

## Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

### Success Story: Castleton Library Goes Vertical to Serve the Entire Community

**\$125,000**

USDA Community Facilities Grant

**\$633,655**

Project Contribution from Library

**\$173,755**

VT Tax Credit & Community Development Block Grant

**14.5%**

State population with a disability

**40%**

Rutland-area seniors with a disability

**12%**

Castleton residents 65 years and over

#### Learning, Lending & Shelter Define a **CARING COMMUNITY FACILITY**

The Castleton Free Library (CFL) in Castleton, Vermont is a beloved historic institution that serves its community far beyond the conventional role of book repository. By collaborating with other libraries throughout the region, the staff takes a proactive approach to expanding collections to meet local needs. Residents with spotty internet service can reliably access a clean signal in the building or parking lot—a crucial component of learning and working for kids and adults during COVID—and CFL also loans laptops to those without hardware. With air conditioning and heat throughout the building, the Library is refuge for patrons needing relief from extreme weather.

#### A Vision to Meet the **NEEDS OF EVERY RESIDENT**

CFL's mission to serve all patrons was inhibited by inadequate handicap bathroom and lack of vertical access to the main floor, where the adult collection and public computers are located. Based on area, state and national data, the Library board members and staff knew a significant part of the population was excluded because of poor accessibility. For those with mobility issues, disabilities or young children in strollers, the whitewashed stairs to the brick colonial's stately entrance were more intimidating than inviting. Installing an elevator and new bathroom would be costly, but undeterred and focused on 100% accessibility, Library leaders started project planning.

#### Preserving History While **CREATING MODERN ACCESSIBILITY**

With help from a USDA Community Facilities Grant, investments from the State of Vermont, and the generosity of the Castleton community, the CFL secured the necessary funding to build a new elevator and handicap-accessible bathroom. To preserve the historic character of the building, the elevator is integrated into the back, within close proximity to the parking lot. For seniors and disabled patrons requiring canes, walkers and wheelchairs, the new features allow unprecedented convenience and ease of access. And for parents with young children and strollers, there are no more tight spaces or troublesome steps to navigate; another benefit of this inclusive investment.

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



*Little has changed at the beautiful Castleton Free Library since its construction in 1929. USDA and other partners helped build a modern elevator and bathroom to provide access for all residents.*

