

# TOWN OF VERNON

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### MEDIA ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Tax Credits Available for Businesses that Donate to Vernon-based Non-Profit Opportunity Works Connecticut, Inc.

**(VERNON, Connecticut)** – Opportunity Works Connecticut, a Vernon-based non-profit that supports people with intellectual and physical disabilities, has been approved for inclusion in the 2021 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act Grant Program, which allows the group to receive monetary grants from businesses in exchange for 60 percent tax credits.

Opportunity Works is seeking to raise \$49,418 toward the creation of a sensory room for individuals with autism and behavioral issues. Businesses that contribute a minimum of \$250 are eligible for the 60 percent tax credit.

“Anyone who’s been to Opportunity Works has seen the great work they do,” Vernon Mayor Dan Champagne said. “This is a tremendous opportunity for businesses to make a difference with their charitable giving.”

Opportunity Works endeavors to foster a sense of respect and dignity, which enables individuals to have greater participation in the services the organization offers, said Rene Lambert, the Executive Director and Co-founder of Opportunity Works.

“A sensory room will provide a calming and helpful atmosphere for some of the individuals with whom we work,” Lambert said. “Individuals with autism and other neurosensory disorders need to be in a stimulating environment that offers sensory input to aid them in self-regulation. When our individuals feel safe and secure in their surroundings they can flourish and become the best they can be.”

To contribute to the Opportunity Works project, please visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/DRS/Connecticut-Neighborhood-Assistance-Act-Form>. **Donations must be made via the linked form between September 15<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.**

Opportunity Works Connecticut has a large service area and works with individuals in most of eastern Connecticut and as far west as Bloomfield, West Hartford, New Britain, Newington and Cromwell. The

organization is based in the Rockville section of Vernon, where it offers a variety of services and programs, including vocational skills training, individual employment support, culinary classes, health and wellness training, music therapy, recreation opportunities, community engagement and a bowling league. It also operates a store where people can purchase items produced in the group's wood shop, greeting cards, jewelry and other crafts produced by participants.

The organization's Neighborhood Assistance Act proposal was facilitated by Michelle Hill, Vernon's Youth Services Director and former Interim Social Services Director, and brought forward to the Town Council by Mayor Champagne. The Council unanimously approved the request after a public hearing.

"The Neighborhood Assistance Act grant program is a great way to provide direct benefits to worthy non-profits, while at the same time giving a generous tax credit to businesses that make monetary contributions," said Matt Hellman, Director of Vernon's Social Services Department. "The program is good for everybody involved."

The Vernon Social Services Department locally administers the Neighborhood Assistance Act for non-profits.

For more information about Opportunity Works Connecticut, please visit: <https://www.owct.org/>

For more information about the Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program, please visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/DRS/Credit-Programs/Neighborhood-Assistance/Neighborhood-Assistance-Act-Tax-Credit-Program>

### **About the Town of Vernon**

The Town of Vernon is a celebrated place to live, work and visit. From its beautiful parks and lakes, to its vast trails and historic homes and buildings, Vernon is a resilient and thriving community that promotes the health and wellbeing of its residents and values the natural environment. With a resident population of approximately 30,000 and occupying 18.03 square miles, Vernon combines a balanced appreciation of history, and a strong economic base for growth, both residential and commercial. Located 15 minutes east of the Connecticut capital of Hartford, and 25 miles from the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, the Town of Vernon is strategically located in "New England's Knowledge Corridor" with close proximity to some of the top colleges and universities in the country.

Designated a certified Sustainable Community, the Town of Vernon offers a wide range of benefits and services to its residents. The Town of Vernon is a full-service municipality that practices a management philosophy of continuous quality improvement. To learn more about the Town of Vernon, please call (860) 870- 3670 or visit [www.vernon-ct.gov](http://www.vernon-ct.gov).

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