

# Community Outreach Skills

**Welcome! We will do some writing during the session. Paper and pens are available at the back of the room if needed.**

**PRODUCED BY:**



**Vermont Council on Rural Development**

Unleashing the power of Vermonters to create a better future



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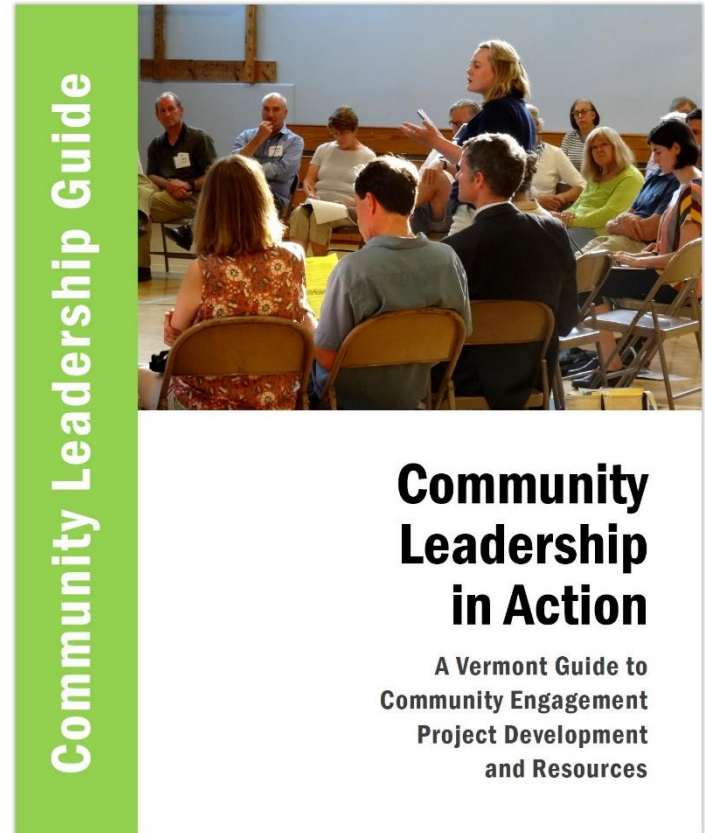
# Workshop Goals

1. Learn something new about community outreach and engagement (skill, technique, idea).
  2. Figure out a way to further community outreach for your community project or initiative.
  3. Recognize and share the expertise in the room.
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# The Vermont Council on Rural Development

“The Vermont Council on Rural Development helps Vermont citizens build prosperous and resilient communities through democratic engagement, marshalling resources, and collective action.”

