



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12 | [ZOOM](#)

9:30a | Keynote Address: “Recover Stronger”

Speaker: **Molly Gray**, Lieutenant Governor of Vermont

10:00a - 11:30a : Session 1

THE GREAT RURAL HOUSING CONUNDRUM

Our housing crisis features a shortage of housing at all income levels. To meet the demand for housing, our region must coordinate partners and leverage public and private investments to improve and develop affordable and market rate housing units. Join our cross-sector team of housing advocates to learn about innovative housing solutions in the Kingdom, resources available for communities, and how to get involved.

Panelists: **Katie Buckley** | Director, ARPA Assistance, Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Joe Kasprzak | Assistant Town Manager, St. Johnsbury
Irene Nagle | Senior Planner, Northeastern Vermont Development Association
Evan Oleson | NEK Program Manager, Northern Forest Center
Gus Seelig | Director of Policy & Special Projects, VT Housing and Conservation Board
Patrick Shattuck | Executive Director, Rural Edge

BUILDING CULTURES OF BELONGING

This workshop explores grounding ourselves in the fundamentals of belonging--accepting our own and others' social identities--to move us toward the just and equitable world we all know is possible: at work, at home, in ourselves and in our communities.

Facilitators: **Laura Smith** | The Nest Collective
Hilary Maynard | The Nest Collective

MAKING IT WORK I: PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

What does the Kingdom need in order to be a workable place to work? Join representatives from the Vermont Dept. of Labor, NVU's Workforce Development department, the Vermont Talent Pipeline and the legislature to learn how regional and statewide programs are working to support the Kingdom's employers and employees.

Panelists: **Mary Anne Sheahan** | Vermont Talent Pipeline
Vin Favoroso | Coordinator, Workforce Development, NVU
Hugh Bradshaw | Assistant Director for Workforce Development, VT Dept of Labor

12:00p - 1:30p : Session 2

MAKING IT WORK II: EMPLOYERS

Join some of the region's biggest employers to discuss strategies for creating an attractive workplace. What do workers want and need in this new era? How can we attract and retain workers with a safe, supportive work environment? How can employers work together across the region to solve new challenges we're facing?

Panelists: **Michael Costa** | CEO, Northern Counties Health Care
 Allyson Bathalon | Director of HR, Jay Peak

SHARK TANK: NEK PROJECT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The NEKC's [Project Development Initiative](#) supports community-backed projects by providing funding for professional project development services. During this session, selected applicants will pitch their projects to the selection committee. Non-applicants are welcome to sit in and learn about projects that are addressing some of our biggest regional challenges.

WORKING COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE

The St. J Hub is a welcoming and accessible community space in St. Johnsbury that facilitates scheduled and spontaneous opportunities for connection and learning. A cross-sector group of NEK partners are expanding the St. J Hub and eventually replicating it in another NEK town. Join this group to learn more about the hub and how you can get involved.

Presenters: **Jenna O'Farrell** | Executive Director, NEK Community Action
 Juliet Emas | Director, St. J Hub

2:00p - 3:30p: Session 3

"YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION IS UNSTABLE"

NEK Community Broadband, the Communications Union District for our region, has been working behind the scenes to bring high-speed internet access to every corner of the Kingdom. But it ain't easy! Find out what they're up to and how you can help.

Presenter: **Christine Hallquist** Executive Director, Vermont Community Broadband Board
 Christa Shute | Executive Director, NEK Community Broadband

STARTING & GROWING A BUSINESS IN THE NEK

The Vermont Small Business Development Center provides no-cost professional expertise and guidance through one-on-one advising and training programs. Join this session to find out what resources are available to your future or current business.

Presenter: Heidi Krantz | VT Small Business Development Center

3:30p - 4:00p: Closing Session

CONNECTS-AT-A-GLANCE

Come together with your fellow NEKers to celebrate our region and share learning from the day. What are we getting right? What work still needs doing? And how do we take action toward our vision of a vibrant, thriving Northeast Kingdom?

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