



Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

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Montpelier, Vermont 05633-0206

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

SEEDS

ROUND 7, FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022

BUILDING GREATER CAPACITY TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC) seeks new proposals for SEEDS grants. This is a unique funding opportunity for small-scale, innovative projects that increase community capacity to support Vermonters with developmental disabilities and family caregivers. SEEDS grants are non-renewable awards that provide \$5,000 to \$10,000 in project support. SEEDS grants are intended to “jump start” a new approach or to spread a new way of thinking about a disability issue. VTDDC places priority on applications that address specific project areas as described below in Section 3.2.

1. Background

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (VTDDC) is a statewide board created under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act [the Act]. Its mission is *to help build connections and supports that bring people with developmental disabilities and their families into the heart of Vermont communities*. Sixty percent of VTDDC members are people with disabilities or family members who are appointed by the Governor; other members are representatives from state and nonprofit agencies. The authority to make grants rests with the Council with staff support.

VTDDC receives federal funding to support advocacy and systems change activities that improve services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. With these federal dollars, VTDDC funds



activities to increase the availability of person- and family-centered supports and to promote independence, self-determination, and community inclusion. VTDDC also advocates for and works toward increased public awareness of issues affecting people with disabilities and their families.

VTDDC follows the federal definition of “developmental disability.” Specifically, this is a disability that happens before the age of 22 that affects three areas of daily living. This is broader than the definition used for developmental services by the State of Vermont, and includes people covered by Choices for Care and other Vermont programs for people with certain physical disabilities, as well as Vermonters living with developmental disabilities who do not qualify for home- and community-based services. For more information about VTDDC, please visit our website:

<https://ddc.vermont.gov/>

2. Overview of Request for Proposals

Every five years, VTDDC engages in a review of the needs of people with developmental disabilities in Vermont. From this, the Council builds a new Five-Year State Plan that will guide how the Council uses its resources—including VTDDC’s annual allocation of federal funds—to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. **All VTDDC grants must support the implementation of one or more goals or objectives in the Five-Year State Plan.**

To review the VTDDC Five-Year State Plan for 2017–2021, please see:

<https://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/5-year-state-plan>

2.1 Term of Agreement

The term of the grant agreement arising from this RFP shall be for an anticipated twelve (12) months, from January 1, 2022, to December 30, 2022. The timeline may be shorter depending upon specific project needs, but the term of the agreement shall not be shorter than six (6) months.

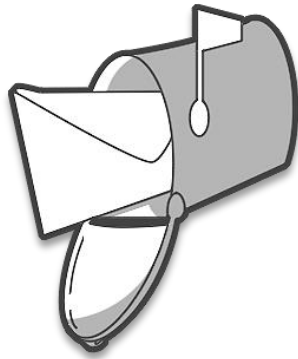
2.2 Funds Available

Individual awards will range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. VTDDC anticipates making 6 to 12 awards as a result of this RFP, based on the quality of the

applications and availability of funds. VTDC may re-issue this RFP to seek additional proposals.

2.3 Sole Point of Contact

All communications concerning this RFP must be addressed in writing to the attention of:



Kirsten M. Murphy, Executive Director

100 State Street, Suite 342

Montpelier, VT 05633-0206

Email: Kirsten.Murphy@Vermont.gov

Actual contact with other State of Vermont personnel or attempts by bidders to contact any other State personnel specific to this RFP could result in the rejection of their proposal.

2.4 Time-Table

The RFP procurement schedule is below. VTDDC reserves the right to modify these dates.

Estimated Procurement Schedule	Date
RFP release date	October 1, 2021
Information Session	October 13, 2021
Written questions due	October 15, 2021
Answers to written questions posted by	October 20, 2021
Applications due	November 1, 2021
Selection notification	December 3, 2021
Proposed date for grant agreement	January 1, 2022, anticipated (subject to approval by the State of Vermont)

2.5 Questions

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing to the sole point of contact by October 15, 2021. Electronic submission is acceptable. Answers to all collected questions will be post on or before October 20, 2021 at:

<https://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/seeds-grants>

2.6 Request for Assistance

VTDDC cannot provided technical assistance to a potential grantee outside of the public information session on October 13 and the written response to questions submitted under 2.4 above. However, if there is a need for assistance in either identifying an appropriate nonprofit sponsor [fiscal agent] or in obtaining accommodations and support to complete the application, VTDDC will refer potential applicants to appropriate partner organizations. Request for Assistance must be provided in writing to the sole point of contact by October 20, 2021. This can be done through email. Applicants are encouraged to seek this assistance as soon as possible in the application process.



