



# Promise Community Application

## Promise Community Application Cover Sheet

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### Attachment 1 Coversheet

*Person to contact with questions about this application:*

Name of contact person: Michelle M Spence Title: Early Education Director

Telephone: 802-868-4457 Email: mspence@fnwsu.org

### *Organization/agency/school submitting application*

Name of Organization/Agency: Franklin County Early Childhood Programs

Address: 100 Robin Hood Drive, Suite 2

City: Swanton Zip code: 05488

Name of Executive Director/ President/ CEO/ Superintendent: Winton Goodrich (Franklin Northwest SU) and Kevin Dirth (Franklin Central SU)

County: Franklin

Agency of Human Service District: Franklin Grand Isle

Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: Franklin Central and Franklin Northwest Supervisory Unions

Targeted School(s): Franklin, Highgate, Saint Albans City School, Saint Albans Town School, Sheldon, Swanton

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator: Loli Berard

### *Sponsor:*

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator or Agency of Human Services Field Director

Name: Loli Berard Email: fgibbfdirectservice@gmail.com

The following checklist is to help you prepare your Promise Community application.

Attachment 1 Application Coversheet

Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment and Signatures- mail hard copy (**HARD COPY WITH ACTUAL SIGNATURE TO FOLLOW IN THE MAIL**)

Narrative on your community needs, will and impact

Promise Community Pledge of Commitment

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**Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment**

*Organization/agency submitting application*

Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: Franklin Central and Franklin Northwest Supervisory Unions comprise the FCECP region.

Targeted School(s): Franklin, Highgate, Saint Albans City School, Saint Albans Town School, Sheldon, Swanton

Sponsor: Name: Loli Berard

We pledge to support the local community of the FCECP region to improve the lives of the young children in a Promise Community. To do this we will work together in a coalition of partnerships with regular meetings and communication to reach the community goals to fulfill the *promise of every child*. The goals and outcomes will be developed as part of needs assessment, strategic planning and implementation process.

This form must be signed by Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator; targeted school principal (s); targeted school superintendent; Regional Agency of Human Services Field Director; and community child health care provider, indicating their pledge to participate as a partner in the implementation of the work plan presented in this application. Other partners are encouraged to sign as well to make a commitment to be a Promise Community.

Hard Copy to Follow of signatures	Maria D. Berard	3/17/15
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Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
	Winton I Goodrich	3/17/15
<hr/>		
School Superintendent		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
	Joan Cavallo	3/17/15
<hr/>		
School Principal		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
	Dr. Laura Bellstrom	3/18/15
<hr/>		
Child Healthcare Provider		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
	Kristin Prior	3/17/15
<hr/>		
AHS Field Director		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

**Promise Community Pledge of Commitment Signatures**

Betsy Fournier 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Franklin County Caring Communities/Swanton Recreation Dept.

Michelle Spence 3/16/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Franklin County Early Childhood Programs/ Coordinator

Reginald Beliveau 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Village of Swanton/Manager

Dena St Amour 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Swanton Elementary School/Principal

Jeffery Benay 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Title VII Indian Education Program /Director

Debora Whitney Grennon 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile / Director

Marcel Choquette 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Highgate Elementary School/ Principal

Destiny Cadieux 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Vermont Department of Health / Nursing Supervisor

Gina Cseh 3/17/15

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: Champlain Valley Head Start/ County Supervisor

(This page can be copied to add additional partners as needed.)

Kevin Dirth

3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>Franklin Central Supervisory Union/ Superintendent</u>		
	Julie Regimbal	3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>Franklin Central SU/ Director of Special Education</u>		

Mariana Gamache

3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>House Representative – Sheldon and Swanton</u>		
	Bryan Savage	3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>House Representative – Sheldon and Swanton</u>		
	Corey Parent	3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>House Representative - St Albans City and St Albans Town</u>		
	Dustin Degree	3/18/15

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: <u>Vermont Senate – Franklin County</u>		

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: _____		

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: _____		

SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE
ORGANIZATION/ TITLE: _____		

**A. Narrative of community addressing Community NEED, Community WILL, and possible impact (page limit of 7) Including:**

**1. Community Need**

The Franklin County Early Childhood Programs (FCECP) is a public school collaborative between the Franklin Central and Franklin Northwest Supervisory Unions. The local schools served by the FCECP are Fairfield, Franklin, Highgate, Sheldon, St Albans City, Saint Albans Town and Swanton. For the purpose of the Promise Community application, this collaborative will be considered a community and referred to as the FCECP community/region.

