

## YEAR 1 LEAD PREVENTION ORGANIZATON REGION 1 ANNUAL REPORT

Activities & Outputs & Feedback covering the period of July 2023 – June 2024

United Way of Northwest Vermont is the Lead Prevention Organization (LPO) for the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use programs (DSU), serving Region 1: Barre, Burlington, & St. Albans Health Districts. DSU is providing new prevention funding to four regions across the state, through partnership with a Lead Prevention Organization in each region. The purpose of this funding is to increase state, regional, and community capacity to deliver meaningful substance misuse prevention statewide, by addressing all ages and substances, ensuring access, decreasing disparities, and developing a consolidated and holistic approach.

Previous grants from DSU supported the development of a 5-year strategic plan and a Regional Prevention Network for Northwest Vermont. Starting in July 2023, DSU expanded the region to include the Barre Health District and now United Way acts as the LPO for Northwest and Central VT.

Major goals for Year 1 included:

1. Expanding regional focus to include Central Vermont.
2. Expanding the scope of prevention strategies to all ages.
3. Establishing a new funding process for allocation of state funds, including convening a regional Funding Committee to determine a portfolio of grants starting January 2024.
4. Investing capacity building funds to strengthen existing prevention efforts, fill gaps, and develop tools and resources to engage a broader range of partners and communities.

The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide a summary of activities and achievements during Year 1 of the LPO grant to the Northwest & Central VT region. The report is organized by specific areas of United Way's responsibility as LPO and as convener of the Northwest & Central Vermont Prevention Network:

Areas of Responsibility	Pages
Engaging and unifying the region	2-3
Providing functions and capacity	4-5
Facilitating collaborative actions and initiatives	6
Investing state funds	7-9
Complying with state grant requirements and reporting	10



## ENGAGING & UNIFYING THE REGION

Convening partners focused on prevention of substance misuse and promotion of wellbeing among people of all ages across the region

<b>11</b>	<b>128 Individuals</b>	<b>31 people</b>
<b>Prevention Network Meetings</b>	<b>63 Organizations</b>	average # attending meetings
	participated in Network meetings in Year 1	(range 21 – 39)

### Partner Presentations

- Prevention at Systems & Policies Level, Kate Nugent, Winooski Partnership & state legislator
- Franklin & Grand Isle Substance Use Prevention Consultant Mary Pickener
- School Health Liaisons for VT Department of Health, Jess LaClair, Isabel Ruiz, Dalice Costa
- Beth Shrader & Alex Karambelas, Prevention Works! VT
- Matt Wolf, VT Afterschool, on behalf of Youth Voice Action Team
- Flavors Hook Kids Campaign, William Greer & Olivia Taylor
- Prevent Child Abuse, Michelle Richling, Director of Family Support Programs
- Alyssa Chen and Kayla Loving, Education Justice Coalition of Vermont!
- Pride Center of VT, Richard Elliot, Health & Wellness Manager at Pride Center of VT

### Trainings offered during Network Meetings

- Prevention Policy and Advocacy, Emma Paradis, Common Good Vermont
- Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction, Theresa Vezina, Vermont Cares
- Intersection of Domestic Violence & Substance Use, Steph Steeves, Steps to End Domestic Violence

### Feedback about Network Meetings (from Partner Input Survey January 2024)

<i>“Teams makes it easy to fit meetings in to attend”</i>	<i>“I like the variety”</i>	<i>“If some of the topic-based learning could be added to the Network Meetings it would save me from having more meetings.”</i>
<i>“Shared learning and partner highlights are usually most helpful for me”</i>	<i>“It feels flexible and accommodating to diverse and complex conversations! Great work!”</i>	

## Second Annual Prevention Network Summit

Hosted by VT National Guard, October 2023

**45 people attended**

### Summit Topics

- Community Data: Trends & Disparities
- Inventory of Prevention: Gaps & Opportunities
- Policy Advocacy: Priorities & Planning
- Funding Committee: Updates & Information

### Guest Speaker: Teddy Waszazak

Advocacy Manager, Hunger Free Vermont,  
Universal School Meals Campaign

### Summit Participants included:

Prevention organizations	Research consultants	Family serving organizations
Other community organizations	Health focused organizations	Schools
State government	Youth serving organizations	Business
Local government	Senior serving organization	Volunteer

