



**BUILDING  
BRIGHT  
FUTURES**

**Impact Report**  
2023





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## OUR MISSION & ROLE

The mission of Building Bright Futures (BBF) is to improve the well-being of each and every child and family in Vermont by using evidence to inform policy and bringing voices together to discuss critical challenges and problem solve.

- ★ We bring together a robust network of policymakers, early childhood professionals, educators, health and mental health providers, business leaders, families, and other stakeholders to share insights and problem-solve through regular meetings of **12 Regional Councils, 7 Committees moving forward the work of Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP), and a 23-member State Advisory Council.**
- ★ We empower and elevate family and community voices as partners in decision-making.
- ★ We oversee **Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP)**, a five-year strategic plan that takes a collaborative approach to building a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system that promotes healthy child development and family stability.
- ★ We centralize and disseminate early childhood data to inform policy through Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center at **VermontKidsData.org**, a free, centralized clearinghouse of data, publications, and policy recommendations on the well-being of Vermont children through age 8. We also produce a yearly report called **The State of Vermont's Children**, an objective, data-driven assessment of the state of young child and family well-being in Vermont; progress on selected indicators and outcomes for the early care, health, and education system; and recommendations on how best to improve child and family well-being.



The 2022 issue of this report, along with the ongoing efforts of Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center, serves as a critical tool for data-driven decision-making for our kids and their families. I am grateful for the role it plays in supporting our collective work as a state to make Vermont the best possible place for children and families to live."

Gov. Philip B. Scott

# OUR IMPACT

BBF utilizes a robust, 450+ person network to convene stakeholders to problem-solve, empower families and communities, monitor outcomes for children and families, respond to gaps, and advise decision-makers. Below we have outlined a few highlights from the last year across our primary functions: to **advise, monitor, convene, respond, and empower.**

## Advise

One of the most critical roles the Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council Network has is serving as the primary advisor to Vermont's Governor and Legislature on the well-being of children in the prenatal period through age 8 and their families. The [2022-2023 Policy Recommendations of Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council Network](#), developed based on input from across the BBF Network, were formally endorsed by the 23-member Governor-appointed State Advisory Council, elevating a series of recommendations targeting the most pressing challenges in the system.

Additionally, **BBF provided formal advisement more than 75 times** (in multiple forms) to Vermont's General Assembly, the Governor's Office and Administration, or the state's Federal Delegation. More important than the number of advisement opportunities are the trusted relationships built between the Building Bright Futures team and members of the General Assembly, Governor's Office and Administration, and Federal Delegation, enabling change and action within the state's early childhood system by calling attention to challenges, errors, or emerging issues. [Building Bright Futures Network Advisement](#) can be found at Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center.

In addition, the voices of families, communities, and early childhood partners statewide are instrumental mechanisms to understand the longstanding challenges, successes, and emerging issues faced by children and families. We engage with these stakeholders through our Regional Councils and VECAP Committees, then share their input with state partners and decision-makers.



**The Building Bright Futures Network summarized feedback from over 190 early childhood partners statewide that informed [the Legislature's] child care work."**

Rep. Jessica Brumsted



**Vermont passes Act 76, a historic law on early childhood** In June 2023, Vermont's legislature passed Act 76, a historic act related to investing in the state's early childhood system. BBF elevated the voices of families, communities, and other early childhood stakeholders and presented the most high-quality, up-to-date data to inform decisions of the Legislature and the Administration. We gathered this data from sources including rapid information gathering, Regional Councils, the State Advisory Council, VECAP Committees, an emerging priorities document, and facilitating a robust systems analysis. Building Bright Futures was written into this legislation in meaningful ways that will allow the team to support the state by promoting stakeholder engagement and providing technical assistance, accountability, and monitoring related to the implementation of the bill. Additionally, BBF was tasked with appointing two family representatives to the Universal Pre-K Implementation Committee, an opportunity to continue to elevate family voice and partnered decision-making.



