REGIONAL PRIORITY PROJECT PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED FOR ANY RESPONSE OR YOU WANT TO SUBMIT ADDITION DOCUMENTS , CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE DOCUMENTS WITH THE PROJECT NAME AND EMAIL THEM TO FKENNEY@ADDISONCOUNTYEDC.ORG.

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PROJECT NAME:

Community Child Care Expansion Project 2022

TYPE OF PROJECT:

- [x] Infrastructure:
  - [ ] Water
  - [ ] Wastewater
  - [ ] Broadband
  - [ ] Transportation
  - [x] Public Facility
  - [ ] Other
- [ ] General Development:
  - [ ] Industrial
  - [ ] Commercial
  - [ ] Residential
  - [ ] Mixed
- [ ] Site/Facility Development for Specific Business
- [x] Workforce Development
- [ ] Business Development
- [x] Other: Child care expansion

PROJECT SPONSOR:

Organization Name	Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.
Organization Mailing Address	150 Weybridge Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
Organization Email	office@ottercreekcc.org
Organization Phone	(802) 388-9688

Contact info for the person submitting project information:

Name	Linda January
Title	Executive Director
Mailing Address	150 Weybridge Street, Middlebury, VT 05753
Email	linda@ottercreekcc.org
Phone	(802) 388-9688

PROJECT PRINCIPAL(S) (if different than above):

Person 1:

Name	David Provost
Title	Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
Organization	Middlebury College
Mailing Address	Middlebury College, Old Chapel 102, Middlebury, V 05753
Email	dprovost@middlebury.edu
Phone	(802) 443-5699

Person 2:

Name	see attached list
Title	
Organization	
Mailing Address	
Email	
Phone	

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (5000 Characters):

The Community Child Care Expansion Project is a cooperative effort of families, Otter Creek Child Center, College Street Children's Center, Middlebury College, the Early Care and Learning Partnership, Champlain Valley Early Head Start, Let's Grow Kids, Building Bright Futures, area employers, educational institutions, and towns. It is a response to a decade-long concern by families and employers about the lack of high-quality affordable care. This project addresses an urgent need for infant and preschool-age childcare in our community and will provide an important boost to the local economy.

This project will also create a replicable model for public-private partnership to address a chronic issue that is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of Vermont families, and crucial to economic growth and development in predominantly rural areas. Our goal is to demonstrate to other counties in Vermont that it is possible to engage large employers, land owners, NGOs, town governments, and others in efforts to create thriving childcare environments that will provide a positive return on their financial support and investment of relevant expertise. Such an effort is not as simple as starting a business or building a facility – it is about designing a holistic programmatic response at a community scale for an issue that impacts the entire state.The project includes:

A state-of-the art, 12,000+ square foot building (part renovation, part new construction);
*ADA compliant;
*serving 140 children ages six weeks to five years;
*within a one-mile radius of the two largest employers in Addison County;
*serving a cross section of families of all income levels, cultures, and backgrounds;
*creating 28 new jobs;
*serving as a workforce development hub for the early care and learning industry; and
*a learning lab for high school and college students.

Many years in the planning, the project now has a physical location in the historic downtown district of Middlebury, site plans completed by Otter Creek Engineering, and conceptual drawings developed by D.W. Arthur Associates Architecture, Waltham, MA. We anticipate seeking permit approval in 2022. That said, we have been in communication with the Town of Middlebury and they are in support of the chosen site. The project has a strong and diverse leadership team, a committed group of parents, and the enthusiastic support of community members.

The project is a renovation of the current Otter Creek facility with a substantial, attached, ADA compliant addition which will be constructed in the location of the existing barn (the barn would be removed). We plan to use the topography of the site to allow for two stories with ingress and egress on both floors. The new driveway and parking area adjacent to the Otter Creek facility will move traffic off the main road to provide greater safety for children and greater convenience for families. Expansion of the available play areas will provide dedicated areas for infants and toddlers and expanded nature-based education opportunities. The site slopes down to the Otter Creek and the footpath maintained by the community. The building is designed to conserve energy, provide a variety of state-of-the-art classrooms for different ages of children and many shared spaces (family greeting areas, kitchen and dining areas, a large motor space and an atelier).

Staff rooms, a community early care and learning library, a multi-purpose room/gross motor play space, and large and small conference rooms will enhance the use of the facility as a workforce development center for the community. Students from Hannaford Career Center, Community College of Vermont, Castleton University, and Middlebury College will have the opportunity for hands on-learning of both child development and non-profit management.

