

Request to Richmond Selectboard from Richmond Recreation Committee – March 8th, 2021

The Recreation Committee supports the request to use \$3000 of the remaining DASH grant funds to contract with Civic Wellbeing Partners to help achieve the committee's goals around Community Outreach in Health and Wellbeing.

We make this request of the Richmond Selectboard tonight:

The Selectboard will allocate \$3000 of the \$5000 received from the 2020 DASH grant to the Town of Richmond to "Civic Wellbeing Partners" for the purpose of actively improving wellbeing for all people in the community. Civic Wellbeing Partners will expand on the work of the DASH mentee grant. They will assist the Recreation Committee with identifying and engaging stakeholders as well as applying for sustainable funding sources to achieve the recreation goals outlined in the Town Plan.

Civic Wellbeing Partners Work Plan;

Several immediate priorities were identified for Richmond:

- Identify and communicate with stakeholders of Richmond, Bolton, and Huntington on how wellbeing initiatives identified in the process will be beneficial to all communities.
- Richmond / or lead partner will apply for the upcoming DASH CIC START grant. The grant will assist the Town in taking steps toward the identified goals of the wellbeing initiative. This includes the potential to create a staff position to oversee Richmond Recreation initiatives.
- Establish more permanence for recreation and community wellbeing activities and infrastructure through the town budget and other sources for the following years.

Phase 1: Define Objectives for Grant Funding

- A. Build a strong team
- B. Review literature
- C. Engage with experts
- D. Engage stakeholders

End Goal: DASH CIC-START Grant \$25,000 and matching grant potential from United Way and other sources

Current Stakeholders with Expressed Interest

- A. Vermont Department of Health
- B. Howard Center
- C. United Way of Northwest Vermont
- D. University of Vermont Medical Center
- E. MMUUSD

Proposal for a Wellbeing Strategy in Richmond, Vermont

Prepared for Stefani Hartsfield, Hartsfield Health Systems Consulting
Prepared by Julie Rusk and Catalina Langen, Civic Wellbeing Partners

01.08.2021



About Civic Wellbeing Partners

Who We Are

We are a startup non governmental organization with deep roots in local government leadership, systems change, and community engagement. We provide support to communities in the United States and across the globe working to implement strategies for civic wellbeing, from design through implementation and analysis.



Julie Rusk

Founder

Julie brings **more than a quarter century of experience in local government and nonprofit management**. Julie previously served as the City of Santa Monica's first Chief Civic Wellbeing Officer, and prior to that role as Assistant Director of Community & Cultural Services, where she oversaw a range of initiatives in **human services, culture, education, recreation, and place-making**. She launched the Cradle to Career Initiative, a public/private partnership to help youth flourish in every aspect of their lives, from conception to careers. That groundbreaking program, like the Wellbeing Project, drew on data from multiple sources and created the Youth Wellbeing Report Card. Julie is known for approaching social problems with **compassion**, an instinct for **collaboration**, and an acuity for **measurement** to ensure that programs are effective.



Catalina Langen

Co-founder, Program Manager

Catalina lifts up promising practices, supports **creative engagement strategies**, and uses data to drive her work. She believes that **equity-forward solutions** have the power to strengthen the wellbeing of our communities, and oversees the Wellbeing Microgrants program, supporting residents as they **advance their ideas for community wellbeing**. Previously, Catalina worked at California State University San Marcos developing **civic learning** programming, creating opportunities for students to connect with community leaders and city officials, dialogue about democracy, and serve the community. A Southern California native, Catalina graduated from the University of California Santa Barbara and lives in Los Angeles.

What We Bring

- **Tools** for framing your own wellbeing framework and action plan (including replication guides, a playbook for equitable community engagement, and models for new ways of working/transferable pilot opportunities).
- **Analysis of the environment**/landscape of actors across systems in your community.
- **Data**, including banked questions and key indicators.
- **Deep thinking** across dimensions of wellbeing.
- A commitment to and passion for **racial equity** and **language justice**. Wellbeing for all will not be possible without systems adapting to create radically different conditions for the most vulnerable and under-resourced people in our society.
- **Decades of experience** working with dozens of municipalities, local and regional government staff, researchers, and community members on what works, what resonates, and what is measurable.
- **Engaged global and local networks** of people who are advancing wellbeing theory, measurement, and practice in their own ways.

