



**NEWS RELEASE
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Citizens Bank Foundation awards \$40,000 in Technical Assistance Grants to 6 community groups

Vermont Community Loan Fund, one recipient, provides Vermont businesses with a full menu of technical assistance services.

BURLINGTON, V.T. – The Citizens Bank Foundation has awarded \$40,000 to 6 community groups through its third annual Technical Assistance Grants program. The grants, ranging in size from \$3,000 to \$8,000, were awarded to local community groups which provide technical assistance specifically in the area of credit services.

“We believe that by providing necessary funds for technical assistance services that help consumers understand and access credit, we can help improve the quality of life for many and serve to strengthen neighborhoods and communities throughout Vermont,” said Cathy Schmidt, President of Citizens Bank in Vermont. “This grant money will assist community groups across the state in their efforts to provide credit service. We are very pleased to assist in this area.”

The following organizations received the grants:

- Opportunities Credit Union, *Financial Education and Counseling Service*, \$8,000
- Community Capital of Vermont, *Post-Loan Technical Assistance Program*, \$8,000
- Vermont Community Loan Fund, *Business Lending Program*, \$8,000
- Northern Enterprises Inc., *Northern Vermont Lending Partners and Micro Business Loan Program*, \$8,000
- Central Vermont Community Action Council, *Vermont Women’s Business Center*, \$5,000
- Milton Family Community Center, *Learning Together Program*, \$3,000

“The Citizens Bank Technical Assistance Grant will help us meet the growing statewide demand for the technical assistance we offer to Vermont entrepreneurs,” said William Belongia, Executive Director for The Vermont Community Loan Fund. “The hands-on expertise we provide is invaluable to helping sustain and grow truly local businesses. Citizens has always recognized the need for the credit services we provide, and we’re proud to serve Vermont with their support.”

About the Citizens Bank Foundation

The Citizens Bank Foundation is the principal charitable contributions vehicle of Citizens Financial Group and Citizens Bank. The foundation’s support is focused on housing, community development and basic human needs. Citizens’ Web site is citizensbank.com.

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