



front porch forum®

HELPING NEIGHBORS CONNECT

# 2025 ANNUAL BENEFIT CORPORATION REPORT



“Front Porch Forum acted in accordance with its benefit purpose and demonstrated the Benefit Corporation standards during fiscal year 2025. I am pleased with FPF’s **continued commitment and progress**, and I look forward to additional improvements going forward.”

*Susan A. Comerford, Ph.D. FPF Benefit Director*

“The staff at Front Porch Forum continued to deliver on our mission in 2025, **helping neighbors connect and increase community resilience** across all of Vermont, and some towns in adjoining states. This report highlights our goals and accomplishments for 2025, and points toward our future goals.”

*Michael Wood-Lewis, FPF Co-Founder and CEO*

## Appreciation!

FPF would not be possible without a cast of thousands! Among Vermont’s 270,000 existing households, we are especially grateful for our:

- **250,000** active members
- **18,000** small business and nonprofit members
- **2,600** local government and public official members
- **Many thousands** of small donors
- **1,700** members who sent us heartfelt thank-you notes detailing FPF’s community value
- **Many hundreds** of satisfied local advertisers
- **Dozens** of Vermont vendors from whom FPF buys services and products
- **31** FPF staff members scattered across our state

“I have experienced FPF as a mechanism for doing good and feeling good by doing. **In these turbulent times, reading the daily posts is a reminder of our interconnectedness and interdependence**, and highlights trust and courage in asking, and compassion and generosity in giving.”

*Lauren, Burke Forum*

## MISSION

Front Porch Forum's mission is to help neighbors connect and build community, thereby increasing local resilience. We do this by hosting a network of local online forums serving every town and neighborhood in Vermont, where neighbors share and engage about a wide variety of topics in a thoughtfully moderated environment that emphasizes civility and supports vulnerability. As such, FPF is often a starting point and catalyst for real-world interactions among neighbors that, in aggregate, tend to increase social capital and community cohesion. Essential to our ability to carry out our mission is FPF's small scale, independent ownership, and rootedness in the communities we serve.

## VISION

FPF's vision for Vermont is a state full of thriving and resilient communities. These towns and neighborhoods are filled with informed residents who know, support and trust their neighbors, organize with them to pull together on community projects, participate in local democratic processes, value local journalism, engage with area nonprofits, and support vibrant local economies. We envision FPF itself as critical civic infrastructure for every community in our coverage area, with an ownership, governance and financial model that supports this work for many generations to come.

# Fulfilling our public benefit in 2025

Front Porch Forum (FPF) hosts a network of local online forums serving every town and neighborhood in Vermont. Here are a few highlights:

FPF has **250,000 active members**, among Vermont's 270,000 existing households

According to a 2023 independent survey of more than 13,000 FPF members:

- **97% find FPF valuable** for their community
- **89% take action multiple times** per year in response to postings
- **85% frequently turn to their Forums for local news** (vs 61% for radio and newspapers, 51% for TV, 37% for Facebook)

**Every Vermont town has its own FPF Forum**, [Business Directory](#), [Community Calendar](#) and [Search](#) and these are all **networked together** statewide

FPF's core service is **free of charge**, welcoming Vermonters to participate on any Forum where they live or work

In addition to neighbors, FPF serves **small businesses, nonprofits, local government, elected officials, and candidates for office**

FPF staff of professional moderators **review every member posting** before publication, guided by our nonpartisan [Terms of Use](#)

FPF receives **no government funding**, relying on paid local advertising for the bulk of its revenue

Unlike Big Tech, **ads on FPF are not surveillance-based** and respect [member privacy](#)

FPF is a **mission-driven, family-owned small business** and a Vermont public benefit corporation

FPF's mission is focused on **fostering town and neighborhood resilience** across Vermont, and this includes helping neighbors connect, as well as strengthening local democracy, economies, and social safety nets

FPF was **launched in 2006** and **employs 31 Vermonters**

## FPF is increasingly recognized for its positive social impact.

In 2025, legendary TV news anchor Judy Woodruff came to our small state to learn how Vermonters build community using FPF. [Her piece on PBS News Hour](#) drew national attention to our work.



