Essex County, VT	380	40.3
Caledonia County, VT	181	19.2%
Coos County, NH	178	18.9%
Orleans County, VT	71	7.5%
Washington County, VT	29	3.1%
Grafton County, NH	27	2.9%
Oxford County, ME	12	1.3%
Chittenden County, VT	9	1.0%
Lamoille County, VT	8	0.8%
Merrimack County, NH	5	0.5%
All other locations	42	4.5%
Live in Essex County and Work In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Live in Essex County</b>	2,070	100%
Top 10 counties Where they Work		
Caledonia County, VT	429	20.7%
Essex County, VT	380	18.4%
Coos County, NH	356	17.2%
Orleans County, VT	223	10.8%
Grafton County, NH	217	10.5%
Chittenden County, VT	100	4.8%
Windsor County, VT	73	3.5%
Washington County, VT	62	3.0%
Franklin County, VT	31	1.5%
Lamoille County, VT	28	1.4%
All other locations	171	8.3%

Essex County has a workforce of 2,070 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 380 (18.4%) workers also work in the county leaving 1,690 (81.6%) workers who work outside of the county. The top locations where workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Caledonia County (429, 20.7%), Coos County, NH (356, 17.2%), Orleans County (223, 10.8%) and Grafton County, NH (217, 10.5%).

Essex County has a workforce of 942 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 380 (40.3%) workers also live in the county leaving 562 (59.7%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Caledonia County (181, 19.2%), Coos County, NH (178, 18.9%), Orleans County (71, 7.5%) and Washington County (29, 3.1%).

Essex County has a net job outflow of -1,128 workers.

## FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERN



Franklin County		2015	
	Count		
Work in county	16,507		
Live in county	23,341		
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-6,834		
<b>Work In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Work in county	16,507	100.0%	
Work in and Live in county	10,798	65.4%	
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)	5,709	34.6%	
<b>Live In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Live in county	23,341	100.0%	
Live in and Work in county	10,798	46.3%	
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)	12,543	53.7%	

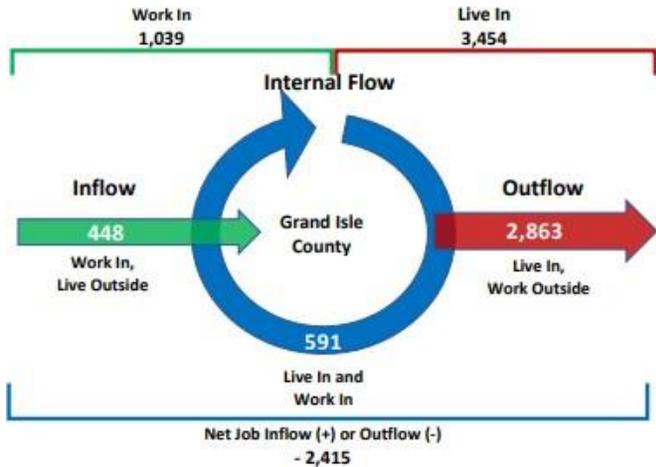
Work in Franklin County and Live In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Work in Franklin County</b>	16,507	100.0%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Live</b>		
Franklin County, VT	10,798	65.4%
Chittenden County, VT	2,418	14.6%
Washington County, VT	435	2.6%
Grand Isle County, VT	433	2.6%
Lamoille County, VT	362	2.2%
Clinton County, NY	330	2.0%
Orleans County, VT	244	1.5%
Rutland County, VT	215	1.3%
Caledonia County, VT	206	1.2%
Addison County, VT	148	0.9%
All other locations	918	5.6%
<b>Live in Franklin County and Work In or Outside</b>		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Live in Franklin County</b>	23,341	100%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Work</b>		
Franklin County, VT	10,798	46.3%
Chittenden County, VT	8,770	37.6%
Washington County, VT	625	2.7%
Lamoille County, VT	622	2.7%
Windsor County, VT	550	2.4%
Orleans County, VT	309	1.3%
Rutland County, VT	242	1.0%
Addison County, VT	226	1.0%
Clinton County, NY	144	0.6%
Bennington County, VT	104	0.4%
All other locations	951	4.1%

Franklin County has a workforce of 23,341 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 10,798 (46.3%) workers also work in the county leaving 12,543 (53.7%) workers who work outside of the county. The top locations where workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Chittenden County (8,770, 37.6%), Washington County (625, 2.7%), Lamoille County (622, 2.7%) and Windsor County (550, 2.4%).

Franklin County has a workforce of 16,507 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 10,798 (65.4%) workers also live in the county leaving 5,709 (34.6%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Chittenden County (2,418, 14.6%), Washington, County (435, 2.6%), Grand Isle County (433, 2.6%) and Lamoille County (362, 2.2%).

Franklin County has a net job outflow of -6,834 workers.

## GRAND ISLE COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERN



Grand Isle County Labor Market		2015	
		<b>Count</b>	
Work in county		1,039	
Live in county		3,454	
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)		-2,415	
<b>Work In</b>			
		<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Work in county		1,039	100.0%
Work in and Live in county		591	56.9%
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)		448	43.1%
<b>Live In</b>			
		<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
Live in county		3,454	100.0%
Live in and Work in county		591	17.1%
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)		2,863	82.9%