The FCECP community is a rural community in the northwestern corner of Vermont, bordering Lake Champlain and the Canadian border. 38.17% of the children in Franklin Central and 50.46% of the children in Franklin Northwest are living in poverty with the Saint Albans City School being our highest rate at 56.2%. Four of our seven communities show that over 50% of our children are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

	Poverty	Kindergarten Readiness	% Reading at Grade Level in 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade (2012/2013)	# and % of Programs and providers with 4 or 5 STARS
Fairfield	40.29%		72%	1 of 5 programs/ 20%
Saint Albans City	56.52%		65%	5 of 40 programs / 12.5%
Saint Albans Town	34.37%		71%	2 of 11 programs / 18.18%
<b>Franklin Central SU</b>	<b>38.17</b>	<b>40.10%</b> <b>(state is 49%)</b>	<b>68.82%</b>	<b>8 of 56 programs/ 14.29%</b>
Franklin	42.64%		76%	1 of 7 Programs / 14.29%
Highgate	52.9%		71%	1 of 12 Programs / 8.3%
Sheldon	51.78%		52%	1 of 11 programs / 9.9%
Swanton	51.98%		43%	3 of 27 programs / 11.11%
<b>Franklin Northwest SU</b>	<b>50.46%</b>	<b>45.00%</b> <b>(State is 49%)</b>	<b>60.12%</b>	<b>6 of 57 programs / 10.52%</b>

2. Community Profile

• What is your community story on high needs children?

	% Eligible for Special Education	% Eligible for EEE currently	Migrant #'s Birth to age 5	Homeless #s for FY 14 (Pk – 12_)
Fairfield	14.29%	11 of 35 or 31.43%		
Saint Albans City	25.06%	31 of 79 or 39.24%		
Saint Albans Town	12.7%	11 of 53 or 20.75%		
<b>Franklin Central SU</b>	<b>17.77%</b>	<b>31.73%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>62</b>
Franklin	15.58%	4 of 40 or 10%		
Highgate	16.49%	8 of 49 or 16.33%		
Sheldon	17.63%	11 of 42 or 26.19%		
Swanton	19.78%	20 of 68 or 29.41%		
<b>Franklin Northwest SU</b>	<b>16.96%</b>	<b>21.60%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45</b>

- Special Education – In Franklin Central SU, 17.77% of all students are eligible for special education. In Franklin Northwest SU 16.96% are. Saint Albans City school has 25% of their children eligible.
  - The numbers of special education students (EEE) enrolled in our early education program show larger percentages being served. This is due to the fact that we are not serving all of our three and four year olds. We know that we are serving about 80% of our four year olds currently and whatever additional three year olds we have the capacity for. Over the next few years as we roll out Act 166 and begin serving more of our three year olds we expect that our percentages will look more like the school numbers displayed in the first column.
- English Language Learners – Franklin County has not seen the large number of ELL students that our colleagues to the south of us, in Chittenden County have. We do however have a handful of children in each town who are English Language Learners. Many of them are Spanish speaking and are the children of migrant farm workers. We also have some children who speak Mandarin and Urdu in our region.
- Migrant – Our Migrant Education program continues to see an increase in the number of families with young children moving to Franklin County to work on our dairy farms.

About half of the children who are eligible for Migrant Education services are English Language Learners and while they may have been born here, their parents are often here working illegally. Often their parents are afraid to leave the farm to come to the school for meetings or to transport their children because of the fear that border patrol will pick them up. Some of the parents are illiterate in their native language as well as not being able to speak, read or write English.