Current Landscape - Assets and Challenges

The Town of Richmond, Vermont is a desirable commuter destination to Burlington with incredible outdoor spaces and a connected, engaged, and proud community. Richmond's 2020 population is 4198, the Tri-Town group of Richmond, Huntington, and Bolton has a population of approximately 7350. Countywide, Chittenden county's demographics are 4% Asian, 3% Black, 2% Hispanic, 2% two or more races, and 89% white as of 2019. This reflects a population of white people approximately 1.5 times the rate of the United States as a whole (61%).

Richmond has much to offer and the town dedicates its resources to essential services. Due to limited tourism revenues, the municipal government has managed its resources modestly and operates a small town staff workforce.

Due to the rural nature of the region, public transportation options are limited and access is an ongoing issue with need for improvement, particularly for young people. Other key issues in the area are mental health and suicide, and housing costs.

Interest in Wellbeing and Community Assets

There is an appetite for working in new ways and bringing together the many functions of municipal government, in partnership with local and regional nonprofits and agencies. The community has many great assets, and an initiative prioritizing wellbeing can serve as the connective tissue to inform decision-making and create effective strategies in the region.

A recent [2018 Town Plan](#) seeks to enhance and explore community wellbeing. A recreation committee was recently formed out of a desire by Richmond's community to explore how this goal might be met. The committee is working to shape its focus in a pragmatic and realistic way, while maintaining aspirations to have a transformative impact in the town and region.

Momentum for racial equity locally has taken the form of [Richmond Racial Equity](#), an ad hoc group made up of dozens of residents whose latest advocacy effort has been the Fair and Impartial Policing Policy. We see civic wellbeing as a way of humanizing and uplifting the issues for all people in our communities. By pairing measurements of individual wellbeing and human potential with the impact of infrastructure and institutions on the community, a civic wellbeing framework can amplify and support the ongoing work of Richmond Racial Equity.

Examples of interest in wellbeing in the region include University of Vermont Medical Center's incorporation of questions from Santa Monica's Wellbeing Index into the [Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont Community Health Needs Assessment](#). This means that some of the data needed to understand community wellbeing is already available for the Town of

Richmond's use. As well, representatives from the municipal government have expressed interest but need the concrete ties between wellbeing and existing regulations made clear in order to be fully on board with moving a wellbeing framework forward. It is vital that operational and regulatory actions should tie to the work of this wellbeing initiative as a starting point.

A group of community leaders is looking at DASH ([Data Across Sectors for Health](#)) grant funding to potentially create a new staff position for recreation. Ideally, that person could have a title and role along the lines of Wellbeing or Community Outreach Coordinator. They would be responsible for greater systems change work and community engagement. Previously, in 2020 the Town of Richmond participated as a DASH Mentee in the DASH Mentor Program. Through this program and during the COVID-19 epidemic, the town reviewed the overlaps of different community organizations (including healthcare, schools, and community groups) and conducted a gap analysis based on this review.

Additional allies for this work include representatives from the local community mental health organization, the school superintendent, United Way of Northwest Vermont, and the Peace and Justice Center of Vermont. The Vermont League of Cities and Towns is an important partner to engage in this effort to support regional buy-in.

Additional existing resources and models that could be built upon include: [All In: Data for Community Health](#), [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#), [Planet Youth](#), and the [Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, Vermont Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

The Solution / Our Methodology

Municipal governments aim to improve the lives of the citizens they serve, but it can be difficult to determine if they've ultimately been successful. Cities and towns also are most focused on operational and transactional business of infrastructure, zoning, and public works. Since typical measures of government progress assess economic output, operations, and little else, resulting statistics rarely reveal the true wellbeing of residents. This lack of metrics makes it challenging to assess if people are thriving, much less whether government is helping improve their citizens' lives.

Wellbeing is not something cities and towns have typically focused on in a meaningful way. Early efforts to address "quality of life," in cities and towns were typically based on generalizations about the things that were important and often relied on anecdotal data from residents about how the city was meeting their needs.