## Monitor

BBF plays a critical role in monitoring Vermont's early childhood system and has a proven track record of supporting the state in capturing, compiling, and producing high-quality cross-sector data. This year, BBF and [Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center](#) produced three original documents, two sections of Vermont's Early Childhood Data Development Agenda, and compiled or updated more than 50 indicators at [VermontKidsData.org](#), Vermont's critical tool for answering early childhood policy questions. The three documents were:

1. [The State of Vermont's Children: 2022 Year in Review](#)
2. [2022 Vermont Early Childhood Family Needs Assessment](#)
3. [Data Brief: Examining Perspectives of Children's Integrated Services \(CIS\) from Families Served by CIS Early Intervention](#)

BBF also has a **centralized tracker to collect emerging priorities and questions** from early childhood stakeholders. More than 30 emerging issues, challenges, and priorities from early childhood stakeholders throughout the BBF Network were shared with the appropriate early childhood partners and decision-makers between January and June 2023. These included topics such as the impact of active opiate use in community settings on children and communities, child care deposits, a lack of health care and dental care providers who accept Medicaid, and the need for mental health and secondary trauma training for teachers in classrooms.



**I use the State of Vermont's Children and some indicators on Vermont's Early Childhood Data and Policy Center as my go-to for early childhood data to use for grants and presentations. It is so helpful to have it all in one place!"**

A participant in our 2023 Stakeholder Survey







## Convene

Building Bright Futures Regional Early Childhood Councils are an essential part of the statewide network. BBF facilitated a process across the 12 Regional Councils during April and May 2023 with over 130 partners participating. The priority-setting process is designed to gather input and prioritize the most pressing regional priorities for Council investment in the coming year. This resulted in an updated [Regional Council Priority map](#) that will guide Council activities and resources over the next year.

Also in 2023, BBF hosted a State Advisory Council meeting with 70 people from across the network focused on monitoring **Vermont's Early Childhood Action Plan (VECAP)**, the collective vision for Vermont's early childhood system through 2026. Participants engaged in small groups to share progress toward the VECAP goals and discussed emerging needs and priorities for the coming year. Some of the key priorities that emerged from this discussion and through the VECAP Committees include: addressing homelessness and housing needs, strengthening family engagement, increasing access to food security programs and reducing stigma, continuing to invest in the early childhood workforce through increased wages and benefits, better meeting the mental health needs of children, building a more coordinated transition to kindergarten for families across the state, building social connectedness among families, and implementing changes to childcare and pre-K as outlined in the recent childcare bill, Act 76.



**Allowing everyone a seat at the table is the most impactful for change."**

A participant in our 2023 Stakeholder Survey







## Respond

Building Bright Futures' 12 Regional Councils serve as the early childhood experts within their communities who identify local needs and drive decision-making about how best to meet those needs. In fiscal year 2023, BBF's **Vermont Early Childhood Fund** awarded \$105,000 of private funds to help address barriers in the system and make impactful connections with Regional Councils. We received 40 applications and ultimately made seven awards of \$10-\$20K to community partners. Projects were selected to address emerging community needs through regional creative solutions. Examples of awards made included professional development and training for early childhood educators in Orleans and Windham counties, developing a culturally-tailored career pathway for immigrants living in southeastern Vermont to enter the early childhood education field, developing and implementing programs for Black and LGBTQ+ dads/caregivers in Chittenden County, and purchasing vision and hearing screening equipment to serve children in Lamoille, Orange, and Washington counties.



We are a recipient of the VECF Grant, which has made a huge impact on our team of teachers and community of families to elevate our programming to best support the mental health and well-being of the children and families in our community."