<https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>

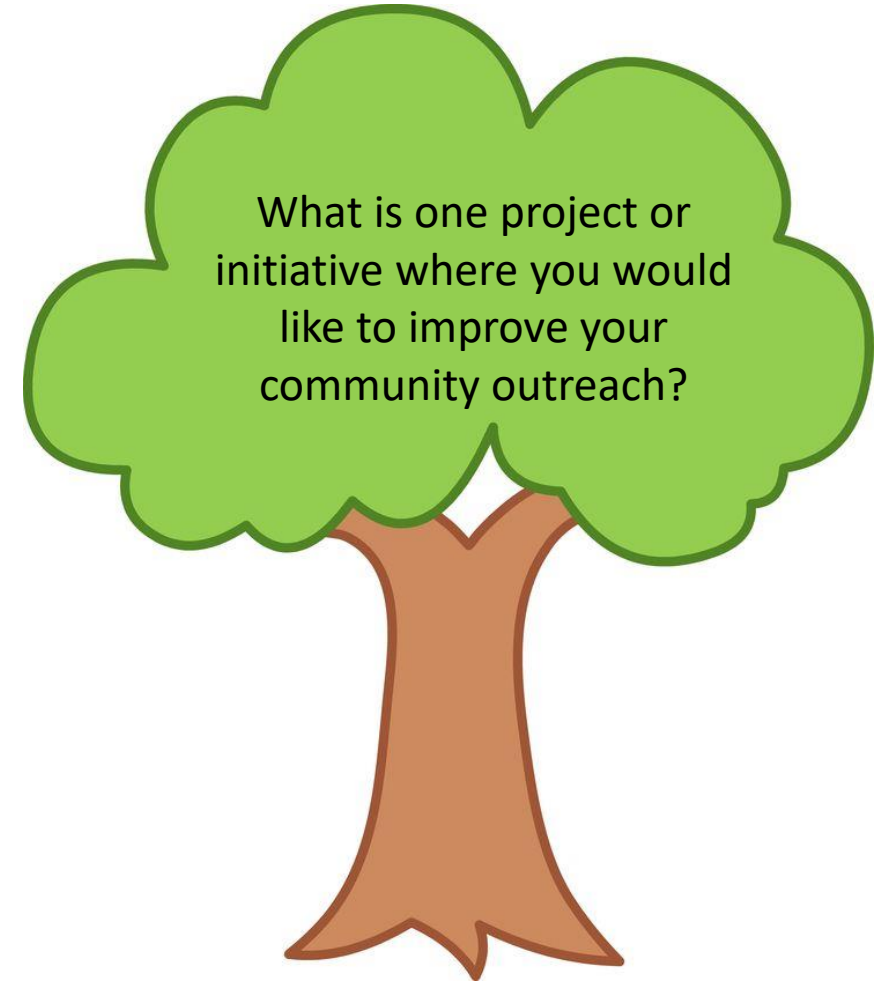


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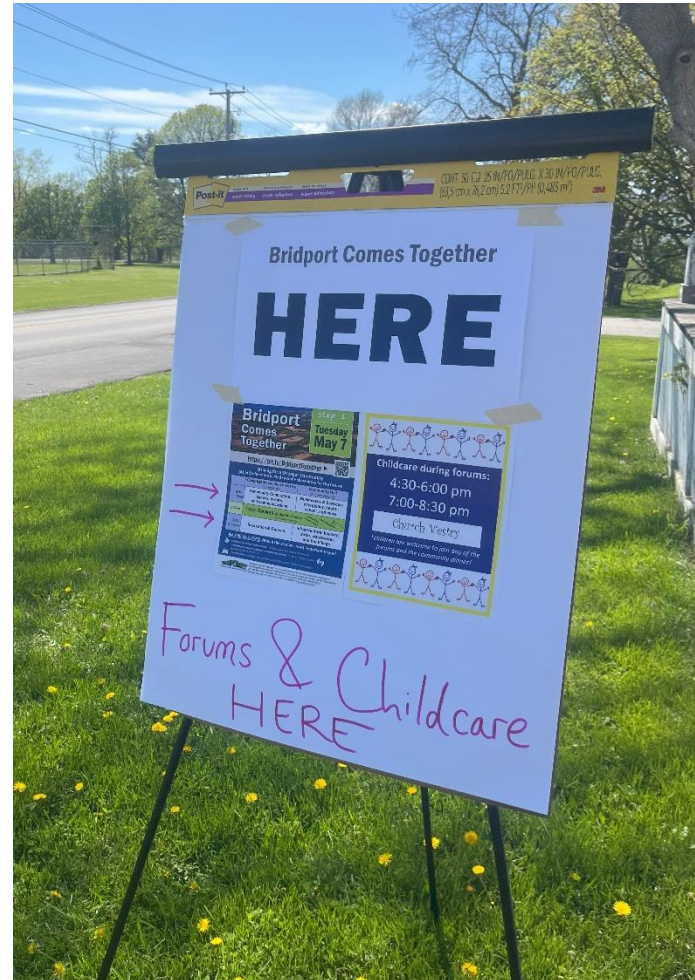
# Community Outreach 101

- A continual process
- Can change and evolve throughout a project
- Builds engagement
- Can help make your project happen!



# Inviting the Public – Best Practices

1. Identify your purpose
2. Plan, discuss, assemble
3. Build, invite, engage
4. Put in the work for outreach
5. Thank and follow up



# 1 - Identify Your Purpose

GOAL	POSSIBLE TOOLS
<b>Inform:</b> provide information to help the public understand	Flyers and newsletters, websites, panel discussions, tabling at community events, open houses
<b>Consult:</b> Solicit public comment on an issue or decision	Surveys, focus groups, facilitated meetings designed for public comment
<b>Involve:</b> Work directly with the public throughout the effort, to ensure their ideas are understood and respected	Visioning exercises, deliberative forums with small-group discussions
<b>Collaborate:</b> Partner with the community in developing alternatives and choosing actions	Advisory committees, participatory decision making, consensus meetings
<b>Empower:</b> The final decision is up to the community and the community owns the project or initiative	Town Meeting, ballot voting, or dot-voting and sign ups to advance projects

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# Framing a Process for Public Engagement

- Open, Inclusive, Transparent, and Clear. Invite everyone who cares!
- Consider your capacity – facilitation needs, space, time
- Listen, learn, and adjust
- **Make it fun!**



## 2 - Plan, discuss and assemble

- Lead with a diverse team
- Engage with the community – Who should be at the table? Who is missing?

Who is one new person you want to invite on your project team?



