



VERMONT BAR FOUNDATION

JUSTICE IN MOTION Impact & Investment

2025

RAND McNALLY
POPULAR MAP OF
VERMONT

SCALE 1:887,000
1 Inch = 14 Statute Miles
1 Centimeter = 8.9 Kilometers

Statute Miles
Kilometers
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This past year has been one of remarkable growth, renewed focus, and meaningful collaboration for the Vermont Bar Foundation. When I stepped into this role, I was struck by the breadth of our reach and the depth of commitment across Vermont's justice community. Today, I am even more certain: the VBF is uniquely positioned to support and strengthen the legal ecosystem that so many Vermonters rely on.

Legal needs in our state are rising rapidly. Organizations serving survivors of domestic violence, individuals with disabilities, families navigating complex challenges, and community members facing eviction or housing instability are reporting unprecedented demand. At the same time, our grantee partners continue to provide extraordinary service with limited resources.

In response, the VBF has doubled down on its mission. This past year we:

- **Expanded our grantmaking reach and increased support to programs working at the front lines**
- **Launched new partnerships and statewide initiatives**
- **Convened advocates, lawmakers, and community leaders to elevate the importance of civil legal aid for all eligible Vermonters**
- **Built new opportunities for engagement through events like our Justice Socials, Justice Roundtable, and our first annual Justice Gala**

At every turn, I have been inspired by the people who make this work possible—our board members, committee members, grantees, donors, and partners across Vermont. You are the heartbeat of our mission.

Thank you for believing in the promise of access to justice. Thank you for standing with us as we continue to grow, innovate, and rise to meet the legal needs of Vermonters. There is much more to do, and together, we will continue to build a Vermont where justice is truly accessible to all.

In Partnership,

**Hannah King
Executive Director, Vermont Bar Foundation
hannah@vtbarfoundation.org**

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WILLIMINGTON

ABOUT US

The Vermont Bar Foundation (VBF) is Vermont's only foundation solely dedicated to strengthening the legal services community and expanding access to justice. Our mission is clear and deeply rooted in equity: to ensure that low-income, underserved, and marginalized Vermonters can access the legal support they need to remain housed, safe, and secure in their rights. When a person cannot afford legal help, the consequences touch every part of life - stability, safety, and the ability to fully participate in one's community.

Since our founding, the VBF has been built on both innovation and impact. Through Vermont's Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) program, we transform the pooled interest from short-term client funds into public-good legal aid - turning an otherwise unused resource into a vital lifeline for thousands of Vermonters each year.

Each year, the VBF awards grants to nonprofit organizations in every region of Vermont, ensuring that legal support reaches rural towns, urban centers, and communities in between. These grants fund essential services - from housing stability and disability rights to family advocacy, domestic violence support, and restorative justice - meeting Vermonters where they are and responding directly to pressing community needs.

A cornerstone of our work is the Poverty Law Fellowship, a flagship program that places new attorneys directly into underserved legal areas. These Fellows stand at the front lines of our justice system, representing vulnerable clients, addressing systemic barriers, and expanding legal access across the state. The Fellowship reflects our belief that investing not only in programs, but in people, strengthens Vermont's justice ecosystem from the ground up.

At its heart, the Vermont Bar Foundation is more than a funder. We serve as a bridge between the legal community and every Vermonter, ensuring that access to a lawyer, to advocacy, and to justice is not a privilege reserved for a few, but a reality available to all.

VISION | To create a just and compassionate society through a fair and effective justice system.

MISSION | To create a just community by funding legal services for the disadvantaged and developing programs that enhance the understanding of and access to the Vermont legal system.

CORE VALUES | Our four core values support our mission and vision. They guide our actions and assist us in evaluating our current performance and positioning us for sustainable growth.

- **Learning.** Our services and programs inform people about the Vermont legal system and its challenges and impacts.
- **Collaboration.** We believe in the value of healthy, lasting relationships between and among our staff, board, partners, sister organizations, stakeholders, and Vermont individuals, families, and businesses, and we do our part to contribute to the Vermont community.
- **Fairness and Equity.** We strive for an equitable and inclusive legal system to make our society more fair and just, and we seek solutions to structural and systemic inequalities that impact our most vulnerable.
- **Adaptability.** We are attentive and endeavor to respond to the changing needs of our Vermont community.

