

Town of Richmond
Request for Special Appropriations
Request for Fiscal Year: 2023

Organization's Name: Vermont Family Network
Address: 600 Blair Park Road, Suite 240
City, State, Zip: Williston, VT 05495
Website address: www.vermontfamilynetwork.org

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Program Name: Family Support Program

2. Contact Person/Title: Claire Giroux-Williams, Development Manager
Telephone Number: 301-509-2435
E-mail address: Claire.giroux-williams@vtn.org

3. Total number of individuals served in the last complete fiscal year by this program:
1055 family contacts throughout the state of Vermont

4. Total number of the above individuals who are Town residents: 15 families and 90 contacts
Percent of people served who are Town residents: 1%

5. Amount of Request: \$500

6. Total Program Budget: \$850,000 Percent of total program budget
you are requesting from the Town of Richmond: less and 1%

7. Please state or attach the mission of your agency: The mission of Vermont Family Network is to empower and support all Vermont children, youth and families, especially those with disabilities or special health needs.

8. Will the funding be used to:
__XX__ Maintain an existing program _____ Expand an Existing Program
_____ Start a new program

9. Has your organization received funds from the Town in the past for this or a similar program? Yes
If yes, please answer the following:
 - a. Does the amount of your request represent an increase over your previous appropriation? If yes, explain the reason(s) for the increase. – No
 - b. Were any conditions or restrictions placed on the funds by the Selectboard? No
If yes, describe how those conditions or restrictions have been met. – N/A

B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Statement of Need: Identify the issue or need that the program will address (use statistical data to justify the need for the program). To what extent does this need or problem exist in the Town of Richmond?

Nationally, 1 in 5 families who have children have at least 1 child with special needs. In Vermont, that statistic is 1 in 4. Vermont Family Network's Family Support program provides

support to families in a multitude of ways to help parents help their children reach their fullest potential. Being the parent of a child with special needs can be very isolating and frightening. Having parents who have been in a similar situation can be vital to helping parents manage the stress and various systems they will have to navigate throughout their child's life. Only a parent who is getting the support that they need can be the best support for their child. In addition, parents need support in navigating systems like special education, and our staff can assist them in a variety of ways, from phone coaching to attending school meetings. Our program had 15 Richmond families through 90 Richmond contacts in the last fiscal year.

2. Program Summary:

a. Identify the target/recipients of program services. Specify the number of Town residents your program will serve during the fiscal year and explain the basis upon which this number is calculated. Indicate any eligibility requirements your program has with respect to age, gender, income or residence.

Our Family Support program employs staff who are all experienced parents of children with special needs. Our target recipient if services are other parents, grandparents and family members of children with special needs. We support anyone who is concerned about their child's development, free of charge. Last year we had 15 Richmond families and 90 Richmond contacts and expect to serve about that many again in this next fiscal year.

b. Identify what is to be accomplished or what change will occur from participating in the program. How will people be better off as a result of participating in the program? Describe the steps you take to make the project known to the public, and make the program accessible and inclusive?

The monies requested will go specifically to funding our Family Support Program. This program allows families to receive various services helping them to adapt to a child's diagnosis, understand the various systems they will need to navigate, and educate them in a multitude of areas to help them be the best advocate for their child that they can be. We market our organization throughout the state, with most staff housed in Williston, and staff members in both Rutland and the Northeast Kingdom. Our Family Support Services are available to anyone in the state Monday – Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm. In-person support can happen as needed.

3. Program Funding:

a. Identify how Town funds, specifically, will be used (i.e., funds will provide "X" amount of units of service)

We are reaching out to towns all over the state where we have had a significant impact for funding to be able to continue the great work we have done with families all over the state. The last few years have seen major cuts in governmental grants and foundation monies, and we don't want the services to families to decrease. The budget we have presented is a conservative budget reflecting the cuts we have experienced or expect to experience. A \$500 appropriation would fund 10-15 hours of direct family support services.

b. List the other agencies to whom you are submitting a request for funds for this program and the amount requested. How would this program be modified should revenues be lost.

