



Rural Development
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2024 Calendar

Vermont and New Hampshire Impacts and Investments

From the Office of the State Director



Sarah Waring
RD State Director – VT/NH

It has been a privilege to serve as RD State Director for Vermont and New Hampshire since 2022. In that time, I've received a fascinating and revealing education on the history and organization of federal funding and the power of its various impacts. Most often, federal agencies move money to state agencies for local distribution, but USDA is fundamentally different: we have the job of placing federal tax dollars directly into rural communities. This means we're a partner, often for decades, in the transformation of our hometowns.

During the Great Depression, 44% of the U.S. population lived in rural areas and 25% of them were farmers. New federal policies emerged which focused on rural American housing, clean water, infrastructure, power and, most importantly, accessible, affordable food. Rural people and their challenges were a priority for the entire nation.

Fast-forward 60 years to the early 90s, and the Depression-era rural programs managed by a handful of USDA agencies were inefficiently scattered over the federal funding landscape. The Clinton Administration conceived of a unified mission area to modernize and improve the government's role in rural America—involving comprehensive community and economic development work—and USDA Rural Development was born. For homeowners, farmers, businesspeople and town governments, it was an introduction to the agency that would stand by them, and champion their priorities, for generations to come.

Today, RD is a centralized agency acting as a lender, grantor and partner in projects that improve the quality of life for rural residents. Over the last five years, we've invested more than \$1.38 billion in the Twin States. That translates to roughly 3,450 families with safe housing, 550 businesses with lower costs, and more than 200 community institutions built or modernized, from town halls and libraries to high schools and hospitals. Though our work is incremental and sometimes slow, the USDA has a proud tradition of putting community-driven economic development first. Today is no different, and RD will be there every day, in good times and in bad, to invest in our rural neighbors and their future. --SW

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Fiscal Year 2023 USDA Rural Development Investments - VT/NH

VERMONT

Vermont's Northeast Kingdom receives additional investments as one of five U.S. Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones. In FY23, NEK REAP Zone funding totaled
\$21,032,828

