



Community
Resilience
Organizations

Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) 2025 Annual Report

Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) is a grassroots organizing hub and technical assistance provider committed to climate and racial justice. We provide resources and frameworks to help communities build local and regional resilience.

Letter from CROs Co-Directors

2025 was undoubtedly a year of disruption: to public services, institutions, funding sources, and structures Vermonters rely on. Amid escalating climate crisis, fascism, and rising inequality, our communities have been pushed to develop new ways of surviving, caring for each other, and building thriving conditions.

Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) is proud to have played a role in that work. In the past year, we have brought on six additional fiscally sponsored projects. We collaborated with diverse coalition members to advocate for changes to state policy around flood response. We completed our Resilience Hub Toolkit, compiled by a cohort of grassroots flood responders over 18 months. Across these different bodies of work, CROs has supported and stewarded community-scale projects that utilized innovative strategies to keep people safe and well.

As it becomes increasingly dangerous and difficult to meet our basic needs, day-to-day life reads more like an acute crisis. This is all avoidable, inexcusable, and unsurprising. Amid terror wrought on our communities by chronic neglect and increasing aggression, CROs is seeing that preparation for one kind of disaster is not dissimilar from preparation for others.

CROs Board Members

Krystal Sanchez (she/her)

Board President

Burlington Yoga Equity Project
and VT Professionals of Color
Burlington, VT

Aly Mars (she/her)

Treasurer

VT Department of Education
Barre, VT

Karen Ganey (she/her)

Secretary

Regeneration Corps Program,
White River Conservation District
Norwich, VT

Destinee Pierce (they/she)

VT-EJ Network
Underhill, VT

Our deep investment in community-led resilience has positioned us well to respond to the emerging complexity of this moment. As a small, nimble entity that follows the work outlined by our movements for justice, we remain firm in our sense of purpose.

In 2025, we identified four clear priorities to pursue in this year and those to come:

- Build CROs' internal capacity
- Provide services to grassroots organizing and organizers
- Influence change in existing systems to orient them towards community-led solutions
- Build alternative models and systems to face climate change and cascading social inequality in Vermont

At the close of 2025, these priorities remain in alignment with where we see our work as most impactful, even as conditions change. We are humbled to hold the role of a hub, convener, and connector. Read on for more detail about how CROs is rising to the occasion.

Onwards,

Lena Greenberg and Julissa Vesely

Co-Directors, Community Resilience Organizations

Joanna Colwell (she/they)

Middlebury Yoga Equity Project
and Otter Creek Yoga Studio
Middlebury, VT

Murphy Robinson (he/they)

Dandelion Housing Project
Worcester, VT

CROs Staff

In 2025, CROs continued to grow and change, as is our way. Early in the year, we handed off and solidified institutional knowledge as Lena moved into full co-directorship alongside Jess. By the middle of the year, we began planning for Jess to transition off staff, and conducted a hiring process. In the fall, we brought on Julissa Vesely as a new co-director. At the close of 2025, we got to test our systems for holding and sharing organizational structure as Julissa and Lena began collaborating.

In 2026, we will continue to deepen our leadership as two young leaders who bring significant, diverse expertise and learning potential to CROs. In service of this goal, we will be investing in board development, internal work, and opportunities to collaborate with peer organizations in Vermont and elsewhere.



*Celebrating Jess before her departure from CROs
From left to right: Jess Laporte, Meghan Wayland, Katie Horner,
Lena Greenberg, Audrey Grant, Michelle Eddleman McCormick*

Financials and Development

While CROs tends to operate out of the public eye as the 'movement infrastructure' entity we are, we have invested this past year in a full overhaul of our website.

Because we change as the work changes, retaining our mission, values, and strategic offerings, CROs can be a bit illegible from the outside.

We are proud of our new website, online at gocros.org, to communicate more clearly to funders about our priorities and successes.

Notable elements of our development work in 2025:

- Successful receipt of the Haymarket' People's Fund Sustaining Grant, which requires a rigorous application process to screen for organizations doing systems-change work
- Over \$40,000 in donations from individuals, some of which were \$5/month sustaining contributions, others of which were from major donors
- We continue to diversify our sources of funding, which has become increasingly important amid cuts to funding for basic services. We are finding ourselves in competition with many entities that used to receive pass-through federal and state funding, but who are now forced to turn to private philanthropy. While the funding landscape is challenging, we continue to seek out new and recurring sources of funds: stock donations, earned income work, and more.
- We made a significant investment of time early in 2025 applying for federal environmental justice funding which disappeared as soon as we applied for it. While disheartening, it was a potent reminder that the federal government is unlikely to invest in the type of work CROs does.
- We streamlined and clarified our financial systems for fiscally sponsored projects, which has meant we continue to decentralize and share this knowledge, which is typically gatekept and wielded as a means of control over those who do not hold it.

