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VIEW

Vermont Information Exchange for Women

Newsletter



December 11, 2020

News & Resources

Expanded COVID-19 Crisis and Vermont Women dashboard | VCW

The Vermont Commission [on Women updated our expanded data dashboard about the impact of the pandemic on Vermont women](#), featuring additional data points about health disparities, racial disparities, and hunger and food insecurity. The data dashboard is updated regularly, [check back later for new data](#). **Vermont women filed 74% of unemployment claims in October 2020**, further highlighting the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on women.

Open Enrollment for Health Insurance ends next Tuesday, December 15!

[Find a health plan that fits your needs and budget.](#) Vermonters can get an estimate for available financial help and select the best health insurance plan for themselves by using the [Plan Comparison Tool](#).

Coping with Stress | Vermont Department of Mental Health

Living with uncertainty during the outbreak of COVID-19 is stressful for everyone. Health, financial and other concerns can increase anxiety. Things that were normal a few months ago are no longer the norm. Physical distancing makes it difficult to see friends or visit family in person. We've been creative in the use of technology, phone lines, and the mail to connect. But it's not the same. [The Vermont Department of Mental Health has compiled some tips to help Vermonters get through this unsettling time.](#) Need support now?

- [Call your local mental health crisis line.](#)
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the [Crisis Text Line.](#)
- Contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255.
- Get connected to Alcohol and Drug Support Services at VT Helplink.
- For multilingual support call 800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
- Call or text Pathways Vermont peer support line at 833-VT-TALKS (833-888-2557)

Buy Local Holiday Campaign

The Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) in partnership with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets launched a new online holiday shopping guide, [Buy Vermont Made.](#) The curated directory conveniently connects shoppers with world-class Vermont-made gifts and products, as well as Vermont retailers, in six categories – wearables, craft beverages, specialty food, home goods, personal care, and toys and books.

Women's Festival of Crafts goes Virtual

The 31st Women's Festival of Crafts presents over 80 unique Vermont women artist's work and shopping from the comfort of your couch. Head to womensfestivalofcrafts.com for direct links to all of this year's vendors.

Women's Prison Locked Down After Staffer Tests Positive for COVID-19 | Seven Days

"A [Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility employee tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday, prompting a full lockdown of Vermont's only women's prison](#), according to Department of Corrections spokesperson Rachel Feldman. Mandy Conte, an inmate at Chittenden Regional, told Seven Days she heard about the positive test on Monday, but she said that officials did not formally notify the prison population until Wednesday afternoon.

Ashley Messier, executive director of the Women's Justice & Freedom Initiative, criticized the Department of Corrections on Wednesday for waiting days to test the entire facility and for failing to be more transparent with inmates about the positive test. Messier also called on the department to immediately release those who are incarcerated for furlough and parole violations in order to keep them safe from the virus." -Paul Heintz for Seven Days

New Report: 'Working with Disability' | Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)

The Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) has issued a new report—[Working with Disability: Toward a truly inclusive Vermont labor force](#)—with data, history, and personal stories of Vermonters with disabilities. The report shines a light on the achievements and potential of people with disabilities as workers, the barriers and challenges they face, the widespread benefits of an inclusive workplace, and the policies necessary to make Vermont a state where everyone can work productively. The report highlights that Vermonters with disabilities earn less than those without disabilities, that Vermont women with disabilities earn less than Vermont men with disabilities, and that Black Americans with disabilities are twice as likely to experience poverty as Black Americans without disabilities and at a rate 10 points higher than all Americans with disabilities.

Employment & Career Services | Vermont Works for Women

[Vermont Works for Women's Employment and Career Services team](#) works with women around Vermont to help find and keep jobs that meet their needs. No

matter what stage folks are at in the process, their team of experienced employment experts can help - from figuring out what you might like to do, to navigating a career transition, to finding a job that pays more.