The majority of the Family Support program budget comes from grants, the two biggest being from Children with Special Health Needs (CSHN) through the Department of Health and Parent Training Information (PTI). We also get a variety of smaller grants from the federal and state government, as well as a few foundation grants. Because our work is primarily direct service through parent-to-parent support, loss of funds would unfortunately result in loss of services to families.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

1. Describe your agency's capability to provide the program including its history, previous experience providing this service, management structure and staff expertise.

Vermont Family Network was formed 14 years ago through a merge of two organizations, Parent to Parent Vermont and the Vermont Parent Information Center. Combined we have more than 30 years of experience supporting parents of children with special needs around the state of Vermont. In our work we reference, refer to, and collaborate a myriad of other organizations such as the Children with Special Health Needs through the Department of Health, the VT Agency of Education, the VT Developmental Disabilities Council, Green Mountain Self Advocates, Building Bright Futures, the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the VT and federal entities of Maternal Child Health, Family Voices and Parent to Parent.

The unique contribution that we offer is specifically peer support, our staff of parents helping reach out and support other parents. The Vermont Family Network also employs a bookkeeper 3 days a week, managed by our Director of Operations. Both the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board of Directors have the authority to sign checks as needed, all under the oversight of the Treasurer of the Board and the Finance Committee.

2. How will you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you will assess program outcomes. Your description should include: what (what kind of data), how (method/tool for collecting the data), from whom (source of data) and when (timing of data collection).

We conduct yearly surveys to assess the needs of families and outcomes of our programs. Our evaluations show where parents and families are feeling they need the most support, where funding may need to be shifted, etc. We use the outcomes of these surveys to drive our planning. A specific example is with our annual conference, we learned that our constituents want more time to network with other families, and we are designing an end of the day session to allow for this.

3. Summarize or attach program and or service assessments conducted in the past two years. – Please find the survey questions and quotes attached.

2022 results will be available in November of 2022. Please let me know if you need them.

2021

2. 92% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
3. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed

4. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
5. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
6. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
7. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed, 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
8. 100% of parents surveyed said "yes"

2020

2. 100 % of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
3. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
4. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
5. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
6. 100% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed
7. 63% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed, 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
8. 100% of parents surveyed said "yes"

4. Does your organization have a strategic plan and a strategic planning process in place? Yes, please find attached.

The strategic plan should include a mission statement, goals, action steps to achieve the goals, and measures that assess the accomplishments of the goals.

5. What is the authorized size of your board of directors? Between 9 and 21, with at least 50% of them being a parent of a child with special needs between the ages of 0 to 26.
How many meetings were held by the board last year? 10 meetings

I, the undersigned, confirm the information contained herein is accurate and can be verified as such. I understand and agree that if the requested funds are approved, the disbursement of funds are subject to all conditions established by the Richmond Selectboard.

Signature of Applicant

Date: 10/3/22



Claire Giroux-Williams,
Development Manager

Q2w

For this question, try to think about the information or support you received, not what happened if you acted upon it. The information or support you received from VFN met your needs.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

(no label)

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	69.23% 9	13	3.54

Q3w

For this question, try to think about the information or support you received, not what happened if you acted upon it. You were able to understand the information you received from VFN.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

(no label)

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	84.62% 11	13	3.85

Q4w

For this question, try to think about the information or support you received, not what happened if you acted upon it. The information VFN provided helped you learn more about how to meet your child's needs.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
(no label)

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	84.62% 11	13	3.85

Q5w

For this question, try to think about the information or support you received, not what happened if you acted upon it. The information VFN provided was useful.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree
(no label)

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	92.31% 12	13	3.92

Q6w

For this group of questions, think about how the information or support you received from VFN may have prepared you for a variety of activities: working with your child's school, program, or service provider to make decisions about your child and available options, to work with others to support your child, to become involved in meetings, or to resolve possible disputes. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree. Select one response.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Strongly Disagree

Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree
 a. You are prepared to ...

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
a. You are prepared to use the information you received within the past six months from VFN.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	76.92% 10	13	3.77

Q7w

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement. If you have not had the opportunity to interact with a school, program, or service provider, please select 'not applicable.' Select one response.