# Strong progress on FPF's 2025 goals

In addition to maintaining all core functions, these 2025 growth goals were laid out in the FPF 2024 Annual Benefit Corporation Report.

**GOAL:** Build more ways for Vermonters to connect in real life

- ✓ Featured many excellent examples of “in real life” connection via “Best of FPF” feature
- ✓ Hosted Lunch & Learn webinar on “Using FPF for Community Event Planning”
- ✓ Tabled at a dozen events across Vermont, connecting with hundreds of FPF members

**GOAL:** Raise awareness of FPF's utility for both town AND regional uses

- ✓ Launched our Local News pilot to give community newspapers greater access to FPF
- ✓ Hosted Lunch & Learn webinar on “Outreach for Religious Organizations”
- ✓ Addressed many Vermont events, including two Osher Lifelong Learning Institute groups, UVM Rise Summit, New Haven VCRD Community Visit, UVM's Local Resilience in Turbulent Times gathering, VCRD Vermont Community Leadership Summit, and Senator Welch Luncheon at BiztoBiz Expo

“Because of FPF I have... eaten delicious Arabic food (last night's pop-up!); found an excellent handyman, a fabulous house cleaner, and a reliable property manager; learned about lots of cool events and joined a local group; and lots more!!!  
**Thank you FPF for being an essential part of my community.”**

*Gina, Middlebury Forum*

**GOAL:** Better serve Vermont elections and public officials

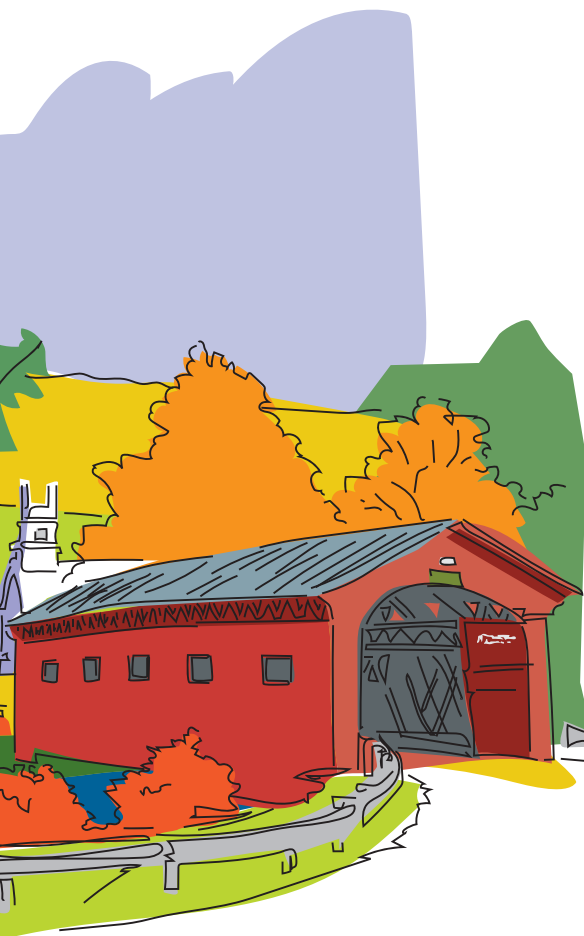
- ✓ Improved Candidate Campaign Access to increase FPF's value for candidates for public office
- ✓ Hosted Lunch & Learn webinar on “Using FPF for Disaster Preparedness and Response”
- ✓ Created an “Urgent” posting category, specifically for local officials

**GOAL:** Significantly increase member traction and engagement

- ✓ Developed guest access to allow members and others to view selected FPF content without logging in
- ✓ Launched our online “FPF Store” selling FPF-branded merchandise
- ✓ Added images to more posting categories
- ✓ Added “In Memoriam” posting category

**GOAL:** Make it easier and more compelling for members to share FPF content with other Vermonters

- ✓ Developed a privacy-respecting member-to-member messaging feature to enhance member safety
- ✓ Created a “semi-anonymized” format for member content that allows it to be shared with non-members in a privacy-respecting way