Our solution is to define, measure, and actively improve wellbeing for all people in your community. This puts measuring and improving individual and community wellbeing at the heart of government decision-making. For us, wellbeing includes both the individual's experience of wellbeing and the collective experience of all individuals, or community wellbeing. Racial equity is at the heart of this work as we cannot achieve wellbeing for all without the wellbeing for the most marginalized people in our communities. A person with high levels of wellbeing is happy, believes their life is going well, has positive relationships with others and lives with autonomy and competence and a sense of fulfillment. A community with strong wellbeing has high levels of health, economic resilience, educational capacity, social connection and environmental sustainability.

Roadmap to Wellbeing

The following is an outline of the steps needed to establish a wellbeing framework in your community:

Phase 1: Define

- A. Build a strong team
- B. Review literature
- C. Engage with experts
- D. Define the dimensions
- E. Engage stakeholders

Phase 2: Measure

- A. Align and identify data sources
- B. Collect data
- C. Analyze data

Phase 3: Act

- A. Share results
- B. Apply to policy

Richmond Context for Roadmap

Several immediate priorities for the wellbeing work in Richmond are apparent from our initial conversations.

First, there is a need to develop high-level messaging that crystallizes the objectives and need for the work. There is a need to frame why a wellbeing initiative would be the connective tissue across institutions and residents in the Richmond area.

As well, Richmond will apply for the upcoming DASH CIC START grant (the timeline of which has not yet been released as of 1.8.21). The grant will likely go toward getting the wellbeing initiative off the ground through the creation of a staff position. Matching funds will need to be raised to support a position through July 2022 and hopefully establish with more permanence through the town budget for the following year.

Services and Pricing

The roadmap to wellbeing above provides an overview of our suggested approach to Richmond's wellbeing work. Based on the background work and research we have already completed with you already, we believe we can hit the ground running and look forward to our partnership!

We anticipate this engagement will take place in February and March 2021. The deliverable will be a set of proposals or options that would be the basis for the local wellbeing work roadmap and Richmond's DASH CIC grant application.

We will support the pre-development work necessary to get your town ready for the application. This will include engagement with stakeholders, including Richmond residents and leaders of aforementioned institutions. Part of this effort will include finalizing a position description and budget for a community outreach coordinator and any other expenses associated with first-year implementation.

We will use the review and gap analysis performed through the town's DASH Mentor Program participation, consultation with key stakeholders, and other resources, to craft the pitch or ask of local and regional organizations for partnership and buy-in on this new wellbeing initiative.

In consideration of your \$3000 budget for retaining the services of Civic Wellbeing Partners:

- Catalina Langen will provide 40 hours of work for \$2000
- Julie Rusk will provide 13 hours of work for \$1000

For more about us, please see the section in this proposal on who we are and what we bring.

Contact Us

For next steps and to begin your roadmap to wellbeing, please contact us at cityofwellbeing@gmail.com

Website

santamonicawellbeing.org

Social Media





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March 4, 2021

Town of Richmond Selectboard
203 Bridge St
P.O. Box 285
Richmond, VT 05477

Dear Selectboard Members:

I'm writing in support of the Richmond Recreation Committee's request for to use remaining DASH Mentee grant funds to work with the Civic Wellbeing Partners. This collaboration will expand on the work of the 2020 Data Across Sectors for Health mentee grant to further engage local stakeholders, act on opportunities identified in the mentorship, and assist in applying for sustainable funding to achieve the goals outlined in the Town Plan.

I was fortunate to serve as the mentor for the Richmond DASH grant team in 2020, and was impressed by the Richmond team's ability to accomplish so much in the middle of a pandemic. Their inclusive gap analysis and analysis of community assets, challenges and opportunities for future collaboration leaves them well-positioned to build on this work to enhance community well-being in 2021.

The Town of Richmond and their multi-sector partners have a strong chance at the next level of DASH grants, the \$25,000 *Community Impact Contracts*, which aim to help multi-sector collaborations build capacity and skills enabling them to "share and use data to improve health, equity, and build a culture of health in their communities." I understand that resources and human capacity can be a challenge in a rural community. That's why funding and assistance provided by DASH can help to propel momentum forward.

I am excited to see the community build on and benefit from the mentorship, and happy help the Town in helping to build on our work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Gradeck".

Robert Gradeck