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

Not Applicable
 Strongly Disagree
 Disagree
 Agree
 Strongly Agree

a. You feel confident in...

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

	NOT APPLICABLE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
a. You feel confident in your ability to work with your child's	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	15.38% 2	53.85% 7	30.77% 4	13

	NOT APPLICABLE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL
school or service providers to meet your child's needs.						

Q8w

Would recommend the Vermont Family Network to your friends or family?

- Answered: 13
- Skipped: 0

YesMaybeNo

0%10%20%30%40%50%60%70%80%90%100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	100.00% 13
Maybe	0.00% 0
No	0.00% 0
TOTAL	13

Q9w

The following questions are optional:

- Answered: 9
- Skipped: 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Responses Please share any comments about the information and/or support that you received from the Vermont Family Network.	88.89% 8
Responses Please share any comments about how you were able to use the information that you received from VFN.	55.56% 5
Responses Please share any additional comments about your experience in getting information or support from VFN.	33.33% 3

STRATEGIC PLAN THEMES, OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES---January 2018 update

Developed March 2016

Themes and Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame	Evaluation	Challenges & Successes	Future Forecast
<p>Strategic Theme One: Program; Recognition & Influence: High quality, impactful work</p> <p><i>Objective 1.1:</i> Expand physical presence in the southern and eastern parts of the state.</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 1.1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Rotate staff schedules (b) Seek increased grant funding to cover increased staff time in S/E VT. (c) Share staff person with existing partners (example, Winston Prouty) (d) Grow volunteer base <p><i>Objective 1.2:</i> Deepen our presence, expand volunteer network</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 1.2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Add staff person & Board Committee to manage volunteers (b) Research other organizations currently doing this well (c) Utilize Family Leaders more effectively <p><i>Objective 1.3:</i> Expand our influence at a systems level.</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 1.3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Staff person to track policy & legislative events/planks (b) Research organizations experienced in advocacy (c) Organize testimony/catalog parents&/or leaders willing to testify. 	M-Team	18 months ongoing	Double the # of families served in S/E VT.	We have been seeking funding to expand services to SE Vermont. DDC grant of 15K was received for 6 mo. workscope in FY17 . Families First and Winston Prouty contributed in-kind to DDC proposal. 2017 VT Leadership Series, participants from Brattleboro and Peacham.Lost staff in the South w/ AOE \$ loss.	Had expected further DDC funding; they have decided to wait while a FY18 VFF SEEDS grant in the South proceeds. Need to grow partnerships w/ Families First and Winston Prouty, as well as VFF and DLP. Need to find new moneys.
	M-Team	18 months ongoing	Stable volunteer pool, with evidence of utilization	No capacity for volunteer management. December 2016, hired Marketing and Events Coordinator who has expertise. Trained Benevon (B) Team, executing w/ engagement of staff and Board.	Using Claire’s skill/insight to develop volunteer capacity, esp. w/ regard to fundraising and program support. B-Team is the focus. Fam. Leaders engaged in Fam. Faculty and advocacy efforts.
	M-Team	18 months ongoing	(1) Quick access to people willing to testify (2) Survey of volunteers & advocates indicate they feel “heard”	Pam, Lisa, Karen and Rachel staffed advocacy work. No capacity for dedicated staff person. Provided public comment on Medicaid Pathways and DD Act proposed changes, DS State System of Care Plan; provided	Active engagement in issues that affect the people we serve, connecting more family and youth voices with advocacy. Continuing presence in multiple Boards and Advisories.