<p><b>Letters to all residents</b> (list SC Member who volunteered to contact town)</p>	<p><b>Press</b> TV Radio  Newspapers</p>
<p><b>Phone Calls</b> (list forum topics and SC member volunteer who will make calls for each forum)</p>	<p><b>Other</b> (include SC member volunteers for newsletters, websites, school backpacks, groups in town, email distribution lists, Front Porch Forum, poster distribution, signs, library/grocery store inserts)</p>



**Help shape the future of Franklin!!**  
This session will build on ideas, challenges, and opportunities shared by community members at forums in March. Come to:

- ✓ Review Action Items
- ✓ Discuss What's Most Important
- ✓ VOTE for Community Priorities

**Everyone is welcome!**

April  
**18**

**6:30-9 pm**  
Franklin Town Hall  
(5336 Main St)



Can't Join In Person? Find the link to join by Zoom here: <https://bit.ly/FranklinVoices>.



Childcare will be provided.



Transportation and Accessibility assistance available by request. Contact 802-222-6896



**Pizza, drinks & dessert will be served!!**

The Franklin Community Voices Community Visit process is produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). The Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. VCRD is a non-profit organization supporting the locally-defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. Learn more at [vtrural.org/programs/Community-Visits](http://vtrural.org/programs/Community-Visits) or contact Alyssa at 802-222-6896 or [alyssa@vtrural.org](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org).

Vermont Council on Rural Development This is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law.

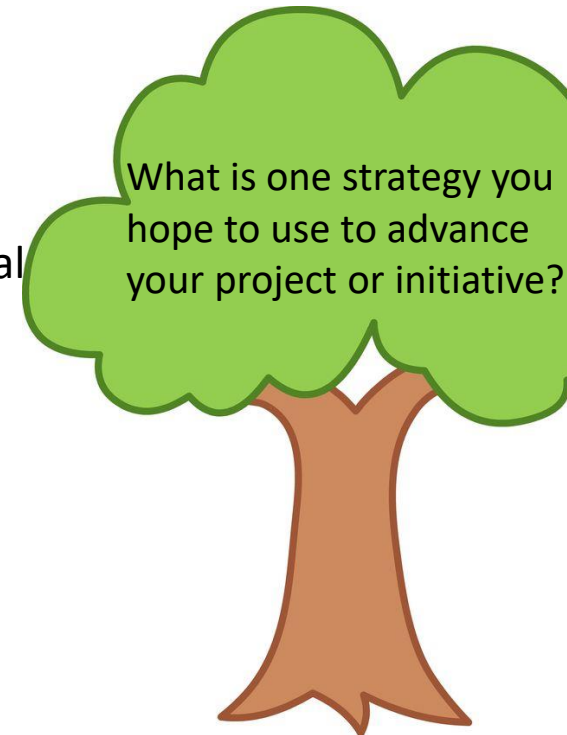
## 3 - Build, Invite, Engage

- Bring your team together
- Plan your event/campaign
- Build an outreach plan
- Identify ways to reach out
- Make it personal
- Avoid tokenizing
- Be clear about ask



# 4 - Potential strategies for outreach

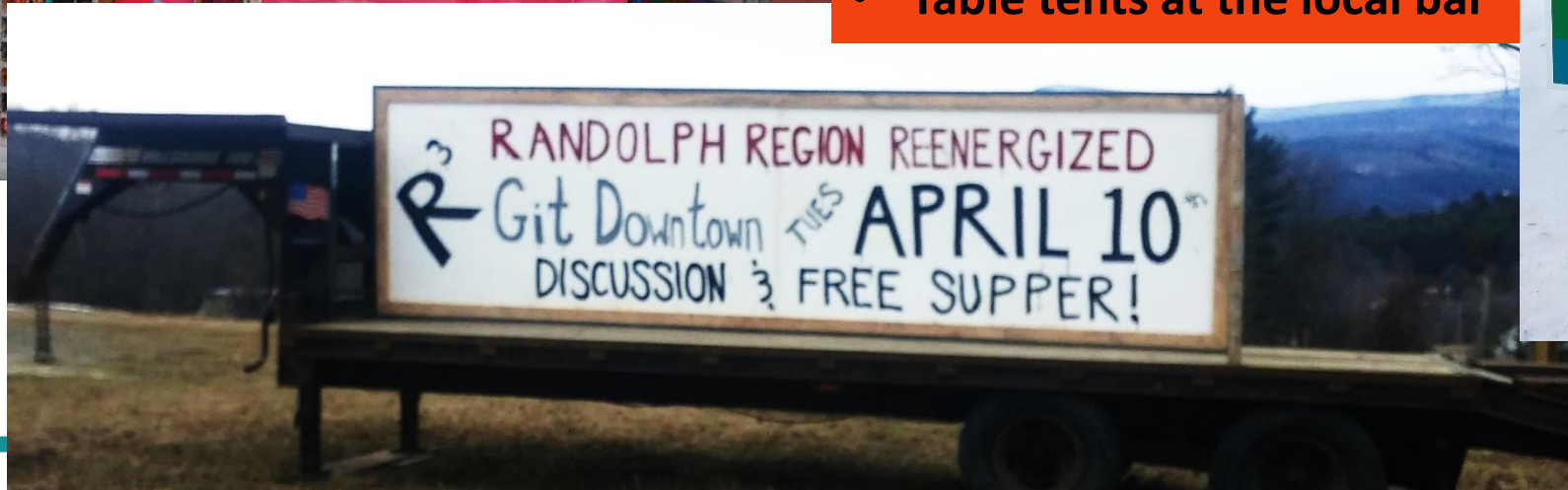
- Staff a **table at community events** (town meetings, concerts, sports events)
- **Make phone calls** and/or personal emails – knock on doors!
- Put up **posters on bulletin boards** (school, town hall, store, post office, cafe)
- Place **handouts on the counter of local gathering spots**
- Put up a **sandwich board** in higher-traffic intersections
- Get on the **agenda of local boards/committees** to keep them updated
- **Visit existing groups** (play group, book group, clubs) with your message
- Host an **interactive event** to highlight your project
- Create your own **event website**
- **Mail postcards or flyer** to all households
- **Create a survey** (use both print and online)
- Take advantage of **word of mouth**—which people are the best sources of juicy news in your town?
- **Access existing media**, such as:
  - Town website
  - Front Porch Forum
  - Facebook or other social media
  - School newsletters, and/or special flyers sent home with students
  - Church and club newsletters
  - Local newspaper
  - Letters to the editor
  - Local radio and TV stations
  - Public access TV