3. Scope of Work

3.1 General Guidelines

SEEDS Grants are “capacity-building grants.” This means that they are intended to increase the ability of an organization or community to support people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (I/DD). Capacity-building activities include:

- **Training:** Teaching people about a new approach to supporting people with I/DD or a new way of thinking about a disability-related issue. Training can be provided to paid staff, people with disabilities, the public, or other groups.

- **Outreach and Public Information:** Reaching out and to inform people from different groups or communities about practices and programs that may positively impact people with I/DD and their families.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developing a plan that lays out how an organization will grow and change in the future for the benefit of people with disabilities.
- **Demonstration Projects (pilots):** Trying out a new approach on a small scale to see if it works and how it can be replicated in other communities. There are additional requirements when applying for a demonstration project. See instructions in Section 3.2 below for application question 2.8.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the VTDDC’s Five-Year State Plan, which outlines the goals and objectives that the VTDDC has filed with its federal funder, the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), to accomplish by September 30, 2026 (see attachments). **Successful proposals must describe how the grantee will assist VTDDC in implementing at least one goal or objective in this plan.**

3.2 Additional Guidelines for SEEDS Grants, Round 7

VTDDC is specifically seeking and strongly encourages projects that:

- **Addressing the Needs of Individuals with Complex Disabilities:** Projects that support customized employment, entrepreneurial opportunities, and/or ongoing skill developmental for individuals who have complex disabilities and/or high support needs¹.
- **Health and Wellness:** Primary prevention projects that support wellness and address the health disparities faced by people with developmental disabilities.

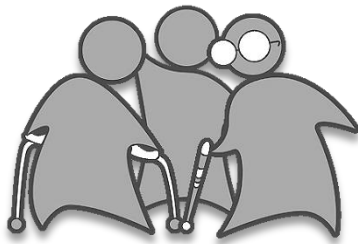
¹ The concept of “complex disabilities” is subjective and fluid. It can be understood to include individuals who have medical or mental health conditions that complicate their developmental disability, individuals who have support needs across several life domains (for example, communication, self-care, mobility), and/or individuals whose personal situation has caused an increased need for support (for example, someone at risk of homelessness). Someone may have high support needs at one period of their life, and lower support needs later. The concept is not intended to suggest low expectations. In fact, the intent of this project is to provide support and accommodations that provide individuals with complex disabilities with the same opportunities as other individuals with developmental disabilities.

- **Outreach and Promotions of Alternatives to Guardianship:** Project that raise-awareness about supported decision making and other alternatives to guardianship through a targeted outreach campaign that includes transition-age students, family caregivers, special education staff, primary care practitioners, and disability support providers.

3.3 Eligible Organizations – *who can apply?*

The applicant must be a nonprofit organization. Individuals who wish to apply for a SEEDS grant should partner with a nonprofit organization that agrees to act as your project’s fiscal agent. VTDDC can help link individual applicants with potential nonprofit sponsors. Request for assistance must be submitted in writing by October 20, 2021.

SEEDS projects and the mission of their nonprofit sponsor must be consistent with the values of the federal DD Act: Specifically,



“to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.”

3.4 Application Form and Instructions – *how to apply*

To simplify the application process, SEEDS uses an application form with eight (8) questions and a project budget. The questions provide an opportunity for you to describe why the project is important, how you will get it done, and why you and/or the sponsoring organization (fiscal agent) are in a strong position to undertake this project. Please be as specific as possible.

Instructions for Project Narrative Questions:

1. Provide a *one-paragraph* summary that clearly states the project's goal.

- What will be different as a result of this project?

2. What issue or problem for people with developmental disabilities does this project address?

- Remember that SEEDS grants focus on capacity building. How does this project increase the ability of your organization or community, or the State of Vermont, to address a problem or issue for people with developmental disabilities?