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				testimony on Special Education issues and did VPR interviews. Karen P supported a family leader in her testimony before the VT Poverty Council and in testimony to Senate Ed. Advocated for restoration of proposed \$1M cut to CIS for FY18 and onward. Consistent participation in DS Standing Committee, MEAB, SEAC, SF Leadership Team, VCDR, VECA, etc.	Pam M vice-chair of VCDR and on Alliance Steering Committee--- these coalitions are tracking our issues and engaging us for testimony. See attached list to see how VFN is being represented/by whom.
<p><i>Strategic Theme Two: Management: Well-run non-profit with needed protocols in place (Infrastructure, Organizational Culture, Staff capacity)</i></p> <p><i>Objective 2.1:</i> Foster a culture that stresses trust, partnership, collaboration, learning & cross-organizational thinking.</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 2.1:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Promote collaboration between Board and staff and across departments (b) Enhance focus on developing a cross-organizational mindset 	M-Team	2016 & ongoing	(1) Survey of staff and Board indicates connection and collaboration (2) Board and staff are working together in accord w/ defined roles and org. goals	Worked on reinforcing norms and developing a culture of philanthropy. Board/staff participating in new Benevon work. Three "buckets" were met with enthusiasm. Incorporating 5 Languages of Appreciation at Work, and have a strong Wellness Committee. Engaged Dr Quintilliani to do mindfulness work with staff and leadership.	Continue to build partnership across teams and across Board/M-Team/staff, esp. w/ regard to Benevon work and learning opportunities. Restructure FS to better support the growing diversity/decreasing funds for core work.

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Developed March 2016

Themes and Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame	Evaluation	Challenges & Successes	Future Forecast
<p><i>Objective 2.2:</i> Organizational norms are the foundation of our culture. All staff and Board will be held accountable for adhering to and modeling cultural norms.</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 2.2:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Annual review/discussion of norms with Board, M-Team, and staff (b) Training of new employees in norms (c) Incorporate organizational norms into annual performance evaluations. 	M-Team, Staff, Board	2016 & ongoing	Documented reviews of VFN norms in meeting minutes, employee orientation checklist, annual reviews of VFN staff, and Board member orientation.	<p>Produced VFN video w/ Alison Segar that captures the impact of FS and CIS-EI work with families. CIS-EI and FS have shared professional development opportunities. PiE has joined us after a year of transition planning, and is a great addition. Board and staff orientations include VFN norms.</p> <p>Norms have been referred to in staff meetings. We have not been consistent about doing this. We have added norms to the New Employee Orientation.</p>	Norms/5 Languages to be incorporated into annual reviews and more consistently referred to in staff and team meetings. Plan to update Annual Review process.

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Themes and Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame	Evaluation	Challenges & Successes	Future Forecast
<p><i>Objective 2.3:</i> Increase staff capacity to support high-quality, effective achievement of organizational goals.</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 2.3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Develop protocol for fee for service. (b) Develop volunteers and parent leadership. (c) Review program priorities, funding, organizational structure, & staff capacity. (d) Increase administrative support for Board to leverage increased Board volunteer time 	M-Team, Board (especially Board experts), Staff	2016 & ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1)Increase fee for service agreements (2)Increase # of VFN volunteers and family leaders; increase their engagement in VFN efforts (3)Document reviews of 2.3(c) and associated actions 	<p>Protocols for fee for service have been created and are being utilized in grant negotiations. Family Faculty has increased. We have trained over 100 family leaders since 2016. A number of Leadership Series grads report using their new expertise in actual boards, advisories, etc. Succession planning for people who are leaving key roles. Periodic reviews of program priorities, funding, org structure, and staff capacity. Claire and Pam supported increased Board time in resource development. Loss of AOE funding created reductions in staff and services. Hiring new Finance Manager. Sarah W-B transitioning into Director of Ops. Progress in CIS \$ advocacy. PiE came on as VFN program.</p>	<p>Increase fee for service to expand services beyond what current resources support. Continue to grow effectiveness of Board workgroups with support from Claire, Pam, and Ellen. Continue to grow parent leadership opportunities, esp. through Family Faculty and the Family Leadership Series. Restructure to create better infrastructure to support VFN's multifaceted work. Stay abreast of threats to existing Federal and state grants, given new Administration. Position VFN for opportunities associated with All-Payer, ACO, and ESSA.</p>

