

May 29, 2025

# **Village Trust Initiative Opens for Applications on 7/9**





The Vermont village is often recognized as an iconic hub of general stores, churches, and community gathering spaces where residents come together. These villages have no shortage of people who want their communities to thrive, and the Vermont village continues to be the stage of vibrant social life.

The **Village Trust Initiative** (VTI), made possible with a \$10 million Congressionally Directed Spending award from former Senator Patrick Leahy's office, fosters community driven revitalization of both the physical and social infrastructure at the foundation of the historical success of Vermont's small villages. The VTI launched in 2024, bringing seven communities into the program and supporting them with technical assistance and funding to create a Community Trust and take on a transformational revitalization project. Now in its second year, VTI is pleased to announce that a new application round will open July 7th to towns with fewer than 2,500 people as per the 2020 Census. An informational webinar on the program and the application process will be held on Monday, June 9th at noon.



## What does this program fund?

The Village Trust Initiative supports communities who want to form a Community Trust and undertake a transformational revitalization project in their historic village. The project could be the revitalization of a general store, the creation of a community center, improvement of accessibility of an old town hall, renovation of a large historic home into village-scale housing, or other historic resource revitalization project.

Together, the Village Trust Initiative partners - the Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV), the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD), and the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) will:

- Facilitate the development of a new or existing community trust organization, a 501c3 nonprofit organization with a mission focused on the vitality of the community, to lead the implementation of the project. Learn more about community trust organizations here: [What is a Community Trust?](#)
- Support robust community engagement and project prioritization.
- Provide technical assistance support for the pre-development work, such as permitting, feasibility, engineering, design, and more.
- Provide initial funding and help assemble other funding sources for the construction phase of a project.

There are two phases of funding for selected projects; **technical assistance funding** to help with the predevelopment work that every project requires and **implementation funding** to help with rehabilitation and construction. Each project can expect between \$200,000-\$450,000 of funding to support the Community Trust and its project. The award amount will depend on project scale, community need, and the funding landscape. For all



projects, the award will be substantial enough to simplify the project's funding stack.

## How does my community apply?

The online application opens on July 7, 2025. Visit [ptvermont.org/village-trust-initiative](https://ptvermont.org/village-trust-initiative) to find the application link. **Applications are due by September 7, 2025,**

## What will make our application competitive?

To participate in this program, your community must:

- Be a town of fewer than 2,500 residents based on the 2020 Decennial Census.
- Have an existing community trust organization or the desire to build one.
- Be interested in a revitalization project utilizing a historic resource or site in an established village environment. Greenspace and trails are not eligible.
- Have site control. Site control means that the community trust organization must either own the building OR have a long-term and well documented lease recorded in the Town land records. Applicants may also have a clear path towards site control at the time of application. If you have questions about site control, please connect with Nicole Gratton at [nicole@ptvermont.org](mailto:nicole@ptvermont.org). VTI funds cannot be used for acquisition of a parcel or property.
- Have endorsement by the Selectboard to participate in the program (a motion in Selectboard meeting minutes or a letter indicating support).

There will be two additional rounds of the Village Trust Initiative program in 2026 and 2027 in case your community is interested in the program but isn't ready to apply this



year.

## How can my community learn more?

[Register](#) for an informational session to learn more about this program, hear about the application process, and ask questions. The webinar will be recorded and available to all who registered.

To learn more and apply, visit: [ptvermont.org/village-trust-initiative](https://ptvermont.org/village-trust-initiative) or contact Kaziah Haviland at [kaziah@vtrural.org](mailto:kaziah@vtrural.org). The webpage has an excellent Frequently Asked Questions section.

## Where can my community find help with grant writing or management?

VLCT published a resource, [Increasing Municipal Capacity for Grants](#), that offers ideas for assistance with grants. Many of the capacity builders also provide project management services. Hiring experienced project management assistance can increase the speed of project development and help avoid cost, permitting, and other development surprises.