3. How will this project help VTDDC to accomplish one of the goals or objectives in its Five-Year State Plan?

- What goal or objective does this project address? How? Describe the activities you will undertake. Please be as specific as possible, stating the timeline you will follow and each step you will take. Where appropriate, use numbers to specify the scope of your work – for example, how many trainings, sessions, or meetings will you hold? How many people do you expect to participate?

4. Describe your organization's qualifications to implement the proposed project.

- Describe any skills, experience, or knowledge that puts you or your sponsoring organization in a strong position to undertake this project.

5. How will you measure your success?

- How will you know that you have reached your project goal(s) as stated in question 2.1? Again, be as specific as possible.

6. What role will people with I/DD or their family members play?

- Describe how people with developmental disabilities will be part of your project. VTDDC is especially interested in whether individuals and families have a leadership role – for example, acting as project advisors, delivering training, or participating in coalitions.

7. Please describe technical and other assistance that VTDDC could provide or secure that would help you to be successful in carrying out this project.

- SEEDS grants are a partnership between the award recipient and the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council. If additional support is needed, please indicate what would be helpful. Technical support may include, but is not limited to, consultation regarding the scope or approach of your project, assistance identifying community partners, information about the policy environment, sustainability planning, and help convening stakeholder groups.

8. What will happen to your project once the SEEDS grant ends?

- VTDDC wants the good work you have done to have a lasting impact. How will you share the results of your project? Will it be implemented in other parts of the State? Have you trained leaders or educators who can continue to share this new approach or thinking?
- If you are applying for a demonstration project (pilot), you must attach a letter of intent from a state agency, nonprofit organization, or other entity indicating their interest in evaluating your project for expansion or implementation in other regions of Vermont.

Instructions for Project Budget Plan

1. Staff

List the total cost of paid staff working on this project, including the cost of benefits. This question refers to staff working directly for the sponsoring nonprofit organization. NOTE: the time of any volunteers supporting your project may be included in the budget as matching funds. Volunteer time in Vermont is valued at \$26.85.

(See <https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Value-of-Volunteer-Time-by-State-2001-2020.pdf>).

2. Sub-contracted Services

List the cost of people who are hired outside the sponsoring organization for project activities. Examples include a sign language interpreter at a training, or a facilitator hired to run project meetings.

3. Travel

Provide transportation costs for staff working on this project. Typically, this is described as a cost per mile that includes gas, tolls, etc. If the sponsoring organization's current reimbursement rate is lower than the federal rate (.56/mile), the lower rate must be used.

4. Supplies

List all supplies and publications necessary to support the project.

5. Other Direct Costs

List any other direct costs for the project such as postage, phone charges, stipends for people with I/DD and/or family members.

6. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are expenses that are incurred by the sponsoring nonprofit organization in the conduct of its general operations. The

applicant may charge indirect costs to the project of no more than 10% of the subtotal for personnel, travel, supplies and other direct costs **only**. When calculating the indirect cost base to be charged to VTDDC, add the four categories above and multiply by 0.10.²

Notes: Provide an explanation for any budget items that are out of the ordinary and/or need clarification.

3.5 Format for the Proposal

- The proposal should be prepared simply and economically, providing straightforward answers in plain language. Answers may be written directly on the application form or provided on attached pages.
- Proposals should be accompanied by a **transmittal letter** signed by the officer of the sponsoring organization who has the authority to bind the business. The transmittal letter should state that:
 - The RFP terms are accepted.
 - The organization agrees to the standard State grant agreement requirements in Attachment C, F, and E; which are included in Section 5.
 - The organization's federal tax ID number, its DUNS number, and its SAM's number.
- If you are proposing a demonstration project (pilot) a letter of intent must be attached, as described above in Section 3.2, instructions for application question 2.8.

4. General Conditions and Requirements

4.1 General Conditions

The cost of proposal development is the sole responsibility of the applicant. All proposals submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under Vermont's Access to Public Records Act (1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320). All proposals shall become the property of the VTDDC.

² If the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with a federal agency, the applicant must use that rate; the portion of that rate which exceeds 10% can be used as a non-federal match.

