

Applications can be completed by anyone in the community committed to early childhood **and** with a connection to an organization (501c3), agency, or school.

Sponsorship of the application must be from your Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator or the Agency of Human Services Field Director for your region. The BBF regional coordinator and AHS field services director can sign onto more than one application. This is to ensure collaboration across the community; we want to be sure communities do not apply in isolation and are connected. Sponsorship is not fiscal responsibility; the fiscal agent will be identified in the planning process with the Promise Community coach.

*Each application must include:*

**A. Attachment 1 Application Coversheet**

**B. Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment- Signatures**

Includes:

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator

School- Principal and Superintendent

Representative from a Child Health Medical Practice

Agency of Human Services Field Director

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

## Community NEED/ Community Profile:

Given the challenges of generational poverty and English language proficiency facing many of our families in Winooski, the need is clear for low-cost, high quality programming that wraps families from the time a child joins our community to the time they reach school. **Currently, only 23.07% of children have access to high quality programming (A6), and with a vacancy rate of 6% within our current capacity of 13 programs and 378 total slots in registered child care centers (A7).** The need has been well established for all partners in the community to create a landscape that gives families a variety of affordable, accessible, high quality child care options.

As a Refugee Resettlement Community, the City of Winooski is home to a very diverse population. This is especially evident in our schools where, of the total K-12 population of 735 students (2014 Winooski School District Report), there are 31 native languages spoken **and 27% of the students are considered English Language Learners.** Winooski also has a high number of community members struggling economically, **with 78.82% of children eligible for Free/Reduced lunches (A3)** and 24% of the Winooski population living below the poverty line as compared to 10.9% in the rest of the county (Census, 2010). The effects of these stressors are reflected through our children's performance before and during their school years. **Only 31% were**

**considered Kindergarten ready (A4), and down the road only 35.85% were reading at grade level by Grade 3 (A5).**

Though the Winooski School District is often reflected through standardized testing as struggling with the challenges faced by a significant English language learner community and a community feeling the strain of widespread poverty, Winooski as a wider community has continued to show its strength, dedication, and commitment to the wellbeing of its members by creating innovative, responsive programming. Part of this commitment is exemplified by the work of the Winooski Early Childhood Network. The Early Childhood Network (ECN) first came together just over two years ago as a place for collaboration between the City and several preschool and other care providers in the community including Vermont Birth through Three, Children's Integrated Services, University of Vermont Medical Center, the Greater Burlington YMCA, the Winooski Family Center, and the Winooski School District. This collaboration gave providers in the community opportunities to educate each other about their programming, discuss and trouble shoot challenges, and allow providers to work together to consciously and mindfully build a landscape where programming is easily accessible to families in multiple formats across the community, while minimizing competition between organizations. Some examples of the benefit of the partnerships built through ECN include:

- Collaboration on multiple large events including Family Fun Days in March and June 2014, providing families with awareness and opportunities to connect face to face with providers, neighbors, and other families in the community.
- Streamlining of program schedules between the Winooski Memorial Library, the Winooski Family Center Playgroups, and the YMCA Early Learning Readiness Program to stagger programming throughout the week, ensuring that families have the best opportunity to participate in a variety of programming.
- A collaboration between the City and the YMCA to relocate the Early Learning Readiness Program from a YMCA site that was difficult for families to access, to the Winooski Memorial Library. Since relocating, the program has seen a tremendous boost in participation and retention of families.
- Ongoing collaboration among members of ECN to address gaps in preschool programming throughout the summer months.

As active members in this dynamic, resilient community, members of the Early Childhood Network will continue to build our partnerships, relationships, and engagement with our shared families, helping to connect them early and actively with the wider school community in the years leading to Kindergarten. This engagement will give children a solid foundation whether they are engaged in preschool classrooms at the Winooski Family Center or the District run Head Start, story time at the Winooski Memorial Library, and even carrying through as they enter Kindergarten and engage in the JFK's classroom communities and Thrive programming during out-of-school time. This cohesiveness across programming in Winooski will allow children and families to access high quality programming in their choice of format, to address each family's specific needs and desires in ways that are meaningful to them, and will ultimately prepare children to be successful in school and life.

Self-Identified need that data does not show: your community story

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

There are countless examples of Winooski groups that have come together over the years to work towards economic growth and stability, improving infrastructure, building stronger schools, developing community based programs and bringing resources to Winooski.

The Early Childhood Network is an example of one group that has been able to successfully leverage shared resources and opportunities between service providers to begin wrapping families in services throughout the community. Through our commitment to our fellow program providers and the children of Winooski, we have been able to collaborate to deliver much needed support to programs in need of space, advertising, and participation and funding for events. Together we have built program calendars across the community that support families' ability to attend diverse programming every day of the week, maximizing time for families and service providers alike.