12 Network Newsletters	260 subscribers	Average open rate 57%
<b>Regular Sections:</b>	<b>Frequent highlights:</b>	<b>Feedback on Newsletter</b> (from Partner Survey)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention Highlights</li> <li>• LPO updates</li> <li>• Upcoming Events (from partners, state, sector)</li> <li>• Training Opportunities</li> <li>• Resources (from partners, network meetings, etc.)</li> <li>• Monthly Meeting Invitation</li> <li>• Get Involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding opportunities</li> <li>• Flavors Hook Kids Campaign</li> <li>• Prevention Works! VT</li> <li>• LGBTQ+ resources</li> </ul>	<p>“It's well organized, concise, and informative”</p> <p>“Nice job on the newsletter”</p> <p>“Great organization, content and formatting.”</p> <p>“What an awesome newsletter, I am so grateful to receive it!”</p> <p>“List of VDH trainings was really helpful to me”</p>

### Building Partnership with Central Vermont

A priority for Year 1 was expanding the region to include Central VT and building connections to partners in the Barre Health District. United Way contracted with Eva Zaret from Central VT Medical Center & Sultana Khan from Mosaic; they informed and led LPO activities in the Barre Health District, including: completing and inventory of organizations doing prevention work, convening a Prevention Summit at which community partners came together to review data, have robust conversations, and determine priorities, recruiting partners and community members to serve on the Funding Committee, and helping facilitate the committee's process.

Through partnership with CVMC and Mosaic, we learned more about the capacity and accomplishments of Central VT Prevention Coalition, and we explored ways the LPO and a Regional Prevention Network can add value to their work.

### Additional Outreach & Fostering Connection

#### During Year 1, LPO staff participated in:

- Coming Together: Substance Use Addiction Summit
- Connections & Community: Statewide Prevention Conference
- Vermont Prevention Advocacy Day
- KidsFest
- KidSafe Monthly Meetings
- Prevention Works! VT Workforce Action Team
- SAPST Connection (Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training)

**Lead Prevention Organization covered the cost of registration for 15 partners** from Northwest & Central VT to attend the Statewide Prevention Conference at Lake Morey Resort in May 2024

**And LPO staff engaged a wide range of new partners**, including some who had not previously connected to prevention efforts in our region, such as:

- August Toynton, VDH Public Health Specialist Emergency Preparedness, met with LPO staff to explore how Medical Reserve Corps volunteers could connect with prevention volunteering opportunities.
- Representatives from the FBI Albany division met with LPO staff in January to discuss how our work overlaps in the realm of community safety and resources, and they connected us to:
  - Senior Chief Nicholas McGowen, Officer In Charge, Station Burlington, U.S. Coast Guard,
  - Elena Clayton, Victim Specialist for Vermont from the FBI Albany division.

## BUILDING FUNCTIONS & CAPACITY

Providing information, data, tools, and training to support shared interests and needs of prevention partners across the region

### Regional Prevention Network Website

Data, tools, resources, news for prevention partners

#### Website Contents

- Purpose and History of the Prevention Network
- 5-Year Strategic Plan
- New & Events
- Calendar of activities, events, and trainings
- Invitation to Network Meetings
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Community Scorecards (see list of data points →)
- Inventory of Prevention Organizations & Programs
- Resources for Prevention Partners:
  - Prevention Basics
  - Crisis Services
  - Community Services & Treatment
  - Planning & Toolkits
  - Communications and Campaign Resources

### 54 Data Points

in County Scorecards

#### Scorecards includes local data for each county reflecting:

- Substance Use among youth, young adults, and adults
- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors
- Indicators of Harm related to substance use
- Community Demographics

### 6 Trainings

provided for Network Partners

#### Trainings provided and/or hosted by the LPO included:

*Policy & Advocacy Training* by Common Good VT (32 people attended)

*Mental Health Literacy*, Sunshine Silver Lining, Sunny Naughton (31)

*Navigating Difficult Conversations*, VCPI, Alex Lehning (44)

*Overdose Prevention/Harm Reduction*, VT Cares, Theresa Vezina (35)

*Prevention 101*, Region 1 Prevention Consultants, VDH (11)

*Intersection of SUD & Sexual/Domestic Violence*, Steps to End Domestic Violence VT (31)

### Highest Interests

for Topics (from partner survey)

- New & Promising Practices
- Evidence Based Practices
- Mental Health
- Violence Prevention
- Alcohol Misuse Prevention
- Housing
- Cannabis
- Opioids
- Scarcity

### 19 trainings promoted by LPO

#### Trainings promoted by the LPO included:

*2024 Advocacy Training*, Prevention Works!VT

*Health Equity Trainings*, VT Department of Health

*Perceptions of Substance Use and Older Adults*, Prevention Technology Transfer Center