4.2 Terms of the Grant Agreement

If selected, the sponsoring nonprofit organization will be invited to enter into a grant agreement with VTDDC. Along with the legal terms set out in the standard State Agreements (See Section 6, Attachments), the following terms will apply:

- The grantee must provide non-federal matching funds equal to 25% of the total project cost. Matching funds may be in cash, meaning funds directly supporting the project; or matching funds may be provided in-kind. In-kind support could include the hours that a sponsoring organization provides to oversee the project funds and/or to advise project staff.
- The grantee must submit two program and budget reports using VTDDC's online grant management system (DD Suite). Reports will be required at the project's half-point and again when the project is finished. Specific due dates will be identified in the grant agreement.
- Payment will be in the form of reimbursement for expenses consistent with the program budget. Invoices may be submitted every 30 days.
- The grantee will credit VTDDC in media and project publicity.
- The grantee may be asked to make a short presentation to the full Council about their project.

4.3 Proposal submission

- One copy of the application form, transmittal letter, and if applicable, a letter of intent must be submitted by 5 p.m. on **November 1, 2021**.
- Proposals must be addressed to the following single point of contact:

Kirsten M. Murphy, Executive Director
100 State Street, Suite 342
Montpelier, VT 05633-0206
Email: Kirsten.Murphy@Vermont.gov

- Hand carried proposals must be delivered to a representative of VTDDC on or before the due date/time and stamped by a representative with date/time received. Bids not in possession of VTDDC's sole point of contact identified in Section 1.3 by the due date and time will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant organization unopened.
- Faxed proposals will NOT be accepted. Emailed proposals will NOT be accepted.

4.4 Additional Conditions

VTDDC may, at any time and at its sole discretion and without penalty, reject all proposals and issue no grant agreements in response to this RFP. Furthermore, a proposal may be rejected for one or more of the following reasons or for any other reason deemed to be in the best interest of the VTDDC:

- The failure of the applicant to adhere to one or more provisions established in this RFP.
- The failure of the applicant to submit required information in the format specified in this RFP.
- The failure of the applicant to adhere to generally accepted ethical and professional principles during the RFP process.

VTDDC reserves the right to amend the RFP at any time prior to the proposal due date by issuing written addenda. Amendments, addenda, Questions and Answers, and any relevant information will be posted at <https://ddc.vermont.gov/>

It is the applicant's responsibility to check periodically for such information.

Read all instructions carefully. If you do not comply with any part of this RFP, VTDDC may, at its sole option, reject your proposal as nonresponsive. VTDDC reserves the right to waive any requirements of this RFP.

5. Scoring and AWARD

SEEDS grants will be made in the best interest of the VTDDC and its Five-Year State Plan. Applications will be evaluated by a subcommittee of the Council, which will make a recommendation to the full Council at its December 2, 2021 quarterly meeting.

Proposals will be evaluated using a 100-point scale. The following rubric will be used in scoring proposals. Please note that some elements of the proposal are weighted more heavily in the evaluation process.

<i>Does the proposal outline a project that will result in greater capacity to support Vermonters with developmental disabilities?</i>	20
<i>Does the proposal outline an innovative strategy or new approach to solving a problem?</i>	15
<i>Does the proposal tie directly and meaningfully to a goal or objective in VTDDC's Five-Year State Plan?</i>	10
<i>Does the proposal support one of the Council's 3 priority areas? (see Section 3.2 of these instructions).</i>	10
<i>Does the project include meaningful leadership by people with developmental disabilities or their family members– for example, as advisors?</i>	10
<i>Does the project staff and its nonprofit sponsor have the skills needed to carry out the project activities?</i>	15
<i>Will the project result in specific products and/or measurable outcomes?</i>	10
<i>Is the project budget reasonable and cost-effective? Is there a plan for securing the required non-federal match?</i>	10
Total potential points	100

6. Attachments

Attachment: SEEDS Grant Application Form

Attachment: VTDDC Five-Year State Plan Goals and Objectives

State of Vermont Grant Agreement Attachment C: State Customary Provisions for Contracts (revised: 9/1/2015)

State of Vermont Grant Agreement Attachment F: AHS Customary Contract Provisions (revised: 12/10/10)

State of Vermont Grant Agreement Attachment E