



## PRESS RELEASE 24 March 2024

The Vermont Academy of Science and Engineering (VASE) is pleased to announce its inclusion in the first round of grant funding administered by the University of Vermont's Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships (LIRP). LIRP officials have issued grants totaling over \$1.7 million in funding to more than a dozen deserving projects around the state.

We are excited to receive a seed grant to support a new program to create **STEM Mentors in Rural Communities**. This is an innovative partnership between VASE and the University of Vermont that addresses Leahy's support of rural community education across the State of Vermont.

VASE is one of the thirteen partnerships funded across the state of Vermont that will be tackling a broad suite of rural challenges. The awarded funds will serve as a catalyst for the expansion of our initiatives in STEM education to assure under-resourced programs in rural areas of the state are able to support STEM initiatives. VASE's grants team is eager to implement new strategies to address the unique challenges faced by rural communities in attracting dedicated and skilled coaches and mentors for STEM programs. Applications for VASE mentorships will be available on its website in April 2024.

"Grant funding through the Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships is a shining new example of the potential for innovation in UVM's land-grant mission of service to Vermont," said UVM President Suresh Garimella. "These grants will connect our faculty experts and students to groups with ideas for transformative projects that will make a direct impact for communities throughout Vermont."

Under terms of the grant, VASE will also work with a number of partners, including FIRST in VT, among others to identify groups needing mentors.



VASE looks forward to utilizing these funds in its effort to increase STEM education and ultimately to grow our workforce in science and engineering. For more information see: <https://www.vtscieng.org/k-12-outreach>