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October 4, 2024

Brian Story, Town Manager  
Town of Thetford  
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## **Request for Town of Thetford Budget Allocation for Fiscal Year 2025**

Thank you for your long-standing partnership with the Public Health Council of the Upper Valley (PHC). Together, we are improving the health and well-being of the residents of Thetford. In addition to serving Thetford, PHC also supports 33 neighboring towns in New Hampshire and Vermont.

### **2025 Funding Request**

We are requesting \$1,388 to continue our support for the residents of Thetford in the coming year. This investment amounts to less than \$1 per resident. These funds will benefit the Thetford community and enhance the health of Upper Valley residents through shared, proactive public health initiatives and services. This year, we expect to serve 95,000 people across the region.

### **The Public Health Council's Impact**

PHC is the region's trusted leader in public health, supporting people, professionals, and organizations to make our communities healthier places to live, work, and play. Our mission is to improve the health of all Upper Valley residents through four key approaches:

1. **Collaborative Action:** We work with municipalities, health and human services organizations, businesses, and policymakers to develop and implement actionable plans and best practices to address community priorities and ensure access to essential public health services.
2. **Idea and Information Sharing:** We gather and disseminate important public health information across the region and create opportunities for people to come together and share their experiences and expertise.
3. **Support for Underserved People:** We advocate for health equity, sponsor promising programs, and provide additional technical assistance to municipal and organizational leaders to help vulnerable community members.
4. **Unified Priorities:** We align the public health priorities of the region to promote collaboration and progress toward shared goals.

PHC is recognized by the State of New Hampshire as one of its regional public health networks and works closely with White River Junction District Office of the Vermont Department of Health.

## 2025 Regional Health Priorities

Every three to four years, PHC generates a Community Health Improvement Plan reflecting pressing health challenges identified through regional assessments. This year, we are focusing on:

- Access to Mental Health Services
- Cost of Health Care Services, Health Insurance, and Dental Care
- Access to Healthy and Affordable Food
- Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery
- Child Wellbeing
- Socio-Economic Conditions: Housing and Others Concerns
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness

## 2025 Coalition Activities and Programs

Examples of PHC's 2025 plans are below. For more information about our upcoming services, we encourage you to visit our website and sign up for our monthly e-newsletter. The enclosed Annual Report highlights recent initiatives.

### *Collaborative Action Ahead*

- **Community-Wide Learning Sessions:** We will host eight learning sessions that bring people and organizations together across state lines to address the region's health priorities. Recent topics include Upper Valley Climate Resilience and Addressing Social Isolation in the Upper Valley.
- **Professional Collaboration:** Four opportunities will be provided for public health professionals and representatives of regional planning commissions to explore projects that benefit from shared expertise, community relationships, and resources.
- **Health Equity Initiatives:** The Upper Valley Equity and Anti-Racism Team will address health disparities through community building and advocacy, representing traditionally marginalized communities.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Regional leaders will continue coordinating resources to prepare for and manage emergencies such as flooding and COVID-19. PHC will be actively involved in developing solutions to these ongoing and emerging threats.

### *Community and Workforce Services and Education Ahead*

- **Free Flu Vaccines:** This fall, flu vaccines will be available at six different Upper Valley sites. These clinics are free for everyone! Please help us spread the word about this life-saving protection.
- **Local Community Projects:** PHC will support projects promoting childhood lead screening, cross-class collaboration on poverty, and recovery housing needs, among other improvements in our community health systems.
- **Information Distribution:** Critical public health information, including regional news and events, will be distributed to our network of 34 municipalities, over 50 social services organizations, and various state and local public health officials.

**We're Here to Help!**  
We want to be a resource for you! Whether it's connecting you to regional resources, training your leaders, attending community events, conducting a public health needs assessment, applying for grants, or offering educational and technical assistance, we're here to support your community's priorities.

- **Public Health Representation:** PHC staff will provide public health information to regional advisory councils and boards, such as the UV Medical Reserve Corps Advisory Board, Lebanon Housing First Working Group, and various school district wellness committees.

### **Advocacy Initiatives Ahead**

- **Bi-State Legislative Breakfast:** Our November 2024 event will gather NH and VT legislators to discuss public policy and ways to improve access to services and supports for vulnerable residents, such as people in mental health crisis or on probation and parole.
- **Public Health Incubator:** This program provides assistance to help start-up initiatives test and build their activities. Recent participants include the Greater Upper Valley Integrated Services Team, the Windsor Community Nursing Program, and Families Flourish Northeast.
- **Advocacy Training:** We offer training to increase the advocacy skills of community members who want to promote public health policies at the state and national levels.

**Program Development & Support**  
 We provide technical assistance for needs assessment, planning, program development, collaboration building, and evaluation. This includes general support for implementing Community Health Improvement strategies within our partner network, targeted projects conducted with and for our partners, and consultations on best practices for program development and sustainability, particularly in public health capacity.

### **Your Support Makes a Difference**

About 25 percent of PHC's funding comes from town appropriations, including investments from Upper Valley communities in NH and VT who want to maximize local resources for local impact. We hope the Town of Theford will join us this year. We appreciate your consideration of our \$1,388 request to help us strengthen our impact in the coming year.

Thank you for your continued leadership to promote and protect the health and well-being of everyone in Theford. We are eager to discuss your community's challenges and aspirations, and to work together to find solutions. Please reach out with any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Alice R. Ely, MPH  
 Executive Director

CC: Marian Whitcomb