



26 March 2026

TO: Senator Brian Collamore + Members of Senate Government Operations Committee

FROM: Lauren-Glenn Davitian, Public Policy Director for CCTV Center for Media & Democracy, davitian@cctv.org on behalf of VAN + VT Community Radio Network

RE: Community Media FY27 Budget Request

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of community media in Vermont. Vermont Access Network (VAN) is joining with Vermont's nine nonprofit radio stations to request \$1.89 million in base funding as part of the Secretary of State's FY27 General Fund Budget.

Status of Budget Request: The Governor proposed \$1.35M (FY26 level funding) to be included for community media in the Secretary of State's Budget for FY27. This left a budget \$540K gap (\$450K for VAN operations + \$90K for Vermont Community Radio Network).

The House Government Operations + Military Affairs Committee recommended \$540K in its budget memo to the House Appropriations Committee and also included its recommendation in [H 935 - Emergency Services Omnibus Bill](#). House APPs chose to remove the request from that bill and included \$450K for VAN in the FY27 Budget and \$90K for radio as a one time FY27 budget item. As of this writing, House passage is pending.

The additional budget request of \$540,000 includes:

- \$90K to supplement the operational costs of 9 community radio stations.
- \$450K for Vermont's 24 community media centers to address the operations and capital costs affected by the steady decline in cable revenue which affects the delivery of local community communications services.

Informing + Connecting Vermonters: The Vermont Legislature recognizes the important role community media plays in informing, educating and connecting Vermonters. Members of the Legislature and the Secretary of State have encouraged us to build a working relationship to address shared challenges and opportunities to maintain local media access.

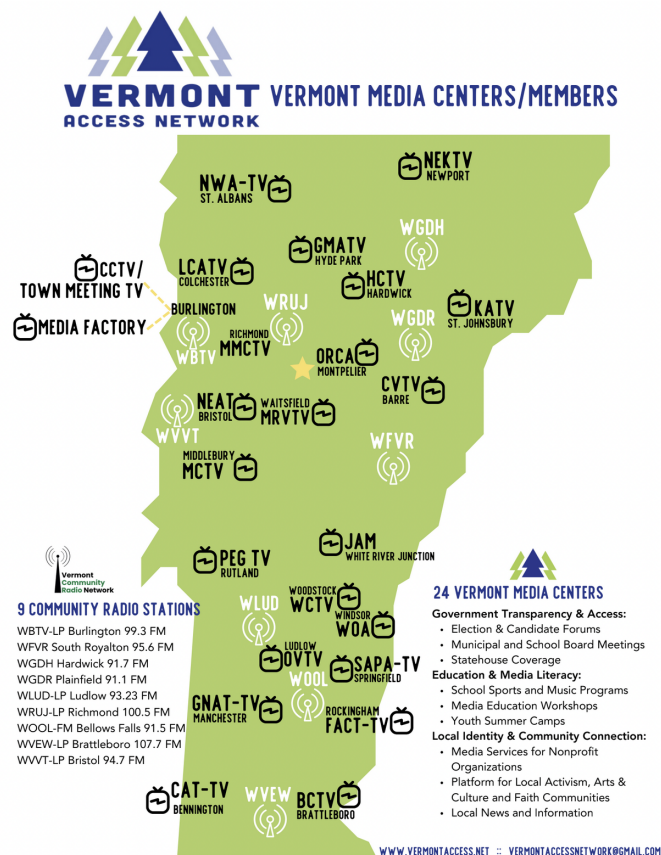
Community media is a general term that includes Vermont's public, educational and government (PEG) access management organizations (PEG AMOs) traditionally funded by cable TV subscribers plus community radio stations (non-profit FM) operated over the air, cable and online largely by volunteers (and in some cases operated by PEG organizations).

The staff and volunteers of Vermont's 24 community media centers and nine community radio stations provide direct access to local information and programming that Vermonters want and need.