A VECF grantee



**Vermont awarded \$23 million in federal funds** In FY23, Vermont was awarded a \$23 million federal Preschool Development Grant to strengthen the state's early childhood system, support the early childhood workforce, and improve the quality and availability of services for family and children from prenatal to age 8. The grant is called the Vermont Integration Project: Building Integration in Vermont's Birth-5 Early Childhood Systems (VIP B-5). BBF was instrumental in helping to secure this grant funding for the state, and will disseminate approximately \$6M in subgrants over the next 3 years through our Vermont Early Childhood Fund.





I am new to the committee, [and] as a parent I have appreciated the dissemination of important policy issues in everyday language, as well as the translation of data and reports in accessible language.”

A member of the Family and Communities committee

## Empower



BBF serves as a key liaison between those most impacted by early childhood policy decisions (children, families, communities, providers) and decision-makers. BBF believes that representation and voice matter, and recognizes families and communities as key components to informing sound, sensible policy recommendations that improve equitable access to early childhood services. As part of BBF’s efforts to expand Vermont’s family partnership and leadership opportunities within the early childhood system through the VIP-3/ECCS Grant, the [Families and Communities Committee](#) has continued to convene meaningful opportunities for families to learn about the early childhood system and policies, for decision-makers to learn about the perspectives of families, and for families to be empowered to engage as partners throughout the system. This year, the committee developed and fielded a survey to better understand the barriers families face when accessing services and supports in order to inform policy and programs in Vermont’s early childhood systems (prenatal to age 8). More than 600 people filled out this Family Needs Assessment from all regions of the state, resulting in a [report](#) that provided an in-depth analysis of how well these services are working for families, the challenges they face, and what Vermont is doing well for young families. The report has been shared with decision-makers to inform programs and policy to better serve young children and their families and highlighted in the 2024 Policy Recommendations.



**BBF acts as a unifying force within the early childhood system. They are neutral but are able to bring together all state partners in taking action around a common goal.”**