The Winooski School Board was recognized by the Vermont School Board Association for Exceptional School Board leadership in 2014, receiving acknowledgement for their commitment to the wellbeing of their students, enhancing the cause of public education in Vermont, contributing effective and efficient oversight of the educational system in Winooski, and consistently recognizing the role of a school board relative to teachers, administrators, children, and families.

In addition to these two examples, many other Winooski groups along with county and statewide organizations have come together to form the Winooski Family Center, the Winooski Coalition for Safe and Peaceful Communities (formerly the Winooski Network), the Winooski Business Association, Partnership for Change, and the Health and Wellness Committee. These collaborations and partnerships have addressed issues such as violence and bullying, health and nutrition, summer programming, substance abuse, parent education, food insecurity and strengthening school programs.

On a more local level, Winooski is one of the few communities in Vermont to be growing demographically younger. Currently, the median age in Winooski is 31.3 years old, while the median age in the State is 45.8 years old. In recent years, we have seen families with young children and young professionals moving into the City. This has contributed to the feeling of rapid change in the community, and has created a renewed interest in participation in programs and services. Across the City, we have seen an increase in participation in our camps and youth programming including youth Soccer and Basketball, and our Thrive After School and Summer Program. These changes, along with growing businesses and strengthened partnerships and program offerings from our local service organizations, contribute to a strong feeling of vibrancy and growing potential throughout our community.

## **What is the impact of Poverty on your community?**

High rates of poverty are shown to be correlated with high rates of child abuse and neglect, higher rates of teen pregnancy, and lower achievement scores in most grade levels. The rate of child abuse and neglect and teen pregnancy for Winooski is double the state rate. Academic achievements are lower for Winooski than for the state. Food insecurity, less access to medical and dental care, more untreated health and mental health issues and increased rates of domestic violence are all by-products of poverty. Sadly, data confirms that many Winooski citizens are experiencing or at least impacted by the effects of poverty.

Winooski is one of Vermont's most ethnically diverse communities, houses a proportionately large senior population, and has been one of the communities that young families and new Americans choose to make their first home. Winooski's location in Chittenden County allows access to entry level jobs and a large number of lower cost rental units. The breadth and depth of these stressors throughout our small community requires a comprehensive approach beyond the capacity of our current programming.

### **How are the children doing in terms of Kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade achievement scores?**

The score for the 3rd grade NECAP assessment in Winooski from fall 2013 is only 35.85% - the lowest of the 27 participating schools across the state. Kindergarten readiness data shows that only 31% of children entering Kindergarten are deemed "kindergarten ready", ranking 52 out of 56 reporting districts.

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

Winooski's uniqueness lies not only in its demographics and challenges, but in its ability to put together often limited and scarce resources that result in community change and growth. The past ten years have brought a continual evolution of the demographics of our community between our participation as a Refugee Resettlement City and the availability of lower cost housing than other areas in Chittenden County. As a geographically confined city of 1.4 miles, bordered by Colchester and Burlington, Winooski had historically been a pass through community of textile industry and mill housing. Currently, Winooski is one of the few communities in the State that is demographically becoming younger, with a current median age of 31.3 years old, compared to Vermont's median age of 45.8 years old, showing the influx of young professionals and families that are taking advantage of a community with a vibrant Main Street of local businesses and restaurants, as well as renter friendly housing stock. Currently in the City, 60% of all housing stock is renter occupied, only 33% is owner occupied, with a 7% vacancy rate.

With our participation as a Refugee Resettlement City, Winooski has seen a rise in the number of different cultures in our small community. These changes have increased the need for supporting individuals that are learning English, may have had minimal formal education, have experienced trauma, and are faced with the challenges of acculturation. The focus of the work that many organizations in Winooski is committed to learning all that we can to assure that the services that we offer are respectful, relevant, competent and effective to each individual that seeks our support.

Whether we consider the impact of generational poverty dating back to our industrial roots, the impact of refugee resettlement and the concerns of our New American families, or the challenges faced by our families on the margins who struggle to receive support, the groups of providers in Winooski have shown time and time again that we are committed to effective collaboration and partnership to address the needs of our community. It is important to point out that although financial contributions and grants supported many projects and programs, it was the willingness, dedication and in-kind support, that brought people together to address and solve problems with the common goal of supporting Winooski children, individuals, families and hence Winooski as a whole, to be a strong and thriving community that perpetuates opportunity and growth.