- Homeless – We have seen increasing numbers of homeless children in our region and many families who move multiple times in a school year, living in various hotels when vouchers are available or doubling up with friends and family members or living in the shelter when they are not.
- Foster care – In 2013 the St Albans DCF office had the highest number of substantiated cases in the state with 108 cases. (The next highest was Burlington with 83) The data on foster care is not yet ready in the Vermont Insights system, however, anecdotally, we have seen a large increase in the number of children under the age of five being taken into custody. We have seen a steady increase of children in foster care enrolled in the FCECP classrooms. This fall, our local DCF office placed eleven newborns with foster families, and have been struggling to find enough foster families to meet the need in our region.

#### Other Community Risk Factors

Risk Factors and Chronic Conditions	Franklin County	State of Vermont
Adult smokers (youth rates declining)	22%	15%
Adult obesity	26%	22%
Childhood obesity	14%	12%
Binge drinking	19%	17%
Motor vehicle crash death rate	17%	13%
Crime rate per thousand.	57.5	Second highest in VT
Access to healthy foods*	35%.	34%
Children under 18 in poverty	13%.	12%

Substance abuse treatment referrals are rising and the community is concerned about opiate use.

Measured as a percentage of zip codes in the county with a healthy food outlet in the form of a grocery store, produce stand or farmer's market. National target value is 46%; overall in VT is 34%

Source: [http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/ahec/documents/VermontCountyProfiles\\_000.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/ahec/documents/VermontCountyProfiles_000.pdf)

- **What is good about your community?**

- Strong Collaboration - Our region has a long-standing and well-known history of working together, with diverse stakeholders to support young children and their families. We were the recipients of the Communities Can! Award in 1991 and again in 2000 and recognized as a Community of Excellence, because of our strong, interagency collaboration. In 2001 we were awarded a \$900,000 federal Early Learning Opportunities Grant and in 2010 were awarded with the 100 Best Communities Award.
- Early Adopters - We also have a long-standing and well-known history of being early adopters of initiatives that will strengthen families and provide wrap around supports

to children and their families. Saint Albans City School started the first public preschool program in our region in 1980, our Early Childhood Advisory Council (now Franklin Grand Isle Building Bright Futures Council) was formed in 1989 and the Franklin County Early Childhood Programs began as a multi supervisory union collaborative in 1990. We first began implementing Universal PreKindergarten in 2001, years before most of the state.

- **What is the impact of Poverty on your community? / How are the children doing in terms of Kindergarten readiness and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade achievement scores?**

In spite of the fact that we have been serving about 80% of our incoming kindergarten children through Universal PreKindergarten since 2001, we have not been able to close the kindergarten readiness gap. In fact, we see children coming to us without the skills that most preschoolers have had in the past. In this current year, at Saint Albans City School, 67% of the 4-year-old preschoolers did not know their colors and shapes when they assessed these skills in the fall.

Our region has seen increasing numbers of adults addicted to opiates and are beginning to see an increasing number of children enter preschool who have been born opiate dependent. More and more children come to us every year having been exposed to trauma. Most of these families are also living in poverty and struggling to feed their families.

Not unique to our region is the impact that poverty has on children. As attested by our poverty rates, almost or more than 50% of the children in most of our buildings are living in families that are living in poverty. We know that they often do not have enough to eat at home and that what is available to them is usually not nutrient dense. We know they are more likely to be exposed to trauma, less likely to be read to, less likely to be given enrichment opportunities like family trips, vacations, camps, lessons, sporting activities, etc. and more likely to live in single parent homes and struggle with obesity.

We also know that this affects housing stability. In addition to low-income levels in family homes, the wage needed to afford housing in Franklin County is \$21.31 per hour, significantly above the state wage of \$17.57. In contrast, the average actual wage per job is \$29,530 or \$14.19 per hour.

- **What is unique about your community?**

- Our region is home to the state recognized Mississquoi Abenaki. About 30% of the students enrolled in FNW and 15% in FCSU are of Abenaki descent.
- Bookmobile – The Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile serves as an outreach vehicle, bringing resources, literacy and fun to child care providers and families who are not able to get to the library with their children. Working in partnership with the community, they provide professional development opportunities, child and family events and

literacy coaching so that children have access to books, and those caring for the children are supported in providing literacy opportunities for their children.