WHO WE ARE

LEADERSHIP

The Vermont Bar Foundation is guided by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors whose leadership, vision, and commitment drive our mission forward. Our work is strengthened by additional volunteers who serve on VBF committees - offering their time, expertise, and insight to support grantmaking, IOLTA oversight, and outreach efforts. Committee participation is open to community members; you do not need to serve on the Board to play a meaningful role in advancing access to justice in Vermont.

PRESIDENT

Lisa M. Campion, Esq.

PRESIDENT-ELECT

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Becky von Trapp, Esq.
Justice Nancy Waples



One of the most meaningful parts of my work outside of my practice has been serving on the Board of the Vermont Bar Foundation. The Foundation funds programs that expand access to justice for Vermonters - helping people who otherwise would not be able to afford legal help, and supporting initiatives that strengthen our legal system. Serving on this board has been an honor. I've had the chance to work with incredible colleagues from across the legal community and to see firsthand how our profession can have a real impact beyond the courtroom or the office.

Becky von Trapp, Esq.
Board Member



Volunteering on a VBF committee is a meaningful way to invest in access to justice. Committee members provide essential leadership and stewardship, ensuring the Foundation's work reflects the needs of Vermonters and supports the partners who deliver critical legal services.

Dave Gurtman, Esq.
IOLTA Committee, Chair

COMMITTEES

Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA)
Grants
Promotions and Revenue
Executive Committee
Governance

JUSTICE IN MOTION

Access to justice is a movement — this year, the Vermont Bar Foundation moved forward together with our partners and community. We invested not only in programs, but in people — creating opportunities for collaboration, visibility, and shared learning across Vermont’s justice landscape. These gatherings strengthened relationships, elevated voices, and built momentum for a more connected statewide justice ecosystem.

JUSTICE SOCIALS

We were proud to host the first-ever series of Justice Socials, a new statewide networking initiative designed to bring together attorneys, advocates, nonprofit partners, and community leaders. One of these events was held in partnership with the Burlington Business Association, expanding our relationship with Vermont’s business community and fostering deeper cross-sector collaboration. Together, these events helped spark new conversations and build a stronger, more connected justice network.



JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE

In partnership with Congresswoman Becca Balint’s office, we convened a Justice Roundtable at Vermont Law and Graduate School’s Burlington campus. Leaders from legal aid organizations, survivor services, disability rights programs, youth-serving organizations, immigration defense groups, and statewide coalitions came together to examine emerging challenges, share data, and explore collaborative solutions to expand legal access in Vermont. The Roundtable highlighted the power of collective problem-solving and renewed our commitment to statewide justice coordination.