Financials and Development, continued

Notable elements of our financials in 2025:

- This year, we set a goal of redistributing \$10,000 in stipends to grassroots organizers. We met and exceeded our goal. Across all our programs, we spent 10% (over \$13,000) of our total operating budget compensating organizers.
- While our overall budget for 2025 was \$136,000, it costs closer to \$87,000 to maintain our nonprofit status and offer fiscal sponsorship. Our fiscally sponsored projects raised \$283,500, more than three times the cost to offer this service.

Income source	Amount	Description
Grants	\$62,000	Unrestricted operating funds from local and regional foundations and project-specific funding.
Earned income	\$6,100	CROs participated in statewide work to create a framework for municipal climate planning, offered facilitation and strategic planning for other nonprofits and state partners; and consulted on policy.
Donations	\$41,500	Individual donors ranging from small-dollar, recurring donations to major gifts.
Fiscal sponsorship Fee Income	\$20,400	CROs collect fiscal sponsorship fees to offset our provision of admin, finance, and HR services.
Total raised by CROs in 2025	\$130,000	Funds raised through donations, grants, earned income, and fiscal sponsorship fees.
Total CROs expenses in 2025	\$136,000	Total funds spent in 2025. CROs ended 2024 with reserve funds, so this small discrepancy in income and expenses was not an issue.
Total funds raised by Fiscally Sponsored Projects	\$283,500	This number reflects the combined budgets raised by fiscally sponsored projects, not including CROs' budget.

Fiscal Sponsorship

In 2025, our fiscal sponsorship program remained a core part of CROs' offering to the movement for climate and racial justice in Vermont. Fiscal sponsorship allows grassroots organizers to seek funding and receive compensation for their work. This enhances the sustainability of essential community tending and organizing labor, which is often uncompensated and leads to burnout. We see fiscal sponsorship as a key way to invest in organizers and their visions for a more just, climate resilient future.

We did not seek out additional projects at any point during the year, but were sought out by over 10 potential projects, six of which we onboarded. We ended 2025 with a total of 11 projects.

Bottomless Well rejoined CROs as a long-term project after their initial collaboration with us on short-term work in 2024. We are always happy to see projects utilizing CROs' services in a diversity of ways. Because of our flexible, short-term fiscal sponsorship option, we were able to begin a relationship with Bottomless Well when their project was in an earlier phase of development. Bottomless Well is located on 600 acres of co-stewarded land, where they raise a small herd of goats whose meat is distributed free-of-charge to BIPOC, immigrant, refugee, and food-scarce communities while improving the soil.



Goats at Bottomless Well. Photo credit: Sasha Hom

Similarly, the **Hartland Resilience Team** initially came to CROs many years ago as part of our work to develop 'resilience teams' in communities to support local preparedness and response to disaster. This era of CROs is reflected in our recently-released Resilience Hub Toolkit, and resilience teams were the initial inspiration for our fiscal sponsorship program. The Hartland Resilience Team re-joined CROs in 2025 to continue their work offering a monthly community breakfast.

Melacha U'Vracha is a 5 day earth-skills gathering, an experiential immersion into Jewish skills and wisdom designed around the framework of melachot (sacred ancestral crafts). The gathering's goals are to build an intergenerational, politically diverse, religiously pluralistic, inclusive Jewish community centered around earth connection and rewilding Jewish practice. The success of Melacha U'Vracha's first gathering prior to joining CROs led organizers to seek out fiscal sponsorship to support their growth. In 2025, over 300 people from across the US and beyond participated.

The **Paij Wadley-Bailey Community Garden** is a reparations and food sovereignty project that is led by and centers those whose relationship to the land has been ruptured by dispossession, enslavement, and oc-



Shabbat at Melacha U'Vracha. Photo credit: Arielle Bareket

cupation. We offer plots of land for gardening, gardening tools, and access to a community that shares wisdom and cultivates food together. Paij's Garden is a place where folks can cultivate a reciprocal and nourishing relationship to the plants and the earth beneath our feet as well as with each other.

Rose Core Collective is a collective of herbalists and organizers who grow, formulate and distribute medicinal herbs in solidarity with local and national frontline organizers and care workers. Since their formation in 2020, Rose Core has distributed thousands of bottles of tinctures and glycerites, gallons of herbal tea, and many pounds of bulk dried herbs to sites of resistance in Vermont and across the country.

The **Bridge at Ezili's Respite** does land-based harm reduction work in rural Vermont. In 2025, the team installed a yurt where they will hold programming, and received funding to develop a land-based version of their Harm Reduction Heroes curriculum. The Bridge will host focus groups over the coming spring and summer to finalize the curriculum, and then begin offering respite services in mid-2026.

