

## Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

### Success Story: RD Helps Retreat Farm Evolve from Growing Vegetables to Growing Community

**\$2,000,000**

RD Community Facilities  
Direct Loan

**\$350,000**

Northern Border Regional  
Commission Grant

**\$143,820**

RD Funding through Other  
CF Programs

**1837**

Retreat Farm Established  
to Support Hospital

**500+**

Acres of Forest, Farm and  
Wetlands

**12,046**

People in Brattleboro  
Benefitted by Restoration

#### Idle Farm Reimagined as UNIQUE COMMUNITY SPACE

Founded in 1837, the Retreat Farm in Brattleboro, VT, once served as the agricultural producer for the Brattleboro Retreat Psychiatric Hospital, providing food, fuel and restorative healing for patients and staff. Modernity and regulations made patient-driven farms obsolete by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the Windham Foundation conserved the beloved property in 2001. In 2015, it became a nonprofit focused on revitalizing the built and natural environments through education and experience.

#### Constant Effort Cultivates ORGANIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Retreat Farm's ongoing mission is to restore the barns, forests, fields and waters of the historic property, held sacred by the Elnu Abenaki Indians. As a gathering and educational space, the Farm is a platform for events and initiatives that advance natural, historical and social connections. To keep this vision of a just, healthy and sustainable community space in focus, org leaders stay busy supplementing income from visitor and program fees with help from private donations and funding partners.

#### Diverse Funding Creates a CULTURAL DESTINATION

In 2017, USDA RD awarded the Farm a \$12,020 Community Facilities Grant to build kids' play equipment. In 2019, a \$50,000 CF grant established computer infrastructure. In 2021, a \$2 million CF loan and \$350,000 grant from the Northern Border Regional Commission funded the conversion of the Farm's North Barn into a modern event space. In 2023, a \$35,000 CF grant enabled a feasibility study, and the next year, a \$46,800 CF grant purchased furniture and equipment for the new Barn.

**For program regulations and requirements, please go to the [USDA RD fact sheet](#)**