**GOAL:** Create more value through FPF for small businesses and nonprofits

- ✓ Hosted Lunch & Learn webinar on “FPF Marketing for Vermont Businesses”
- ✓ Significantly expanded and promoted posting access for nonprofit profiles

**GOAL:** Significantly enhance the FPF mobile app and raise awareness of its value

- ✓ Converted mobile app Forum to webview and made other app improvements

**GOAL:** Improve FPF’s advertising products

- ✓ Built advertiser-submitted ad copy feature
- ✓ Restructured pricing and other elements of Featured Ads

**GOAL:** Increase leadership team capacity

- ✓ Created Senior Product Lead position to improve product strategy and development
- ✓ Distributed leadership responsibilities among existing staff

**GOAL:** Invest in staff wellness and job satisfaction

- ✓ Maintained stable staffing, and made one new hire
- ✓ Improved hiring process
- ✓ Invested in professional development for various staff
- ✓ Cross-trained multiple staff to perform backup roles
- ✓ Moved planning process for all teams into new planning tool
- ✓ Increased compensation across all staff teams

**GOAL:** Explore moving to an employee ownership model

- ✓ Further researched employee ownership options
- ✓ Built relationships with a network of organizations to assist with transition

**GOAL:** Assess and prepare for emerging threats

- ✓ Further developed FPF emergency response mode and used it during crises
- ✓ Invested in protection of member privacy
- ✓ Improved FPF data protection

“I’m new to the area, but FPF has already helped me connect with neighbors and local service providers. **There’s hardly a better example of a platform that truly strengthens community ties.** Unlike big corporate media, FPF keeps our local conversations genuine and neighborly.”

*Vijay, Hyde Park Forum*



# How do Vermonters build connection?

## Check out “Best of FPF”

Best of  
FPF

Each week in 2025, we selected one recent posting from an FPF member to their neighbors that showed off the best of what FPF can offer to each Vermont town and neighborhood. Here are a few examples from our 2025 “Best of FPF” series:

### Heartstrings

Margie shared the following appreciation in the Castleton Forum. We thought it was well worth a share:

*“On Labor Day evening a pickup truck parked on Route 30 alongside Beebe Pond and the driver proceeded to play a cello from the pickup bed. I happened to be fishing at the time, and the acoustics of the cello across the lake were amazing. ‘Nights in White Satin,’ ‘Stairway to Heaven,’ ‘Close to You,’ and many other songs filled that air! What a wonderful way to spend the night.*

***“I just want the mysterious cello player to know how wonderful and peaceful it was. A joy that could only be found in Vermont!”***

### Planted!

Mark reached out to the Barre Forum with visions of this summer’s bumper crop. We thought his idea was well worth a share:

*“I just planted spinach, lettuce, and carrots in my tiny backyard garden. Even though it is small, I anticipate having more than my partner and I can eat. **I was wondering if there was any interest in having a community garden swap a couple Saturdays a month starting in June? Folks could bring excess veggies down to Currier Park say the first and third Saturdays of the month between 9 and 11 and trade? If you don’t have any veggies but bake bread or whatever, you’d be welcome to bring that as well. This would be 100 percent barter, no money exchanged.**”*

Mark reported **an immediate response to this proposal** and the Barre Vegetable Exchange Group — including veggies, breads, and flowers — is now a reality!

### Acts of Kindness

Elizabeth posted this challenge on the Stowe Forum and it got a huge response. We thought it was well worth a share:

*“It seems that no matter how hard I try to avoid it, I am turning 60 this coming Tuesday. I am once again (I did this for my 50th) asking everyone to celebrate my special day in a very special way. **I want 60 people to perform one or two Acts of Kindness on my birthday and post your efforts that day here on FPF.** To clarify, I’m gunning for a total of 60 acts, everyone can do one or two and it will add up to 60 or hopefully more. For the more ambitious, the over-achievers in the crowd, those who feel a challenge isn’t real unless it’s a mega-challenge, feel free to do 60 yourself in one day.*