VWW works with everyone, including those who are trying to find their first job out of college, to women who are getting back on their feet after prison, to professionals looking to make a career shift. [VWW's](#) Employment & Career Services team also specialize in helping women join non-traditional fields, such as the trades. Services are free and there are no income qualifications.

VWW just announced the launch of **Career Mentors!** This women's career mentoring network matches women across the state with a volunteer career mentor to get advice during job searches, support with resumes and cover letters, or to learn more about a particular occupation, company, or career field of interest.

Ready to get some help? To get in touch about Employment and Career Services, or to request to meet with a career mentor, please contact Rachel Kauppila at rkauppila@vtworksforwomen.org or 802-999-3172.

Tech @ Work | Vermont Works for Women

Vermont Works for Women is running [Tech@Work this school year as a live, virtual program for youth](#) over Google Meets. Tech@Work is a speaker series that introduces technical center students to gender diverse role models in their fields of interest and provides opportunities for career exploration. Tech@Work brings local industry professionals – predominately women or gender non-conforming individuals – to schools to talk with students about their experiences in a non-traditional career field for their gender.

This year, VWW is excited to expand this program's reach by partnering with two technical and career centers: Burlington Technical Center and Randolph Technical Career Center. VWW invites partnerships with middle schools, high schools, or career and technical centers to bring this Tech@Work speaker series program to their students.

Landlord-Tenant Mediation Program | Vermont Legal Aid & Vermont Landlord Association

[Through December 20, 2020, Vermont landlords and tenants can use this free mediation service to work through and solve disagreements.](#) This program is available virtually, and provides access to a free professional mediator. A list of participating mediators, along with a short bio, can be found in the application.

Rental Housing Stabilization Program Application Cut off Friday, December 11th at 4:30 p.m.

The [Vermont State Housing Authority \(VSHA\) Rental Housing Stabilization Program \(RHSP\)](#) is for funding landlords on behalf of tenants in need of rental arrearage assistance due to COVID-19 to avert tenant eviction. This program will provide the VSHA Payment Standard or the actual amount due for the month(s) being claimed, whichever is less, per household at a single unit who meet eligibility criteria. The goal of this program is to prevent eviction, homelessness and to provide housing stability. The Vermont State Housing Authority will stop taking applications for the Rental Housing Stabilization Program at **4:30 pm on Friday, December 11, 2020.**

The Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan and the Early Childhood Systems Needs Assessment | Building Bright Futures

Over 300 stakeholders helped inform these documents to create a stronger, more equitable, and integrated early childhood system.

The [Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan \(VECAP\)](#) is the state's early childhood strategic plan for all things serving families prenatal through age eight. The updated plan has 4 goals and articulates a strengthened vision for Vermont's early childhood system.

The VECAP is informed by [Vermont's 2020 Early Childhood Needs Assessment](#), another significant tool for decision makers to use to strengthen the early childhood system. The report highlights 8 themes including data gaps, chronic underfunding,

and limited family engagement. For those interested in system integration and understanding how programs and policies impact children and families, a data gap table shows the gaps in existing knowledge base and what information must be prioritized to inform policy and service provision.

Vermont Community Legal Information Center

Due to the ongoing pandemic and rise of COVID-19 cases, Vermont Law School's library building remains closed to the public. However, all Vermonters can help themselves to legal information on the web. Start your search at <https://libguides.vermontlaw.edu/vermontlawguide> to find free resources. If you have a specific legal information question, contact us via email at cllc@vermontlaw.edu, or call and leave a message on the Ask a Law Librarian line, at 802-831-1313. They are in the process of creating new services to provide more remote access to legal materials for Vermonters, including interlibrary loan, and reference consultations via video chat.