### **Understanding the resources of the community**

#### **What are the resources of your community or lack of resources?**

- Existing resources in the community include, but are not limited to:  
Mental health and early intervention services (provided by the Winooski Family Center, Howard Center)
- Out-of-school time support (provided by the Thrive After School and Summer Program, a program operated by the City of Winooski through the Community Services Department)
- High quality preschool programming and literacy support (Early Learning Readiness Program/YMCA, Winooski School District, Winooski Family Center, Head Start, and youth programming at the Winooski Memorial Library)

Although we have a strong foundation to build programming, families in Winooski still struggle to comprehensively access the care and support services needed to provide stability and high quality experiences for children's success. Barriers such as a high student turnover rate of over 30%, lack of transportation, limited English proficiency, and stress from acculturation, mental health and substance abuse, lack of high quality, affordable, or full day child care options, will require a coordinated response from our existing community partnerships and ongoing efforts. Using partnerships and systems already established throughout the community such as the Winooski Early Childhood Network, we are positioned to leverage our combined resources to reshape the systems and landscape for young children and their families.

### Community WILL (spirit):

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

There is a compelling NEED: Winooski should be part of this initiative because there is a demonstrated, compelling need in the community as per many data sources. Data show high indicators for children being "at-risk" is repeatedly linked with a lower number of children determined to be "ready for school" in study after study.

We are READY: The Winooski community has established groups to address the many challenges facing Winooski families, exemplified by many strong relationships such as the City and the School District partnering closely at all levels of leadership to improve opportunities for Winooski families, as well as their partnership on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Community Centers grant to improve the service provided by the School's 21<sup>st</sup> Century program and the Thrive After School Program. The group effort is also exemplified by the relationship between the Winooski Family Center and the School District to effectively educate families and serve a shared group of preschoolers through their individual programs and classrooms. One of our many strengths is the ability to collaborate and build on current resources. Our Early Childhood Network includes a group of organizations and individuals such as the City, the School District, the Winooski Family Center, the Greater Burlington YMCA, University of Vermont Medical Center, Building Bright Futures, and many others that can serve as a foundation and for the work that needs to be done through this initiative. The strength of our relationships throughout Winooski, as well as the presence and success of the Early Childhood Network, means that the initial work of relationship and trust building has been done and our core group of providers and stakeholders are already invested in innovative, sustainable, long term projects to alter the landscape in Winooski to best serve children and families. If chosen to be a Promise Community, we will be

prepared for day one of the coaching period with shared visions, meaningful connections and relationships, and an established, shared commitment to best serving our children and families.

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

The Winooski Early Childhood Network was established just over two years ago and included partners such as VT Birth -3, University of VT Medical Center, YMCA, the City, Winooski Family Center, the School District, Building Bright Futures, Children's Integrated Services and the Winooski Memorial Library. We work together to enhance outreach, services and activities that are offered by sharing information, resources, knowledge and expertise. Together, we have planned several community wide events that brought families with young children together to learn about resources and network. Other examples include:

- The Winooski School District and Winooski Family Center have increased the number of preschool slots this year;
- The Winooski Family Center is a pilot site for the Early Multi-tiered System of Support project;
- The City and the School District have partnered closely to provide summer programming that is seamless across our offerings of the District run Summer School and City run Thrive Summer Program, providing families of school-age children with full day care and children with the opportunity to participate in diverse, high quality programming for a majority of the summer months.
- The City and the School District have also partnered closely as joint applicants for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant, allowing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning programs at JFK to partner closely with the Thrive After School program, again providing seamless and diverse opportunities for participating families during after school hours.
- Clinicians from the Howard Center have a longstanding collaboration with the Winooski School District to provide social work services through all grade levels and with Head Start to provide consultation and training opportunities;

## What is the plan for engaging families in the work ahead?

We will begin with seeking out involvement of families through our existing preschool programs, out-of-school time school programs, Welcome Baby programs, playgroups, library programs, and local medical offices. We will seek to involve the Association for Africans Living in Vermont and the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program as partners and access their connections and expertise to help us approach and engage New American families. In partnership with our Early Childhood Network, we will also seek to involve home child-care providers, both regulated and unregulated, to gain access to families who take advantage of other forms of child care across the City and maximize benefit to populations of Winooski children that traditionally have been harder to access.

## Who are the partners to help make this work happen?

Winooski School District, City of Winooski, Winooski Family Center, Dr. Ann Goering, Building Bright Futures (Beth Truzansky), Agency of Human Services Field director (Jane Helmstetter), Winooski Memorial Library, University of Vermont Medical Center, VT Birth-Three, Associations for Africans Living in VT, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, home child-care providers, Winooski families.