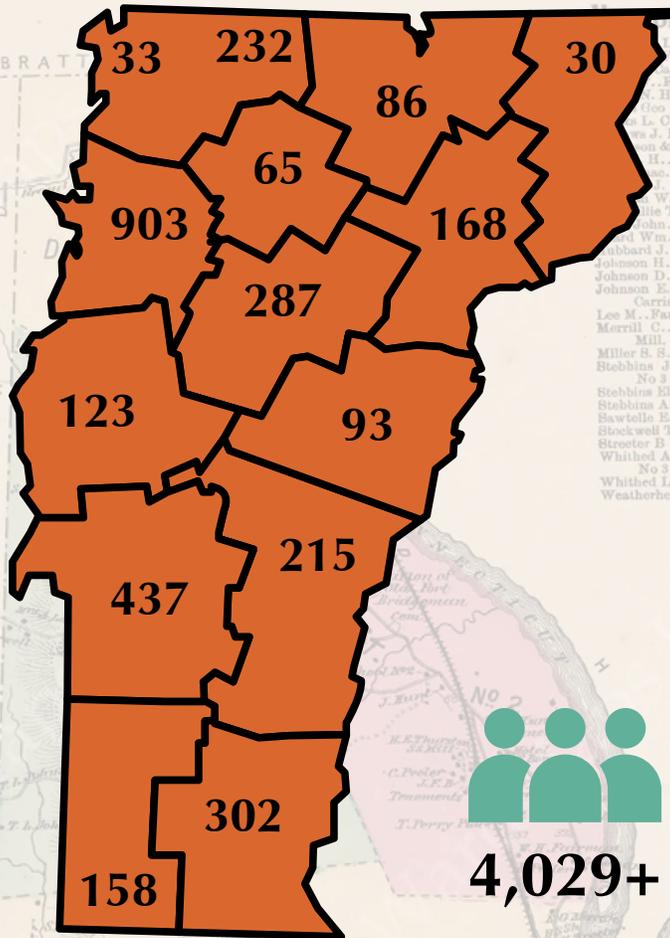
FIRST ANNUAL JUSTICE GALA

A milestone moment for VBF and our partners. The first annual Justice Gala, hosted in partnership with Vermont Legal Aid and Legal Services Vermont, brought Vermonters together to celebrate access to justice and recognize the advocates, attorneys, and organizations strengthening our justice ecosystem every day. The event was generously supported by sponsors across Vermont’s legal and business communities, demonstrating broad and unified investment in expanding civil legal aid. The Gala raised critical funding for legal services and established a new annual tradition centered on community, gratitude, and impact.



BY THE NUMBERS

The Vermont Bar Foundation is truly a statewide organization, supporting more than 4,000 Vermonters this year through civil legal services spanning immigration support, domestic violence advocacy, housing stability, family law, disability rights, and rural legal clinics. Engaging in high stakes legal issues with a high return on investment is the mark of our deeply collaborative work in every region of Vermont. We are proud to be an anchor institution for Vermonters seeking justice and of the extremely high output for an organization of our size.



1 IN 5

Vermont residents are now eligible for civil legal aid.

NEARLY 1 IN 160

Vermonters served through VBF-supported legal services.

14/14

Counties served.



4,029+

Vermonters helped with VBF-supported legal services.



300%

Rise in grant requests from Vermont legal service providers.



\$11

Returned to the Vermont economy for every \$1 invested in civil legal aid.

- ADDISON – 123
- BENNINGTON – 158
- CALEDONIA – 168
- CHITTENDEN – 903
- ESSEX – 30
- FRANKLIN – 232
- GRAND ISLE – 33
- LAMOILLE – 65
- ORANGE – 93
- ORLEANS – 86
- RUTLAND – 437
- WASHINGTON – 287
- WINDHAM – 302
- WINDSOR – 215

Data based on most recent grant reports submitted to VBF and publicly available information.

GRANTMAKING IMPACT

IOLTA AND THE HON. JOHN A. DOOLEY COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

The Vermont Bar Foundation administers two core grant programs funded through the Vermont IOLTA (Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts) Program: the invite-only IOLTA Grants Program and the Hon. John A. Dooley Competitive Grants Program. Both programs are supported by interest earned on pooled client trust accounts and are designed to expand access to civil legal services and justice-related education across Vermont. The IOLTA Grants Program provides targeted, strategic funding to key legal service partners through an invitation-only process, ensuring stable support for essential, high-impact legal services. The Hon. John A. Dooley Competitive Grants Program is the Foundation's open, competitive funding program, awarding annual grants to nonprofit organizations that deliver direct legal services to low-income Vermonters and provide law-related public education. Together, these programs represent the Foundation's primary investment in Vermont's civil justice infrastructure, supporting innovation, accountability, and statewide access to justice.

2025 Grantees Include:

- Association of Africans Living in Vermont
- Atria Collective
- Center for Justice Reform Clinic at VLGS
- Community Restorative Justice Center
- Have Justice Will Travel
- Hope Works
- Migrant Justice
- Vermont Asylum Assistance Project
- Community Asylum Seekers Project
- NewStory Center
- Steps to End Domestic Violence
- Vermont Bar Association
- Vermont Legal Aid
- Legal Services Vermont

Access to civil legal representation can be life-changing for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. This support from the Vermont Bar Foundation allows us to connect survivors with trusted legal partners who help them navigate complex systems and reclaim their safety and independence. We're deeply grateful for this investment in justice and healing.