Community-centered and locally focused content includes:

- Live hybrid meetings enable all Vermonters to be informed and participate in local decision making.
- Coverage of local news, weather and emergency response.
- Election forums and results programs help to keep voters involved and the wheels of democracy turning.
- Media education and hands-on skills for volunteers of all ages builds more critical thinking and job skills.
- Extensive preservation of local video/ radio archives preserves local culture and creates a legacy for future generations.

Covering all Corners of Vermont: Vermont community media covers 176 cities, towns and villages in the state and 13 counties—covering 94% of the state's population (according to 2020 Census Data). In 2025, we provided 35,000 hours of original, locally made programming. Hundreds of Vermonters are engaged as media producers of this



content, creating real time engagement with their municipalities and neighbors that is not possible in any other type of media.

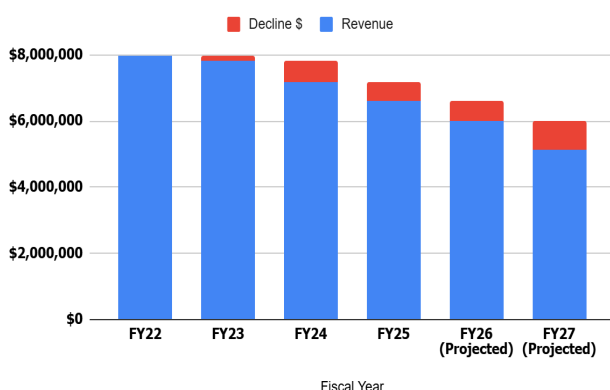
Some quick stats:

- 70% of Vermont municipalities have access to live public meetings.
- 24 PEG centers operate 80+ cable channels + dozens of online outlets + a statewide channel (Vermont Community Television) - up to 15,000 hours a year of local TV.
- Community radio volunteers produce 300 regular shows and vital emergency messaging each year-amounting to 20,000 hours of locally made programming.
- Vermont community media is available over the air, on cable and online.

94% VT Population Served

County	# Served	%
Addison	~33,500	~90%
Bennington	~35,000	~95%
Caledonia	~29,000	~95%
Chittenden	~165,000	~97%
Franklin	~44,000	~86%
Grand Isle	~7,300	~97%
Lamoille	~22,500	~88%
Orange	~26,500	~88%
Orleans	~25,500	~92%
Rutland	~54,000	~90%
Washington	~57,000	~95%
Windham	~42,500	~93%
Windsor	~48,000	~83%
TOTAL	≈ 605,000	

VAN Cable Revenue Decline



Challenges to Accessible Local

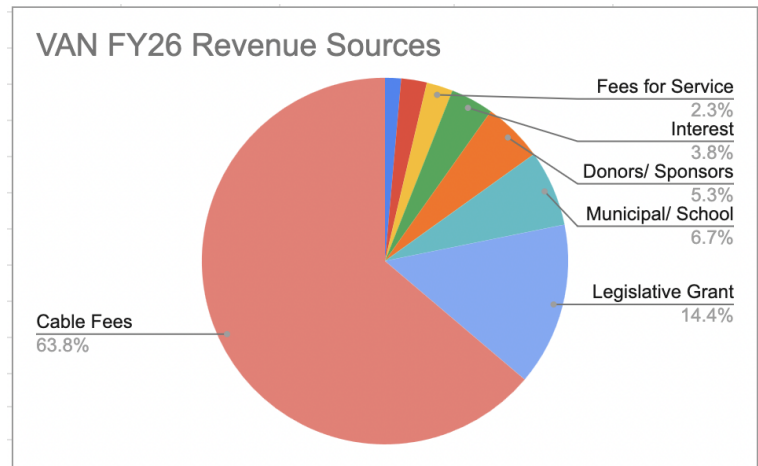
Media: The FY27 Budget request addresses, in part, the **decline in traditional revenue sources**. For VAN this represents the continued rapid **decline of legacy cable TV fees**. For community radio, revenue is challenged by increased competition for already scarce regional and state philanthropy sources **in the wake of the defunding for Corporation of Public Broadcasting** last year.

