

Dear VFFC community and friends,

I am writing this special fall newsletter with a tremendous sense of excitement and anticipation for the months ahead at VFFC. After two years of closure, we are about to reopen Farmers Hall! Everyone at VFFC cannot wait to see the Hall filled with people and local food-based activity again!

As many of you know, Farmers Hall had to be closed when an air quality issue from the building's past use was discovered during an inspection before the building's renovation could begin. In January 2021, VFFC's staff, community kitchen renters, and tenants had to move out and relocate.

This September, [VFFC received a grant of \\$800,000](#) from the State of Vermont's Department of Economic Development to cover the costs of the cleanup and remediation of Farmers Hall. And the cleanup and remediation work has begun!

**Farmers Hall has been cleared and remediation work has begun!**



Over the past two years, we have made significant progress, but it has come at a cost. The closure of Farmers Hall displaced the Winter Farmers Market vendors and two of VFFC's food-based business tenants. It also meant that we could not lease the hall for events or rent out the Community Kitchen.

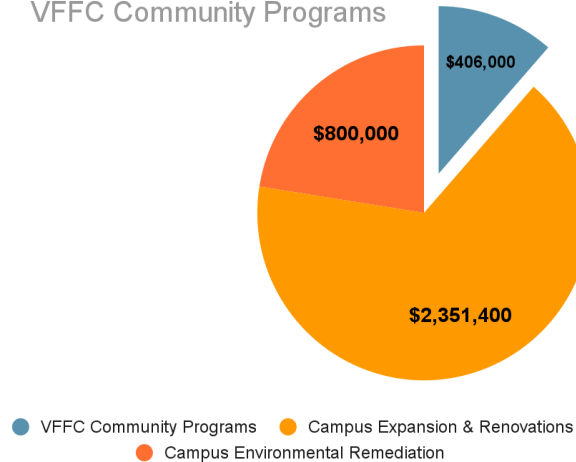
As a result, VFFC lost \$65,000 in income per year for the past two years due to the closure of Farmers Hall. Lease and rental income are critical to sustaining our general operating and administration costs and to ensure we can pay our staff to deliver our programs and services.

Grants and donations have had to make up for the shortfall. The "bricks and mortar" grants we have received for campus expansion and renovations to construct our food hub will increase our agricultural and food-based business production capacity in the region.

But they do not help pay our staff or support our daily operations to work with farmers and bring local food to the Rutland community. **As of now, we need to raise the last \$70,000, or 17% of**

our \$406,000 Community Programs operating budget, to meet our goals for the remainder of 2023.

Campus Expansion Project vs  
VFFC Community Programs



**Please help us reach our year-end goal with your generous gift!**

**Your contribution will allow us to continue our work to make local food more accessible  
in our community!**

**You can make your donation through our secure site [here](#).**

To celebrate our VFFC community and the reopening of Farmers Hall and our campus renovation, Root Words podcast returns this month to talk to local, national, and global experts in a special five-part series!

By showcasing VFFC's efforts, we will hear how a food hub can create an alternative to the existing food system by rooting food production and access in a particular place. And we will learn how a focus on local food restores relationships between people and the environment.

In the last episode we will hear about the much-anticipated reopening of Farmers Hall! And we look ahead to see what is yet to come at 251 West Street and learn why efforts like VFFC's are critical to the future. You may listen to the first episode in this special series on [Apple Podcasts](#), through [VFFC's website](#), or on [Root Words' PodBean host page](#).

Over the past two years, our community has been a great source of strength and hope for us. Know that you are a vital part of the VFFC community. We cannot do our work without you.

Please donate to VFFC today!

Thank you!

Heidi Lynch, Executive Director