Watch *Coded Bias* Free Through Sunday | The Vermont Community Foundation, FreshTracks Capital, the Rowland Foundation, C2, Vermont Alliance for Racial Justice, the Vermont NEA and the Vermont chapter of Women in Machine Learning & Data Science

[The 2020 documentary *Coded Bias* sits at the intersection of race, artificial intelligence, and a pursuit of justice.](#) The film, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival, follows MIT Media Lab researcher Joy Buolamwini's startling discovery that many facial recognition technologies fail more often on darker-skinned faces. Buolamwini delves into an investigation of widespread bias in AI and the person-made and machine-learned algorithms that drive it. Vermonters can stream *Coded Bias* from December 7 through 13. This free screening is organized by partners from across the state inspired to share the film and engage in conversations about these emerging and vital civil rights issues.

Free Flu Shots at Planned Parenthood | Times Argus

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England announced Monday that flu shots are available at all 12 of its Vermont locations. [The group said it will absorb the cost for those whose insurance won't cover a shot.](#) Make your flu shot appointment: call 1-866-476-1321 or at ppne.org. There are centers in Barre, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Middlebury, Newport, Hyde Park, Rutland, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, White River Junction, and Williston.

COVID-19 aid for undocumented immigrants coming in 2021 | VTDigger

"The state aims to send Covid-19 stimulus checks by early April to Vermonters who didn't receive federal payments earlier this year because of their immigration status. Two months after Gov. Phil Scott signed the state budget that included \$5 million to send undocumented adults \$1,200 and their children \$500, the state is finalizing its contract with the Vermont Community Foundation, a non-governmental entity, to administer the fund and send checks in the first three months of 2021." - [Kit Norton for VTDigger](#)

“Seeing the humanity”: Homeless in 2020, pt. 1 | Underground Workshop, VTDigger

This is the first in a three-part series about the issues surrounding homelessness in Vermont in 2020, from the Underground Workshop, VTDigger's new platform for student journalism. [This first installment was written by Alexandra Smart of Montpelier High School.](#)

Daniel Felde: When the vaccine arrives, Vermont must prioritize incarcerated people | VTDigger Commentary

"With the first coronavirus vaccines set to arrive soon, Vermonters may be envisioning freedom. To some, freedom is a future of nightlife, dinner with friends, "normalcy." To others, freedom is the promise of any future at all. As the vaccine is rolled out to the most vulnerable populations first, [Vermont must prioritize the least](#)

[free: people in prisons.”](#)

Vermont Women’s Fund doubles down on COVID-19 support with first-ever fall grants | VT Business Magazine

For the first time since it was established in 1994, the Vermont Women’s Fund has distributed a second round of grants in one calendar year. Supported by its 100-for-100 Campaign celebrating the anniversary of women’s voting rights, [unrestricted grants of \\$10,000 were given to organizations offering wraparound services that help displaced workers](#) find new employment and, in some cases, first help them gain stability and skills. Recipients of the \$10,000 grants are: the Center for Women & Enterprise in Burlington, Green Mountain United Way in Montpelier, Mercy Connections in Burlington, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) in Westminster, Umbrella of St. Johnsbury, and Vermont Works for Women in Winooski.

Rutland Area NAACP names new leader, succeeding Tabitha Moore | VTDigger

“Tabitha Moore moved out of Rutland County because of racial harassment, and now is resigning as president of the Rutland Area NAACP. But she’s handing the reins to another activist she once helped. Mia Schultz, a Bennington resident, will move into the presidency in January, and she’s thrilled by the opportunity. ‘Tabitha asked me a few months ago, and I was really excited and honored that she would consider me,’ Schultz said. ‘I respect her so much. I respect her decision to want me to follow her.’” – [Emma Cotton for VTDigger](#)

Kunin: Women gain leadership positions in D.C. and Montpelier | VTDigger Commentary

“It’s no longer a man’s world — certainly not in the Vermont Statehouse and not in Washington, D.C. Women are scoring “firsts” in leadership at an extraordinary rate in 2020. The sign “Girls Keep Out” on the “Good Old Boys Club” had been torn down years ago. Today, women have not only gained membership, they are

running the show.” – [Madeleine Kunin via VTDigger](#)

Vermont Conversation: Becca Balint looks ahead as incoming Senate leader | VTDigger

[When Sen. Becca Balint is sworn in as the Vermont Senate’s new president pro tem next month, she will shatter not one, but two glass ceilings](#) over the state’s highest legislative body: Balint will become the first woman and the first openly gay pro tem in the state’s history. “I am a woman, I am an openly gay woman, I am a mom, I am a Vermonter,” says Balint. “When I walk into that building [the Statehouse] though ... the biggest weight that I feel is wanting to do the work that Vermonters have sent me there to do and make lives easier for people on the ground.”