*“I am giving you plenty of time to plan. Nothing is too big or too small, just go out there and give to someone else in a kind way. Buy a stranger a coffee, donate blood, give compliments all day long, volunteer, donate money, hold the door open all day, make a meal for a shelter, CALL YOUR MOTHER!, easy stuff like that. I can’t wait to see what you all come up with and thank you for thinking of me by celebrating with love.”*



# Vermont art, new merch

In 2025, Front Porch Forum commissioned Vermont artist Christine Tyler Hill to create an original piece of art to celebrate 25 years since the launch of our first neighborhood newsletter. Inspired by actual FPF postings, Christine’s art captures the thousands of community connections that are sparked by FPF every week across Vermont. Elements of this piece can be found on items in [the FPF Store!](#)



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## New in 2025: FPF’s Online Merch Store!

FPF launched its first online store in 2025, selling branded merchandise, including tote bags, mugs and glasses, sweatshirts and t-shirts, and more. FPF’s logo and community-building message are showing up across Vermont and beyond in a growing number of ways. [Check it out!](#)



(Bestseller!) Large organic tote bag  
\$24.00 USD



Unisex Long Sleeve Tee  
\$29.00 USD



FPF mug  
\$14.00 USD



Baby Onesie  
\$18.00 USD



Shaker pint glass  
\$15.00 USD



Trucker Cap  
\$25.00 USD



"local matters" Unisex garment-dyed  
heavyweight t-shirt  
\$30.00 USD



FPF Cuffed Beanie  
\$18.00 USD

“The day I saw the announcement about the new FPF merch shop, I got an invite to a baby shower with instructions to bring a onesie to hang on a clothesline as part of the decorations. **Boom! Done! Great idea, FPF** – I know so many folks throughout VT who rely on this great network!”

*Natalie, Richmond Forum*

# Economic impact: FPF helps Vermonters make ends meet

When budgets are tight, Front Porch Forum helps people find a way. Every day, neighbors are lending items, buying used gear, offering jobs, and sharing advice about local services. This fosters stronger local economies and more resilient towns and neighborhoods across Vermont. Here's how:

## BORROW THINGS

People use FPF to borrow items from neighbors for a one-time need — like a post-hole digger, cat carrier, or folding chairs for a special event — instead of buying new. In fact, Vermonters turned to FPF more than **3,500 times** in 2025 to borrow items.

“I’m in search of a **chainsaw-type limb trimmer** to borrow. I have a few limbs that are beyond the use of a pole saw. Thank you.”

*Steven, Colchester Forum*

“Thanks to all the folks who reached out with **offers to lend pack-and-plays**. It turns out Craftsbury is a pack-and-play-rich town full of generous people. I am all set for the weekend and appreciate the many responses.”

*Louise, Craftsbury Forum*

## GET FREE STUFF

FPF members gave away free items to neighbors a remarkable **28,000 times** last year.

“Thanks to everyone who has **donated three-ring binders and coloring books** for our kids in the afterschool program. It really does take a village, and Front Porch Forum.”

*Llalla, Randolph Forum*

“**The egg cartons have been picked up.** And a big ‘Thank You!’ to the person who took them and then was so kind to later drop me off some free eggs! I really appreciated it!”

*Liz, Monkton Forum*

## SCORE GREAT DEALS

In 2025, Vermonters posted **40,000 “For Sale” notices** on their local Forums, and neighbors shared **19,000 times** that they were looking for items.

“Our beloved **push mower** just pattered for the last time. Looking for an affordable replacement and would rather find something used than new.”

*Colin, Waterbury Forum*

“Purchased a **Glory Gold starter saxophone** for my middle-schooler this fall but they opted to switch instruments. Tired of renting? This is a more affordable means to access an essentially brand-new instrument. It is in perfect condition.”

*Meaghan, Charlotte Forum*

“Looking for a **comfortable and affordable mattress?** This single futon is in excellent condition and perfect for small spaces. It’s ideal for guest rooms, dorm rooms, or anyone who needs a budget-friendly sleeping solution.”

*Alexandra, Waterville Forum*



## FIND A HOME

People posted about housing **6,000 times** in 2025 on FPF across the state, and real estate agencies and landlords are some of the most popular listings in local FPF Business Directories.

