NORTHWEST AND CENTRAL VERMONT PREVENTION NETWORK

LEAD PREVENTION ORGANIZATON REGION 1

ANNUAL REPORT - YEAR 3

Activities, Outputs & Feedback | July 2025 – June 2026

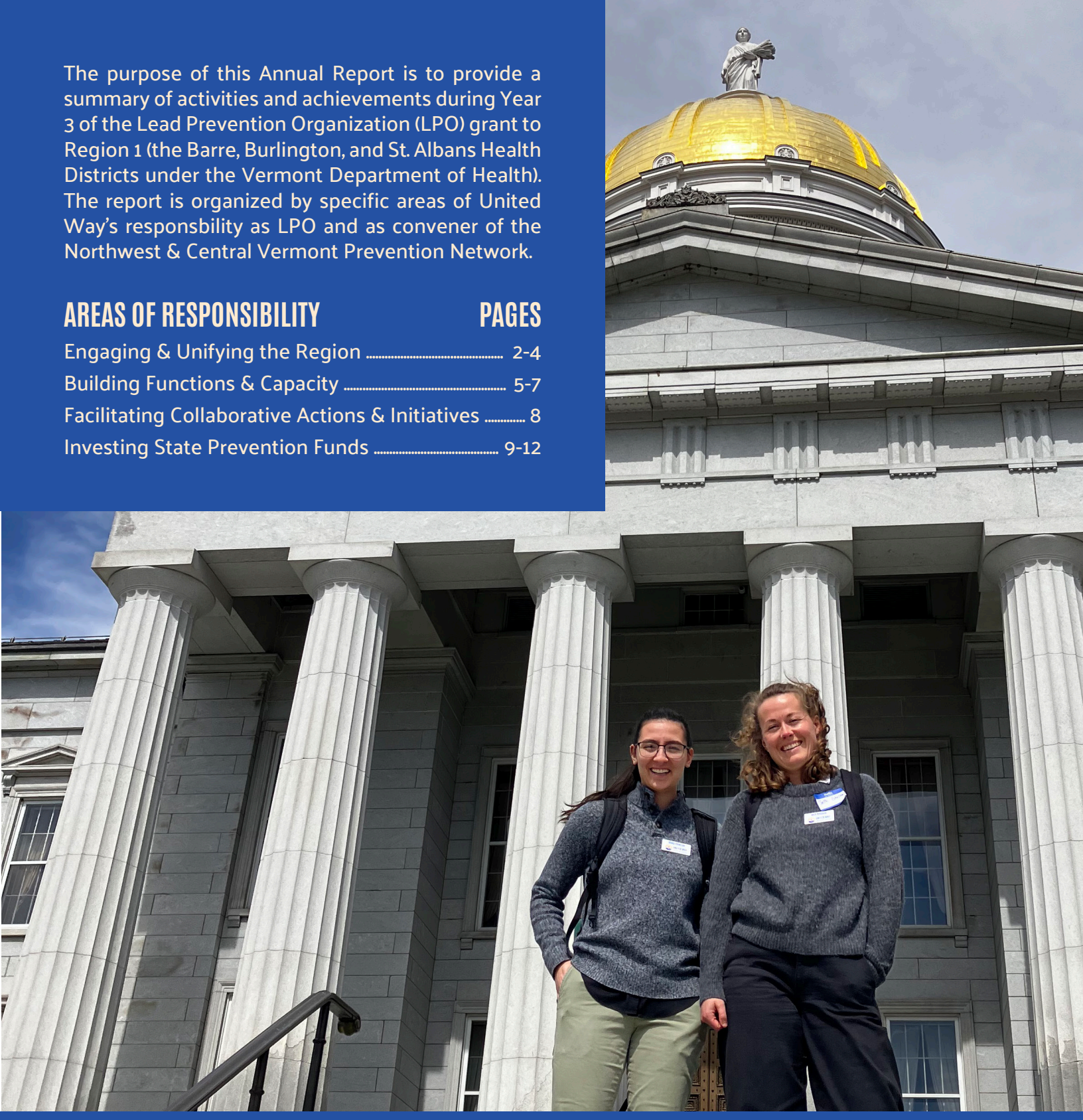


UNITED WAY
Northwest Vermont

The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide a summary of activities and achievements during Year 3 of the Lead Prevention Organization (LPO) grant to Region 1 (the Barre, Burlington, and St. Albans Health Districts under the Vermont Department of Health). The report is organized by specific areas of United Way's responsbility as LPO and as convener of the Northwest & Central Vermont Prevention Network.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY — PAGES

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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.