In 2025, Vermont Access Network's 24 AMOs saw an **8% loss in cable revenue** across the state. The revenue decline is accelerating. VAN is projecting a *conservative* 6% cable revenue loss in FY26 and FY27. This is expected to be higher.

VAN Cable Revenue Decline			
Fiscal Year	Revenue	Decline \$	Decline %
FY22	\$7,990,082		
FY23	\$7,805,722	\$184,360	2.31%
FY24	\$7,181,412	\$624,310	8.00%
FY25	\$6,598,073	\$583,339	8.12%
FY26 (Projected)	\$5,992,484	\$605,589	6.00%
FY27 (Projected)	\$5,128,135	\$864,349	6.00%

The FY27 budget request also accounts for **increased costs to operate** community media organizations – from **utilities rents, and licensing fees, equipment for public meeting and event coverage to staff costs** (e.g., competitive wages, health care). Like so many state and nonprofit partners, community media is not immune to the high cost of living and doing business in Vermont.

To address revenue challenges, Vermont's community media centers and radio stations rely on a **variety of income sources**, of which Legislative funding makes up a portion (10% in FY24). Community media organizations (TV *and* radio) also raise funds from memberships, grants, fees for service, underwriting, and donations to maintain continuity of services for Vermonters.



Case Studies show the numbers of people involved in media creation and the reach of viewers and listeners. For example, **Central Vermont Community Radio**, which includes WGDR/WGDH engaged 115 volunteers who helped to produce 135 programs each week, resulting in 8760 hours of live programming listened to by 12,000 broadcast listeners and 17,500 online listeners.

BCTV, based in Brattleboro, celebrating 50 years of community service, supported 44 community producers who, with the BCTV staff, produced 1295 programs, watched by 251K YouTube viewers.

CCTV in Chittenden County covered more than 500 municipal meetings, trained 65 interns and volunteers, and reached 536K online viewers + 500K views of its extensive community archive of 53,000 programs dating to 1984.

GNAT, serving part of Bennington county, produced 824 local programs and 110 news project segments, trained 140 community members, posted 957 events on their community calendar and had 311K online video views.

Northwest Access TV, serving Franklin county, produced 132 live streams (including municipal meetings and local sporting events) plus more than 1000 local programs, with online views of 162,264 and 10.5K social media followers.

Challenges Legislative Support Helps Vermonters to Overcome: Legislative funding helps to address economic and structural issues facing local media access in Vermont:

- Fewer local media options for Vermonters due to local newspapers closing and federal cuts in public media;
- Emergent times requiring us to get word quickly out to our communities on issues ranging from weather to government threats to our neighbors;
- Rapid decline of Cable TV revenue;
- Rising business expenses, including health care, labor and capital costs, and music licensing; and,
- The rise of AI/ Artificial Intelligence-generated news and information, making it harder to know what is true and reliable news and information.

In short: Vermont community media's FY 27 request for \$1.89M as part of the Secretary of State's budget:

- adds to local radio and TV's impact as providers of local meeting coverage, news, interviews - and real time, live response in emergencies,
- addresses the decline in legacy cable TV revenue,
- helps meet the increasing costs "to do business" in Vermont, and,
- ensures that community media can remain a free and accessible outlet for Vermonters to get their news and local community coverage.

At just \$3 per Vermonter reached by our services, this is an investment the state can be proud of.

Thank you for your consideration of VAN and Vermont Community Radio's \$1.89M FY27 Budget request.

Please see Exhibit A: Grant Report to Secretary of State detailing FY26 Funds, below.

