



STEM & Technical Skill Fund Grant Outcomes Summary

2019 Recipients

Generator

[Generator](#) was granted \$30,000 in support of its [Design Lab](#), [Maker Mentors](#) program, and its [Advanced Manufacturing Program \(AMP\)](#) to give Vermont students access to the bright futures a STEM career can afford through maker-oriented education. With support from BTV Ignite, Generator leveraged Grant funds to manufacture personal protective equipment.

Current Status: Funds Fully Deployed

Grant Outcomes

The Design Lab curriculum, adapted for COVID, included virtual STEM lesson based on [PinBox 3000](#) and was also delivered (in partnership with Greater Burlington YMCA) to [Camp Ignite](#) - an all-girl's summer camp developed around empowering young women. Similarly, Generator is currently strengthening its collaboration with Vermont Works for Women through their Rosie's Girl Afterschool program.

The Grant also supported the Maker Mentors program, which expanded its offering to Burlington High [School's Expanded Learning](#), working with 18 new BHS students who will participate in Tool Trainings ranging from the Laser Machine, Wood shop, 3D Printer, and Metal shop. The number of students served tripled from the program's first year.

Grant funds provided Generator's Advanced Manufacturing Program (AMP) to 8 students who gained skills related to Intro to Vector & Logo Design, Intro to V-Carve, Laser Cutter Operation, CNC Router Operation, Tool types and specifications, G-code, Tool measurement, Reading blueprints, and 3-D Modeling.

In response to COVID-19, Generator used partial Grant funds to produce over 15,000 face shields to UVM Medical Center and the State of Vermont. 2 paid internships supported this effort, gaining skills on the 3D Printer, Adobe Illustrator, and the Laser Machine as well as the valuable soft skills of working with a team and being accountable.

“Generator was extremely grateful to BTV Ignite for the flexibility of timing and spending of our grant during the initial COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.”

– Meg Hammond, Executive Director, Generator

Mercy Connections

[Mercy Connections](#) was granted \$20,000 in support of its [Women's Small Business Program](#) to benefit aspiring and current women entrepreneurs through the development of the Vermont Women Entrepreneurs Hub and their families.

Current Status: Funds Fully Deployed

Grant Outcomes Assessment

The following programs were supported by the Grant:

Idea to Action: Roadmap to Self-Employment – This three-session course was offered twice in 2020 and again in February 2021, serving 24 people. 100% of students reported the course provided excellent guidance and helped them clarify their desires to pursue their business idea. They also reported increased confidence and new knowledge and skills to apply to their businesses. Two of these students went on to attend the more advanced Start Up course that ran in Fall 2020.

Start Up: Comprehensive Business Planning - 11 students completed this semester-long course in Fall 2020 and another 13 began a new session in January 2021. From the Fall session, each student made an informed decision based on the viability of the business concept, their personal circumstances and the requirements of entrepreneurship. 90% of the students submitted business plans and at least 10 graduates are actively working on launching or have launched their businesses. The Start Up program allowed students to develop comprehensive business plans, build a strong personal support network, and develop tools needed to be successful entrepreneurs. Post-program surveys indicated that all Start Up graduates improved their business and financial literacy, gained business management skills, and increased knowledge of the requirements and outputs needed to start and run a business.

Business Workshops, Co-Working, and Mentoring – These support services were offered to business owners pre-COVID and since, to include those impacted by the changing economy during the pandemic. In addition, Mercy Connection staff provided advising, technical assistance, and facilitation at virtual business community gatherings around business strategy, planning, and diversity. More than 200 people were served through these services.

Online Business Community – In Fall 2020 Mercy Connections piloted its new online business community to the Start Up cohort, using the Mighty Networks platform. This enables us to deliver course material, resources, workshops, coaching, and more to enrolled students and the greater WSBP community.

Financial Empowerment for Entrepreneurs – This three-week course is scheduled kicked off in March 2021 and is offered 2-4 times per year. Outcomes to be reported upon program completion.

Note: The overall cost for the programs highlighted in this report was \$199,055, 10% of which was met by the BTV Ignite Grant.

“The STEM & Technical Skill Grant helped to support an expansion and renewed framework for the Women's Small Business Program (WSBP) during an uncertain period when our participants were facing new realities about business ownership. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we completely

transitioned our education and services to an online platform, allowing us to provide additional services and assist people who we would otherwise have been unable to. Without these funds, it would have been even more challenging to expand our programming and provide the level of access to entrepreneurs that we were able to.”

- Lisa Wood, Director, Women’s Small Business Program

##