1

ENGAGING & UNIFYING THE REGION

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



10
Prevention Network Meetings
attended by ...

100
Individuals
representing ...

65
Organizations
averaging ...

33
Attendees
per meeting

Partner Presentations:

- **July 2025**
  Matt Wolf, Vermont Afterschool
- **August 2025**
  Abdirisak Maalin, United Immigrant & Refugee Community of Vermont (UIRC)
  Christine Hughes, Richard Kemp Center
- **September 2025**
  Jessica Bickford, Healthy Lamoille Valley
  CADCA 7 Strategies Training (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)
- **November 2025**
  Sultana Khan, YWCA
  Christine Hughes, Richard Kemp Center
- **January 2026**
  Marielle Matthews, Winooski Partnership for Prevention (WPP), Cannabis Advertising
- **February 2026**
  Hilary Denton, Prevention Consultant for Barre, School Based Prevention
  Heather Moore, Empowering the Youth: The Café
- **March 2026**
  Rosemary Rosa, Turning Point Center of Central Vermont (TPCCV)
  Intro to HOPE training
- **April 2026**
  Prevention Day!
- **May 2026**
  Emma Paradis and Andy Cao, Common Good Vermont
  Katie Niebuhr, Prevention Consultant for Bennington, Self Care!
- **June 2026**
  Megan Stearns and Marielle Matthews on Alcohol Policy

Feedback:

"Grateful to be a part of this INCREDIBLE network of prevention professionals who come together centered in love and skill and expertise and curiosity. A shining example for other regions in the US!"

"Thank you Mahat and everyone at United Way NWVT ... appreciate all the resources you've shared."

"The meetings are always informative and productive, a meeting I like attending!"

"Best newsletter in all the land!! Thank you so much :)"

HIGHLIGHT: Fourth Annual Prevention Network Summit

Hosted by United Way of Northwest Vermont, October 2025



The fourth annual Prevention Network Summit was held on October 8th, 2025 in South Burlington, and began with an acknowledgement of the very different funding landscape today's nonprofits occupy. Mahat Abdullahi, Prevention Network Manager, and Amy Carmola, Chief Impact Officer at United Way of Northwest Vermont, provided framing for the Summit. Mahat prompted attendees to reflect on an experience where opportunity was born out of a struggle, and to share it with the person sitting next to them. He also expressed heartfelt gratitude for the community of prevention providers and partners in our region and charged attendees to embrace the spirit of collaboration and working together through challenges.

Amy acknowledged how difficult this last year has been due to federal actions, loss of funding, and uncertainty, and recognized what this means for the organizations and people who do the work. She highlighted that the purpose of the Summit was to talk about what we can do together within this challenging context, to find where, collaboratively, we can make a difference. This year's approach was a working Summit where we applied our network's expertise and energy to prioritize specific actions.

There were six breakout groups organized around shared strengths and priorities regarding specific substances (alcohol, cannabis, or tobacco) and using CADCA's 7 Strategies for Community Change. Each group focused on a specific substance and came up with strategies at the individual level or environmental level of prevention.

1. Identifying and Prioritizing
For the first breakout, each group generated a list of strategies at either the individual or environmental level and then prioritized their ideas by discussing as a group if they met this criteria:
a) essential for regional effort
b) level of impact and
c) readiness in the next 18 months.

2. Mobilization
After lunch, each group wrote out one or two of the highest priority ideas from their morning session and began to outline a workplan for each.

SUMMIT

Common Themes Identified by the Breakout Groups:

GAPS

- A universally accessible place for accurate and current information
- Buy-in from the business community, including wariness around the Flavors Hook Kids campaign

NEEDS

- More collaboration at the local and state level and also between sectors
- Trusted and askable adults; peer messengers; building skills in youth and adults
- Education about the importance of positive childhood experiences (PACES); mentoring mindset for adults; youth voice
- Sustainable funding

CONCERNS

- High rates of youth substance use and access

We observed that one of the strengths of the breakout group design was to have folks who are already involved in relevant activities working on a strategy together so that connection was happening around the work in real time. United Way is always grateful to have the opportunity to convene around timely issues. **Thank you!**





50+ Participants Attended, Representing:

BAART Programs • Buell Street Dismas House • Building Bright Futures • Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community • Common Good Vermont • Central Vermont Prevention Coalition/Central Vermont Medical Center • Dismas of Vermont • Department of Health, Division of Substance Use • Education Justice Coalition of VT • Essex High School • Flavors Hook Kids Vermont • Franklin Grand Isle Tobacco Prevention Coalition • Georgia Public Library • Mad River Mentoring • Maquam Bay of the Missisquoi/Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi • Mentor VT • New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program • Prevent Child Abuse VT • Project All Together Now • Richard Kemp Center • Spectrum • Twinfield Together Mentoring Program • United Immigrant & Refugee Communities of VT INC. • United Way of Northwest Vermont • UP for Learning • University of Vermont Health Network • Vermont House of Representatives • Vermont Racial Justice Alliance • Vermont National Guard Counter Drug Program • Winooski Partnership for Prevention • Youth First Mentoring • YWCA Vermont

2

BUILDING FUNCTIONS & CAPACITY

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



Hosted First Hybrid Network Meeting in June 2026

Convened the Prevention Network in person and online to share information about our alcohol policy work–with positive feedback!

- "I thought this went well and I enjoyed the meeting and the contact with folks. Thanks!"
- "Thanks for lunch and the opportunity to connect–I would consider the meeting a huge success!"
- "Thank you for hosting it, it went smoothly and felt like the right pace to have a productive discussion and include everyone at the same time."
- "I loved being in person and being able to network and having time to socialize over lunch and get to know folks better–super great!"

Updated County Scorecards on 54 Data Points

Scorecards include 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

See Scorecards at:
preventionnetworknwvt.org/community-data



Leverage Additional Resources

United Way increased its capacity to advance prevention in Northwest and Central Vermont:

- Continued our partnership with VT National Guard Counterdrug Program & with AmeriCorps VISTA
- Welcomed Beth Whitlock, Director of Prevention and Housing Initiatives, to our team!

Building Awareness of Training Opportunities

Across the region, United Way helped our community partners promote 56 trainings:

JULY 2025

Overdose Prevention Training – Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC), VT CARES
Substance Use Addiction Summit 2025
Gone Guys Documentary & Community Conversation

AUGUST 2025

From Risk to Resilience – Project Echo
From Punishment to Positive Reinforcement – Project Echo
From Talking to Listening – Project Echo
HR, Culture, and Communication in Tough Times – Common Good Vermont
2025 Youth Prevention Institute – New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program (NEHIDTA), ADAPT, Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC)

SEPTEMBER 2025

Nonprofit Management Certificate Program – Common Good Vermont
Youth Thrive – Vermont Afterschool
The Art of The Ask: Building Confidence and Skills in Fundraising – Prevention Works!VT
Leading Great Meetings: Practical Tools for Effective Facilitation – Prevention Works!VT

OCTOBER 2025

Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training – Center for Tobacco Independence
2025 HIDTA Summit: Prevention Through Connection – High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program (HIDTA)
State Nonprofit Summit – Common Good Vermont
Introduction to Prevention Core Competencies – Prevention Works!VT, Northern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH), Healthy Lamoille Valley

NOVEMBER 2025

Prevention Ethics – Vermont Department of Health Division of Substance Use Programs (VDH DSU)
Fundraising & Development Certificate Program – Common Good Vermont
Triangulum of Nicotine, Vaping, and Cannabis – New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program (NEHIDTA) and Stanford's REACH Lab
Operational Security – Common Good Vermont

DECEMBER 2025

Addressing Substance Use in Youth with a Prevention Lens Virtual Training – New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor's Association
Restorative Practices in Schools Webinar – UP for Learning and Vermont Department of Health
Opioid Addiction, the Impacts of Overdoses, and Treatment and Prevention Strategies Virtual Training – New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor's Association
Transforming Supervision for the Behavioral Health Workforce 2026 – Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine
Substance Use Trends: Child Safety and Family Risk – National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW)
Art Therapy Seminar for Mental/Health Clinicians – Barre Social Club
MHFA – Sunshine Silver Lining

JANUARY 2026

Supporting Healthy Use of Media & Technology for Your Child – Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community (BPHC)
Substance Use in Youth Using a Prevention Lens – New Hampshire Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor's Association
Restorative Practices in Schools – Vermont Department of Health and UP for Learning
Getting to 'Y' Program Orientation for Adults – UP for Learning
Federal Policy Changes & the Law – Common Good Vermont
iCare Learning Program – Massachusetts Department of Public Health
A Lifespan Approach to Prevention – Prevention Works!VT