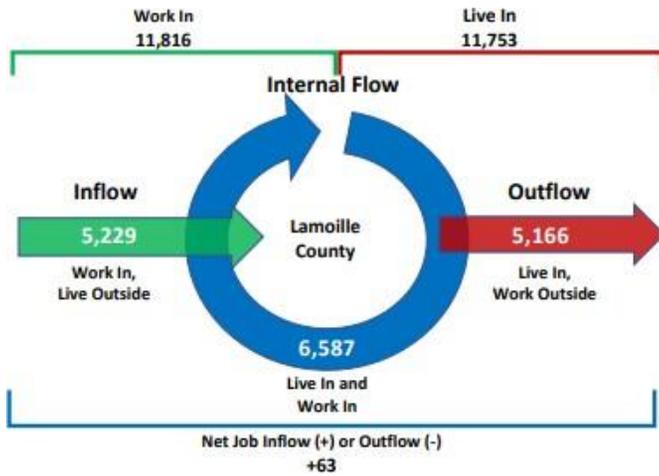
Work in Grand Isle County and Live In or Outside		
	2015	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
<b>Work in Grand Isle County</b>	1,039	100.0%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Live</b>		
Grand Isle County, VT	591	56.9%
Chittenden County, VT	195	18.8%
Franklin County, VT	93	9.0%
Clinton County, NY	38	3.7%
Washington County, VT	23	2.2%
Lamoille County, VT	14	1.3%
Caledonia County, VT	11	1.1%
Orleans County, VT	10	1.0%
Rutland County, VT	8	0.8%
Essex County, NY	6	0.6%
All other locations	50	4.8%
<b>Live in Grand Isle County and Work In or Outside</b>		
	2015	
	<b>Count</b>	<b>Share</b>
<b>Live in Grand Isle County</b>	3,454	100%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Work</b>		
Chittenden County, VT	1,853	53.6%
Grand Isle County, VT	591	17.1%
Franklin County, VT	433	12.5%
Washington County, VT	113	3.3%
Clinton County, NY	87	2.5%
Windsor County, VT	83	2.4%
Lamoille County, VT	51	1.5%
Addison County, VT	41	1.2%
Rutland County, VT	41	1.2%
Bennington County, VT	16	0.5%
All other locations	145	4.2%

Grand Isle County has a workforce of 3,454 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 591 (17.1%) workers also work in the county leaving 2,863 (82.9%) workers who work outside of the county. The top locations where workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Chittenden County (1,853, 53.6%), Franklin County (433, 12.5%) Washington County (113, 3.3%), and Clinton County, NY (87, 2.5%).

Grand Isle County has a workforce of 1,039 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 591 (56.9%) workers also live in the county leaving 448 (43.1%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Chittenden County (195, 18.8%), Franklin County (93, 9.0%), Clinton County, NY (38, 3.7%) and Washington County (23, 2.2%).

Grand Isle County has a net job outflow of -2,415 workers.

## LAMOILLE COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERNS



Lamoille County Labor Market		2015	
	Count		
Work in county	11,816		
Live in county	11,753		
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	63		
Work In			
	Count	Share	
Work in county	11,816	100.0%	
Work in and Live in county	6,587	55.7%	
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)	5,229	44.3%	
Live In			
	Count	Share	
Live in county	11,753	100.0%	
Live in and Work in county	6,587	56.0%	
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)	5,166	44.0%	

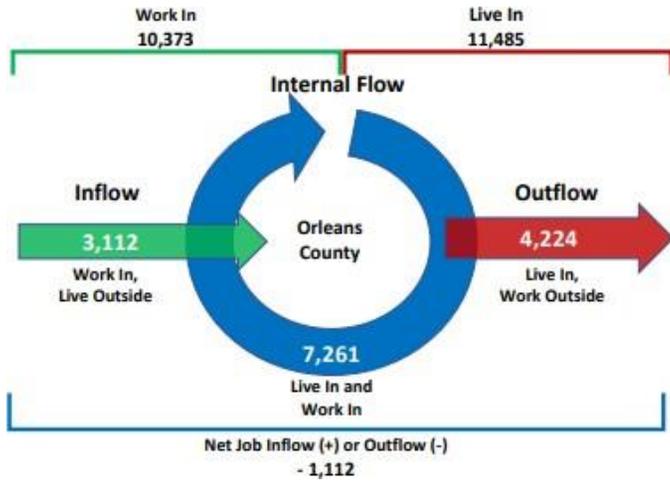
Work in Lamoille County and Live In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
Work in Lamoille County	11,816	100.0%
Top 10 counties Where they Live		
Lamoille County, VT	6,587	100.0%
Chittenden County, VT	1,314	11.1%
Washington County, VT	1,107	9.4%
Franklin County, VT	622	5.3%
Caledonia County, VT	578	4.9%
Orleans County, VT	561	4.7%
Rutland County, VT	102	0.9%
Windsor County, VT	78	0.7%
Addison County, VT	62	0.5%
Grafton County, NH	57	0.5%
All other locations	748	6.3%
Live in Lamoille County and Work In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
Live in Lamoille County	11,753	100%
Top 10 counties Where they Work		
Lamoille County, VT	6,587	56.0%
Chittenden County, VT	2,156	18.3%
Washington County, VT	870	7.4%
Franklin County, VT	362	3.1%
Caledonia County, VT	312	2.7%
Windsor County, VT	279	2.4%
Orleans County, VT	265	2.3%
Orange County, VT	105	0.9%
Rutland County, VT	102	0.9%
Grafton County, NH	96	0.8%
All other locations	619	5.3%

Lamoille County has a workforce of 11,753 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 6,587 (56.0%) workers also work in the county leaving 5,166 (44.0%) workers who work outside of the county. The top locations where workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Chittenden County (2,156, 18.3%), Washington County (870, 7.4%), Franklin County (362, 3.1%), and Caledonia County, VT (312, 2.7%).

Lamoille County has a workforce of 11,816 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 6,587 (55.7%) workers also live in the county leaving 5,229 (44.3%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Chittenden County (1,314, 11.1%), Washington County (1,107, 9.4%), Franklin County (622, 5.3%) and Caledonia County (578, 4.9%).

Lamoille County has a net job inflow of +63 workers.