“We have **one room opening up**. Basically it is a slice of paradise AND is affordable. We occasionally host collaborative gatherings such as karaoke parties, yule celebrations and potlucks.”

*Sarah, a Burlington Neighborhood Forum*

## FIND WORK

Vermonters posted about job openings **5,000 times** in 2025, and small businesses reached out to their neighbors **18,000 times** by posting on their Forums.

“Retired? Interested in working a few hours seasonally? The Shadow Lake **Boat Wash Greeters Team** is seeking a few folks to work 6-hour shifts to greet boaters, inspect boats for invasive aquatic species, wash boats with a hot water pressure wash, & educate boaters.”

*Corinne, Barton Forum*

“When I first started out, I was a guy with a pickup truck who would haul unwanted junk to the dump. Grateful FPF members like yourselves would post on here and spread the word about their positive experience. I had enough business at that point to realize I **had stumbled upon something special**. Markoski’s Move and Haul was born.”

*Rick, Williston Forum*

## RECOMMEND AFFORDABLE SERVICES

More than **8,000 FPF postings** across Vermont in 2025 dealt with recommendations for contractors, healthcare providers, financial services and other local businesses.

“I am giving a shout out for the **Pratt Pearson Road Orchard**, which has outstanding apples, pumpkins, squash and pears for very reasonable prices.”

*Betsy, New Haven Forum*

“I want to let our community know of the kindness, compassion, and generosity I witnessed from the folks at **Longtrail Veterinary Center** here in our town center. I was assisting a friend with getting care for his beautiful cat. The vet suspected the cat was in dire health but also recognized my friend’s inability to afford the costs of even routine exams. Despite this, extensive assessment, diagnostic labs and x-rays were performed for free.”

*Joseph, Williston Forum*

“FPF is an amazing resource that’s easy to take for granted. Since moving to Vermont 18 months ago, we’ve used FPF to launch a micro bakery, give things away that would have wound up in the landfill, find an electrician, get help with house cleaning, borrow a tiller, and so much more. **FPF has become our go-to for so many things.**”

*Susan, Shoreham Forum*



# Recognition and community connections

## Media attention

Media continued to report on FPF's work this year, including:

- [Better News](#), January 2025
- [New\\_ Public](#), February 2025
- [Le Monde](#), February 2025
- [WCAX](#), April 2025
- [PBS News Hour](#), May 2025
- [The Main Street Journal](#), August 2025
- [The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#), August 2025

## National conferences

Interest in FPF's model prompted invitations to national conversations, including:

- Pluralism in Action conference in Atlanta, GA
- The Aspen Institute's Trust in Practice Summit in Chicago, IL
- Local Democracy Practitioners Convening at the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in Cambridge, MA
- Flourishing Neighborhoods at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in Manhattan

## Speaking to Vermonters

FPF leaders addressed audiences at Vermont events, including:

- Local Resilience in Turbulent Times, UVM College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- UVM RISE Summit, Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships
- Vermont Community Leadership Summit, VCRD
- All Things In Moderation Conference
- St. Albans Osher Lifelong Learning lecture
- U.S. Senator Peter Welch Luncheon at the BiztoBiz Expo, VT Business Magazine
- Using Digital Spaces to Strengthen Social Connections, Healthy Places by Design
- St. Johnsbury Osher Lifelong Learning lecture

“Unfortunately, I’ve never lived in Europe during the Middle Ages where communities relied on the Town Crier to share the local news & happenings, but I’ve always loved the idea! Every night when I gather the family and read the daily postings from FPF, I envision myself dressed in clothing from the Middle Ages ringing a bell and shouting the news.