FEBRUARY 2026

Media Skills for Youth – Richard Kemp Center
Nonprofit Fundraising Series – Common Good Vermont
Intro to Hope – Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC)

MARCH 2026

14th Annual Vermont College Symposium: The Heart of Prevention – Vermont Department of Health
Building Health-Promoting Relationships with Youth – New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program (NEHIDTA)
Bridging the Gaps: Prevention Through Connection – Prevention Works!VT
Barre Overdose Training – Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC) and Vermont CARES
Project ECHO: Strengths Based Frameworks – New England Prevention Technology Transfer Center
Chronic Absentee Zoom Series – University of Vermont

APRIL 2026

Barre and Williamstown Overdose Training – Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC) and Vermont CARES
Medetomidine Impacts on Clinical Management and Systems of Care – The American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine

MAY 2026

2026 HOPE Summit – Tufts
Project ECHO: Community, Aging and Equity – University of New Hampshire
Williamstown Overdose Training – Central Vermont Prevention Coalition (CVPC) and Vermont CARES
Emotional Sobriety I and II – Divided Sky Foundation and Trusted Provider Network Health
Substance Use Addiction Summit 2026
Care Conference: Expanding Addiction Systems – Blueprint for Health and Vermont Department of Health
Data and Program Evaluation Training Series – Common Good Vermont
SAPST – Vermont Department of Health
Protect Your Game: Substance-Free Athletics – New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program (NEHIDTA)

JUNE 2026

Quit Smoking Workshops – 802Quits
Problem Gambling 101 for Vermonters – VT Gambling Help

115 unique people

representing

72 organizations

attended trainings we sponsored, Prevention Network Meetings, and the Summit.

3

FACILITATING COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS & INITIATIVES

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



Investing in Alcohol Policy

Alcohol policy has been identified by regional partners as a top priority for prevention engagement and coordinated action across Vermont. **We invested $90,000** to support the development of a communications and engagement campaign to broaden understanding of Vermont's high rates of alcohol use disorder (AUD), building on existing research and policy proposals from Winooski Partnership for Prevention (WPP).

This investment paid for a campaign organizing strategy consultant and a communications consultant to assess public awareness of Vermont's high rates of alcohol use and AUD, including their social and economic impacts; supported WPP's engagement and messaging; helped with research and strategy; tested messaging and support for specific policies that have been shown to reduce alcohol misuse, and developed a plan for broader outreach and engagement across Vermont.

Focus groups held in March 2026 revealed that:

- The general public has little awareness of Vermont's high rate of AUD and its social and economic impacts on the state;
- Only half of participants were aware of the causal link between alcohol and cancer;
- There is little understanding of the process of recovery from AUD; learning more about this topic evokes urgency for finding a solution;
- Communications should utilize science and personal stories to build credibility and empathy for the issue.

Investing in Tobacco Policy

We invested $50,000 to support capacity, communications, and outreach for the Flavors Hook Kids VT campaign, which is working to protect kids by ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in Vermont:

- Banned sale and marketing of deceptive tobacco products that look like school supplies and toys;
- Removed penalties on youth for possession and use and now promotes cessation as an alternative to punishment for those caught attempting to purchase tobacco products with a fake ID;
- Increased fines for retailers and strengthened Vermont's regulatory market;
- Increased fines for selling without a license or selling
  to someone under 21; removes non-consecutive penalties and revokes license after 5th violation;
- Separated tobacco license from alcohol license: Vermont previously allowed alcohol retailers to get a tobacco license for free. No other state in the country allows this, making enforcement of tobacco laws more difficult;
- Created wholesaler license within the Deparment of Liquor & Lottery, allowing for more oversight of the products on the shelves.

In 2026-2027, United Way is convening an Alcohol Communications Workgroup that includes prevention organizations across Vermont and the Vermont Division of Substance Use to implement focus group findings and strategy in a statewide communications campaign.

4

INVESTING STATE PREVENTION FUNDS

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



$647,000

in subgrants awarded to 17* organizations

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.