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Developed March 2016

Themes and Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame	Evaluation	Challenges & Successes	Future Forecast
<i>Strategic Theme Three: Resources needed to achieve our goals</i>					
<i>Objective 3.1: Diversify funding.</i>					
<i>Activities for Objective 3.1:</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Examine partnerships for leverage. (b) Examine fee-for-service (including segmentation analysis) & membership; find people who want to pay what we have to offer (c) Monitor & pursue grant opportunities. 	M-team Program Directors Claire	1-3 years	Add 2-3 new funding streams	We have expanded our health-related grants, thanks to relationships built by FS Director. VR partnership is growing, thanks to Martha and Karen P. We have applied for foundation grants that we hadn't previously, no \$, but relationships built. PiE and VFN working to leverage their donors for the benefit of all. Received individual 5K donation, Flutie renewed with increase this year. New fundraising activities. Continue to seek new resources.	Pursue and receive 2-3 new grants in 2018. Continue to expand upon fee for service work. Continue to pursue new grant and donor opportunities while growing the Benevon model for a successful Nov. \$ event. Explore deeper partnership w/ VFF through AI process. Capitalize on relationships.
<i>Objective 3.2: Revisit development, advancement, & communications capacity</i>					
<i>Activities for Objective 3.2:</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Perform cost/benefit analysis of different models of increasing development (b) Consult/network with development professionals to identify strategies that may fit with VFN (c) Determine what we need to bring Board to a level that would support "high-flyer" board members 	Board Executive & Finance Comms. Board Executive & Develop. Comms. Board Develop. & Laurie	10 months ongoing	(1)Clear plan and timelines for development activities that utilize Board skills and interests. (2) Dedicated resources established for effective fundraising (3) Readiness of VFN Board for	Pam, Claire and Board have reviewed past Development Plans; prioritized strategies for this year's fundraising events and activities, including PiE in discussions. Hired Marketing and Events Coordinator with fundraising experience and interest last year.	Move Development Plan activities forward, esp. Benevon. Analysis of Board composition and diversity; recruit and train for optimal inclusion of "high flyers" in the next year when new Board Governance and Development Committee convenes.

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Themes and Strategies	Responsibility	Time Frame	Evaluation	Challenges & Successes	Future Forecast
<p><i>Objective 3.3:</i> Increase public recognition & influence of VFN as a primary resource for families of children with special needs</p> <p><i>Activities for Objective 3.3:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Increase staff & board capacity to support families in leadership & advocacy. (b) Monitor opportunities for systems advocacy. (c) Inventory experience among Board, staff, & families for advocacy 	<p>Board, M-Team, staff, parent leaders</p>	<p>FY17 and ongoing</p>	<p>effective inclusion of “high flyer” members.</p> <p>(1)Increased demand for VFN /family leaders to be “at the table”</p> <p>(2)Increase in # of family leaders on boards and advisories, etc.</p> <p>(3) Increase in # of Board, staff, families in the community trained in effective advocacy (increase in experienced family advocates “at the ready”)</p> <p>(4)Increase in # of advocacy opportunities where VFN-connected family voices are leading/</p>	<p>Claire seeking input from successful fundraisers; working with Board to advance identified strategies. Benevon training/launch has occurred! Board workgroups have been dissolved to focus on Benevon.</p> <p>VFN was asked to participate in a number of “family engagement” efforts, recognizing our organization’s expertise in this area. VFN was specifically asked to support development of a Youth Advisory for VR, a Patient/Family Advisory for CSHN, and a Children’s /DS Standing Committee We are actively engaged in school governance and systems-change conversations.</p> <p>Lisa Maynes is Co-Chair of the AMCHP Committee on Family and Youth Leadership. Benevon tours are educating people about</p>	<p>Update the inventory of advocacy expertise/interest across VFN Board and staff and family leaders annually; mobilize them effectively according to our legislative platform and any emergent issues for families of individuals with disabilities. Promote VFN as a credible resource for families of children with special needs statewide. Continue to actively participate in VCDR and the Alliance and be appropriately present.</p>

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			participating	<p>what we do re: Family Voice.</p> <p>Family Faculty continues to be held up as a “gold standard” internationally.</p> <p>Challenges: Many policymakers speak of the importance of “family engagement,” but there is little funding directed to its advancement.</p> <p>VFN does not have a dedicated Policy and Advocacy position. It is challenging to spread this work and also keep the “dots” connected.</p>	