## ORLEANS COUNTY COMMUTING PATTERNS



Orleans County Labor Market		2015	
	Count		
Work in county	10,373		
Live in county	11,485		
Net job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-1,112		
<b>Work In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Work in county	10,373	100.0%	
Work in and Live in county	7,261	70.0%	
Work in county but Live outside (Inflow)	3,112	30.0%	
<b>Live In</b>			
	Count	Share	
Live in county	11,485	100.0%	
Live in and Work in county	7,261	63.2%	
Live in and Work Outside (Outflow)	4,224	36.8%	

Work in Orleans County and Live In or Outside		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Work in Orleans County</b>	10,373	100.0%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Live</b>		
Orleans County, VT	7,261	70.0%
Caledonia County, VT	866	8.3%
Chittenden County, VT	310	3.0%
Franklin County, VT	309	3.0%
Lamoille County, VT	265	2.6%
Essex County, VT	223	2.1%
Washington County, VT	218	2.1%
Coos County, NH	124	1.2%
Grafton County, NH	85	0.8%
Windsor County, VT	67	0.6%
All other locations	645	6.2%
<b>Live in Orleans County and Work In or Outside</b>		
2015		
	Count	Share
<b>Live in Orleans County</b>	11,485	100%
<b>Top 10 counties Where they Work</b>		
Orleans County, VT	7,261	63.2%
Caledonia County, VT	772	6.7%
Chittenden County, VT	717	6.2%
Lamoille County, VT	561	4.9%
Washington County, VT	455	4.0%
Windsor County, VT	429	3.7%
Franklin County, VT	244	2.1%
Rutland County, VT	131	1.1%
Grafton County, NH	109	0.9%
Orange County, VT	74	0.6%
All other locations	732	6.4%

Orleans County has a workforce of 11,485 workers who live in the county. Of that number, 7,261 (63.2%) workers also work in the county leaving 4,222 (36.8%) workers who work outside of the county. The top locations where workers who live in the county but commute out of the county to work include: Caledonia County (772, 6.7%), Chittenden County (717, 6.2%), Lamoille County (561, 4.9%) and Washington County (455, 4.0%).

Orleans County has a workforce of 10,373 workers who work in the county. Of that number, 7,261 (70.0%) workers also live in the county leaving 3,112 (30.0%) workers who live outside of the county. The locations of workers who live outside of the county and commute into the county for work include: Caledonia County (866, 8.3%), Chittenden County (310, 3.0%), Franklin County (309, 3.0%), and Lamoille County (265, 2.6%).

Orleans County has a net job outflow of -1,112 workers.

# Regional S.W.O.T. Analysis

As part of the CEDS development process a S.W.O.T. analysis forms the basis for the five-year plan.

S.W.O.T. stands for

- Strengths: Internal factors that give the region a competitive advantage over regions.
- Weaknesses: Internal factors that place the region at a disadvantage relative to other regions.
- Opportunities: External factors that the region can capitalize on to its advantage.
- Threats: External factors that can create challenges for the region.

Drawn from data, community feedback, and business and municipal government input across the region, the S.W.O.T. Analysis provides a catalog of strengths and where opportunities may lie and identifies weaknesses and potential threats to the region. The S.W.O.T. helps to identify priorities for action and provides a baseline for measuring progress across the district.

### STRENGTHS

- Access to local, state, and federal leadership and resources
- Strong community partnerships & collaboration
- Diverse natural resources
- Four-season outdoor recreational opportunities
- Educational facilities
- Low crime rates and generally a safe place to live

### WEAKNESSES

- Aging population (impacts workforce and healthcare)
- Decline in population (lower birthrates, declining influx of new residents)
- Broadband–underserved in rural areas
- Lack of critical wastewater and water infrastructure in many rural villages
- Lack of diverse and affordable housing
- Lower wages than elsewhere in the state
- High rates of people commuting for work out of region
- Retention of post-secondary students
- Lack of diversity in communities

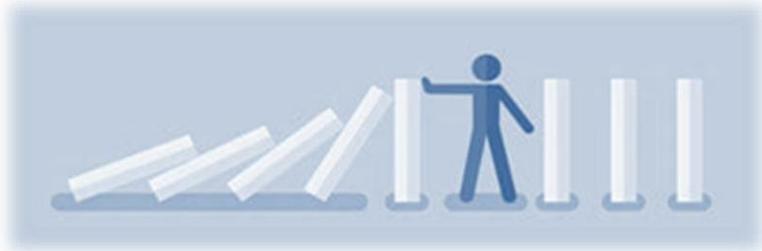
### OPPORTUNITIES

- Retaining youth population
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Increase collaboration between public-private partnerships
- Proximity to Canadian markets
- On-the-job training
- Develop partnership with local business and education
- Matching up of labor force and business
- Growth in small business development
- Drawing investments into Opportunity Zones
- Creating vibrant downtown centers
- Develop local talent and human capital with creative skills
- Capitalize on existing regional cultural assets
- Predicted resilience in face of climate change

### THREATS

- Higher wages near larger metropolitan areas
- Aging population
- Climate change (impact on agricultural sector/impact on natural disasters)
- Labor shortage
- Perception of the region
- Aging and inadequate infrastructure
- Outmigration – educated young adults move elsewhere
- Lack of diversity
- Poor access to healthcare
- Growing opioid misuse

## *GOAL 1: Building Economic Resilience*



Each year across the United States, communities experience disasters and major disruptions to their ways of life. Severe weather events such as floods, hurricanes, and violent storms; outbreaks of infectious or foodborne illnesses; financial collapses and the closures of major employers; the increasing threat of terrorist events. All of these events impact regions and local economies in ways that take a tremendous toll

on the financial, social and environmental resources of communities, businesses, and government entities.

While the human needs created by such disasters and disruptions require an immediate emergency response, recovery from such events requires a different strategy. Advance planning and organization help to anticipate risks, limit negative impacts of adverse events, and promote rapid recovery within a coherent framework of information, communication and strategies for intervention. (NADO 2015).

The goal of the NVEDD CEDS plan is to create resilient communities in order to reduce the vulnerability of the regional economy to crises of economic shifts, natural disasters, climate change, and other major disruptions or shocks to the region's economic base. Building resilience across the region will include development and use of both steady-state and responsive initiatives.