A participant in our 2023 Stakeholder Survey

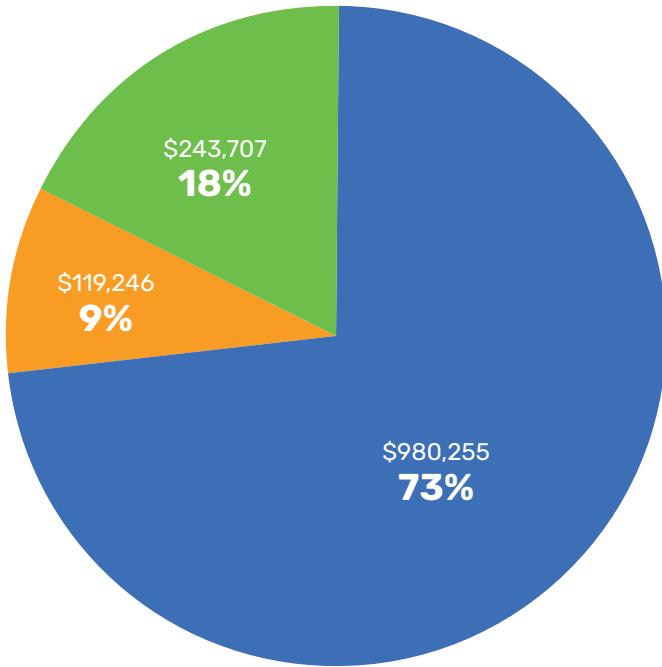


# OUR FUNDERS & FINANCIALS

## Expenses by Category\*

FY23 = \$1,343,208

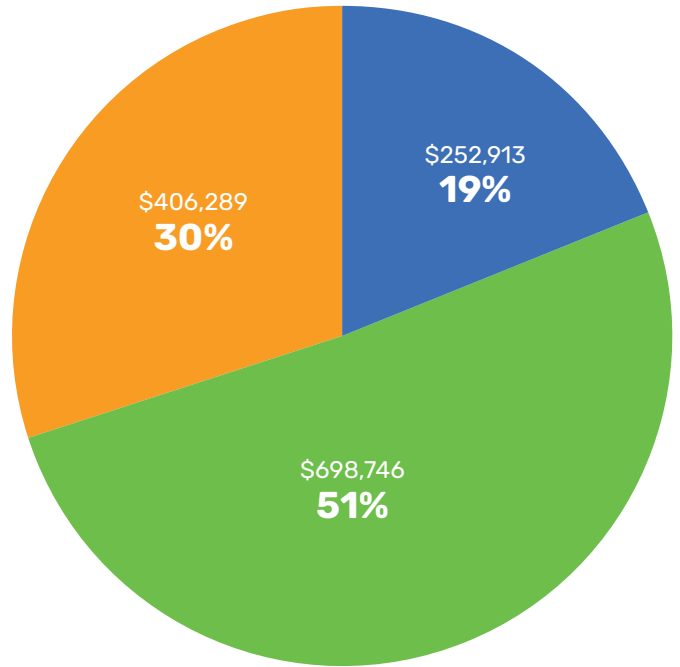
● Payroll and Benefits ● Operating ● Programs



## Revenue by Source\*

FY23 = \$1,357,948

● Federal ● State ● Private



\* Unaudited financials





# Thank you to our major FY23 funders!

## Over \$10,000

### PRIVATE

Anonymous

Antonio B. and Rita M. Pomerleau Foundation  
Association of University Centers on Disability  
Couch Family Foundation  
Donley Foundation  
The A.D. Henderson Foundation  
The Sunflower Fund via the  
Vermont Community Foundation

