



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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## About the Community Visit Program

### How does a Community Visit work?

VCRD's Community Visit program actively connects grassroots community building efforts in towns across Vermont with state-wide resources, expertise and opportunities. Each Visit brings together a broad mix of community members with a *visiting resource team*, made up of Council members and statewide providers (state, federal, non-profit, and philanthropic), to create intensive partnerships and tailored work plans for long-term local success. The Visit process is designed for community members to prioritize and choose strategic goals and vision for their community and for the state-wide visiting resource team to provide advice and expertise to help them get there.

The program takes place over four months with a series of public meetings, facilitated discussions and community events. To be successful, a broad spectrum of community members must be involved; invitations sent through schools, businesses, and through town offices to residents are very important.

Community Visits are produced by VCRD in partnership with the [Vermont Community Foundation](#) [1] which is devoted to the progress of Vermont communities; VCF supports and helps guide visits, and provides significant resources to community projects throughout Vermont. In addition to VCF support, we raise funds from business, private, philanthropic, and state sources to be able to sustain this program. Communities are asked to contribute their time, energy, and skills to make sure the process is well-attended and capacity is built locally to follow through on the identified priorities.

### What Does a Community Visit Produce?

The **Visit** begins with a series of focus groups and a community wide discussion where residents champion their ideas for the future of their town. A local chairperson will help to keep the community informed and involved as the program progresses. It is important that the community decides together what their priorities are through discussion and dialogue, which VCRD will help facilitate. Then the visiting resource team brings their best knowledge and most appropriate resources to advise and help construct work plans for local volunteers.

Once priority areas are established, **volunteers form Task Forces** to advance the identified strategies; such as youth activities, economic development, infrastructure development or communications and events. Each Task Force has *chairperson* who will manage meetings and keep work moving forward. Local leaders have direct access through the process to state-wide resources, grant opportunities, non-profit, state and philanthropic partners through the *Resource Team*.

## Past Community Visits

Since 1996 VCRD has conducted 26 Community Visits, usually working in two communities each year from the northern border in Troy and Jay, south to Pownal. For details on specific communities and their accomplishments, goals, and resources, please visit our Reports Page.

**What will success mean for your town?** For some towns, the **Visit** creates community goodwill and celebrations, such as *Rutland's Friday Night Live* [2] series; outdoor summertime events each week with live music, food and shopping opportunities. For others, it is used to leverage funds or planning resources, such as *Pownal's affordable housing project* or *Johnson's downtown redesign*. And for others, the **Visit** provides a mechanism to talk about important issues and begin long term work for the future, as in *Killington's 4-season tourism planning*, or *Poultney's downtown revitalization work*. See a [list of some of projects](#) [3] towns have begun as a result of a Community Visit process in their community.

## Reports and Documents

- [Community Visit Reports](#) [4]
- [Diagram of Process](#) [5]
- [Community Visit Flyer](#) [6]

## For More Information

If your community would like more information about this program or is interested in hosting in a Community Visit, please contact us at 802-223-6091 or [info@vtrural.org](mailto:info@vtrural.org) [7].

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**Source URL:** <https://www.vtrural.org/programs/community-visits/about>

### Links:

[1] <https://www.vermontcf.org/Home.aspx>

[2] <http://www.rutlanddowntown.com/events-entertainment/friday-night-live>

[3] <http://vtrural.org/programs/community-programs/communityvisit/snapshot>

[4] <https://www.vtrural.org/programs/community-visits/reports>

[5] [https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/content/reports/community visits/CVDiagram.pdf](https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/content/reports/community%20visits/CVDiagram.pdf)

[6] <https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/content/CommunityVisits/ComVisitProgram-1pager2016.pdf>

[7] <mailto:info@vtrural.org>