Exhibit A: Grant Report to Secretary of State detailing FY26 Funds:

AMO	Communities Served	Contacts		Description of Expenses 6/30/25
<u>BCTV Brattleboro Community Television</u>	Brattleboro, Dummerston, Guilford, Jamaica, Newfane, Putney, Townshend, Vernon	Johnny Gifford <johnny@brattleborotv.org>	\$30,344.77	Field producer hours, website development, camera kit, podcast studio equipment, computers (2)
<u>CAT-TV Catamount Access Television</u>	Bennington, Pownal, Shaftsbury, Woodford	"Lisa M. Byer" <lisa@catamountaccess.com>	\$62,429.98	Production staff (events/meetings), Interactive Program Guide, streaming services, high speed internet/phone, Heat Pumps (3)
<u>CVTV Central Vermont Television/ Video Vision</u>	Barre, Barre Town, Cabot, Chelsea, Marshfield, Orange, Plainfield, Royalton, Tunbridge, Washington, Williamstown	Tony Campos <tony@newenglandcooks.com>	\$55,332.20	Telvue Server, related modules and installation/training
<u>Chittenden Community TV / Town Meeting TV</u>	Burlington, Colchester, Essex, South Burlington, St. George, Williston, Winooski	Meghan O'Rourke <morourke@cctv.org>	\$96,433.28	Media Educator, Special Project and Archival hours, plus digital storage equipment and installation.
<u>JAM White River Jct.</u>	Hartford, Hartland, Norwich	Samantha Davidson-Green <samantha@uvjam.org>	\$24,117.10	PT Field Producers and Production Assistants hours (Govt. Meetings), High Speed Internet, mileage reimbursements (partial).
<u>FACT-TV Falls Area Community Television</u>	Athens, Brookline, Grafton, Rockingham, Westminster	Alex Stradling <Alex@fact8.com>	\$16,388.34	Paid for temporary Production Coordinator and Outreach, Online equipment rental system, remote video production equipment as well as portable switcher, Upgrade to Video hosting service through Vimeo for more bandwidth and storage.
<u>GNAT-TV Greater Northshire Access Television</u>	Arlington, Dorset, Londonderry, Manchester, Peru, Rupert, Sandgate, Stratton, Sunderland, Weston, Winhall	Tammie Reilly <tammie@gnat-tv.org>	\$32,488.05	Youth Education Counselors (s), Manager and Content Producer ("News Project"), Video on Demand, Streaming/OTT Applications, Interactive Program Guide, Community Calendar Website Contract, Editing Software and Video Camera.
<u>GMATV Green Mountain Access Television</u>	Hyde Park, Johnson, Morristown, Elmore, Eden, Wolcott	Tim Torrey <info@greenmountainaccess.tv>	\$26,024.80	Field Producers/Editors, Station Manager & Operational Manager hours.
<u>HCTV Hardwick Community Television</u>	Greensboro, Hardwick, Woodbury	Macy Molleur <director@hctv.us>	\$10,610.38	Field producer hours (municipal, sports, other) and sports livestream tech hours and office supplies.
<u>KATV Kingdom Access TV</u>	Barnet, Bradford, Burke, Concord, Danville, Groton, Kirby, Lyndon, Newbury, Peacham, Ryegate, Sheffield, St. Johnsbury, Sutton, Waterford, Wheelock	Jamie Dimick <jamie.dimick@katv.org>	\$51,262.76	Media producer hours (recording/editing government, educational and community events), Content Management hours, High Speed Internet and studio supplies. Also: multi-camera mobile studio switcher and WIFI TX/RX system, and Post Production editing computer.
<u>LCATV Lake Champlain Access Television</u>	Colchester, Fairfax, Georgia, Grand Isle, Milton, North Hero, South Hero, Westford	Kevin Christopher/LCATV Colchester <kevin@lcatv.org>	\$55,739.48	Assistance for health care benefits (6 FT employees) and content managemtn system migration,