### STATE

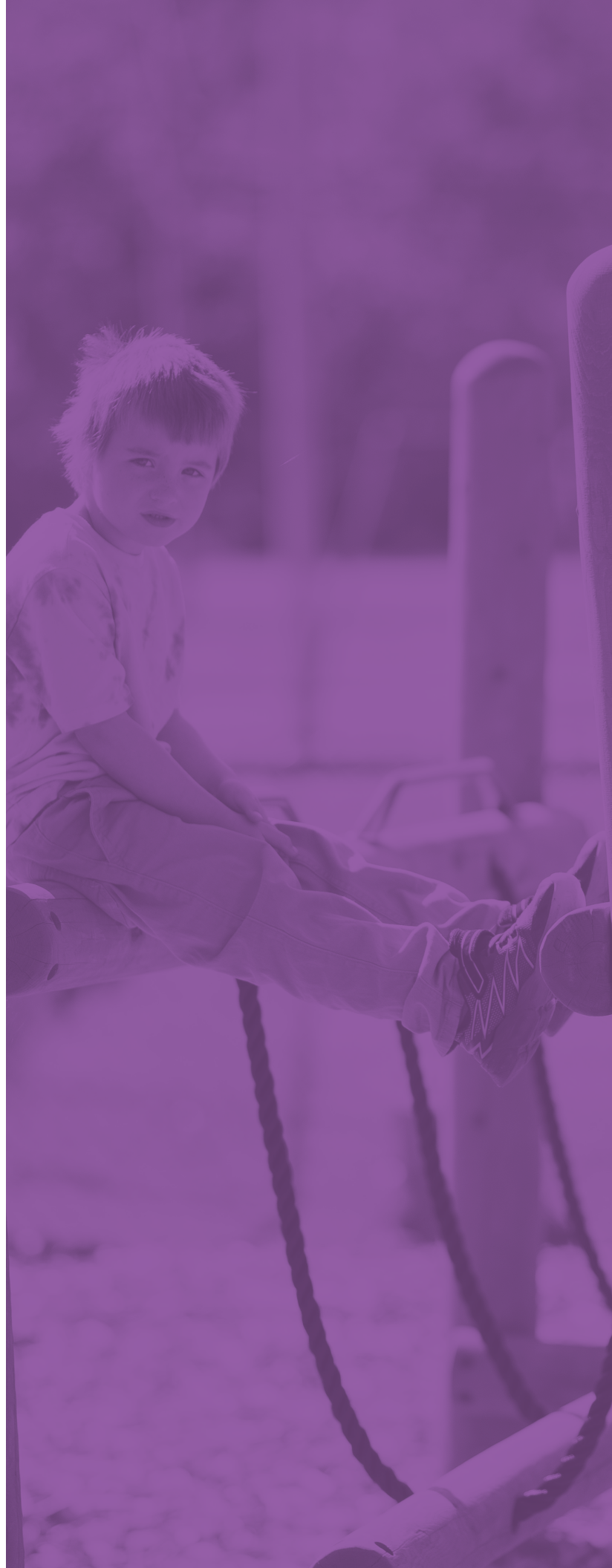
State of Vermont Legislative Allocation

### FEDERAL

Dept. of Housing and Urban Development via  
Vermont Housing and Conservation Board  
Health Resources Services Administration,  
Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood  
Comprehensive Systems via the Vermont Dept.  
of Health  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration via the Vermont Dept. of  
Mental Health  
The Administration for Children and Families,  
Office of Early Childhood Development via the  
Vermont Dept. for Children and Families

## Under \$10,000

Hannaford Brothers  
Marie Murphy  
Paul Gallo  
Turrell Fund  
Vermont Agency Foundation





# OUR TEAM

## STAFF

Dr. Morgan Crossman, Executive Director  
Beth Truzansky, Deputy Director  
Kate Bailey, Network Manager  
Anna Brouillette, Policy and Program Director  
Ali Dieng, Regional Manager for Chittenden, and Franklin and Grand Isle  
Kitty Foster, Data Coordinator  
Kelly Hayes, Regional Manager for Central Vermont and Lamoille Valley  
Courtney Hillhouse, Regional Manager for Southeast Vermont, Northern Windsor and Orange, and Springfield Area  
Michelle Kersey, Vermont Early Childhood Fund Grant Manager  
Tanya LaChapelle, Family Leadership Coordinator  
Dora Levinson, Research and Data Director  
Linda Michniewicz, Regional Manager for Caledonia and Southern Essex, and Orleans and Northern Essex  
Nathaniel Millarhouse, Finance Manager  
Katie Mobbs, Office Manager  
Jenn Schollmeyer, Data Manager  
Darla Senecal, Regional Manager for Bennington, Rutland, and Addison  
Valerie F. Wood, Early Childhood Systems Evaluator

## STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ilisa Stalberg, SAC Public Co-Chair; Vermont Department of Health  
Flor Diaz Smith, SAC Private Co-Chair; Vermont School Boards Association  
Rep. Jessica Brumsted, Vermont House of Representatives  
Libby Daghlian, Parent Representative  
Xusana Davis, Vermont Office of Racial Equity  
Paul Dragon, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity  
Alexis Duquette, Parent Representative  
Eddie Gale, A. D. Henderson Foundation  
Dimitri Garder, Business Representative; Global-Z International  
Sen. Ruth Hardy, Vermont Senate  
Sharon Harrington, Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children  
Renee Kelly, SAC Secretary; Head Start Collaboration Office  
Carol Lang-Godin, Lamoille Family Center  
Shayla Livingston, Agency of Human Services  
Janet McLaughlin, DCF Child Development Division  
Mike McRaith, Vermont Principals' Association  
Dr. Ashley Miller, South Royalton Health Center  
Meg Porcella, Agency of Education  
Christy Swenson, Capstone Community Action/Head Start  
Jessica Vintinner, Agency of Commerce and Community Development  
Rebecca Webb, SAC Treasurer; Barre Unified Union School District  
Cheryle Wilcox, Vermont Department of Mental Health  
Heather Wilcoxon, Healthcare & Rehabilitation Services  
Miranda Gray, non-voting member; DCF Economic Services Division  
Aryka Radke, non-voting member; DCF Family Services Division  
Kendal Smith, non-voting member; Vermont Governor's Office

