

Vermont Community Foundation

Community Report

Lamoille County

Lamoille County has deep agricultural and forestry roots and is known for its tourism economy centered on skiing, hiking, and scenic landscapes. Its historic character endures through covered bridges, farmsteads, and landmarks such as the Fisher Covered Railroad Bridge in Wolcott and the Hyde Park Village Historic District. Outdoor recreation remains central, with the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Smugglers' Notch, and state parks drawing visitors year-round. The county's close-knit communities are known for their resourcefulness and strong local traditions. Seasonal festivals, farmers markets, and community gatherings reflect a culture that values connection, resilience, and a deep sense of place. In 2023 and 2024, severe flooding caused widespread damage to roads, homes, and businesses—particularly in Johnson, Wolcott, and Cambridge. Federal disaster declarations supported recovery, while local groups like Lamoille Area Recovery Network (LeARN) coordinated rebuilding and assistance. Efforts include road and bridge repairs, floodplain restoration, and hazard mitigation planning to strengthen resilience. As the region balances tourism with housing, infrastructure, and environmental concerns, flood recovery has become a defining force shaping its future.

The strength of Lamoille County shines in how neighbors rallied after the floods—repairing roads, restoring homes, and rebuilding their communities together.

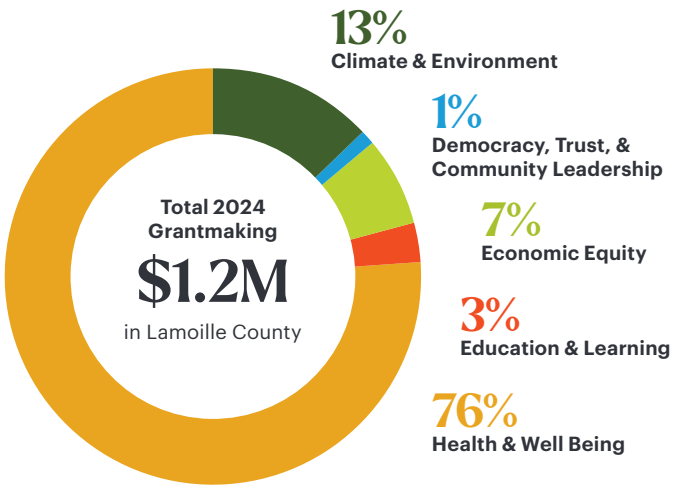

Photo Credit: Ashley Chilson

$1.2M Total 2024 Grantmaking | 124 Total 2024 Grants | $400K in Active Mission Investments (as of June 30, 2025)

Several key organizations contribute to Lamoille County's vitality, enhancing life for residents and creating opportunities that draw visitors and new community members.

Jenna's Promise

Since 2023, Jenna's Promise has received nearly $200K from VCF, including $105K to support the organization's recovery and community services following the 2023 and 2024 floods.

The Current

The Current has received support from donor advised fundholders and VCF's Arts and Social Cohesion grant program, strengthening belonging and community cohesion through arts and collaboration.

Lamoille Restorative Center

In 2024, the Katz Amsterdam Charitable Trust provided $225K to VCF to increase access to behavioral and mental health services across Vermont, including funding for the Lamoille Restorative Center.



Green Mountain Fund

Established in 1993, the Green Mountain Fund at the VCF supports charitable activities in Lamoille County. Over time, its reach has grown to include Orleans County and neighboring communities, deepening its regional impact. Grants from the fund create opportunities for low-income youth and families, foster health and wellness, and strengthen community connections. They also help people engage with the natural environment, support sustainable farming and local food systems, and advance Vermont's climate goals—building stewardship, resilience, and lasting impact for generations to come.

"Lamoille County is such an important part of our state, and supporting the organizations that strengthen its communities has always felt deeply meaningful to me. It's a place I genuinely want to see thrive," said the fund's anonymous founder.

Over more than three decades of giving, the fund has awarded $5 million in grant funding to local organizations, reflecting an enduring commitment to community vitality and a legacy of meaningful change. In addition to the organizations highlighted below, the fund has provided recurring support to the Lamoille Family Center, Peoples Academy, the Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District, and AWARE, Inc., as well as area schools, including Cambridge Elementary, Eden Central, Hyde Park Elementary, and Johnson Elementary, and others.





River Arts spotlight

Deeply committed to supporting the arts in Lamoille County and surrounding communities, the fund first supported River Arts in 2002, helping the organization develop a strategic plan and build its early staffing and development model. Since then, River Arts has received ongoing support for its afterschool arts program, offering affordable, enriching classes for Lamoille Valley families in ceramics, painting, and more. The program gives kids a safe, supportive space to build skills, make friends, and explore creativity. With limited afterschool options in the area—and growing demand from a rising population—the program fills a critical gap in accessible youth enrichment.

