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# **Vermont Declaration of Inclusion Initiative Reaches Goal, Enters New Phase**





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Rutland, VT — To date, 160 towns, home to more than 79% Vermont residents, have adopted the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion (DOI). In addition, six other municipalities have adopted a DOI but have used language which differs from our version to such an extent that we were not able to list them with the towns that have adopted it. Altogether 166 Vermont municipalities have committed to the principals and goals of the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion Initiative. [Municipalities that adopted declaration.](#)

The first phase of the DOI Initiative is ending. By the end of 2024, all 247 municipalities in Vermont will have been contacted. Outreach to the communities that have not adopted the DOI will continue indefinitely. Phase two of the Initiative, finding ways to implement the DOI once adopted, will continue indefinitely as well.

To launch the second phase process, a survey was sent to the first 100 communities that adopted the DOI asking them what they were doing for implementation. A significant number - 50% - of them responded.

Of the 50 communities that responded,



- 84% have posted the Declaration on their town website.
- 78% have explained to their residents the reasons for adopting the Declaration.
- 54% have reviewed town policies, programs and ordinances for implicit or institutional bias.

Many of the communities were excited to share details on what they have been doing to support the DOI.

For instance, in Brandon, penalties for late municipal payments have been postponed for those with economic challenges and civic engagement is off and running. "We have been tackling our policies and procedures one by one to better serve the entire community," said Sue Gage, Town Clerk and Treasurer. "We will incorporate this work into all of our tasks."

In Fairfax, the Selectboard passed a resolution acknowledging that ongoing and intentional work is needed to be an anti-racist community. "We recognize that this is a time to listen and to learn with a goal of gaining a more complete understanding of the needs of our community. This is the time to create space for and engagement with diverse voices and to be inclusive in meeting community needs."

Colchester has a successful Get Engaged Program "to promote age inclusivity and diversity in town government," said Pam Loranger, Colchester Selectboard Chair. It was promoted at its high school and in media and now, "The youth seats on our boards and commissions have filled up."

The full survey results can be found be found here: [2024 Survey](#)

The Declaration of Inclusion is a grassroots initiative begun by community members in the Rutland area, which has been assisted by the Vermont Interfaith Action, Vermont



Chamber of Commerce, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Additional information on the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion may be found at [vtdeclarationofinclusion.org](http://vtdeclarationofinclusion.org). This website is generously furnished by and maintained by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.

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