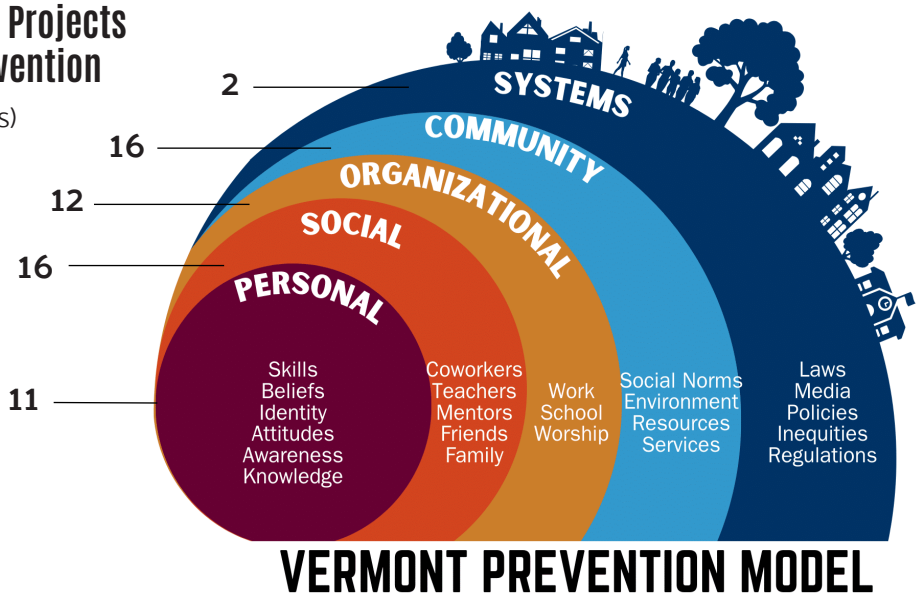
Funding Priorities

- 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

(most programs focus on multiple levels)

Total # of subgrants: 18



VERMONT PREVENTION MODEL

**The Pride Center suspended operations midway through this funding in 2025. Vermont Cares received the remainder of the grant.*

Year 3 Subgrants Awarded By Region 1 Funding Committee

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

50+ hours served by the Funding Committee throughout orientation, training, and grant-making process

ORGANIZATION	SUBGRANT FOCUS	AWARD
BIPOC Youth Mentorship Program	BIPOC Youth Mentorship	$25,000
Strengthening protective factors for BIPOC youth through culturally responsive mentorship and prevention training. BIPOC mentors are trained in substance use prevention and youth development strategies and provide mentees with biweekly support and group activities. Mentors meet youth biweekly, providing personalized support and community-building activities.		
Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community	Community-Level Prevention Strategies in Burlington	$50,000
Addressed underage and high-risk alcohol and cannabis use in Burlington by strengthening local prevention capacity to implement evidence-based strategies. Targets community systems, policies, and local conditions that impact Burlington's 44,528 residents, with a focus on increasing youth engagement and skills in prevention, supporting school-based policy and practice improvement, and improving local municipal policies and practices to support public health.		
Community Empowering Youth: The Café	3rd Space	$50,000
Serves youth in grades 6-12 by providing open-ended hang out opportunities at the Enosburg center for youth to socialize in their community. Also provides guided learning opportunities such as cooking classes, board game tournaments, bike repairs, and music lessons. Expanding to also offer pop-up events in Richford.		
Education Justice Coalition	Supporting BIPOC Youth	$50,000
Supports BIPOC youth with leadership development and training. The work centers healthy BIPOC youth - adult relationships, BIPOC youth leadership, and empowering BIPOC youth to make a change.		
Georgia Public Library	3rd Space	$36,000
An arts-based program in collaboration with the St. Albans Pride Corps called "Here I Belong," which offers opportunity for connection, social networking, and mutual support for those who identify as LGBTIA+ in Franklin County.		
Good Samaritan Haven	Embedding Recovery in Homeless Services	$50,000
The project embeds recovery principles into shelter operations, integrating restorative practices alongside existing wellness programs. The shelter is transformed from a crisis-response setting to a healing community where guests develop coping skills, foster connections, and access essential resources.		

