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Department of Vermont Health Access
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Vermont Health Connect Selects 18 Navigator Organizations

Navigators to provide Vermonters with in-person assistance when applying for health coverage

WINOOSKI, VT – Vermont Health Connect today announced \$2 million in grants to organizations that will provide in-person health coverage enrollment assistance. Navigator Organizations will manage individual Navigators who will be trained and certified to provide direct assistance to individuals, families and small businesses across Vermont. Navigators will also play a key role in Vermont Health Connect’s outreach and education in communities. Their work will ensure that Vermonters know what changes are coming and have access to the tools and resources they need to apply for health coverage.

Starting this October, Vermont Health Connect will be a new way for Vermonters to find health coverage that fits their needs and budget. Vermont Health Connect is a marketplace where individuals, families and small businesses can make side-by-side comparisons of private health plans and find financial help to pay for care. Vermont Health Connect is also for individuals and families in Vermont to find out about and enroll in public health coverage.

Navigators will be available in communities throughout the state to help Vermonters understand their health care options, enroll in a plan, and access financial help. Small employers and their employees can also turn to Navigators for help in determining their best health coverage options.

“Social service agencies, business associations, and others across Vermont have shown that they are ready, willing and able to assist fellow Vermonters in finding health coverage that meets their needs and budget,” said Mark Larson, Commissioner of the Department of Vermont Health Access. “We welcome their collaboration and look forward to tapping their expertise to efficiently reach eligible Vermonters. We are confident the grants will serve Vermonters well.”

Organizations interested in serving as Navigator Organizations responded to a grant announcement posted by the Department of Vermont Health Access in early April. In their proposals, applicants identified the population(s) they intend to provide assistance to, either by geographic area or specific to an audience in need of enrollment assistance. Some of the potential audiences in need of enrollment assistance include the small business community, low income households, and new American communities of Vermont.

A total of 29 different proposals were received, representing partnerships of 53 unique Vermont organizations. Eighteen proposals were funded at varied levels based on their capacity and reach. Grantees will designate individual Navigators to receive training and begin outreach work in July. Two applicant partnerships were selected to coordinate outreach and enrollment of individuals and families across the state, and two others were selected to coordinate outreach and enrollment of small businesses.

Statewide Coordinating Navigator Organizations	Grant Award
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity <i>(in partnership with Community Action in Southwestern VT, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and Southeastern Vermont Community Action)</i>	\$ 200,000
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility <i>(in partnership with the Vermont Grocers Association, Vermont Retail Association, and the Vermont Medical Society)</i>	\$ 200,000
Vermont Chamber of Commerce Services, Inc. <i>(in partnership with various regional business membership organizations)</i>	\$ 260,000
Vermont Coalition of Clinics for the Uninsured <i>(in partnership with nine of its clinics)</i>	\$ 204,833

Navigator Organizations	Grant Award
Association of Africans Living in Vermont	\$ 56,576
Bi-State Primary Care Association <i>(in partnership with eight of its member organizations)</i>	\$ 100,000
Central Vermont Community Action Council	\$ 80,000
Community Health Centers of Burlington	\$ 135,000
Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region, Inc.	\$ 100,000
Community Health Services of Lamoille Valley	\$ 40,000
HR Consulting Solutions LLC	\$ 100,000
Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce <i>(in partnership with The Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Addison County Chamber of Commerce)</i>	\$ 120,000
People's Health and Wellness Clinic	\$ 70,000
Planned Parenthood of Northern New England	\$ 100,000
Richford Health Center, Inc. d/b/a Northern Tier Center for Health	\$ 80,000
Spectrum Youth & Family Services	\$ 40,000
Vermont Campaign for Health Care Security	\$ 132,821
Vermont Family Network	\$ 50,000

Successful applicants demonstrated financial responsibility, existing relationships or ability to readily establish relationships with Vermont Health Connect-eligible populations, ability to manage Navigators, ability to conduct outreach and education, and a familiarity with the Vermont health care system. Per the application requirements, they are registered businesses in Vermont and they have no conflicts of interest with federal guidelines for the program.

The Navigator Program is one piece of Vermont Health Connect's comprehensive consumer assistance program. In addition to the work of Navigator Organizations, health industry employees will be trained and certified to provide enrollment assistance; registered and licensed brokers will have an opportunity to serve small businesses and individuals; and an enrollment support unit and Vermont-based call center will be available. Together, these resources will ensure that Vermonters can get the enrollment help they want, online, by phone or in-person.

For additional details visit www.VermontHealthConnect.gov.