Single Family Housing
\$14,595,000

Multi-Family Housing
\$10,139,000

Business Programs
\$24,367,000

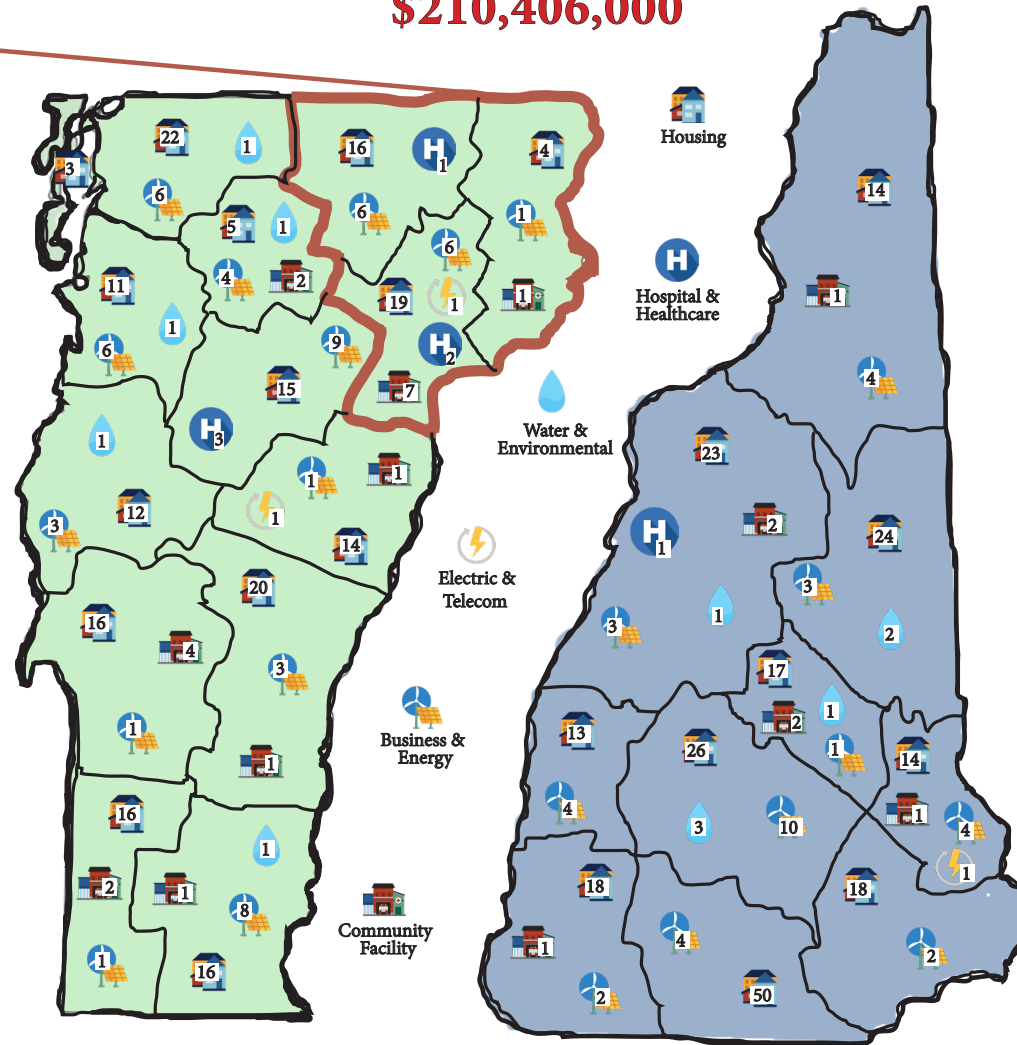
Community Facilities
\$54,793,000

Water & Environmental
\$1,905,000

Electric & Telecom
\$18,099,000

Total Funding / Projects
\$123,898,000 / 294

\$210,406,000



Projects by County

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Single Family Housing
\$17,571,000

Multi-Family Housing
\$15,690,000

Business Programs
\$28,395,000

Community Facilities
\$1,228,000

Water & Environmental
\$21,845,000

Electric & Telecom
\$1,779,000

Total Funding / Projects
\$86,508,000 / 274

2023 saw transformative improvements in rural communities increase quality of life for thousands throughout the Twin States, featuring (clockwise, from top right):

- The Winooski School District ribbon-cutting with VT Senators Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch, and Representative Becca Balint, where \$57.8 million in RD funding created a modern campus and diverse learning environment for students and teachers
- A Farm Bill listening session at Dartmouth in Hanover, NH, with Rep. Anne Kuster
- Climate-smart water and waste infrastructure for Montpelier, VT, as explained by Chief Operator Chris Cox (*in red*) to visitors at the Water Resource Recovery Facility, where \$35.8 million in RD funding is advancing the city's 2030 zero-emissions goal
- Beloved senior-care facility Peabody Place in Franklin, NH after its renovation and expansion, courtesy of a \$26 million USDA investment



Photo courtesy of Peabody Place



January

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Winter in New Hampshire was full of energy for Rural Development, as Aligned Solar Capital used a \$15.2 million USDA Electric Infrastructure Loan to build five large solar arrays in Maine and the Granite State.

Congressman Chris Pappas met with RD State Director Waring (*right*) at the Conway array (*backdrop*) to learn more about the project's 10.3 megawatts of annual generation—enough to power 1800 rural households.

Effingham was next, where (*from bottom right to left*) Rep. Pappas engaged leaders like Selectman Mike Cahalane to discuss the impact of a \$250,000 RD CF Disaster grant to rebuild the Snow Road Bridge with U.S. timber and steel—the only public access to the town transfer station. Along for the tour was Sam Evans-Brown, Executive Director of Clean Energy New Hampshire.



February

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 <small>Washington's Birthday</small>	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		



March of '23 saw USDA Deputy Secretary—then Under Secretary for RD—Xochitl Torres Small (*backdrop; top*) visit St. Johnsbury, VT, to highlight \$28.4 million in healthcare funding.

Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital received a \$1 million USDA Emergency Rural Health Care grant and \$16.5 million Community Facilities loan to expand and modernize multiple departments, while Copley Hospital used a \$1 million ERHC grant and \$9.9 million CF loan to build an orthopedic clinic in Waterbury (see October).



