

Application for: Tandem at 26 Main street in Bristol VT Co Owner/ Applicant: Lauren Gammon of Nomadic Chef Catering

Origin: Tandem was conceived in 2015 by Lauren Gammon and Jess Messer as a multi use space on Main street in Bristol and used primarily as the home for Nomadic Chef Catering and Savoure for production of their individual offsite businesses. Tandem has historically provided a community space to host pop up guest chefs and community events. Events have included the origin of Lumen festival and Spirit & Soul Gathering for downtown Bristol. They have also housed events annually for the community such as storytelling for chronic pain survivors, weekly CSA hosting and Night Markets as well as benefits for nonprofits including, most recently, Ukraine and Palestine and other under represented communities. Tandem has served as an incubator space for multiple businesses that have flourished since being housed at Tandem including V Smiley preserves at Minifactory, Ariel Infusions, and Downhill bread. In 2018, Tandem's founder was brought on the panel of the Vermont State Historical Society in 2018 to impart perspective on how to utilize multi use spaces in struggling Vt downtowns. During the pandemic, Tandem has put less focus on community events and more on their use as a production space. Moving towards 2025, Tandem looks to refocus their vision on the local community with an intent to expand and renovate its front of the house, primarily focusing on more food and drink offerings with upgrades on seating for the public. The intent is to increase its presence in Bristol and add to the vitality of a thriving community.

Use of Funds:

Outside : Upgrade of awning and outdoor seating during warm months

Indoor : Intention to open to the public on a regular weekly schedule. Physical location needs upgrades including the refinishing of floors, added furniture including table seating and chairs for patrons, added POS system and wifi, sound buffering system and audio system. Additionally Tandem requires a barrier construction between back of house and front of house, as well as, dishwasher upgrade, lighting upgrade, bar upgrade and under counter refrigeration, sink replacement in bathroom, hood replacement, repainting and aesthetic add ons. This will all entail carpentry build out to implement all of the above including some customized elements.

Community to be served: Tandem is seeking to widen its community outreach with more consistent public offerings for Addison County and local VT. Currently Tandem has an active mailing list of 1200+ local members that already seek out their events, some that travel from abutting counties. The demand for expansion is already present as Tandem expects to utilize its Main Street location as an added benefit for patrons and tourists in the downtown business district.. Additionally, Tandem has served as an incubator space for emerging businesses and expects to attract more guest entrepreneurs of food forward concepts yet to launch (most of which struggle to get started without a commercial kitchen of their own). Historically Honey Road, Mamajuana, Arcadian, Moroccan Cafe and Taste of Abyssinia have all been under this umbrella, four of which were James Beard award finalists. The proposed expansion will have a direct impact on local employment opportunity for bartenders, dishwashers cooks and servers. Additionally, the community will have more access to private/ public event space for local non profit events, while increasing availability for musicians & artists to showcase their talents.

Project Accomplishment: Tandem has an already proven track record of serving the community for last 10 years and was on the forefront of pop up culture in VT. The proposed upgrade will help Tandem reengage with the community in a more direct way and meet the already proven demand by creating access to a sought after venue. Through the last 10 years a few things have become apparent and need addressed if using Tandem in a more public facing way. Tandem is loud and needs sound mitigation, the front of house layout needs a facelift and to be made more comfortable for seating. Finally, some industry standards need to be implemented if used as a higher trafficked food forward venture. All of this will allow Tandem to change their focus from a handful of pop up community events per year to weekly offerings of food and drink and the ability to host more events that align with the community interests..

Public Funds will allow for enhanced public draw on a regular basis by initiating and completing renovations. Completion of project will provide increased vitality of the downtown Bristol network, while creating increased local opportunities for potential employment and creative endeavors from local residents, artists and non profits in surrounding areas.

Specs from the ACEDC, the grant focuses on increasing employment opportunities in VT FYI :

- Three (3) letters that represent the "community's" support, using the term "community" in the broadest sense, not just your physical community – all communities impacted by your business.
- Suggestions: Chamber of Commerce, AC Regional Planning Commission, project location municipality, other businesses, clients, customers or organizations that would benefit. Do not seek letters from State legislators.
- Letters should be addressed to: "Commissioner, Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services, 2 Governor Aiken Avenue, Montpelier, VT 05633-5801, Re.: Regional Economic Development Grant Program."
- Ask letter writers to send completed letter directly to ACEDC in PDF format and to cc you.

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