- The Franklin County Early Childhood Programs is a unique collaboration. The Franklin Central and Franklin Northwest Supervisor Union co-employ an early childhood coordinator to provide oversight, support and training to the early educators in the seven towns served by the two SUs.
- Mousetrap Pediatrics was started in our region by Dr. Fred Holmes. With offices in St Albans, Milton, Enosburg and Swanton, the pediatricians from Mousetrap serve many of our families. Dr. Laura Bellstrom's practice is located next door to Mousetrap and serves most of the children not seen by Mousetrap. We are fortunate to have a multitude of dedicated and collaborative pediatricians in our region who go out of their way to be at IEP meetings, make phone calls personally to special educators, teachers and school principals and who support the work that we do as early educators.
- Currently most preschool students (even those being served in school buildings) do not have access to many of the supports provided to the K-12 students in our Supervisory Unions. These supports include transportation, access to the home school coordinator, behavioral support teams, school psychologists, English Language Learning Teachers, school mental health supports and in some cases the school nutrition programs and the school nurses. It is our hope that the Community Promise Grant, the Prekindergarten Expansion Grants and the First School initiatives will help us build a better bridge and close the preK and Kindergarten gap for students and families.
- Swanton rural development – Swanton is working with the Vermont Council on Rural Development and has recently set the five priorities to move their community forward. Members of the Swanton community have also pledged to commit to the Promise Community work. We will build on each others work when we can impact child outcomes.
  - Create a Swanton Economic Development Committee
  - Improve River Access and Bike-ability and Expand Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Bike Tourism
  - Unite the Community to Reduce Substance Abuse
  - Improve Traffic, Walkability, and Parking Downtown
  - Create a Swanton Arts Council

### **3. Community WILL (spirit):**

- **Why should your community be part of this initiative?**

The community partners who are supporting this application are very excited about the opportunity to bring a diverse cross section of stakeholders together to focus on leveraging our partnerships, resources and initiatives so that our children who demonstrate the most need are reached and supported earlier, so that they have better outcomes as they move out of their early years and into school years.

Additionally, we are gearing up to implement our first publicly funded full day prekindergarten classrooms through the PreK Expansion Grant and are applying to be a First School partner in two

of our local schools (St Albans City School in Franklin Central and Swanton Elementary in Franklin Northwest) so that we can begin strengthening the continuum for children from PreKindergarten through grade 3.

We have a leadership and collaboration infrastructure in place to maximize the leverage of opportunities that are already in place as well as the ones being provided by the Race to The Top Grant. School principals are examining their buildings for more space for preschool as well as looking at what supports can be extended to their youngest learners.

Early Educators are engaging in collaborative inquiry and school administrators are starting to talk about how to build learning continuums from the preK through the grade three years. We look forward to creating early education data teams and participating in professional learning communities both within our prek teams and with our kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> to third grade teams to look at how to intentionally create opportunities for children that result in closing the achievement gap.

There is excitement at all levels, from the Superintendents office, to the preschool classrooms to the Building Bright Futures Council about what it would mean for the children of our community if we can capitalize on the collective will and using a collective impact model, truly do what it takes to turn the curve for young children.

- **How is the community coming together to make a difference for the young children to help with school outcomes?**

Our region is currently participating in the strengthening families initiative. Our FCECP schools are a pilot site for program wide implementation of the early MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support) initiative. Our leadership team, which consists of parents, school principals, early educators, early childhood special educators and child care providers are working with a systems coach to ensure that our programs have the infrastructure in place to assure the sustainability of evidence base practices that have been proven to impact better outcomes for children. We would use this leadership team as a base for this work.