Media covered the roundtable featuring Senator Peter Welch and state healthcare leaders, but it was a closed broadband session at the Fairbanks Museum afterward. Communication Union District directors from across the state gathered for a productive talk, including (*bottom, from left*) Christa Shute of Northeast Kingdom Community Broadband and Jenille Smith with CVFiber.



In May, Shute would successfully apply for a \$17.4 million USDA ReConnect grant, bringing reliable broadband to thousands of NEK residents. In October, CVFiber, which secured a \$25,000 USDA Rural Business Development Grant in 2019 for a feasibility study, would cut the ribbon on new service for central Vermonters.

March

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

It was a memorable Earth Day '23 at Bullis Savage Farm in Grand Isle, VT, where Farmer Dwight Bullis (*backdrop; bottom left, middle*) hosted State Director Waring and friends to learn more about his methane digester made possible by a \$250,000 USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant. Kids from the nearby Grand Isle School welcomed the field trip and a chance to pet the cows. Senator Peter Welch, State Director Waring and VT State Conservationist Travis Thomason of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (*in vest*) engaged students while NRCS colleagues like Sarah LaRose (*sunglasses*) looked on.



April

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



In 2023, residents of Woody Hollow Co-op in Boscawen, New Hampshire, enjoyed spring for the first time in a decade. During previous years they had to contend with outdated water infrastructure responsible for giant potholes, leaking pipes, dangerous ice and mud—and the economic costs that result. With a \$800,000 grant and \$156,000 loan from RD's Water & Waste Disposal Loan and Grant program, neighbors led by Joyce Manning (*center, orange*) made transformational upgrades above and below ground to ensure their safety, promote healthy community engagement, attract new residents—and save money!

To celebrate the resilient neighborhood's inspiring success story, Congresswoman Anne Kuster joined RD State Director Waring and Chris Monroe of the NH Community Development Finance Authority (*above left, dark blue*), which contributed a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant to the project.



May

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Memorial Day	28	29	30	31	

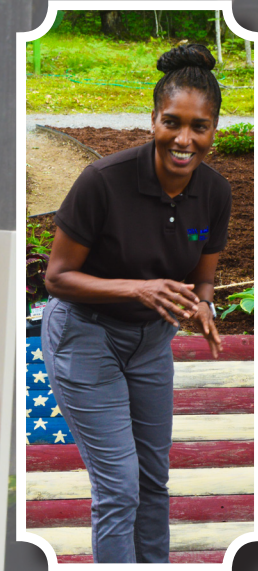


June is National Homeownership Month, and RD staff traditionally marks the occasion by descending on a lucky neighbor's home—and getting to work!

In '23 it was Bill and Janet Berner (*top left*) in Williamsville, Vermont, recipients of a USDA Single Family Home Repair grant to install an elevator lift from the garage to the home's main floor.

Among the RD staff on-hand to lend a helping hand were Housing Specialist Janice LeBlanc (*bottom left*) and Area Director Misty Sinsigalli (*backdrop*).

USDA Rural Housing Service Deputy Administrator Cathy Glover (*top and bottom right*), visited from D.C. to celebrate the American dream of homeownership, congratulate the Berners on easier, safer home access—and wield a mean shovel!



June

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Juneteenth Independence Day	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Disaster struck the Green Mountain State in July 23, when excessive rain caused rivers to overflow their banks and flood surrounding rural communities.

Homes and businesses in Montpelier, situated on the Winooski River, were hit hard. As a stunned mother and daughter looked on, the Capitol building lawn along State Street became a pond in mere minutes (*backdrop*). A couple stood at the water's edge at Court and Elm Streets as a water rescue team navigated a channel that had been a roadway intersection just hours before (*top right*).

Residences on low-lying Main Street near the Stevens Branch in Barre were also devastated (*top left*). While salvaging what he could from his home, a flood victim at the nearby Berlin Mobile Home Park paused to consider a symbol of hope: a glowing tealight that survived the deluge (*bottom left*).