We've also continued to support projects in outgrowing CROs. We see this as a sign of success: most of our projects begin with little to no funding and big visions. When projects move onto different organizational structures, it is a reflection of the utility of flexible, supportive fiscal sponsorship. Conscious Homestead, one of our longest-tenured projects, moved onto a larger scale fiscal sponsor. Radical Imagination has transitioned to be its own nonprofit. We wish these projects well and remain in community during this next phase of their work!

CROs' fiscally sponsored projects, as of December 2025

Bottomless Well	Hartland Resilience Team
The Bridge at Ezili's Respite	Middlebury Yoga Equity Project
Burlington Yoga Equity Project	Melacha U'Vracha
Dandelion Housing Project	Paij Wadley-Bailey Garden
Environmental Justice Network	Rose Core Collective

Launching the Resilience Hub Toolkit

Building on work we'd begun in the wake of 2023 flooding, CROs continued to convene a cohort of grassroots flood responders to build a toolkit full of best practices for community-led disaster preparedness and response.

We'd started with big picture conversations about what makes a community resilient; what it takes to be prepared for disaster; and how to create one tool that is useful for many communities with variable needs. After months of consultation inside and outside our group and research about similar tools, we arrived at some clarity.

We wanted to build a toolkit that functioned more like a work plan than a resource list, so anyone in Vermont could adapt it to their needs and use it as an organizing tool. As we neared completion, we held public events where we gathered feedback and shared the toolkit, learning valuable lessons we integrated afterwards.



*Presenting the Toolkit at a public event in Plainfield.
Photo credit: Lena Greenberg*

We completed and released the Resilience Hub toolkit in December 2025. It includes guidance for assessing community resilience, creating a structure for advancing resilience initiatives, comprehensive supply lists, frameworks for readiness, and potential for adaptation to suit diverse Vermont communities. The Toolkit lives on a custom-built online/offline interface created by our collaborator Rhizome Cottiss.

Through CROs' organizing, the Toolkit is cited in the forthcoming statewide guidance for municipalities doing climate planning. It has garnered attention from state legislators, Vermont Emergency Management, and the Vermont Department of Health.

The Land Access and Opportunity Board, housed under the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, has identified our Resilience Hub model as a strategic intervention for communities to take disaster preparedness into their own hands amid cuts to State and Federal resources. In 2026, the LAOB will create a funding opportunity to invest significant resources in burgeoning hubs. We are thrilled at the impact this tool is already having on existing public service systems, communities and organizers looking to make positive change, and the statewide conversation about what it means to live in an era defined by climate disaster.

In the coming year, CROs hopes to compensate grassroots organizers to steward Resilience Hubs springing up across the floodplain funded with public and private support. Communities will take on the stewardship of their own Hubs, and call on CROs and other partners for technical support as needed. Beyond individual Hubs, we hope to see communities across Vermont using the Toolkit to prepare themselves for climate disruption, and those Hubs joining a regional, decentralized resilience network equipped to provide broad support to each other as disasters arrive and depart.

Check out the toolkit at resiliencetoolkit.org!

Policy Work and Institutional Engagement

Throughout 2025, CROs showed up for policy work and consulted with State agencies to embed climate and racial justice priorities in legislation and public resources.

We advocated for state funding to go to Long Term Recovery Groups, the community-led formations that support individuals impacted by flooding. While that provision was included in an earlier version of a bill we helped shape, this funding disappeared in final stages of the policymaking process. This is an all too common phenomenon in the legislative process and a testament to the limitation of policy work given the political climate and structure of government institutions.

We have since been involved in other processes around implementation of existing flood policy in which we have offered feedback about this omission, and continue to elevate the need for funding these semi-official, chronically under-supported entities. Our collaboratively written, robustly endorsed [People's Demands for a Just Recovery from Flooding](#) are on file in the public record as a part of this advocacy, and continue to come up in conversation and collaboration with state agencies interested in shifting flood response away from waste and dysfunction and towards community investment.

CROs staff also consulted on the forthcoming Municipal Climate Planning Framework, which gives cities and towns in Vermont guidance for how to do climate and resilience planning as part of existing, state-mandated planning processes. Our [Community Resilience Assessment](#) and Resilience Hub Toolkit are heavily cited in the Framework, which is currently being piloted across Vermont.

We engage in policy work selectively and strategically. CROs is honored and thrilled to see our community's work and vision reflected in resources shared by the public sector.

Conclusion

At CROs, we are practiced at meeting the moment; flexibility and emergence is our normal.

We meet the end of 2025 with a recognition of the severity of our times and grief for the preventable horrors we will witness.

We remain committed to following and supporting the leadership of grassroots organizers as we find our way into and boldly envision a just, resilient future. Thank you for joining us in this work.



*The Dandelion Housing Project team working on a cabin.
Photo credit: Murphy Robinson*