Vermont Conversation: Jill Krowinski takes charge as next House speaker | VTDigger

"When the Vermont Legislature convenes on Jan. 6, 2021, [Rep. Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, is poised to become the speaker of the House](#). She will succeed Mitzi Johnson, who lost her seat in the Nov. 3 general election. Krowinski was first elected to the Legislature in 2012 and served most recently as the House majority leader. When not in the Legislature, she is executive director of Emerge Vermont, an organization that recruits and trains female Democratic candidates to run for political office. Krowinski previously worked as chief of staff to former speaker Gaye Symington. She will become just the fourth woman to be speaker of the Vermont House of Representative."

Vermont Conversation: Keshia Ram breaks barriers as the first woman of color in Vermont’s Senate | VTDigger

["Keshia Ram is used to breaking barriers.](#) At the age of 34, she already has an impressive list of firsts: she was elected to the Vermont House in 2008 at age 22, becoming the youngest member of that body. Earlier this month, she won a highly competitive race for Vermont Senate representing Chittenden County, the state’s largest population center. Ram, who was born to an Indian father and Jewish

American mother, will become the first woman of color to serve in the Vermont Senate."

Vermont Conversation: Allen Gilbert on Vermont's 'quest for equity' | VTDigger

[Allen Gilbert has had a front row seat to historic changes in Vermont that influenced the nation.](#) As executive director of the Vermont chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union from 2004 to 2016, he was involved in the groundbreaking legal battles that led to the state's landmark marriage equality decision. He was in the courthouse with 8-year-old Amanda Brigham and her parents for the landmark Brigham case that transformed Vermont's way of funding education. And he has worked in the more elusive fight for universal health care. He writes about being a participant and witness to this history in his new book, *Equal is Equal, Fair is Fair: Vermont's Quest for Equity in Education Funding, Same-Sex Marriage, and Health Care*.

Updates to Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Forgiveness Webinar Schedule

The SBA Vermont District Office has updated the hours and days for their PPP Forgiveness Webinars. Webinars will now be conducted every [Tuesday at 11:30 am](#) and [Wednesday at 9:00 am](#). Topics include forgiveness criteria, the process, changes to the applications, and more. For more information, email susan.mazza@sba.gov.

Singing the She-cession Blues: How the Pandemic Is Revealing Existing Fault Lines in the U.S. Economy | Ms. Magazine

"An alarming 865,000 women left the workforce in the month of September. A new report shows how old the barriers faced by working women are, and how seldom U.S. policymakers cared.

Right now we're all blue over the COVID-19 pandemic, but soprano notes grew louder as the election grew closer: The Labor Department reported an alarming 865,000 women left the workforce in the month of September. The pandemic is stomping on women, especially women of color, our biggest losses in hospitality, retail, and especially child care, without which moms of every color and career are in trouble. Sing it, sister." - [Vermonter Rickey Gard Diamond for Ms. Magazine](#)

Sex Work is Real Work, and it's Time to Treat it That Way | ACLU

Sex workers aren't always a part of the conversation about police brutality, but they should be. Police regularly target, harass, and assault sex workers or people they think are sex workers, such as trans women of color. The police usually get away with the abuse because sex workers fear being arrested if they report. If we lived in a world that didn't criminalize sex work, sex workers could better protect themselves and seek justice when they are harmed. - [LaLa B. Holston-Zannell via ACLU](#)

Drug ODs are up as the state faces more quarantines | VTDigger

"In the first weeks of March, as Vermont and the country entered lockdown, Grace Keller felt a sense of dread. Not just because of the impending pandemic, though that was part of it. But because, after her many years working on overdose prevention at Burlington's Howard Center, she knew what quarantine, and a pandemic, would mean for drug overdose deaths.