- **What is the plan for engaging families in the work ahead?**

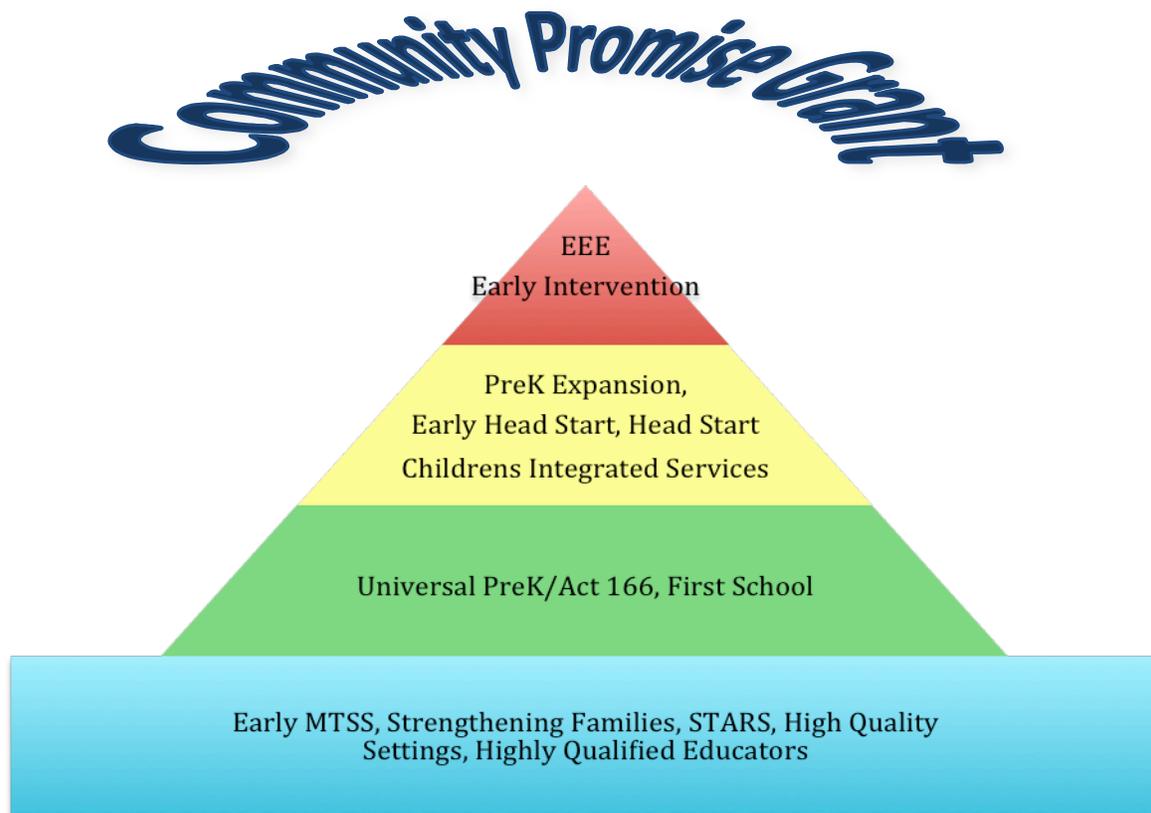
We currently have a parent on this leadership team and have already conducted a self-assessment using the early MTSS program inventory that has led us to prioritize meaningful parent engagement. We will be working with our partners who have signed this commitment pledge as well as others yet to be identified to ensure that this happens.

- **Who are the partners to help make this work happen?**

The Promise Community partnership will allow our leadership team to work with our community partners to further braid and integrate these initiatives into a cohesive system of services while addressing the gap and needs in our communities that are not being addressed by other funding streams. We have school principals and administrators, parents, Head Start staff, Village managers,

legislators, Department of Health staff and early educators who have pledged to commit to this work, in addition to the required representation.

The diagram below shows how we envision the numerous early education programs and initiatives working together. The base of the pyramid shows infrastructure that supports high quality programming and fidelity of implementation. The first green level indicates programs and services that are available for all children, the yellow are targeted supports, services and interventions and the red shows services for children that need individualized services and supports. We see the Community Promise Grant as the umbrella that assures that these services provide comprehensive supports to those that need it the most, while addressing the gaps and barriers to ensuring better outcomes for children.



#### 4. Anticipated Impact:

We will use the Promise Community collaborators to focus our work and our target schools, demographic, etc. from the seven schools in the two supervisory unions. We are currently serving 356 three and four year olds with a large % of children meeting a variety of criteria that defines them as high needs children. We will not have a problem serving more than 40 children through this initiative.