**I hope FPF can remain the fun loving, respectable, and local modern Town Crier for many years to come.”**

*Josh, Bristol Forum*



## Community events

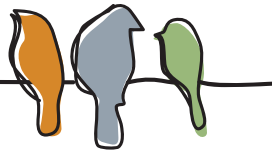
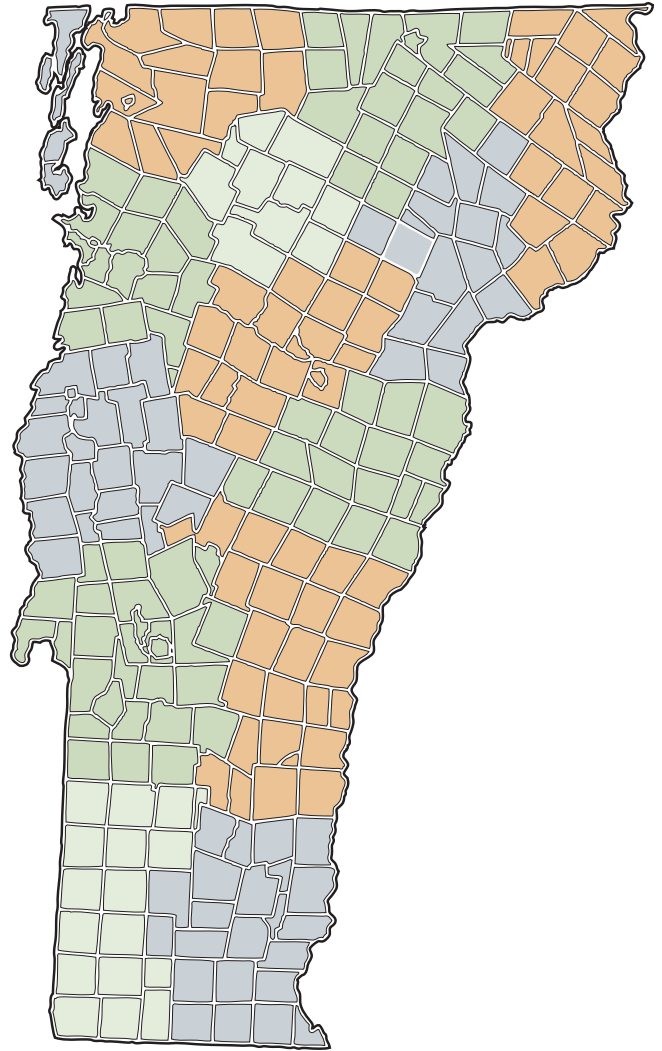
Our staff and summer interns engaged with Vermonters at many in-person events this year, fielding questions and feedback, distributing free FPF tote bags, and playing some fun games:

- VT Green Football Club matches
- Barre Farmers Market
- Sam Mazza Strawberry Festival
- Milton Farmers Market
- SB Nite Out, South Burlington
- Do Good Fest at National Life, Montpelier
- St. Albans Farmers Market
- Stowe Farmers Market
- VT BiztoBiz Expo
- Vermont Solutions Summit: Turning Strategy Into Action
- Vermont Public Curious Kids Day

# 2026 plans

In addition to successfully maintaining all core functions in 2026, FPF will focus on the following growth initiatives. This work is intended to further our public benefit, ensure our financial stability, and invest in our team.

- Use peer-to-peer content sharing to draw in new members
- Increase FPF's impact via collaborative ventures
- Enhance the value of non-Forum features
- Encourage and support a daily FPF habit
- Increase quality and quantity of postings
- Increase FPF's utility during crises
- Inspire and support in-real-life groups
- Build a more flexible ad system
- Create a self-pay option for small advertisers
- Increase revenue
- Develop workforce strategy
- Build foundations for employee ownership



“I am overwhelmed by the response to my post today about last-minute care for my pup. I started receiving emails before I even knew that FPF had come out. I have gotten over a dozen emails now, offering care or names of others who might be able to help. With so much divisiveness in our country, **no one asked about my politics, just how they could help.** Thank you. I am so excited to see my grandchildren.”

*Maddy, Shelburne Forum*

## FPF board of directors

**Michael Wood-Lewis**

Board Chair, Co-Founder & CEO

**Valerie Wood-Lewis**

Board Member & Co-Founder

**Susan A. Comerford, PhD**

Benefit Director

**Front Porch Forum**

PO Box 64781

Burlington, VT 05406-4781