In the aftermath, USDA staff jumped to action in disaster recovery centers, helping some victims find shelter and others make home repairs through RD's expanded Single Family Housing Home Repair Grant program.



*Montpelier photos courtesy of Ben Doyle
Preservation Trust of Vermont*

July

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



RD Business Programs achieved big things in '23 for ag producers.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack (*top left*) led a roundtable in Manchester, NH, and announced a \$19.9 million USDA Business & Industry loan guarantee for North Country Growers in Berlin. A 20-acre greenhouse (*backdrop*) will grow lettuce year-round, drawing Rep. Anne Kuster who met with State Director Waring to take it all in.

The goats at Robie Farm in Piermont, NH (*top right*) are pleased with the \$250,000 USDA Value Added Producer Grant to implement new product marketing strategies, while Sisters of Anarchy in Shelburne, VT will use their VAPG to expand customer markets for flavors like Dirty Ann and Chaste Anne (*bottom right*), made with Yellow Anne raspberries from Fisher Brothers Farm.

Photo courtesy of Sisters of Anarchy

August

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31



*Photo courtesy
of The Fredettes*



*Photo courtesy
of Julie Abati*



USDA Housing Programs had huge impacts on rural residents throughout the Green Mountain and Granite States in 2023. Kate and Ken Fredette (*top left*) of Rutland improved their solar array with new batteries through the Single Family Housing Home Repair Loan & Grant Program, saving them money and making life easier.

Through the Single Family Housing Direct Home Loan Program, Julie Abati (*bottom left*) of Tamworth, NH, found a good home for her family after a tough divorce.

Bill and Janet Berner in Williamstown got a literal lift (*backdrop*) from USDA, making home access much easier. Housing Specialist Ryan Bonacum and Community Programs Specialist Alex Gauthier (*above, from left*) helped the Berners with yard work during USDA's Homeownership Month site visit (see June).

September

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2 Labor Day	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

In Waterbury, VT, Copley Hospital broke ground on a 9,962 sq. ft. orthopedic clinic, courtesy of \$10.9 million in USDA loan and grant funding. Along with construction, the investment will secure modern medical imaging equipment.

Among the VIPs gathered to make the dirt fly were (*below, from left*) Dr. John Macy, Chief of Orthopedics; Nancy Banks, Chair of the Board of Trustees; Joe Woodin, President and CEO; RD State Director Waring; and Jeffrey Hebert, Chief Financial Officer.



October

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 <small>Indigenous People's Day</small>	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Rural communities came together to make inclusive changes in '23 (clockwise, from top right):

- Killington Selectman Jim Haff (left) and Town Manager Michael Ramsey (right), cut the first log of a major stormwater and streetscaping project, aided by an \$18.3 million RD Community Facilities loan

- Director Mary Feldman (third from left) and her team broke ground on a modern facility for the Rutland County Parent Child Center, thanks to \$1.2 million in USDA CF loans & grants

- The Castleton Library received a \$125,000 CF grant to build an elevator into the facility, offering safe accessibility for visitors with mobility limitations

- Start.Coop out of Manchester, NH, will use a \$56,155 USDA Socially Disadvantaged Group Grant to accelerate small businesses in underserved areas



November

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Thanksgiving Day	29	30

USDA Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small enjoyed a whirlwind New Hampshire day trip in December 2023, visiting (clockwise from top right):

