

November 20, 2024

This New Team Will Help Strengthen Your Operational Capacity





VLCT is always looking for creative ways to make your jobs easier and bolster your capacity – knowledge, skills, and access – without increasing your annual dues to do so. One of the ways we have done this in recent years is by obtaining grant funding to extend and diversify VLCT staff with two municipal and funding experts: Katie Buckley and Bonnie Waninger, who have helped our members understand [ARPA requirements](#), pursue other [federal and state funding opportunities](#), and access the state's Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP).

Now, through an innovative partnership between VLCT, the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (RD), and the State of Vermont, VLCT has received [\\$1 million in funding through RD's Disaster Assistance Fund](#) to expand our assistance to you. This partnership's overall goal is to enhance the financial, operational, and managerial/administrative expertise of Vermont's local governments so they (you!) can be stronger in good times and more resilient in times of challenge, such as disasters. This rare opportunity has allowed us to **deepen our bench and broaden our offerings**.

VLCT has long had municipally focused attorneys in our excellent [Municipal Assistance Center \(MAC\)](#) to answer your legal questions. Now we have created a complementary



arm to answer local officials' non-legal questions and provide technical assistance related to the day-to-day operations of their municipalities. The new [Municipal Operations Support \(MOS\)](#) team consists of **Katie Buckley, Municipal Operations Support Director; Bonnie Waninger, Project and Funding Specialist; Kathleen Ramsay, Municipal Operations Specialist; and Marguerite Ladd, Government Finance Specialist.** Recently added to VLCT staff, Kathleen and Marguerite are longtime successful practitioners in municipal finance, administration, and operations.

How Kathleen Will Assist Members?

As Municipal Operations Specialist, Kathleen will first focus on Vermont's flood impacted communities with the highest capacity needs by working one-on-one with local government officials to assess municipal operational capacity, determine targeted plans to address vulnerabilities, highlight opportunities, and advance recovery and long-term resilience efforts. Her work may address recovery efforts relative to FEMA's Public Assistance Program, which can include developing strategies and implementation plans for long-term disaster resilience projects. Kathleen will work directly with legislative body members, municipal clerks and treasurers, managers, administrators, and finance staff to coach and mentor them as they navigate their disaster recovery process.

Read a bit from Kathleen herself at [VLCT's New Local Government Nerd Helps Members Operate!](#)

How Marguerite Will Assist Members?



As Government Finance Specialist, Marguerite will coach, mentor, and teach local officials how their municipalities can be more resilient by following the best practices of government financial management. She will provide general finance assistance including responding to member inquiries and drafting and reviewing guidance documents and policy templates. A core piece of her work will be developing and delivering an introductory level municipal finance education curriculum (for any municipal official that is involved in their municipality's finances), as well as creating and delivering timely and relevant trainings outside of this curriculum to build financial literacy and fluency for all municipal officials with financial involvement. She will work closely with VLCT's partners VMCTA, VTCMA, VTGFOA, the State of Vermont, state and federal funders, statewide organizations, etc.

You can read more about Marguerite at [Municipal Finance is Music to Her Ears](#).

What Does All This Mean for You? ?

VLCT will continue to provide you with ...

- Guidance and support throughout the life of your ARPA funding
- [Project development assistance](#) – such as advancing project concepts, assisting with project prioritization, and determining high-level feasibility (for finances and buildability)
- Assistance in identifying and accessing potential state and federal grants and financial incentives to advance local initiatives



In addition, VLCT will ...

- Help increase your understanding, knowledge, and skills in the realm of [municipal finance](#) through one-on-one technical assistance, learning opportunities, toolkits, and resources. Whether you are a new local official with no experience in governmental finance or you have been at it a while and want to deepen your understanding of fund accounting or create and implement a capital improvement program but don't know where to start, we have you covered.
- Provide [one-on-one technical assistance to help you improve your municipal operations](#) to make things simpler, easier, and more efficient, which will hopefully give you back the most precious commodity of all: your time.
- Develop processes, systems, policies, and procedures that will help your municipality access state and federal funds more easily, be more competitive in applications, and be more successful in managing awards.
- Help your municipality ensure that it is ready when the next disaster hits so your response and recovery can be faster, smarter, and easier.

VLCT's mission is "serving and strengthening Vermont local government." We believe in the importance of local government and the capabilities of its leaders. Let us help you take your work to the next level of 21st century municipal operations.