The project timeline is designed to avoid disrupting services during construction. Once the new addition is completed, children and teachers will move into that space while the old building is renovated, and then a full complement of children will be enrolled.
This creative infill development project would increase the capacity of two existing childcare programs while remaining in the Town of Middlebury core where this use contributes to the vitality of our state-designated downtown. The project also meets the intent of our Town Plan and 2020 Down Master Plan and has been well coordinated with Town staff.

PROJECT LOCATION (3000 characters):

Provide the physical location of the project and/or the area to be served by the project

The project is located at 150 Weybridge Street in Middlebury, Vermont. Two lots have been combined (one previously owned by Middlebury College) in order to provide for safe, off street drop off and parking.

The project will serve all of Addison County with an emphasis on families working in or near the town of Middlebury. The infants and toddlers at the College Street Children's Center will be moved to the newly renovated Otter Creek Child Center once the project is completed.

PROJECT PURPOSE AND BENEFITS (3000 Characters):

Describe the purpose and benefits to the region of the project. Describe if/how the project builds capacity within the region for improved regional development/economic development/ community development, including: advancing workforce development; expanding entrepreneurship efforts; supporting or enhancing existing business clusters, or other economic impacts within the region.

The work of the economic task forces created in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic have also identified childcare as one of the most critical elements for economic recovery in the area. Lack of high quality, affordable care has severely hindered the ability of local and regional employers to recruit and retain a qualified workforce. Stress levels for families who can't find the care they need have risen during the pandemic, contributing to greater pressures on the mental health system. Highly stressed families are less able to give their young children the nurturing care they need to succeed in school and in life. Studies of the long term effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences point to a very strong correlation with later health, mental health, and social adjustment problems. Expanding options for care that supports children, families, and employers is both the right thing to do and the right economic investment in our communities.

A survey conducted locally by students working with the Early Care and Learning Partnership identified the critical need for care in this community. When families were asked what they would do if they couldn't find the care they needed, the two dominant answers were: cut my hours and leave the workforce. Investments in child care are both an investment in our current economy (by allowing parents to work) and in the future workforce for our state (getting children off to a positive start in life).

The function of the new facility as a Workforce Development Hub has several aspects, including a living laboratory for training the future childcare workforce:

High school students from the Hannaford Career Center will have opportunities for hands-on learning as they work to attain their CDA (Child Development Associate). This certification will make them desirable candidates for assistant teacher positions at other facilities and will give them some of the skills they need to establish their own registered child care home.

Students at CCV, many of whom will be working professionals, will have the opportunity to earn as they learn -- using their time at the new facility to demonstrate competency for attainment of their childcare apprenticeship certification and associates degrees.

Students from Middlebury College and Castleton University, who are working on their bachelor's degrees and teaching licenses, will have a state-of-the-art learning lab for child development and non-profit management.

Master's degree students from Castleton University and the University of Vermont will be able to focus on policy and research related to early care and learning.

Perhaps the most exciting part of this project for the existing child care community in the county will be the creation of beautiful, inspirational and relaxed spaces where children can learn together with their peers, creating a community of practice that will promote equity for all children and families.

PROJECT TIMELINE, MILESTONES, AND STATUS (3000 Characters):

Describe the project timeline, the current status of the project, and impediments to proceeding. Include factors such as site control, engineering and design, financing/funding identification and commitment, and permitting. Clearly identify where the project is in the timeline and what work remains.

The project has almost completed the Schematic Design phase, as basic organizational concepts are finalized to optimize the building and site configuration to support early childhood development best practices in a cost-effective manner. The design has also been refined to respect the historical integrity of the immediate neighborhood and other contextual factors. NEPA review is underway and some sections have been completed. We anticipate collaborating with the town's planner and other authorities to secure necessary permits. The civil engineers are developing technical designs to address storm-water management, tie-ins to utilities and any necessary provisions related to proximity to Otter Creek. We have met with the Middlebury Area land Trust about the possibility of them extending the trail by the river's edge.

The current design includes the retention of an existing farmhouse and rear connector and a new addition attached to the "rear" of the connector. To minimize disruption to existing programs, the project is anticipated to be implemented in a phased construction. Phase 1 includes new parking, access drive and the new building addition. Upon completion of Phase 1, the Otter Creek program will relocate into the new addition, freeing up the farmhouse for renovations. Phase 2 includes these renovations and related site work, playgrounds and the opening of the connection between the new and renovated structures.

The team anticipates development of drawings so that the project can be put out to bid as soon as we are given the go ahead by NBRC.. Construction for Phase 1 is anticipated to begin (contingent on approvals and funding) late spring of 2023, and be ready for occupancy in 2024. Phase 2 construction should begin in fall of 2024 and be completed in summer of 2025, at which time the entire facility will be occupied for the full program.