Steady-state initiatives are long-term planning and implementation efforts designed to bolster a community or region's ability to withstand or avoid a shock in order to promote the long-term economic durability of the region.

Responsive initiatives are efforts to establish the capabilities of NVEDD to be responsive to the region's recovery needs following an incident. This includes establishing information networks among various stakeholders in the region to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors. NVEDD can also serve as a source of information to deal with an economic challenge and be a convener of regional stakeholders to gather data and encourage collaboration in the post-disruption stage.

A strong regional economy is based on the strengths of its individual local communities. The goal is to create resilient communities in order to reduce the vulnerability of the region to crises of economic shifts, natural disasters, climate change, and other major disruptions or shocks to the region’s economic health. There are three elements involved in developing resiliency across the Northern Vermont region: systems, agents, and institutions.



**SYSTEMS**

Includes physical infrastructure, technical infrastructure, energy, communications, and ecosystems

Systems are the underlying processes needed to organize and operate community life. They include transportation, physical infrastructure, energy, communications, ecosystems, etc. Systems can be strongly affected by factors at multiple scales and at long distances.



**AGENTS**

Individuals, households, communities, businesses, government organizations, etc.

Agents, unlike systems, are capable of deliberation, independent analysis, voluntary interaction and strategic choice in the face of new information. Agents behave in ways that reflect their location and role within society (i.e. as businesses, individuals, government entities, households, etc.).



**INSTITUTIONS**

Rules and social conventions that guide interactions of agents with each other and access to systems

Institutions structure human behavior and exchange in social and economic interactions. They are created to reduce uncertainty, maintain continuity of social patterns and social order, and to stabilize forms of human interaction in predictable ways.

**For each element, building regional resilience means:**

**Strengthening systems**

- to reduce their vulnerability in the face of major disruptions (disasters, economic downturns, etc.);
- to reduce the risk of cascading failures;

**Building the capacities of social agents**

- to anticipate and develop adaptive responses;
- to access and maintain supportive systems;

**Addressing the institutional factors that**

- constrain effective responses to system vulnerabilities;
- undermine the ability of agents to take action;

**Sample steady-state and responsive initiatives:**

Ensuring redundancy in telecommunications and broadband networks to protect commerce and public safety in the event of natural or manmade disasters (steady-state initiative);

Undertake efforts to diversify industrial base by targeting development of emerging clusters or industries that

- build region’s unique assets & competitive strengths;
- and provide stability during downturns that disproportionately impact any single cluster or industry (steady-state initiative);

Establish information networks among the various stakeholders in the region to facilitate active and regular communications between the public, private, education and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges (responsive initiative);

**ACTIONS** to create resilient communities in order to reduce the vulnerability of the region include:

1. Community planning: encourage and facilitate Municipal Emergency Operations Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans, Protective Zoning (flood resilience).
2. Capacity building: train volunteers and establish volunteer networks.
3. Economic recovery: establish revolving loan funds, stabilization reserves, and facilitate access to state and federal programs.
4. Health and social services: increase adequate health care capacity and the availability of "tele" services.
5. Housing: town wide or region wide inventory, compliance with or establishment of housing codes.
6. Housing: establish revolving fund for rental assistance.
7. Infrastructure: preserve alternate water sources, explore mutual aid agreements for equipment, reliable electrical grid with redundancy.
8. Natural and cultural resources: establish volunteer corps for maintenance and operations.

**EVALUATION FRAMEWORK** to assess the impact of actions on building resiliency include:

- How often plans are reviewed, updated and adjusted.
- Number of volunteer groups.
- Amount of available funds, and accessibility to funds.
- Infrastructure for "tele" services.
- How often systems are tested, inventory of well-maintained municipal equipment, testing grid flexibility.
- Public awareness, volunteer work days/training.

## ***GOAL 2: Cultivating Business Growth***

While people are the heart of any community, businesses are its lifeblood. Businesses play a key role in all facets of life within rural communities, providing employment, services, and goods.

While there are many benefits to operating in their local communities, businesses in the more rural Northern Vermont District face barriers including accessing financing options, difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified workforce, geographic isolation from markets, inadequate broadband internet service, and challenges to accessing goods and services.

**ACTIONS** to cultivate, attract, and grow businesses and enhance economic competitiveness include:

1. Supporting the development of innovation-based industry clusters that create high-wage jobs.
2. Helping communities implement strategies that grow existing, locally-owned businesses and attract new companies.
3. Supporting the formation and growth of export-oriented businesses.
4. Supporting business attraction and retention efforts of local and regional economic development entities.
5. Supporting programs that encourage people of all ages to consider becoming entrepreneurs.
6. Supporting the development of entrepreneurship education.
7. Identifying resources that entrepreneurs and small businesses need to start and grow and help facilitate access to these tools.
8. Supporting efforts to improve access to capital for entrepreneurs.
9. Supporting efforts to improve awareness of, and access to, regional Small Business Development Centers.
10. Supporting promotion of and investment in Opportunity Zones across the region.

**EVALUATION FRAMEWORK** to assess the impact of actions on cultivating business growth include:

- Increase in number of full-time jobs created, as well as retained, in the region.
- Increase in amount of new private investment in the region.
- Increase in number of business formations and expansions in the region.
- Increase in number of new business start-ups assisted through regional SBDCs.
- Increase in number of banks in the region that are SBA lenders.

## ***GOAL 3: Improving and Expanding Infrastructure***

Northern Vermont communities require proactive and collaborative approaches/strategies to address infrastructure needs in a cost-effective manner. Managing the access to and maintenance, replacement, and growth of these assets are key to preserving and maintaining communities and providing for growth opportunities. Foundational assets include above-ground and below-ground infrastructure such as transportation, utilities, and water.

