

September 20, 2025

# **Better Connections Grant Program Opens for Applications**



Better Connections is an ongoing partnership between the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) that seeks to align state and local investments to increase transportation options, build resilience, and strengthen economic vitality in Vermont's Community Centers through planning grants.

## What This Program Funds

This program provides funds a consultant to help the municipality engage in a master planning effort that evaluate multi-modal transportation options, future land use, and water quality improvements. Your community will develop an action-oriented plan and be linked to a growing network of public and philanthropic partners to help you implement priority projects. The program also can fund corresponding economic and marketing plans to ensure the market viability of the proposed improvements and inform the municipality's capital planning.

## How Your Community Applies

- A required [Pre-Application form](#) must be submitted, and a Pre-Application interview must be completed by **October 24, 2025**.
- The deadline for application submission is **October 31, 2025**.
- Projects located within Chittenden County are not eligible for this program.

## Make Your Community's Application Competitive

- The municipality's planning process must be confirmed by the Regional Planning Commission by October 31, 2025.
- Inter-municipal efforts that address a shared issue are encouraged.
- The project must be consistent with the goals or the municipal or regional plan.
- Projects improve the multimodal transportation system, downtown and village revitalization, and lead to project implementation.
- Projects must include an effective community visioning process and robust stakeholder involvement. A successful master plan includes an extensive, equitable, and inclusive public engagement process with multiple public meetings, workshops, charrettes, and/or pop-up events.
- Project management by the municipality or a regional planning commission is required. If municipal, a dedicated staff person with experience managing state or federal grants and with capacity to complete required tasks is necessary. The Program does not fund municipal staff time. Poor administrative performance on previous state grants will affect the competitiveness of an application (points deducted).

## Where You Can Learn More

Program information is available at [Better Connections Program](#). The Applications Page includes the Program Overview, Application, and other information.

You can contact Faith Ahearn Dall, VTrans Planning Coordinator, at [faith.dall@vermont.gov](mailto:faith.dall@vermont.gov) or 802-793-6680, or Natalie Elvidge, ACCD Planning Coordinator, at [natalie.elvidge@vermont.gov](mailto:natalie.elvidge@vermont.gov) or 802-261-1681.

## Find Grant Writing or Grant/Project Management Help

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.