

# Middlebury Health District (Addison County) Community Projects

February 15, 2023

**Backbone Organization:** Porter Medical Center

**Website:** <https://www.portermedical.org/>

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

Through this grant we will address mental health and health care inequities by focusing on our community's mental wellbeing and access to care through a lens focusing on training and capacity building, trauma-centered care, LGBTQIA+ support, culturally competent care, and projects to elevate and better support our marginalized populations. We strongly encourage community partners to apply for this grant and share person-centered initiatives that address health equity among populations that have traditionally been underfunded or underrepresented within this community. By the end of May 2023, this grant will have allowed us to support current and new efforts and continue conversations around the sustainability of supporting health equity efforts in Addison County.

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

Addison County recognizes that improving health equity within our health care system requires long term learning from community members and establishing a culture that enables this work. Through the Vermont Health Equity Partnership Grant, we will build a foundation to address health inequities by increasing opportunities for prevention, treatment, and promotion of physical and mental wellbeing among underserved populations within our community.

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## Addison Allies

Addison Allies Network, Inc. will continue its work providing social services to immigrants and migrant farm workers in Addison County. These funds will give us a chance to make a lasting impact on our work by allowing us to make purchases and fund long lasting improvements to our work. The funds will also be used to help us complete work to establish the community kitchen/tortillaria/community meeting space in Addison County much need by marginalized populations.

## Teen Center

Utilizing VTCHPEP funding, the teens of The Teen Center will organize and executive a Pride event for their community. The event will include a traditional Pride parade and gathering, as well as a queer-friendly social event, such as a Pride Ball.

## Charter House

Funding will be used to purchase program supplies to supplement ongoing costs directly related to improving and maintaining the health and wellness needs of our clients. Additionally, training for all staff and several community partners in the areas of brain injury and recovery coaching. Lastly, funding will support the attendance of staff to annual housing conferences that focuses on community wide solutions and that involve all levels of barriers; including mental wellness and medical needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.

## Elderly Services

Transportation to Project Independence, our medical adult day health center, is critical to medical oversight for poor, disabled and rural elders. We are rebuilding our program after closing for 15 months during the start of the pandemic. This grant funding allows us to increase our transportation routes and build up our attendance with new participants. It also helps us train a new transportation coordinator as Joanne Corbett, current executive director and transportation coordinator, is retiring from that position at the end of June.

## Engaging Families Project

Marginalized families will be empowered to have a stronger voice in the mental health/physical health arena by sharing their experiences, making recommendations for change, and becoming the trainers for professionals and policy makers. The actual process of exchanging experiences, ideas, and information with peers and interested professionals is a significant way to promote feelings of self-efficacy. The focus of this project is having families as experts be the trainers for professionals who are learning more about promoting equity through participation in coursework, workshops, and reflective practice.

## Eye Care Associates

Middlebury Eye Associates, Inc will be using the funds to provide lenses free of charge to all open door clinic patients, such that they will receive a full pair at no charge as MEAI already provides the frame at no charge. The funding will also help buy a portable slit lamp which will complete our equipment to be able to do mobile visits to migrant workers in coordination with open door clinic. This funding is greatly supporting and complimenting the patients we see in concordance with open door clinic.

## Giving Fridge

This VTCHEP grant funding will allow Giving Fridge to continue to serve Addison County residents our average weekly healthy restaurant prepared meals at the volume we are currently distributing (400-450 meals per week). One of the grants that currently supports approximately half of our weekly meals will expire in March 2023, and so this grant would make up for the deficit in funds beginning in March. A significant portion of our population is experiencing both physical and mental chronic health issues (diagnosed and undiagnosed) that either don't qualify for other programs due to their income being slightly higher than the requirement yet are still unable to make ends meet, or their health issues require specialized meals that they can't access through other programs, or both. Our meals are healthy, delicious and, on average, are made with 50% local ingredients - during the summer and fall, our meals are generally 100% local. Our goal is to provide healthy prepared meals that also strengthen our local food system, resulting in more jobs and more healthy workers to fill them - ultimately enriching our community.

## Storytelling for Health Equity

It is crucial that health systems create intentional space and time to listen to the communities they are responsible for serving. I will design and facilitate two (2) community storytelling and listening events in Addison County to honor and share the stories of underserved populations. They will be in thoughtfully facilitated combinations of community members and BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA2s+ health providers. There will be opportunities for storytelling and listening in small and large group settings throughout the events.

## Teen Makery

The Teen Makery afterschool program is offered through a partnership between The Makery at Hannaford Career Center, the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center, and the Counseling Service of Addison County. The Teen Makery at the Hannaford Career Center welcomes all high school-aged students Thursdays after school from 3:15 – 5:00 pm. Students can participate in sewing, woodworking, games, or technology labs. Each lab is managed by a trained mentor who is an expert in using all the available tools. Students can work on individual projects or team up with other students on a group project. Special classes will be offered, including T-Shirt Design, Improv, CNC Router sign making, basic cooking, welding, and CNC Plasma cutter. Food and snacks will be provided, and transportation can be arranged.