**ACTIONS** that promote comprehensive planning solutions to ensure that regional transportation and public infrastructure meet the needs of employers and citizens in the Northern Vermont region include:

1. Identifying funding at state/federal levels to develop/improve regional infrastructure including broadband and cellular service.
2. Supporting watershed initiatives that conserve open spaces, provide a network of improved ecosystem benefits, provide recreational opportunities and encourage efficient water use.
3. Supporting development of community/county land use, transportation and economic development plans.
4. Supporting municipal efforts to improve/add/remove infrastructure.
5. Supporting regional water quality initiatives to accommodate future growth.
6. Creating opportunities for cooperative buying across the region.
7. Offering capital budget training to municipalities.
8. Increasing the water and wastewater capacity available for new development in the District's villages, downtowns, and industrial/enterprise areas.
9. Where appropriate, upgrading municipal wastewater systems to treat increased loads of high-strength wastewater.

**EVALUATION FRAMEWORK** to assess the impact of actions on improving and expanding infrastructure include:

- Increasing the number of CDBG, EDA, and NBRC infrastructure grants awarded.
- Increasing the number of state and federal dollars spent on highways and bridges in region.
- Increasing the number of completed improvement projects at the local level. Villages/downtowns/industrial parks served by public water infrastructure.
- Increasing villages/downtowns/industrial parks served by public sewer/wastewater infrastructure.
- Increasing water/wastewater capacity in villages/downtowns available for future development.

## ***GOAL 4: Developing the Workforce***

As Northern Vermont grows its economy, it is confronted with the challenge of meeting the hiring and skill needs of employers. Developing, retaining, and attracting talent is critical to sustain and grow businesses and communities. Tracking the characteristics of the labor force and the needs of employers and creating strategies for alignment between the two are key strategies in addressing this need.

**ACTIONS** to develop a competitive skilled workforce in the Northern Vermont region include:

1. Conduct collaborative planning activities with regional partners to promote alignment of economic and workforce development goals, including emphasis on postsecondary education and skills training to support high-growth, high-wage jobs, including skilled trades.
2. Encourage and identify industry-led certification training programs to train existing and future workers for a more competitive economic environment.
3. Pursue funding opportunities with workforce partners to expand the availability of training programs for targeted industries and occupations.
4. Provide labor market information to education institutions so students can make informed choices about career options.
5. Partner with post-secondary institutions in the region to increase production of knowledge-based workers in science/technology sectors.
6. Partner with local industry, Workforce Solutions, union organizations/training programs, and post-secondary institutions, and Career and Technical Education Centers in the region to identify and provide a skilled-trade workforce.
7. Establish strategic partnerships, which include a combination of social services, community and faith-based organizations, and educational providers to ensure a successful support system is developed.

### **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

- Number of people receiving job training in the region.
- Number of post-secondary degrees awarded by regional colleges.
- Number of industry recognized credentials and licensures awarded.
- Number of students receiving information about careers in the region.
- Number of events providing workforce development services for employers and communities.
- Total job seekers educational achievement.
- Number of employer job openings filled.

## ***GOAL 5: Promoting the Quality of Life in Communities***

Northern Vermont has unique characteristics that define and support the quality of life for people living and working in the region. It is therefore important to balance the preservation of the heritage, social and cultural values, and the natural assets of the region with the necessary development and improvements that are critical for the growth and health of the communities. Housing, job creation, business retention, lifestyle options as well as conservation and use of natural assets all play a role in promoting and supporting the quality of life across the region.

**ACTIONS** to promote the quality of life through inclusive community development in the Northern Vermont region include:

1. Determine housing needs in the Northern Vermont region across a range of income levels.
2. Integrate economic development and job creation with workforce housing development, including housing within walking distance of job growth locations.
3. Encourage development of housing for seniors and persons with disabilities.
4. Encourage communities to apply for designated downtown/village center status to support community revitalization.
5. Promote infill and redevelopment to enhance the region's downtowns as one of the priorities for business development.
6. Support collaborations between local organizations to promote healthy lifestyles by expanding outdoor recreational opportunities, exercise programs, and healthy food options, etc.
7. Encourage the establishment of diversified attractions that expand the tourism and recreation opportunities.
8. Promote and market local community events, amenities, and assets to people outside of the geographic region.
9. Encourage the promotion of the arts and cultural opportunities.
10. Encourage community and regional planning that address all aspects of natural resource protection, preservation, and restoration.
11. Conserve natural amenities by incorporating them into the local/regional development plan as open spaces, buffers, or common areas.

### **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

- Number and type of housing units added to region.
- Number of new parks/recreation facilities developed.
- Number of eligible downtowns/village centers granted designated status.
- Improvement in health outcomes rankings.

## *GOAL 6: Disaster Recovery*

The number of disaster declarations has increased in Vermont over the past 5 years, from weather-related disasters in all seasons to the rapid and devastating emergence of the Covid-19 global pandemic and the magnitude of its impact on communities and the economy. The immediacy and devastation of disasters force communities and their local governments to grapple with complex recovery decisions, the results of which will leave legacy impacts on a community long after the disaster event is over.

Many communities in Northern Vermont, particularly the small rural communities, lack the human capital, resources and the management capacity often needed to implement recovery plans. The objective of Goal 6 is to facilitate building the capacity within and across the communities of Northern Vermont for collaborative and coordinated problem solving, decision-making and resource implementation between local governments and community stakeholders and the regional, state and federal agencies in order address the range of decisions needed for post-disaster recovery.

### **ACTIONS** to increase capacity for disaster recovery within and across communities in Northern Vermont:

1. Post-disaster assessment led by coordinated planning and economic development organizations to fully assess the situation on the ground.
2. Create a coordinating structure of organizations for economic recovery.
3. Create an effective communications strategy between organizations and to the public to ensure awareness of planning efforts and to build community support for recovery.
4. Create an updated list of various local, state and federal grants and programs relevant to the specific incident including availability and timing of various federal grants and programs.
5. Identify and/or establish local and regional specific task forces to coordinate and work with other state and federal resources on identified economic recovery issues.
6. Integrate efforts with existing parallel recovery efforts to identify opportunities to combine and coordinate programs in order to maximize benefits and avoid duplication of efforts.