*Expand your Grant Application Toolkit*, Common Good Vermont

*Xylazine 101*, Addison County

*Teens, Social Media & Mental Health*, Parent In – Dr Erin Walsh

*VT Tobacco Cessation Learning Series - Best Practices and Resources for VT Providers*, VDH

*How pediatricians can help youth quit using nicotine*, The Parent Venture, reshared from Addiction County Prevention Coalition

*Pathways To Prosperity: Tapping Into The Hidden Workforce*, Working Fields – Recovery Friendly Workplaces

*Recovery Coaches in the Emergency Department*, Recovery VT

*Zeroing in on Xylazine Training*, Opioid Response Network

*Vermont Recovery Coach Academy*, Recovery Vermont

*Harm Reduction Through the Family Lens*, Opioid Response Network

*Alcohol, Equity, and Social Justice: Breaking the Silence*, Prevention Technology Transfer Center

*What is a Recovery Community Organization?* Opioid Response Network

*Substance Misuse and Older Adults*, Prevention Works!VT

*Substance Use and Other Risk Factors for Gun Violence: Prevention and Intervention Strategies*, PTTC

*Creating a Thriving Organization*, Opioid Response Network

## Evaluation of the LPO and the Regional Prevention Network

LPO staff worked with consultants from *Pear Associates* to **develop a comprehensive evaluation plan** for the Prevention Network and our role as the LPO.

The consultants conducted a **focus group with local prevention partners** to gather input on how to define and evaluate success and how to gather data to assess success and make improvements. They also met with LPO/Prevention Network funders (DSU and UVM Medical Center's Community Health Improvement Committee) to understand the funders' goals and expectations. The consultants completed the Evaluation Plan in spring 2024; the plan was shared with regional partners and funders. Evaluation activities will launch in Fall 2024.

### Evaluation activities in Year 1 included:

- survey of everyone who received the fall 2023 Request for Proposals for allocation of state funds; the survey asked about accessibility and clarity of our communications about and process for applying for subgrant funds,
- in-person debrief and follow up survey with Funding Committee members to get input on the Year 1 process and recommendations for improvement in Year 2.
- Survey of network partners to gather feedback and suggestions for Prevention Network meetings, newsletters, website, and trainings.

## Leverage Additional Resources

As the LPO, United Way secured the additional resources to advance prevention in Northwest and Central VT:

- Partnership with VT National Guard Counter Drug Program, which provides a full-time position to lead the Prevention Network
- \$100,000 Collective Impact Implementation Grant from UVM Medical Center Community Health Investment Fund
- Intern from University of Vermont focused on Healthy Aging & Substance Use in VT
- AmeriCorps VISTA Position from SerVermont

## FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

Convening and funding projects to build capacity, engage new partners, and advance shared priorities

### Investing in Prevention Coalitions

As the LPO, United Way funded a strategic planning process for five prevention coalitions, led by consultants Emily Boedecker and Elise Annes (Momentum Communications).

The purpose of the planning process was to support coalitions in identifying how the coalitions can work together, share expertise and resources, and create a more sustainable and efficient prevention strategy.

Participants in the planning included leaders from:

- Burlington Partnership for Healthy Community
- Winooski Prevention Coalition
- Franklin County Caring Communities
- Franklin-Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition
- Connecting Youth - Champlain Valley School District
- VT Department of Health

Additional input was provided by DSU, United Way, and community partners.

### Engaging Employers in Substance Misuse Prevention

**Project:** Creating an employer guide focused on substance misuse prevention and recovery, in collaboration with United Way's Working Bridges program and Prevention Works!VT as part of a workgroup of partners representing employers as well as community organizations.

**Purpose:**

- Providing information, guidance, resources for VT businesses whose employees and workplaces have been directly impacted by substance misuse.
- Informing policies, practices, and culture to create safe and supportive workplaces and addressing employees' needs related to substance misuse, treatment, and recovery.
- Collaborating with employers to prevent substance misuse and related impacts.

***The employer guide will be completed and shared widely in Fall 2024.***

The workgroup was facilitated by consultant Bryan O'Connor, coordinated by Adrienne Lueders-Dumont, United Way's Senior Communications Coordinator, and led by Connie Beal Working Bridges Director and Beth Shrader, Prevention Works!VT.

Workgroup participants included:

- Evelyn Sikorski of UVMMC's Employee Assistance Program,
- Tammy Bushnell of Edlund Corporation,
- Tawyna Kristen of Green Mountain United Way,
- Jody Lantman of Rhino Foods, and
- Lisa Lord of Recovery Vermont

Hilary Denton, Mary Pickener, Nicholas Tatakis, and Sean Campbell from the VT Department of Health and Reid Wobby, a drug and alcohol consultant, provided additional content and guidance.