Her fears were well-founded. Nine months into the pandemic, Burlington is still reporting high numbers of overdoses, after a particularly sharp rise in the spring. And the trend is consistent across the state.

By September, 109 people in Vermont had died of an opioid overdose, about 25% higher than the previous three years. Vermont appears likely to break its record for fatal opioid-related deaths in one year — 130, set in 2018." - [Katya Schwenk for VTDigger](#)

Seeking Gender Justice and Peace? Include Men | Women's eNew's

"But with patriarchal norms standing in the way of women's empowerment, we must absolutely focus on changing attitudes among men and boys towards gender equality, and crucially, when it comes to pursuing the women, peace and security agenda.

The landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), adopted on October 31, 2000, seeks to address the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and to recognize the under-valued role of women in conflict prevention and peace building. Yet 20 years later, implementing this resolution remains profoundly challenging." - [Ndeye Sow for Women's eNews](#)

Funding Opportunities

Better Places Grant Program | ACCD

The [Better Places pilot program provides "placemaking" grants ranging from \\$5,000 to \\$20,000](#) that improve the vitality of state-designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas. Municipalities, nonprofits, and other community

Employment Opportunities

Executive Director | NeighborWorks of Western Vermont

The [Executive Director offers strong leadership, a clear vision, and is responsible for protecting and building the resources that support the mission of the organization](#). This position works under the direction of, and in collaboration with, the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall comply with Board policies and shall submit to the Board of Directors such reports, analyses, statistics, plans and other information as may be required from time to time, and shall assist the Treasurer in the preparation of its annual budget.

groups may apply to ACCD for grant awards of up to \$20,000. Applications are due January 22, 2021, and awards will be announced in mid-February.

Executive Director | United Way of Rutland County

The [Executive Director is responsible for the overall strategic direction, business development, and financial performance of the Agency.](#) This includes the functional areas of program operations, fundraising, administration and program development, and is responsible for regular and open communications with the Board of Directors and its committees.

Upcoming Events

"Coded Bias" Live Stream Panel Discussion | VT WiMLDS

[Saturday, December 12, 8:00 – 9:30 p.m.](#)

Steps to Grow Your Business | CWEVT

[Wednesday, December 16, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.](#)

Business Plan Basics | CWEVT

[Thursday, December 17, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.](#)

Free Virtual Senior Advice Clinic | VT Legal Aid

[Thursday, Dec. 17 | 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.](#)

Examining Bias and Interrupting Systemic Patterns of Educational Injustice to Support Anti-Racist School Communities | VT Higher Education Collaborative

Wednesdays, January 6 & 13, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Men through Imagination | Vermont Humanities Council

Wednesday, January 6, 7:00 p.m.

Racism in America Forum Series 2020-2021 Focus on Vermont | The Vermont Racial Justice Alliance, Mount Mansfield Community Television, and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Wednesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Policing & Mental Health | LWVVT

Wednesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.

Legislative After-Dinner Coffee & Conversation: A conversation about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 | Vermont Commission on Women

Thursday, January 14, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Training of Trainers – TECHNICOOL: Keeping Kids Safe on the Internet| Prevent Child Abuse Vermont

Tuesday – Thursday, January 19 - 21, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.



We choose events for VIEW from our [statewide events calendar](#) for women and girls. **If you'd like your event featured in the VIEW**, make sure you [add it](#).

Looking for more? You'll find many more events for women & girls in Vermont on the calendar.



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The Vermont Commission on Women (VCW) is a non-partisan state agency advancing rights and opportunities for women and girls. Sixteen volunteer commissioners, along with representatives from organizations concerned with women's issues, guide VCW's public education, coalition building, and advocacy efforts. For more information, please visit us at <http://women.vermont.gov>.

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