### **EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

- Local and regional coordination of organizations for economic recovery identified and/or established.
- Effective communications strategy established.
- Updated resource list and identified task forces established.

# APPENDIX A: INVESTMENTS IN THE DISTRICT

## Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA's investment priorities are designed to contribute the strongest positive impact on sustainable regional economic growth and diversification. Recent EDA investments in Northern Vermont include:



### **Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium:**

*Electrical Grid and Weather Forecasting Resiliency Project*

EDA Grant = \$362,898

Total Project = \$453,623

The project was funded during CY19 through the FY18 EDA Disaster Supplemental.

The Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium's EDA-supported Electrical Grid and Weather Forecasting Resiliency Project implements infrastructure hardening that enhances regional public safety across four states (weather forecasting and broadcast syndication with VPR), adds supply to the regional Green Mountain Power system, advances rural economic development and provides a business continuity center for local businesses during power outages.

The scope of work includes:

- Installation of battery back-up systems that will enhance the performance of the public facility, especially the "Eye On the Sky" weather forecasting in partnership with Vermont Public Radio;
- Construction of a 27.36Kw solar canopy and burial of transmission lines will enhance resiliency for the Museum and Green Mountain Power as the regional utility provider; and,
- Installation of two EV charging stations will support St. Johnsbury as a visitor/tourist destination.

This EDA investment is projected to support up to 8 new near term jobs, stimulate up to \$153,000 in near term private investment and will generate additional visitors/tourists to the Town of St. Johnsbury, enhancing commercial and retail revenues in the town's designated downtown. The viability of expanding said jobs within the small rural center of St. Johnsbury is in line with findings documented within the NVEDD CEDS. Through a Community Business Continuity of

Operations Plan, St. Johnsbury businesses when affected by disaster will have opportunity to utilize the Fairbanks facility on a temporary basis for business.

This project demonstrates alignment with the 2017 St. Johnsbury Town Plan’s goals of increasing energy self-sufficiency and decreased dependency on external energy providers by stimulating the development of alternative energy sources, investment in business and industry with access to jobs that increase median income of St. Johnsbury households, supports diverse employment opportunities, and contributes to the quality of life and well-being of all residents.

Additionally, this project helps both the Applicant and the Town to contribute toward the goals and objectives of the 2016 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan which has the ultimate goal of meeting 90% of the state's energy needs from renewable sources by the year 2050. A priority of the plan is to develop the state's distributed energy system which this project will strongly support. We also find that despite Vermont’s negative 13% drop in solar jobs from 2016-2017, the state has maintained its first in the nation ranking of solar jobs per capita\*. (\* Solar Foundation’s Solar Jobs Census 2017.)



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The following two projects represent a deliberate coordinated Federal approach to funding between EDA and the Northern Borders Regional Commission, with EDA funding predicated on co-funding with NBRC.



Northern Vermont  
UNIVERSITY

**Northern Vermont University - Lyndon / Vermont State College System;**  
*Do North Coworking*

EDA Grant = \$289,420  
NBRC Grant = \$217,665  
Total Project = \$507,085

Project was funded during FY18 through the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program

The EDA and NBRC investments in the Lyndonville Coworking Space are designed to support business development and link area residents to workforce education opportunities. Funds will be used for technical assistance to hire a full time entrepreneur in residence and part time facilities coordinator for the new coworking facility in the heart of Lyndonville's downtown.



**DO  
NORTH  
COWORKING**

These experienced professionals will work in collaboration with the business community and Northern Vermont University's Center for Professional Studies. This strategic collaboration is incorporated in the five-year Northern Vermont University Strategic Plan to serve more working age Vermonters, become a more attractive destination for Vermont high school graduates and operate as a more integrated system to expand student and regional business opportunities.

The project was developed in cooperation with the EDA-supported Economic Development District, the Northern Vermont Economic Development District (NVEDD).

The Do North Coworking space is designed to match people from rural communities in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, visitors to the region, and their ideas, with expert advice that inspires action, cultivates skills, and provides the knowledge they need to take their business idea to the next level. This hybrid coworking and accelerator space enables diverse groups of students, entrepreneurs, remote workers, and other independent professionals to share resources, knowledge, and networks.

The Do North Coworking Space business model will enable the initiative to be a self-funding, sustainable entity by its fourth year of operation. This facility with its quality broadband access, shared resources, and entrepreneurial programming will serve a range of Northeast Kingdom businesses such as software developers, food and agriculture ventures, and professional services, and is anticipated to create up to 26 new jobs over the near term.

Long term projections provided by Vermont's Agency of Commerce and Community Development estimate 66 new jobs (long term). Private investment over a nine-year span is projected in terms of personal income increases by \$4.7 million per year and increases in the regional value of the housing stock at \$3.3 million.



**Town of Fairfax**

*Municipal Water and Wastewater Extension and Access*

EDA Grant = \$463,000

NBRC Grant = \$263,055

Project was funded during FY2018 through the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program

Funds are being used by the Town of Fairfax to support municipal water and wastewater extension and access in order to create new jobs for the area.

In 2017, Runamok Maple, a manufacturer of niche maple syrup, purchased a 50,000 square foot pre-engineered metal building, the former Amoskeag Woodworking facility / Scrabble Tile factory in Fairfax. Runamok Maple spans over 1,100 acres in Cambridge and 250 acres in Fairfield, where their crew taps over 81,000 trees to collect pure maple syrup to create Runamok Maple's unique collection of infused, smoked and barrel-aged maple syrups. This expansion projected the creation of more than 100 jobs at Runamok Maple. Unfortunately, the new location lacked sufficient water and wastewater access.

The EDA and NBRC investments helped to close the financial gap to allow Runamok Maple to complete its relocation project. Runamok Maple plans to create up to 189 new jobs over nine years and anticipates up to \$3 million in private investment as a result of its improved operations and support for other food manufacturing startups.