Avaloy Lanning, MSW
Executive Director, NewStory Center

THE RICHARD CASSIDY SPECIAL GRANT PROGRAM

The Richard Cassidy Special Grant Program is a \$100,000 statewide funding initiative created by the Vermont Bar Foundation to honor the life and legacy of attorney Richard Cassidy, whose career was defined by justice, public service, and removing barriers for Vermonters. Through this program, the VBF awarded special grants to 21 organizations working across Vermont to address critical needs including housing stability, disability rights, youth services, economic opportunity, immigration support, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and community reentry. The program reflects Richard Cassidy's enduring values and the Foundation's belief that access to justice extends beyond the courtroom—strengthening communities, expanding opportunity, and supporting Vermonters in meaningful and transformative ways.

2025 Richard Cassidy Special Grant Awardees:

- ARC-Rutland Area
- Bridge to Rutland, Inc.
- BROC Community Action
- Central Vermont Refugee Action Network
- Disability Rights Vermont
- Dismas of Vermont
- KidSafe Collaborative
- Let's Build Homes
- OUR House of Central VT, Inc.
- Pride Center of Vermont
- Rutland County Pride
- Spectrum Youth and Family Services
- SPEAK Inc.
- Therapeutic Works
- The Vermont Professionals of Color Network (VT PoC)
- Vermont Immigration Legal Defense Fund
- Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Vermont Nonprofit Legal Hub
- Vermont Parent Representation Center, Inc.
- Vermont Works for Women
- Voices for Vermont's Children

The Richard Cassidy Grant will help us connect the dots between legal equity and our broader mission of advancing BIPOC prosperity in Vermont. It gives us the chance to listen, learn, and act on real data and from a place of real community insight.

Tino Rutanhira
Vermont Professionals of Color Network

POVERTY LAW FELLOWSHIP

The Vermont Poverty Law Fellowship empowers outstanding young attorneys dedicated to expanding access to justice for low-income and marginalized Vermonters. Funded entirely through robust fundraising efforts and generous contributions from law firms, individuals, businesses, and community partners, the Fellowship provides two years of critical salary and program support to emerging legal advocates working on the front lines of civil legal need. Since its launch in 2008, the Fellowship has strengthened Vermont's legal services ecosystem by building capacity in high-need areas, supporting innovative legal projects, and cultivating the next generation of access to justice leaders across the state.

I credit my Vermont Poverty Law Fellow (VPLF) experience with preparing me to lead Vermont Asylum Assistance Project (VAAP), even in uncertain times. While law school equipped me with core lawyering tools like legal research, writing, and analysis, the VPLF equipped me with the local context and relationships and leadership skills that I draw from daily to leverage VAAP's growing legal services program and affect positive systems-level change.

Jill Martin Diaz, Esq.
former VPLF, Executive Director of VAAP

SUSTAINED SUPPORT

As freedoms and protections are called into question, it is crucial that we invest in pro bono legal services. Vermont Bar Foundation remains unwavering in championing immigrant rights. Together, VBF and Vermont Law and Graduate School are unyielding in our commitment to improving access to justice. For all of the aspiring public interest lawyers whose careers are shaped by their experience in the Clinic, and for all of our clients whose lives are positively impacted by our representation, thank you, VBF, for your generosity.

Brett Stokes, Esq.
Director, Center for Justice Reform Clinic at VLGS

The VBF has supported the Legal Program and Free Legal Clinic at St. Johnsbury's Community Restorative Justice Center for more than a decade. This generosity has allowed hundreds of low-income residents of Caledonia and Essex Counties receive much needed legal advice from volunteer attorneys when they otherwise would've had no way to get it. The program has become a locally well-known and highly depended-on service for the County Courts and local human service agencies to refer clientele in need of legal help. It is the only program in the area offering this kind of free service. VBF's ongoing financial support makes this vital program possible.

Neil Favreau
Executive Director, Community Restorative Justice Center

DESIGN & SUPPORT



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SUPPORT & SERVICE

Investing in Justice

Your tax-deductible contribution will make a significant difference by providing crucial legal services to low-income Vermonters in need. Our programs depend on the generous support of Vermonters like you.

Donate by scanning the adjacent code or by USPS via the mailing address above. Checks should be payable to “Vermont Bar Foundation”

Please specify in the memo line on your check the program you’re helping to fund: Poverty Law Fellowship Campaign, Grant Programs, or wherever it will make the most impact.



Joining in the Work

Expanding access to justice depends on robust participation from the Vermont legal community. To join us in this endeavor through Board service, committee work, or volunteerism, please use the codes below, or email hannah@vtbarfoundation.org.