Vital Communities, a Leading Upper Valley Nonprofit, Seeks New Board Members

Do you want to make a difference in the Upper Valley? Vital Communities seeks new board members who share our commitment to inclusive, equitable, and long-term community engagement that cultivates the civic, environmental, and economic vitality of the Upper Valley. With 19 full- and part-time staff, a $2.7 million budget, and a service area covering 69 towns in NH and VT, we work with partners to lead projects in the areas of climate, economic resilience, energy, farming, food security, housing, leadership training, early childhood education, and transportation.

We are actively seeking to diversify our Board as part of our commitment to identify, include, engage, and connect with residents of all ages, genders, races, cultures, faiths, abilities, professions, documentation status, income levels, sexual orientation, and geographic locations within our Upper Valley service area. Previous Board experience is not required. Former staff who have worked at Vital Communities after January 1, 2019, are ineligible. We welcome people from any part of our region to apply; we are especially looking for candidates that live and/or work in communities not currently represented on our board. We are especially in need of board members with finance experience.

Vital Communities is at an exciting turning point. We completed a strategic planning process in Spring 2023 and the resulting Strategic Compass reflects both our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (our JEDI principles) and our intentions to listen to and trust perspectives that challenge our own, identify and test alternatives to the status quo, and advance systems that are just. We recognize that this is a journey and that there are both internal and external challenges we need to overcome as we seek to effect change within our organization and in our communities.

Board members serve in a volunteer capacity for two- or three-year terms starting on July 1. Board member roles and responsibilities (listed on pages 3-4) include attending six meetings per year which are conducted either via Zoom or in person. Reimbursement for mileage and other expenses is available, and orientation and training are provided.

If you are interested in applying, please complete this online application. The deadline is April 9, 2024. If you would like further information, please contact Board Member Tim Josephson (josephsonth@gmail.com), Board Chair Amy Lappin (amy.spence.lappin@gmail.com), or Executive Director Sarah Jackson (sjackson@vitalcommunities.org).
BOARD MEMBER and BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS:

1. Understand the mission, policies, and programs of Vital Communities as well as an understanding its current and future needs;

2. Understand the financing of Vital Communities as well as its regularly circulated financial statements, as scrutinized and presented to the Board by the Finance Committee;

3. Share information about Vital Communities’ goals and accomplishments with diverse networks throughout the Upper Valley;

4. Identify and secure individual donations for Vital Communities, and support Vital Communities staff as needed in identifying and securing other financial resources to further the cause of Vital Communities;

5. For those in a financial position to make donations to organizations, contribute annually to Vital Communities’ fundraising appeals by including the organization among your top three nonprofit giving opportunities, thereby enabling Vital Communities to report 100% Board giving, as required by many donors;

6. Identify and assist in facilitating new professional and social connections with Upper Valley individuals and nonprofit organizations that would be mutually beneficial;

7. Assist the Nominating Committee in creating a board that reflects the diverse geographic, demographic, socio-economic and professional composition of the Upper Valley;

8. Prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings (five 2-hour meetings per year plus one day-long retreat) and serve on at least one committee of the board (variable schedules for committees, depending on focus and time of year);

9. Participate in personal / professional development around key issues such as racial justice and in topics related to nonprofit Board best practices;

10. Identify and engage with at least one Vital Communities program and its staff members and, if the program has an advisory committee associated with it, attend at least one advisory committee meeting per year; and

11. Attend at least one public Vital Communities event annually, apart from board meetings.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOARD AS A WHOLE:

1. Determine and approve the mission and purposes of Vital Communities;

2. Select and evaluate the performance of the Executive Director of Vital Communities;

3. Lead the strategic planning process, drawing on staff input and identifying emerging and evolving community needs, ensuring that programs align with Vital Communities’ mission and creating measures by which progress toward goals may be assessed and documented;

4. Ensure strong fiduciary oversight and financial management of Vital Communities;
5. Assist in fundraising and other resource development efforts;

6. Share information about Vital Communities’ goals and accomplishments with diverse networks throughout the Upper Valley;

7. Approve new programs;

8. Participate in annual Board self-assessment;

9. Maintain a regular and open line of communication with Executive Director through the Chair and Executive Committee of the board; and

10. Gratefully acknowledge and support the hard work and dedication of the Vital Communities staff members.

EXPECTATIONS OF VITAL COMMUNITIES:

To support Board Members, Vital Communities will:

1. Send an agenda and board materials in a timely fashion, prior to Board meetings;

2. Provide new Board Members with an orientation to Vital Communities;

3. Keep Board Members informed of organizational issues, financial challenges, etc. so that Board Members are able to make informed decisions during meetings;

4. Provide information needed to participate in Vital Communities activities, advisory committee meetings, etc.;

5. Offer ongoing Board Member education and training opportunities; and

6. Provide Board Members with Directors and Officers Liability insurance.