### Anticipated Impact:

Through our partnerships between the Winooski School District, youth centered programs provided by the City, the Winooski Family Center, and other providers, we will have the ability to reach a wide array of children and families. These collaborations will build on existing systems, develop new resources, and strengthen our relationships with families across the whole community in order to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for all Winooski Children.

### Promise Community Decision

Six communities will be selected for the first cohort from different regions of the state. A group of the Promise Community statewide stakeholder team will review and score applications to determine the first Cohort. Promise Communities will be announced on March 31, 2015. Coaches will meet with community partners and begin the work right away.

### Questions about Promise Communities?

Please use the SurveyMonkey link to pose your questions that you would like answered during the Feb 18, 2015 GoToMeeting webinar by Feb 17, 2015.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PromiseCommunityQuestions>

## Promise Community Application Cover Sheet

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### **Attachment 1 Coversheet**

*Person to contact with questions about this application:*

Name of contact person: Kirstie Paschall, Karen Prosciak                      Title: Children and Family Programs  
Manager, Director of Winooski Family Center

Telephone: 802-316-1552, 802-655-1422              Email: [kkpaschall@winooskivt.org](mailto:kkpaschall@winooskivt.org), karenp@howardcenter.org

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

Name of Organization/Agency: City of Winooski and Winooski Family Center

Address: City of Winooski  
27 West Allen St

City: Winooski    Zip code: 05404

Name of Executive Director/ President/ CEO/ Superintendent: Sean McMannon

County: Chittenden

Agency of Human Service District: Chittenden

Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: Winooski School District

Targeted School(s): JFK

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator: Beth Truzansky

### *Sponsor:*

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

Name: Beth Truzansky    Email: [btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org](mailto:btruzansky@buildingbrightfutures.org)

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
- 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: Winooski School District

Targeted School(s): JFK Elementary School

Sponsor: Sean McMannon

We pledge to support the local community of Winooski 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.

\*Please see attached PDF with signatures.

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Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

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School Superintendent		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

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School Principal		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

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Child Healthcare Provider		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

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AHS Field Director		
SIGNATURE	PRINT	DATE

## Promise Community Pledge of Commitment Signatures

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SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ PRINT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
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Promise Community Pledge of Commitment

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**Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment**

*Organization/agency submitting application*

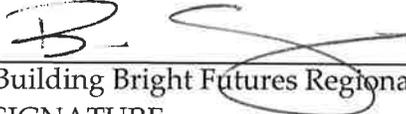
Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: Winooski School District

Targeted School(s): JFK Elementary School

Sponsor: Sean McMannon

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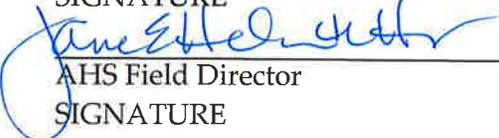
This form must be signed by Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator; targeted school principal (s); targeted school superintendent; Regional Agency of Human Services Field Director; and community child health care provider, indicating their pledge to participate as a partner in the implementation 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.

 Beth Truzansky 3/16/15  
Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

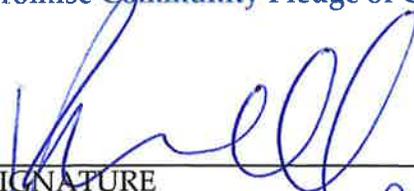
Please see signature on page 2.  
School Superintendent  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

Please see signature on page 2.  
School Principal  
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Please see signature on page 2.  
Child Healthcare Provider  
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 Jane Helmstetter 3/17/15  
AHS Field Director  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

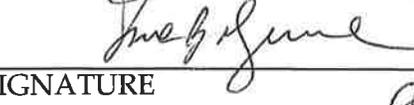
Promise Community Pledge of Commitment Signatures

 Kirstie Paschall 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: City of Winoski, Children and Family Programs Manager

 Amanda Perry 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Winoski Memorial Library

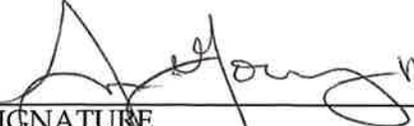
 Raymond Coffey 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: City of Winoski, Community Services Director

 Katherine R. Decarrean 3-17-15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: City of Winoski, City Manager

 Tina Boljevac 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Greater Burlington Ymca

 Mary O'Rourke 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Principal - JFK

 Sean McManus 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Superintendent - Winoski School District

 Ann Goering 3/18/2015  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Winoski Family Health

 Karen Prosser 3/17/15  
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE  
ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Winoski Director / Director Family Center

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