### Building Capacity & Practice for Policy Advocacy

**6 meetings** of Policy Advocacy Workgroup

**Policy & Advocacy Training** by Common Good VT

**Presentations by:**

- Teddy Waszazak, Advocacy Manager, Hunger Free Vermont, Universal School Meals Campaign
- William Greer & Olivia Taylor, Flavors Hook Kids Campaign

**LPO staff:**

- participated in Prevention Advocacy Day,
- advocated for state funding for prevention, in collaboration with other Lead Prevention Organizations and DSU, and
- shared updates on policy issues and promoted opportunities for partners to engage in advocacy.



## INVEST STATE PREVENTION FUNDS

Sub-grants & project funding to advance prevention across all ages & substances

<b>\$372,000</b>		<b>\$78,620</b>		<b>\$450,620 total in new funding</b>
in subgrants to	+	in project funding to	=	to organizations serving communities across
19 organizations		9 organizations		Northwest & Central VT

### FUNDING SCOPE

Funding programs and projects for the purpose of advancing substance misuse prevention by:

**preventing** the onset of substance misuse,  
**delaying** initiation of substance use,  
**promoting** healthy lifestyles, and  
**optimizing** wellbeing among individuals, families, and communities across the lifespan.

### FUNDING PRIORITIES

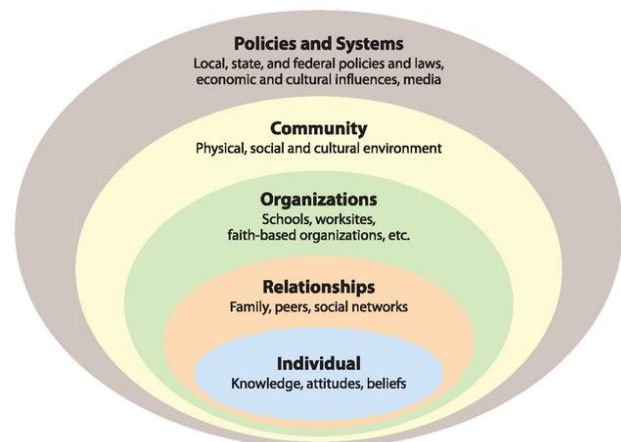
- **reduce disparities in access** to prevention resources
- support a holistic model that **builds community**
- address risk and protective factors for **specific populations** including:
  - youth, parents and caregivers,
  - people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color,
  - people who identify as LGBTQ+,
  - people from households with limited financial means
  - people experiencing homelessness

### Funding supported programs and projects addressing the *Continuum of Prevention* (programs and projects may address more than one)

17 subgrants and 8 projects	supported <b>Primary Prevention</b> activities
7 subgrants	supported <b>Secondary Prevention</b> activities
7 subgrants and 1 project	supported <b>Tertiary Prevention</b> activities

### Funding programs and projects focused on all levels of the *Vermont Prevention Model* (most programs and projects focus on multiple levels)

Levels	# subgrants	# projects
Policies & Systems	4	1
Community	17	5
Organizations	17	5
Relationships	18	6
Individuals	19	5



**16 community members**

convened as Region 1 Funding Committee, facilitated by LPO, with representation from each Health District

**50+ hours served**

by each Funding Committee member throughout orientation, training, and grant-making process

