



## **BTV Ignite and Burlington Telecom Announce Second Annual STEM and Technical Skill Grant Awards Totaling \$50,000**

\$30,000 to be awarded to LaunchVT and \$20,000 to be awarded to ReSOURCE in support of youth-focused workforce development programs

**Burlington, Vt. – June 15, 2020** – BTV Ignite and Burlington Telecom announced that LaunchVT and ReSOURCE will be awarded grant funding to deliver programming to support workforce training and development with a focus on Burlington’s youth and disadvantaged communities.

“These grants awards announced today are much needed during a time where thousands in our community are facing a wide range of economic hardships. The workforce support programs offered by LaunchVT and ReSOURCE are critical while we come together to address the changing needs of workers and local businesses, as well as providing opportunities to Burlington residents who may not otherwise have them,” said Adam Roof, BTV Ignite Project Manager. “I’m excited that we have been able to award these two significant grant awards on an accelerated timeline to help meet immediate and emerging needs in the Burlington community and economy. Young people and communities that have historically been left behind through conventional workforce development programs are rightly the core focus of this funding.”

Details about the grant awards and the programming are as follows:

LaunchVT has been awarded \$30,000 to develop and implement an internship and STEM skill development program through its established Nexus, REACT, and LaunchVT programs. LaunchVT will develop internship opportunities with its alumni to match interns with highly valuable opportunities to develop entrepreneurial and STEM related skills. The BTV Ignite Board has required LaunchVT to work with a number of organizations as part of their outreach and recruitment for the internship program.

John Antonucci, Executive Director of LaunchVT, said “with this funding we will be able to offer young people in our community the opportunity to develop professional knowledge and skills in leading industries with some of Vermont’s most promising businesses. We are committed to providing internship opportunities to youth of a range of backgrounds, with a particular focus on supporting women, people of color, and those that come from a low-income or other background that historically has been disadvantaged. Interns will develop skills to advance their career opportunities and the businesses that host them will benefit from the work they do, creating greater economic impact throughout the community.”

ReSOURCE has been awarded \$20,000 to support its YouthBuild Program that serves 16-24 year old youth, as well as Construction Intensives that serve both youth and adults. The BTV Ignite Grant will support 10 disadvantaged Burlington youth in the YouthBuild program and 20 through a Construction Intensive. The funding will be specifically focused on supporting weatherization skill training resulting in students receiving a valuable professional certification.

“The trades are becoming increasingly technical and this targeted funding demonstrates that our community understands the importance of this work in our local economy,” said Thomas Longstreth, Executive Director of ReSOURCE. “Professional weatherization skills are in high demand here locally and across our state and are a key aspect of our collective effort to address climate change. Employers need skilled workers excited to make a difference through high quality professional work. ReSOURCE provides both technical skills and soft skills and supports both the student and the employer to ensure successful placements. The BTV Ignite funding and our training helps meet multiple community needs.”

The \$50,000 annual STEM and Technical Skill Grant Fund is a component of the \$3 million over 10 years commitment from Schurz Communications during the sale of Burlington Telecom that resulted from the competitive process directed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council.

“Burlington Telecom is proud to support the local community and economy in meaningful ways and specifically by providing these early release grant dollars to two great local organizations,” said Mike Loucy, General Manager of Burlington Telecom and BTV Ignite Board Member.

### **About BTV Ignite**

BTV Ignite is focused on bringing together the energy, resources, and values of the Burlington, Vermont community to create opportunities to start and grow new businesses, create new jobs and promote the skills needed to fill them. The nonprofit provides STEM experiences for students, helps launch ‘smart’ city initiatives, and ensures these opportunities are inclusive and accessible for everyone. BTV Ignite was founded in 2014 and is sponsored by the leading government, business, and academic stakeholders of Burlington, including The City of Burlington, People’s United Bank, The University of Vermont, UVM Medical Center, Hula, Burlington Telecom, The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Burlington Electric Department. It’s founding mission is to help take advantage of Burlington’s city-wide fiber optic gigabit network infrastructure and unlock the potential of this world-class digital resource to drive sustainable economic and community development. Learn more at <https://www.btvignite.com/>.

### **About Burlington Telecom**

Burlington Telecom is Burlington, Vermont's only 100 percent fiber-optic network, focused on providing transparent pricing and the best customer service. Burlington Telecom is a core institutional partner for BTV Ignite, supporting the creation of a sustainable tech eco-system aimed at generating new, well-paying jobs in Burlington and providing professional careers for young Vermonters.

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