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## **EDA Support of Northeast Kingdom Broadband Summit**

June 27, 2019

The three northeastern counties of the district are home to 16 of the 20 most underserved towns in the state when it comes to broadband service. A third or more of address are unable to purchase even the most basic of internet service.

On June 27, 2019 the NEK Broadband Summit brought more than 60 people together to create strategies to establish and increase broadband to the less populated areas of the Northeast Kingdom. In support of these efforts, EDA was able to reach across to NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) which brought Dr. Don Williams, NTIA Senior Broadband Development Officer, to the June 27, 2019 NEK Broadband Summit as a technical assistance presenter. His presentation on *Planning & Funding a Broadband Infrastructure Project* gave attendees, which included federal, state and local representatives, clear and comprehensive information about the current status of policy efforts and programs designed to help increase access to broadband in rural communities. In addition, Dr. Williams provided models of community planning, implementation plans, and financial plans to assist the NEK Broadband Working Group with next steps in expanding broadband access and adoption in the Northeast Kingdom.

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## Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) invests in economic and infrastructure projects in all 14 counties in Vermont. NBRC-funded projects can be eligible for up to an 80% matching grant depending on the level of economic and demographic distress in each county. Recent NBRC investments in the NVEDD region include:

2019 Grantees	Amount	Project
City of St. Albans	\$443,956	to build basic public infrastructure to redevelop the former Fonda/solo manufacturing site
Alburgh School District	\$250,000	to build a much needed childcare center to ensure parents can enter or remain in the workforce
Burke Fire District #1	\$185,000	to replace/install 2.4 miles of water mains, services, new well, storage tank and water meters to allow continued growth in busy recreational area
Northeastern Vermont Development Association	\$250,000	to identify the NEK as an outdoor recreation trails destination to attract new businesses, create new jobs and market local businesses
Let's Grow Kids	\$250,000	to expand the Make Way for Kids (MWFK) project supporting job retention by enabling parents with children 0 - 5 to stay in/return to the workforce
City of Newport	\$250,000	to improve pedestrian and motorist safety at the Newport's downtown gateway
Northern Forest Center	\$908,277	to connect existing and emerging destination development initiatives and invest in community recreation infrastructure across the Central NBRC region

2018 Grantees	Amount	Project
Town of Fairfax	\$263,055	to extend municipal water/wastewater infrastructure to a commercial property purchased by a Vermont forest product company projecting 100+ new jobs for Fairfax
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation	\$219,213	to assist three pilot villages (Wolcott, East Burke, and West Burke) with no municipal sewers to arrive at financially viable approaches to wastewater treatment facilitating job creation by making redevelopment of vacant buildings possible and priming villages for business investment
Northern Vermont University - Lyndon	\$217,665	to create a Coworking Space to support business development and link area residents to workforce education opportunities for sectors in high demand while adding vibrancy to downtown Lyndonville
Town of Burke, VT / Kingdom Trails	\$438,426	A partnership project to rehabilitate the roadway and improve drainage on 0.7 miles of East Darling Hill Rd in East Burke, VT, add 5ft of uphill bike lane, acquire two adjacent parcels to improve safety, and facilitate continued recreation-based job growth in the town and region at large.
Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation	\$219,213	FCIDC will construct a building and lease it to a start-up business creating 11-14 jobs.
Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council	\$59,187	to develop and implement a Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Marketing Plan to boost the region's tourism and recreation economy.
Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC)	\$219,213	to highlight professional/recreational opportunities to retain/attract youth and workers in Northeast Kingdom and develop targeted recruitment and marketing in conjunction with ThinkVT / MOVE
Lamoille County Planning Commission	\$345,041	to relocate existing on-road parking in Smugglers' Notch to reduce congestion, improve safety, reduce impacts to fragile vegetation, and create a more welcoming environment for increased visitor use
Hazen Union High School, Hardwick, VT	\$175,370	to build a career academy focusing on employer-led approach to create a career pipeline for workforce development. Through business partnerships the Academy will focus on entrepreneurship, skill and business development, apprenticeships, and employment education.

# APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

## Business Resources

*These resources are centered on providing businesses and entrepreneurs with the information required to successfully start and grow a business.*

The **Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC)** is a non-profit that assists local businesses and start-ups through no-cost advising services. VtSBDC connects new and existing businesses to an advisor who assists them through one-on-one advising, which includes helping businesses grow, secure capital, find workers, etc.

The **Vermont Procurement Technical Assistance Center (VT PTAC)** provides services to businesses such as one-on-one counseling, market research, training, and identifying government buyers with an overall mission to increase the number of federal contracts awarded to Vermont businesses (particularly small businesses). Specifically, PTAC can assist businesses through complex processes such as government paperwork and helps businesses and individuals understand these processes.

The **ThinkVermont State Website** provides assistance for businesses in terms of growth; specifically they provide access to different available resources and lending programs such as those seen below. There are also resources for workers looking to move to Vermont and information about what living in Vermont is like.

The **Vermont Secretary of State Business Start-Up Guide** is a checklist from the Vermont Secretary of State's office that provides a detailed list of what is required to start a business in Vermont. This includes a detailed list with different helpful resources and forms.

The **Vermont Business Assistance Network (VBAN)** serves to connect businesses to one another as well as helping businesses with elements such as finding customers, vendors and suppliers. It is ultimately a pipeline for a business, consolidating resources that allows businesses to search for contacts, market your business, list products and services, etc.

**Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR)** is a statewide business association that exists to foster a business ethic of social responsibility in Vermont. That mission is realized through sustainable economic development, education, public influence, etc.

## Municipal Resources

These resources are centered on providing municipalities with resources to support community growth through planning and strategic investment.

**Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD)** provides resource for information and programs surrounding both economic and community development. The ACCD also offers a **wide variety of grants and funding opportunities** for community development that are available to municipalities.