ReSOURCE spotlight

Across Vermont, ReSOURCE creates opportunity through job training, credentialing, and placement with local employers. Through hands-on training and paid or stipend-supported experience in fields like construction and HVAC, participants gain the skills needed to build stable, sustainable careers. The Green Mountain Fund has supported the organization's workforce development work in Lamoille County with nearly $30K over the last decade, helping low-income residents gain marketable skills and credentials while strengthening the local workforce. These programs help participants move from unemployment or low-wage work to stable, livable-wage careers, giving families a stronger foundation to prosper.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of River Arts (top and middle left). Pam Laser, ReSOURCE Weatherization Training Coordinator (middle right)

STOWE LAND TRUST

A Family's Legacy Protects Stowe's Brownsville Forest

What once seemed impossible—the conservation of Stowe's largest remaining unprotected privately-owned forest—became reality.

Stowe Land Trust (SLT) received a $5 million anonymous gift through the Vermont Community Foundation in 2019—the largest single grant the Foundation has ever made—to support the purchase of the 750-acre Brownsville Forest. When the property became available, a Vermont family stepped forward to ensure the land remained undeveloped and preserved as a vital natural resource for generations to come.

"We had an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to conserve this outstanding property for our community," said former SLT Executive Director Kristen Sharpless. "It was the last conservation project of its kind that could happen in our town, and it was truly exceptional to have everything come together to make it possible."

Photo Credit: Steven Mermelstein



ALDEN AND MARY BRYAN

A Legacy in Land and Art

In 1939, Alden and Mary Bryan moved to Brewster Uplands in Jeffersonville, VT—a property with historic dairy farms, a one-room schoolhouse, and stunning views of Mt. Mansfield. Over generations, the Bryan family cared for the land, creating trails and preserving its natural beauty.

After Mary's passing in 1978, Alden honored Mary by creating the Bryan Memorial Gallery in Jeffersonville, which became a hub for artists inspired by Lamoille County's landscape. In 2006, the family donated the Brewster Uplands property to the Vermont Land Trust.

The Bryans' generosity continues to support the community they loved. Several funds at the VCF support the gallery and the Brewster Uplands, ensuring that Vermonters and visitors alike continue to enjoy the art, trails, and working landscape they helped preserve.

Photo Credit: Bryan Gallery



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- former SLT Executive Director Kristen Sharpless

Lamoille County Mission Investing in Action

HIGH MOWING ORGANIC SEEDS:

Where Goodness Grows

Located in Wolcott, High Mowing Seeds (HMS) was founded in 1996 by Tom Stearns as one of the nation's first certified organic seed companies. At first, it offered only 28 varieties, most of which came from Tom's backyard. Today the company has over 700 heirloom, open-pollinated, and hybrid seed varieties supported by many independent organic seed farmers. The company has grown from a solo operation to a professionally managed business distributing throughout the United States, its territories, and Canada. The VCF's initial $150K loan in 2016 converted to an equity investment in 2020.

In their last fiscal year, HMS donated more than 110,000 seed packets to school groups, nonprofits, and community garden programs. Its trials farm, which tests and refines new varieties, also generates a tremendous amount of produce. Also in FY2025, nearly 10,000 pounds of produce were donated to Salvation Farms and subsequently distributed to local food programs around the state. Over the same period, HMS added 65 new varieties to their seed assortment, many of which would not otherwise be available as organic varieties.

Through its innovation, generosity, and commitment to sustainability, High Mowing continues to expand opportunities for organic farmers and gardeners everywhere.

JONESLAN FARM:

A Farm's Journey from Cows to Goats

The Joneslan Farm investment began in 2020 with a loan to support the transition from milking cows to milking goats, secured by the new livestock. At the time, the farm was navigating bankruptcy, making the project a significant demonstration of adaptability. Today, Joneslan's primary customer is Vermont Creamery (Land O'Lakes) and the farm continues to supply Fat Toad Farm (Butterfly Bakery).

The transition proved more challenging than expected, with a steep learning curve on goat genetics and husbandry. After several years of diligent effort, herd size, productivity, and milk quality are consistently improving. When the 2023 floods disrupted feed supply, VCF provided a $25,000 emergency loan in early 2024 to stabilize operations. The farm's outlook continues to strengthen, and lessons learned are being shared with other operations through the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program to support other farms navigating transition and recovery.

Photo Credit: courtesy of High Mowing Seeds



To learn more or speak with a philanthropic advisor, please visit **vermontcf.org** or contact us at **philanthropy@vermontcf.org** or **802 388-3355 opt. 5.**