Cont'd ▶

ORGANIZATION	SUBGRANT FOCUS	AWARD
King Street Center	Building Resilience in Youth & Their Families	$50,000
Aims to uplift Burlington's low-income community by strengthening skills, providing education and mentorship and reducing barriers. Through consistent adult support guided by the SPF, the goal is to prevent substance misuse for middle school aged youth and their families.		
Mad River Mentoring	1:1 Mentoring Program Expansion	$10,000
Community-based 1:1 mentoring program serving youth ages 8-18 who live or go to school in the Harwood Union School District. The goal is so foster strong relationships that enhance the availability of support and resources crucial for the well-being, sense of belonging, and overall quality of life for youth.		
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont	Supporting Parents in Treatment & Recovery	$22,000
Offering Nurturing Programs for Families in Substance Use Treatment & Recovery to families in Chittenden, Franklin, and Washington County. The program will increase the number of safe, substance-abuse-free, nurturing, stable, and violence-free home environments.		
Pride Center	2STLGBQIA+ Substance Use Prevention Project	$15,500
Expands peer-led, harm reduction-focused, and culturally grounded program for 2STLGBQIA+ Vermonters. Community events, outreach, partnerships, and direct support will help build protective factors and reduce barriers to prevention services.		
Project All Together Now VT	Youth Led Prevention Programming	$50,000
A youth-driven prevention coalition that empowers youth to create change for equitable mental health and well-being outcomes in Eastern Chittenden County. Creates opportunities for youth to connect and become stewards of their community to build a bridge for better mental health between youth, school, and community.		
Richard Kemp Center	Expansion of Current Initiatives	$50,000
Aims to expand its current initiatives, education tools, prevention efforts, and community wellness efforts. The target population is black and brown youth, children, and families in Burlington and Winooski and beyond. In collaboration with partners, the Richard Kemp Center is expanding into marginalized communities to offer programs and services that are currently ineffective, inefficient or nonexistent.		
Twinfield Together Mentoring	Middle School Clubs and Wellness	$20,000
A mentoring program embedded into the school, Twinfield is an opportunity for 100% of middle school students to engage in clubs during the school day and promote wellness every Friday. This dedicated time creates protective factors for substance use by giving youth access to adults they can turn to, engagement in hobbies and skills, and a sense of connection.		
United Immigrant & Refugee Community of Vermont	Substance Misuse Prevention and Wellness	$50,000
Through Resilient Futures, UIRC offers a comprehensive, community-driven initiative designed to prevent substance misuse and promote holistic wellness within VT's immigrant and refugee communities. This program includes culturally responsive workshops, youth engagement, mental health support, and health navigation.		

Cont'd ▶

ORGANIZATION	SUBGRANT FOCUS	AWARD
UP for Learning	Supporting Getting to 'Y' (GTY) Teams	$12,000
Expands access to Getting to 'Y': Youth Bring Meaning to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which equips youth-adult teams to analyze and respond to YRBS data via projects that reduce health risks and strengthen protective factors.		
Vermont CARES	2SLGBTQIA+ Substance Use Prevention	$34,500
As Vermont's longest-standing AIDS Service Organization, Vermont CARES has decades of experience advancing harm reduction, health equity, and community well-being, particularly among 2SLGBTQ+ Vermonters and people disproportionately affected by stigma, HIV/AIDS, substance use, and structural inequities. Staff operate in nearly all counties, with offices based in Burlington, Barre, Rutland, and St Johnsbury, and offer mobile services, enabling the organization to meet individuals where they are and deliver consistent, best practice-based programming.		
Winooski Partnership for Prevention	Community-Identified Priorities in SUDs Prevention	$50,000
Expanding on last year's success, the project will re-focus prevention-related discussions in Winooski on the actual voices of residents and youth who go to school in Winooski. The staff will focus on sharing issues and solutions identified in the Assessment Report and continue to support youth in advocating for policy, systems, and environmental change.		
Youth First Mentoring	Cultural Competency and Youth Voice	$22,000
Increased capacity to serve Barre City youth by deepening their outreach to families, youth, and community partners. The project will also increase the organization's cultural competency to better serve the changing demographics, and will add Youth Voice to their decision-making framework.		

Other Funding

- Scholarships for 10 prevention organizations to attend the Common Good Vermont Fundraising & Development Certificate program - **$28,000**
- Community Empowering Youth: The Café - expansion and pop-up activities in Richford - **$20,000**
- Central Vermont Prevention Coalition - coalition operations and activities - **$20,000**
- Swanton Rec summer prevention programming, including youth leadership and community wellbeing activities - **$20,000**
- Outright Vermont - supported attendance at Camp Outright for Region 1 LGBTQ+ youth - **$20,000**
- Hosted Prevention Core Competencies for subgrantees and other partners - **$10,000**
- Funded 9 Region 1 prevention partners to attend Prevention Core Competencies hosted by Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital - **$4,650**
- Central Vermont Medical Center - start-up costs for Primary Prevention Specialist position - **$5,000**
- Arts So Wonderful - sponsorship to host substance-free events - **$2,500**
- Funded 10 Region 1 prevention partners to attend the Prevention Works!VT conference - **$1,225**
- Co-hosted a Prevention Day Ice Cream Social at the State House with fellow Lead Prevention Organization to share updates about our work as the LPO and the programs and activities we support