

# Bennington Health District Community Projects

February 1, 2023

**Backbone Organization:** Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC)

**Website:** <http://www.bcrcvt.org/healthy-communities.html>

## **Bennington's Data Driven Problem Statement:**

Previous public health initiatives in the Bennington region have not adequately addressed the root causes of health inequities, specifically poverty and the economic systems that keep people in this condition. A significant portion of the Bennington population lives at or below the poverty level, and the design of the current economic system is a large contributor to this rate of poverty and associated negative health outcomes.

## **Bennington's Community Goal/Vision:**

Economic development and reform efforts that center human dignity, lived expertise, and health equity are essential to improving the wellbeing of the Bennington community.

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## **Alliance for Community Transformations (ACT)**

ACT is partnering with the Take Care Project to distribute and provide free period and hygiene products across the SVSU school district.

Intended results: Increase access to free period and other personal hygiene products across Bennington, increase the number of partners participating in the Take Care Project, create more locations for donation drop offs.

## **Bennington County Open Arms (BCOA)**

Refugees often have no rental history and do not arrive with enough to pay first month, last month and a security deposit. Partnering with Bennington County Open Arms to help pay those costs. Additionally, using space in the Second Congressional Church for ESL classes.

Intended results: Newcomers will feel supported, have a sense of financial stability, and will be able to move more easily into permanent housing options. Landlords will verbalize willingness to rent to refugees. English language learners will develop communication skills that allow them to access healthy foods, medical and dental care, and financial stability. Renters will be asked to eventually pay back first, last, and security so that new refugees can have the same opportunity.

## **The Bike Hub, Inc**

Improve access to, use of, and maintenance of bicycles among those living at and below the poverty level.

Intended results: Bicycles offer a means of transport which can improve access to goods such as healthy foods, services such as healthcare, economic opportunities such as work, and community health experiences such as independent recreation often out of reach for those who lack motorized transport.

## Greater Bennington Community Services

Working with Rural Area Medicine to offer a pop-up clinic in the Bennington County area. This clinic would offer no cost to the patient medical, dental and vision care on a walk-up basis. Will create a Community Host Group (CHG) of local volunteers to help organize the event.

Intended results: The pop-up clinic will attract and serve a population of individuals that current structures and systems are not serving. The services provided will be free of cost and would provide educational and referral materials for individuals.

## Mount Anthony Union Middle School

Students will plant late bearing pear trees, plum trees, peach trees, blueberries and raspberries that will feed students while giving them the knowledge and interest to propagate and care for these plants on their own.

Intended results: Students will be able to successfully describe the process of planting the orchard in a final project. The students will harvest and cook food in class and will be able to bring home extra produce. Students will also be able to start their own gardens or fruit trees by harvesting seeds and cuttings from school. In the future when the fruit trees mature this orchard could be a food resource for the neighboring community.