

For Immediate Release

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WORKING COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE AWARDS \$1.9 MILLION IN GRANTS TO FOUR VERMONT COMMUNITIES

Grants will fund initiatives to improve economic outcomes for rural towns and smaller cities

Barre, Vt. – Federal Reserve Bank of Boston President Eric Rosengren and Vermont Governor Phil Scott today announced that the Springfield Area, Greater Barre, Lamoille County, and Winooski are the recipients of \$300,000 grants as part of the Boston Fed’s [Working Communities Challenge](#). The program includes more than \$700,000 in additional planning and action grants for Vermont communities, and aims to strengthen the economies of rural towns and smaller cities. The competition officially launched in Vermont in 2019 with state, private sector, and not-for-profit support.

Each of the four communities will receive the grants over three years to support programs designed to bolster economic equality and workforce development across these regions of the state.

“Congratulations to each of these communities for putting together proposals designed to address significant needs in their unique regions,” Rosengren said. “This is just the start of a lot of hard work on behalf of the residents in these communities. I look forward to working with these teams and following their progress over the coming years.”

- **Springfield** seeks to increase workforce participation to combat generational poverty and help residents support themselves and their families.
- **Greater Barre** looks to lower the rate of single female head of households in poverty by 15% in 10 years.
- **Lamoille County** plans to tackle systemic barriers to employment and improve workforce transitions in order to lower the county’s unemployment rate by 2024 and create a more diversified economy.
- **Winooski** aims to establish systems to lift underrepresented voices and involve the area’s diverse population in decision-making and community dialogue.

“I want to congratulate the four winners we’re announcing today and thank the Boston Fed for working with us on this initiative,” said Governor Scott. “This pandemic has shown us why it’s important to strengthen our small communities and ensure we have more diversity in our economy so we’re not so

reliant on any one sector or any one region. Grants like this will help achieve these goals so we can come out of this pandemic stronger and more resilient.”

President Rosengren and Governor Scott will celebrate the four communities being named grant recipients on Thursday, November 19, at 12 p.m. via a virtual event. [Register here](#) to join and hear from Rosengren and Scott. Leaders from each of the four communities and funders will also share their efforts to strengthen their local economies and build healthy communities.

To learn more about the communities and the initiatives these grants will support please check out a [series of videos that feature their work](#).

About the Working Communities Challenge

The Working Communities Challenge advances local collaborative efforts that build strong, healthy economies and communities in Vermont’s rural towns, regions, and smaller cities. Launched in 2019, the initiative supports diverse, local teams as they tackle complex challenges facing their communities. This unique three-year grant competition focuses on economic opportunity for communities and residents with low incomes. Its supported by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, the State of Vermont, national and local philanthropy, and private sector employers.

The Working Cities Challenge is funded by of the state of Vermont and a collaboration that includes the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NeighborWorks America, The Avangrid Foundation, The Northern Border Regional Commission, The William J. and Dorothy K. O’Neill Foundation, The National Life Foundation, The Vermont Community Foundation, The TD Charitable Foundation, Green Mountain Power, Efficiency Vermont, Pomerleau Real Estate, People’s United Bank, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc., Northfield Savings Bank, Vermont State Employees Credit Union (VSECU), Housing Vermont, and Windham Foundation. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston does not provide funding for the initiative.

For more on the Working Communities Challenge, visit <https://www.bostonfed.org/workingplaces/communities-challenge.aspx>.