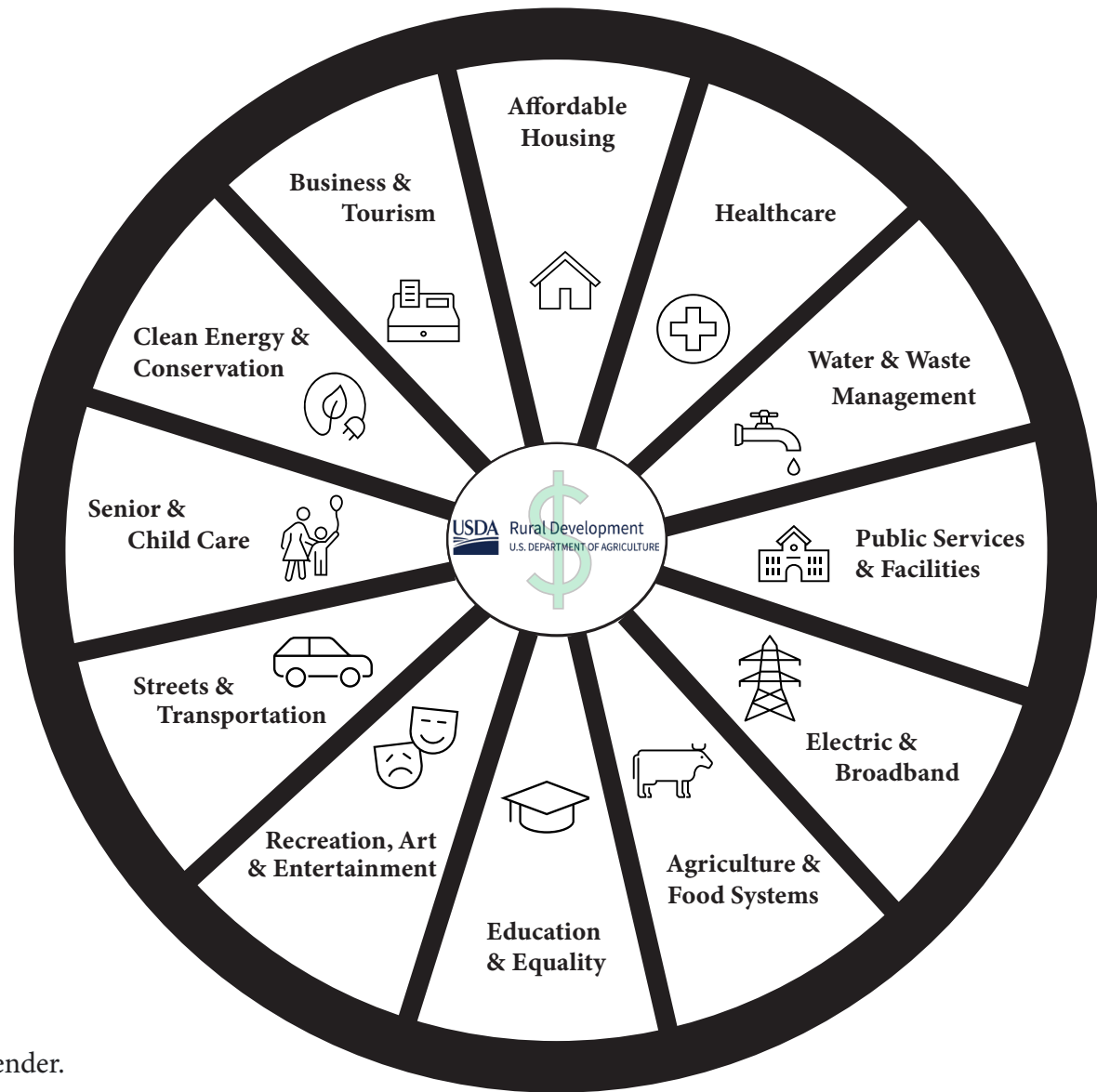
- REAP awardee Stephanie Zydenbos of Micro Mama's in Weare, a fermented produce business that received cost-saving solar panels to offset nearly all of its annual power usage
- Gould Hill Farm in Contoocook, for a roundtable with food producers and ag leaders such as (from left) USDA Farm Service Executive Director Jeffrey Holmes, Rep. Anne Kuster, State Ag Commissioner Shawn Jasper, and NRCS Acting State Conservationist Joe Buford
- Whaleback Mountain in Enfield, for a discussion about the recreational economy hosted by (from left) Director Jon Hunt and Northern Border Regional Commission Co-Chair Chris Saunders, who directs annual funding via USDA Rural Business Development Grants to Twin State orgs, including more snow-making for the non-profit, community-owned ski & ride facility



December

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29	30	31				

With more than 80 loan, grant and loan guarantee programs to stimulate economic development, USDA RD is committed to helping improve the quality of life for rural Americans



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