PROJECT PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE/PARTNERSHIPS (3000 Characters):

Describe project principal(s) experience, ability to complete the project, and describe any projects partnership(s) and how the partnership(s) will help ensure success.

Several years ago the Community Childcare Expansion Team was formed to oversee the design and construction of this new community-wide early childcare solution for Addison County. The team includes the following local childcare experts and others supporting the project:

*Cheryl Mitchell, PhD, Early Care and Learning Partnership, Inc. (ECLP), founder of Addison County Parent Child Center, and later of two other Addison County childcare programs, 10 years in the Vermont State Agency of Human Services, founder and president of the Early Care and Learning Partnership, Inc.
*Johana "Jody" Brakeley, M.D., Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician recently retired; ECLP board member.
*Linda January, Executive Director, Otter Creek Child Center;
*Lorie Mulcahy, Program Director, College Street Children's Center
*Doumina Noonan, Children's Integrated Services, Specialized Child Care Services Coordinator, Board Member of OCCC
*Holly Moriglioni, Champlain Valley Head Start
*David Provost, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, & Treasurer
*Sue Ritter, J.D., Special Assistant to the President, Associate Secretary of the Corporation, Director of Community Relations.
*Matthew Curran, Director of Business Services
*Trish Dougherty, Academic Coordinator, Educational Studies, Board Member of OCCC
*Early Care and Learning Partnership, Inc. Board Members, including Darla Senecal, Regional Director, Addison, Bennington and Rutland Counties, Building Bright Futures
*D.W. Arthur Associates, Architecture, an award-winning firm with significant expertise in the design of child care centers across the country

Otter Creek and College Street bring years of expertise in early childhood development. In addition, Middlebury College brings the financial resources and expertise in building design and construction of numerous College facilities. David Provost, Executive Vice President of Middlebury College, will oversee the project construction with his facilities team. With nearly 20 years of higher education administrative leadership overseeing operations of both Champlain College and Middlebury College, he was responsible for the physical expansion of Champlain's significant growth in the Burlington Hill District and oversaw the building of 10 new facilities. At Middlebury, Mr. Provost is leading the efforts to construct a new 80,000 square foot, 280 bed first year residential housing project, a new 150,000 square foot student center, and a new 40,000 square foot museum. He also has significant experience in the restoration and renovation of existing spaces both at Champlain and Middlebury.

Potential Funding Partners:
University of Vermont Porter Medical Center

PROJECT SUPPORT AND REGIONAL NEED (4000 Characters):

Describe how the project is consistent with identified local and regional goals, advances regional needs identified in plans, reports or public forums, and describe the community support and engagement. Include reference and link to the municipal and/or regional plan, report, or forum identified. Also describe how the project leverages regional human, social, financial, cultural, and/or physical capital, and supports, compliments, or enhances existing efforts.

The State of Vermont is struggling to fill the demand for high quality, full day, year-round early care and learning programs. In January 2022, Let's Grow Kids produced its latest biennial report on the state of childcare in Vermont, titled Stalled At The Start, Vermont's Child Care Challenge: An Analysis of the Supply of and Demand for Regulated Child Care for Children Birth through Five in Vermont. In the most general terms, the report concludes that "there have been statistically significant changes in the percent of infants and toddlers likely to need care who do not have access to regulated child care programs." Although precise estimates are challenging given the number of variables, in Addison County, it is estimated that 471 infants and 240 toddlers—711 total—are likely to need care. However, current capacity can only provide slots for 148 infants and 111 toddlers—259 total— leaving gaps of 323 and 129 for infants and toddlers, respectively. The report also shows an estimated need for 148 additional preschool spots to meet demand.

In a recent Building Bright Futures report titled How are Vermont's Young Children and Families?, it was reported that the number of Addison County children under the age of nine in DCF custody increased by 80% since 2014. This increase has made specialized child care slots even more coveted as the early childhood community tries to provide early care and learning to the county's most vulnerable citizens.

The Vermont Department of Children and Families Child Development Division published the Report on Regulated Child Care and Early Learning Program Closures, Capacity and Enrollment in December 2020. The report painted a somewhat bleak overall picture of state trends in capacity, including the stark reality that since 2013, the overall net gain or loss of licensed and registered programs is -479. Specifically for this proposal, between April 2012 and December 2020, the percentage change in licensed capacity of child care programs in the Agency of Human Services Middlebury district exceeded the statewide average in every age category:

Age	% Change Middlebury AHS District	% Change Statewide
Infant	-25%	-13%
Toddler	-34%	-21%
Preschool	-3%	-2%
School Age	-11%	-1%

It is important to note that the report highlighted that the capacity data assumes that "all spaces are equal and meet every family's needs." Yet the reality is that specificity of individual needs often further limits availability of service.