<u>MRVTV Mad River Valley Television</u>	Buells Gore, Duxbury, Fayston, Moretown, Waitsfield, Warren	Christopher Wiersema <christopher.wiersema@gmail.com>	\$21,897.19	FT Executive Director, PT Production Manager and PT (3-5) Camera Operators.
<u>MCTV Middlebury Community Television</u>	Middlebury, Weybridge	Kurt Brodersen <Kurt@middleburycommunitytv.org>	\$17,115.82	Executive Director and Production Coordinator Hours (partial), Interactive Program Guide and camera equipment.
<u>MMCTV Mt. Mansfield Community Television</u>	Jericho, Richmond, Underhill	Angelike Contis <Angelike@mmctv15.org>	\$22,773.71	Intern, PT Field Producer/Editor, PT Hybrid Producer and PT Production Manager hours, Interactive Program Guide, Editing Software and Camera.
<u>NEAT North East Addison Television</u>	Bristol, Huntington, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven, Starksboro	Mary Arbuckle <marya@gmavt.net>, <neatbristol@gmail.com>	\$20,873.94	Tech Support, Studio and Field Producer Hours, Sign, equipment repairs, computer and broadcast rack.
<u>NEK-TV Northeast Kingdom Television</u>	Barton, Brighton, Brownington, Charleston, Coventry, Derby, Glover, Irasburg, Jay, Morgan, Newport, Newport Town, Troy, Westfield	Tod Pronto <director@nektv.com>	\$32,904.68	Repairs and upgrades to facilities, Equipment (Cameras, Microphones, tripods and Computer)
<u>NWA-TV Northwest Access Television</u>	Bakersfield, Berkshire, Enosburg, Fairfield, Highgate, Montgomery, Richford, Sheldon, St. Albans, St. Albans Town, Swanton	Paul Snyder <director@northwestaccess.tv>	\$61,454.90	Programming Coordinator, Technical Coordinator, PT Editor and PT Videographer hours and benefits.
<u>OQTV Okemo Valley TV</u>	Cavendish, Ludlow, Mount Holly, Plymouth, Andover, Reading	Patrick Cody <pcody@okemovalley.tv>	\$16,206.38	Field Producer hours (2).
<u>ORCA Onion River Community Access Media</u>	Berlin, Bethel, Braintree, Calais, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Randolph, Rochester, Waterbury, Worcester	Jin An <jin@orcamedia.net>, Zach Zorn <zach@orcamedia.net>, office@orcamedia.net	\$64,049.15	Staff Hours and Benefits (partial) and Mileage.
<u>Media Factory</u>	Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Ferrisburg, Hinesburg, Shelburne, South Burlington, St. George, Vergennes, Waltham, Williston, Winooski	Seth Mobley <seth@mediafactory.org>	\$148,316.38	Production, Administrative, Content/Distribution, IT, Education and Outreach wages and benefits, Administrative and Program Operating Expenses, Public Access Capital Equipment, Municipal/Production Services and Content Distribution.
<u>PEG-TV Rutland Region Community Television</u>	Brandon, Castleton, Chittenden, Clarendon, Danby, Fair Haven, Ira, Killington, Leicester, Mendon, Pawlet, Pittsford, Poultney, Proctor, Rutland, Rutland Town, Wallingford, West Rutland	Tom Leypoldt <tleypoldt@pegvtv.com>	\$81,897.02	All Staff Wages (3 months).
<u>SAPA-TV Springfield Area Public Access Television</u>	Chester, Springfield, Weathersfield	Kevin Paquet <kevin@sapatv.org>	\$21,299.05	New payout server
<u>WOA8TV Windsor On-Air</u>	West Windsor, Windsor	Paula Wehde <woa-tv@comcast.net>	\$15,308.32	Executive Director hours, channel web streaming and website maintenance.
<u>WCTV Woodstock Community TV</u>	Bridgewater, Hartland, Woodstock	<woodstockcommunitytv@gmail.com>	\$14,732.32	PT Videographers/Editors (misc. events), Content Management and Outreach hours.