# Be Creative About Reaching Out



- Local photographers
- Community Art
- Graphic Designers
- Artists
- Web Specialists
- Students
- Poster Contest
- Flipcharts at events to collect ideas
- Table tents at the local bar



# Meet People Where They Are



**MONTGOMERY THRIVES**

MONTGOMERY, VERMONT

## We're building a vibrant future for Montgomery, Vermont.

↓

**Updates**

Feb. 10, 2021 Update

**Meetings**

Aug. 19, 2020 - Informal Meeting

**Headlines**

"Vermont gets \$4.4 million in northern border grants to 14 communities."

Looking for more information on the project? View project files, an extensive Q&A section, and other public information made available ahead of the vote.

[View project archive](#)

**More information**

You'll find a complete archive of the public information published in the lead-up to the bond vote on the public project archive:

**Questions**


Contact your local selectboard member or use the form below. We'll do our best to respond as quickly as possible.

# Make it fun!





# 5 - Thank and Follow Up

 Vermont Council on Rural Development shared a link. 26 September 2018 · 🌐

What a wonderful afternoon/evening in Montgomery - a strong turn out of over 150 community members for forums and dinner and excellent conversations around assets, challenges, and ideas for the future (photos coming soon!). If you have additional ideas to share or were unable to attend, please feel free to complete this survey to share your ideas! (or pass the survey along to friends, family, and neighbors).

**\*\*Update - you can also fill out hard copy surveys at the Town Cler... See more**

Montgomery Thrives Survey: YOUR Ideas for the Future of Montgomery

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DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

**Montgomery Thrives Survey: YOUR Ideas for the Future of Montgomery**

This fall, the Montgomery community is coming together to set positive direction and concrete action for the future. On September 25th...

 Vermont Council on Rural Development is in Franklin, VT. May 15 at 9:55 AM · 🌐

Thanks to everyone in Franklin who joined and supported the Franklin Community Voices process! Task Forces are now beginning work to expand childcare options, improve community communication, and collaborate for the health of Lake Carmi. Franklin friends can sign up to stay up-to-date on those projects at [bit.ly/FranklinVoices](https://bit.ly/FranklinVoices)



# Thank you!

Alyssa Johnson

[alyssa@vtrural.org](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org)

802-222-6896

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**AUG  
6  
2024**

**VERMONT  
COMMUNITY  
LEADERSHIP  
SUMMIT**

**Forge Forward,  
Thrive Together**



## Leadership Network

Upcoming Workshops

Workshop Library

Vermont Leadership Programs

Join the Network



Vermont is a place where motivated individuals have real power to make positive change in their communities. Throughout our history, the work of these leaders has shaped our towns and the state as a whole. Today, active and engaged local leaders, with or without an official position, are more important than ever as we respond to and recover from the Covid-19 crisis and continue the critical work of renewing our communities and strengthening our state.

The Vermont Community Leadership Network (VCLN) connects and supports local leaders as they build local projects, organizations, and systems that serve their communities and Vermont's urgent and long-term needs. The Network supports members with various [workshops](#) and resources such as the [Leadership Guide](#) for advancing leadership and community projects.

[Join the Leadership Network](#) to receive updates about workshops and action center opportunities.

The video below is from VCRD's August 2020 event announcing the new Network and Leadership Guide, and recognizing some leaders doing great work around Vermont. Senator Leahy joined and delivered some inspirational remarks:

<https://www.vtrural.org/leadership-network/>

<https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>