Anecdotally, over the last 15-17 years, we have lost nearly 50% of licensed child care programs in Addison County (including nine in the past two years alone). Looking forward in the short term, at the end of the 2020-21 school year, a private program closed and eliminated 30 slots, and two Addison County school-based pre-k programs closed – eliminating 10 pre-k slots. The overall stress on the existing programs makes staff retention an ongoing challenge and physical plants are typically small, awkward retrofits of former residences that are not candidates for meaningful expansion. To increase stability and predictability of service to families across the region, the time has come to build a new facility to better serve future generations of Addison County.

In terms of project support, please see the previous section. Increases in child care spaces are currently a priority of the Child Development Division of the Agency of Human Services.

PROJECT COST, IDENTIFIED AND COMMITED FUNDS/FINANCING, AND FUNDING GAP:

Provide the total project cost and complete the simple sources and uses chart.

Total Project Cost: $ 10,692,533

Sources:

Source	Amount
Middlebury College	$ 3,200,000
Otter Creek Child Center, Inc.	$ 300,000
Make Way for Kids Grant	$ 100,000
CDS (earmarked)	$ 3,000,000
Total Sources:	$ 6,600,000

Uses:

Use	Amount
Land Acquisition	$ 200,000
Soft Cost, Design, Permitting/Planning	$ 533,201
Construction/Renovation	$ 7,204,313
Site Work	$ 2,061,606
Equipment	$ 693,413
Total Uses:	$ 10,692,533

Funding Gap: **$ 4,092,533**

Note: Uses must exceed sources or there is no funding gap

Budget Narrative (3000 Characters):

Describe the amount of funds/financing that have been identified and include a clear status of the funds (Received, committed, applied for, identified, etc.) including the dates of receipt, commitment, application, expected distribution, etc. Clearly identify any funding gap.

As with any construction project, estimations of construction cost are refined continually as the design phase progresses. At this time, our total costs are based upon preliminary design work, consultation with our architect, and advice from facilities staff at Middlebury College who are highly experienced with projects at or beyond this scale.

Middlebury College's planned contribution will include $3,000,000 in cash and a donation of land valued at approximately $200,000. This contribution is contingent upon the approval of the Board of Trustees. Otter Creek Child Center also plans to contribute up to $300,000 towards the project. These contributions from the College and Otter Creek Child Center are also designed to leverage additional contributions and grants from other employers, stakeholders, and funders. Through Senator Leahy's Congressional Directed Spending, $3,000,000 has been earmarked for this project and is awaiting congressional approval. We have also received a Make Way for Kids grant through Let's Grow Kids of $100,000. It is estimated that the project will receive $1,000,000 from Private Employees and remaining funds will be a mixture of grants and private funders.

JOB CREATION (4000 Characters):

Provide the number of full-time jobs to be created and/or retained by the project, a description of the benefits package to be offered to the majority of the new/retained jobs, and the average wage of the jobs to be created/retained.

The center will bring at least 28 new jobs to Addison County. Given the quality of the physical plant and the educational philosophy, we anticipate attracting outstanding teachers in a competitive market.

	Otter Creek Current	College Street Current	New Program Projected
Full time Teachers	13	9	39
Part Time Teachers	3	0	13
Admin Staff	2.5	1	6
Cook	0	1	1.5
Other	.5	0	2

Currently the average wage for teachers is $17.55 an hour. The starting wage is $15.27 an hour for a teacher new to the field with no formal education or experience and has incremental increases based on both years of experience and education levels. A teacher new to the field with a B.A. and teaching license in Early Childhood Education would start at $18.27 an hour. We have a goal to have minimum compensation standards that would ensure all teachers earned wages and benefits on par with peers in other fields.

We currently offer the following benefits at both Otter Creek and College Street:

Paid Time Off
Paid Holidays (11-15 days per year)
Employee Assistance Plan
Dental Insurance
Vision Insurance
Telemedicine Services
Simple IRA
Disability Insurance
Group Life & AD & D Insurance
Dependent Care Accounts
Child Care Discount
Tuition Reimbursement
Paid Release Time for Professional Development
Professional Development Support
Paid Planning Time
Yearly Wage Increases

When the expansion is complete we have estimated a benefit packet that is equal to 25% of average salaries, that would include health insurance coverage.

CLEAR FORM PRINT FORM SUBMIT PROJECT