The **Vermont Attorney General's office** and **Vermont Secretary of State office** each provide businesses with information about the steps required to start a business in the state of Vermont. They are the primary ways in which businesses interact with the state and are a good place to forward interested constituents.

The **Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting Vermont's municipal governments. To support this mission, the VLCT employs a team of professionals with expertise in areas such as municipal law, public administration, human resources, and more. The VLCT also hosts an annual economic development conference and provides American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding guidance on its website: <https://www.vlct.org/>.

The US Department of Agriculture's **Rural Development program** is a strong resource for towns and runs over 50 financial assistance programs for municipalities.

The **Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA)** is devoted to communal planning and seeks to strengthen the capabilities of local governments. Their goals are accomplished through a combination of environmental and economic planning strategies which is planned to serve the needs of residents.

The **Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation** is a division of the Agency of Natural Resources and offers a variety of programs to municipalities, including certain finance-based programs.

The **Vermont Business Roundtable (VBR)** is a non-profit, public interest organization that includes more than 100 CEOs of Vermont employers. VBR is dedicated to thoughtful, deliberative analysis of public policy issues impacting Vermont.

**Vermont Business Magazine Lists** include lists of all food producers in Vermont, Vermont's largest employers, VT tech companies, active VT trade names, and more. These lists are published by the Vermont Business Magazine which itself can be a helpful resource for business information in Vermont as well

The **Vermont Small Business Administration (SBA)** is the Vermont division of the US Small Business Association and serves a role in lending and connecting businesses to lenders. Centered in Montpelier, the Vermont SBA also has other partners such as the Vermont Small Business Development Center.

#### **Industry Specialized Resources:**

The **Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (VMEC)** is an advisor to Vermont manufacturers that provides resources such as consulting, coaching, direct implementation support, and training and education programs for leaders and workers.

The **Alliance for Vermont Communities (AVC)** exists to protect forests, farms, and communities in central and southern Vermont. The AVC intends to promote responsible development that will allow Vermont to sustain its lands and communities for generations to come.

The **Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF)** is a non-profit organization committed to fostering sustainable development in Vermont by developing creative approaches to growing the state's economy through elevating the well-being of Vermont's people, communities, and environment.

The **Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative** is a state program designed to support innovative entrepreneurs interacting with Vermont's Working Lands economy by providing technical and financial assistance so that growing businesses have the opportunity to thrive.

The **Vermont Planners Association (VPA)** is a statewide, non-profit, membership-based organization of planners and developers. VPA can be a useful resource for municipalities in terms of connecting to planning and development resources. Specifically, VPA can help your municipality connect to professional and citizen planners, landscape architects, engineers, housing and economic development specialists, developers, and more.

The **Vermont State Website** can be useful for municipalities in terms of worker attraction, as it provides information about moving to Vermont and promotes the Vermont lifestyle.

#### **Community Economic Development Resources:**

The **Vermont Downtown Designation Program** is a community development program run through the Vermont ACCD that provides "financial incentives, training and technical assistance supporting local efforts to restore historic buildings, improve housing, design walkable communities and encourage economic development by incentivizing public and private investments".

The **Building Communities Grants Program** is designed to provide financial assistance to projects that "help communities preserve important historic buildings and enhance community facilities." This program consists of five individual grants and is designed for municipalities and non-profits.

The **Vermont Planning Advance** is a program run through the state's Department of Environmental Conservation that provides financial assistance to towns looking to create, improve, or study their town's waste and general water systems. Repayment is only obligated for projects that are completed.

## Regional Resources

### **Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation**

2 North Main Street, P.O. Box 1099, St. Albans, VT, 05478

802-524 2194, FAX: 802-524-6793

<http://www.fcidc.com>

### **Lake Champlain Islands Economic Development Corporation**

P.O. Box 213, North Hero, VT, 05474

802-372-8400, FAX: 802-372-5107

<http://www.champlainislands.com>

### **Lamoille Economic Development Corporation**

P.O. Box 455, Morrisville, VT, 05661

802-888-5640, FAX: 802-888-7612

<https://lamoilleeconomy.org/>

### **Northeastern Vermont Development Association**

P.O. Box 630, St. Johnsbury, VT, 05819

802-748-5181, FAX: 802-748-1223

<http://www.nvda.net>

### **Northwest Regional Planning Commission**

75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans, VT 05478

Office: (802) 524-5958

Fax: (802) 527-2948

<https://www.nrpcvt.com/>

### **Lamoille County Planning Commission**

P.O. Box 1637

52 Portland Street, Second Floor

Morristown, VT 05661

Office: (802) 888-4548

Fax: (802) 888-6938

<https://www.lcpcvt.org/>

### **Additional Regional Resources:**

#### **Northeast Kingdom Collaborative**

PO Box 59

Craftsbury, VT 05826

Phone: (802) 586-0099

<https://nekcollaborative.org/>

## Regional Resources

### **Northeast Kingdom Community Broadband CUD**

4 South Main Street, Hardwick, VT 05843  
<https://nekbroadband.org/>

### **Northwest Fiberworx CUD**

802-829-6302  
<https://www.nwfiberworx.com/>

### **Lamoille Fibernet CUD**

P.O. Box 1637, Morrisville, VT 05661  
[info@lamoillefiber.net](mailto:info@lamoillefiber.net)  
  
<https://lamoillefiber.net/>

### **United Way of Lamoille County**

20 Morrisville Plaza, Suite B  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
Office: 802.888.3252  
<https://uwlamoille.org/get-help/>

### **Working Communities Challenge**

<https://uwlamoille.org/who-we-are/working-communities-challenge.html>

### **NVEDD Recovery Plan**

[https://www.nvedd.org/\\_files/ugd/cf375c\\_f0745f66a2bf41c0a6a793e45ca281dd.pdf](https://www.nvedd.org/_files/ugd/cf375c_f0745f66a2bf41c0a6a793e45ca281dd.pdf)