**YEAR 1 SUBGRANTS AWARDED BY REGION 1 FUNDING COMMITTEE**

Organization	Population(s)	Geography	Subgrant
All Together Now	Youth	Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond, Underhill	\$25,000
Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community	Youth	Burlington	\$25,000
Burlington Dismas House	Individuals transitioning from incarceration	Chittenden & Franklin Counties	\$14,600
Education Justice Center of VT	BIPOC Youth	Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle Counties	\$25,000
Good Samaritan Haven	Individuals experiencing homelessness	Barre, Barre Town, Berlin, Montpelier	\$18,900
Milton Family Community Center	Youth 8-14, Families	Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Jericho, Milton, Underhill, Westford, Williston, St. Albans City, St. Albans Town	\$17,500
Outright VT	LGBTQ+ Youth	Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle Counties	\$12,200
People's Health & Wellness	2SLGBTQI+	Washington County	\$15,600
Prevent Child Abuse VT	Parents & Caregivers	Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle Counties	\$12,000
Pride Center of Vermont	2SLGBTQ+	Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle Counties	\$25,000
Richard Kemp Center	BIPOC Youth & Families	Burlington & Winooski	\$25,000
Sage Mountain Botanical Sanctuary	Youth in grades 4-8	Barre, Barre Town, Berlin	\$31,000
Swanton Recreation	Youth, Families, older adults	Franklin, Highgate, Swanton	\$15,000
Turning Point Center of Central VT	Adult Parents	Barre, Barre Town, Berlin, East Montpelier, Montpelier	\$14,800
Twinfield Together Mentoring	Youth MS	Marshfield, Plainfield	\$13,000
United Immigrant & Refugee Communities of VT	Parents & Youth	Burlington, Colchester, Essex, Essex Junction, Milton, Shelburne, South Burlington, Williston, Winooski, St. Albans	\$22,750
Village of Enosburg Falls: Youth Center	Youth 12-22	Bakersfield, Berkshire, Enosburg Falls, Enosburg, Montgomery, Sheldon	\$25,000
Winooski Partnership for Prevention	MS/HS Youth, Parents & Families	Winooski	\$25,000
Youth First Mentoring	Youth 8-18	Barre City, Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, Montpelier, Worcester	\$10,400



**APPROVAL OF CONTINUATION GRANTS FOR YEAR 2**

Following LPO review of mid-grant progress reports, the Funding Committee approved continuation grants for all subgrantees requesting funding for Year 2 (July 2024 – 2025).

**ADDITIONAL PROJECT FUNDING FROM LPO**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Geography</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Community Engagement Lab	Thriving Communities Project	Barre; Barre Town; East Montpelier; Middlesex; Montpelier; Moretown	\$10,000
Essex CHIPS	Friday Nights in the Teen Center and Afterschool Program	Essex Westford School District	\$ 5,000
Lund	Lund Parent Child Center Services: Safeguarding Futures Against Substance Misuse	Franklin & Grand Isle Counties	\$10,000
Montpelier Parks & Trees	Feast Farm Visioning and Development: Preventing substance misuse through community engagement	Barre; Barre Town; Berlin; Calais; East Montpelier; Middlesex; Montpelier; Plainfield; Worcester	\$10,000
Mosaic	Screenings of Bess O'Brien's documentary film Just Getting By	Screenings in Montpelier and Waterbury	\$ 9,020
Sara Holbrook Community Center	Enhancing Youth Outreach: A comprehensive Approach to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism	Burlington	\$10,000
The Dream Program	DREAM Guided Mentoring: Burlington / St. Albans	Burlington; Colchester; Hinesburg; Jericho; Milton; Winooski	\$10,000
Up For Learning	Getting to Y: Engaging Local Youth in Prevention Efforts	Franklin & Grand Isle Counties	\$10,000
Turning Point Center of Central Vermont	VT Creamery Recovery Support Project	Employees of VT Creamery in Websterville, VT	\$ 4,600

## GRANT COMPLIANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

### Responsibilities of the Lead Prevention Organization

As the Lead Prevention Organization and fiscal agent for state prevention funds, United Way is responsible for grant compliance and accountability to the Division of Substance Use program (DSU). Requirements include:

- creating an annual budget and detailed workplan,
- establishing and facilitating a Regional Funding Committee and subgrant process,
- DSU approval of subgrant portfolio,
- quarterly reporting on activities and workplan process,
- quarterly invoicing to DSU for all grant expenses, including quarterly reporting from subgrantees,
- annual site visit and review of financial documentation,
- monthly meetings with DSU,
- monthly meeting with the other Lead Prevention Organization teams in VT,

We are also accountable to the Community Health Investment Committee, through annual reporting, and to the VT National Guard's Counter Drug Program, which provides in-kind support through a full-time position.

And we strive to be accountable to all of our prevention partners through inviting input and feedback, providing regular updates through network meetings and communications, and being transparent and collaborative in our planning, processes, and decisions.

## OUTSTANDING GOALS & ACTIVITIES

### Work planned for Year 1, but not completed

We did not make as much progress as we had hoped in several areas of planned work, due to the extent of effort and capacity required to complete the work outlined in this report, and in some cases due to stage of readiness or capacity among key partners. Areas of work that we did not complete in Year 1 include:

- establishing a governance structure for the Prevention Network, to support committees and action teams, and facilitate decision-making,
- engaging other funders in our region to share prevention-priorities and progress, discuss process and opportunities for leveraging funds, and explore collaboration,
- developing tools and practices for collaborative advocacy.

These activities continue to be priorities for our work in Year 2.