



STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 to 2028

The instinct to solve problems and create things of beauty and utility with our hands is the essence of being human. As dear to our natures as telling stories and imagining our futures. An investment in the teaching, practice and culture of woodworking is a recognition of the confidence and character that comes with feeling useful and comfortable within the material world. The individual and group rewards of making things are many, including emotional, intellectual and social resilience.

HatchSpace exists to fill the cultural and economic void created by the disappearance of the trades in rural America. The challenge is so acute that in December the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance listed “Historic Preservation Trades” on its 2022 list of “Seven to Save” - an annual inventory of irreplaceable landmarks around the state that are under-used or threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, or unsympathetic development. The Vermont Department of Labor estimates that the Green Mountain State requires 5,000 new carpenters to meet demand in the next 10 years, or an additional 500 each year.

We know that Vermont and New Hampshire are not alone in facing this trade shortage. A report authored by the Association of Builders and Contractors last year found that in 2023, the industry will need to bring in nearly 590,000 new workers on top of normal hiring to meet industry demand.

WHO WE ARE

HatchSpace is a shared space for woodworking. We are a 7,000 SF community workshop where we spark and nurture creative expression and lifelong learning within a supportive community environment. We foster the conditions for exploration, independent work, and group collaboration necessary for anyone to build beautiful things with wood. Our impacts include personal development, livelihood support, and community well-being.

Since opening our doors in 2019 HatchSpace has come to recognize that an acute shortage in skilled woodworkers is a constraint on many regional employers. At the same time we are excited to see an opportunity to broaden access to the craft of woodworking and welcome groups historically marginalized in the trades including female and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and GNC (Gender Nonconforming) community members. We are excited to be a leading provider of lifelong craft education, community building, and entrepreneurial support services amidst a growing network of diverse woodworkers. And we're keen to share what we're learning with communities across the country – to contribute to a restoration of the trades and rural renewal.

As HatchSpace looks ahead to the next five years, we are poised for growth, inclusion, and deepened impact. Our goals are to optimize our business model and operations; to invest in partnerships that strengthen our impact; and to nurture new community spaces that contribute to a movement of makers across the country.

Our vision, values, and pillars of growth provide the foundation for organizational growth and outlines our roadmap for the next five years. We're excited to welcome you on this journey.

OUR VISION

HatchSpace envisions a national network of rural communities enlivened by the benefits of woodworking. We imagine a society renewed by craft, where everyone feels welcome to develop their capabilities and share their talents, contributing to the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of rural communities.

Our mission as a not-for-profit community workshop is to promote the value and practice of craft by providing the instruction, tools, and space to support a community of woodworkers. We celebrate and advance the learning, practice and cultural varieties of woodworking and strive to provide anyone with access to the tools and training necessary to develop creative confidence and build the things they love. This includes preparing them for careers careers in the trades and crafts.

To realize our vision and fulfill our mission over the next five years, HatchSpace has identified five pillars of growth:

1. Deepen our educational impact by increasing the number and breadth of life-long learning programs we run, from middle school into retirement

2. Ensure that HatchSpace reflects the communities we serve; take visible and measurable action to involve historically marginalized groups
3. Strengthen our community of woodworkers by investing in upgrades to our facility and expanded programs that nurture creative confidence
4. Contribute to the economic and social well-being of rural communities through workforce development and entrepreneurial support programs
5. Invest in rural renewal by providing technical assistance and serving as a champion to a growing network of kindred spaces.

OUR VALUES

- Learning and confidence. We're committed to fostering a culture of curiosity and problem-solving that encourages life-long, hands-on learning and builds creative confidence in woodworking.
- Access and inclusion. We prize a welcoming environment at all times, and we seek the participation of groups historically marginalized from woodworking and other trades including women, BIPOC and GNC community members, New Americans, and returning citizens.
- Community and cultural equity. We value the positive social bonds that form when people come together. We welcome all woodworking traditions, encourage multicultural exploration, and seek ways to support the livelihoods of historically marginalized groups.
- Creativity and play. We recognize that the talent, skills and ingenuity of our members are the currency of our community; we strive to make room for risk-taking, discovery and fun in everything we do.
- Reliability and sustainability. We are committed to delivering a reliable, high quality experience in our shops and recognize that this is the foundation of a viable, enduring business.

OUR GROWTH

HatchSpace's success over the next five years will turn on our ability to deliver impact through high-quality courses and activities consistent with our five pillars of growth. These

are creative community, access and inclusion, lifelong learning, livelihood support, and nurturing a movement for rural renewal through the joy of craft.

Pillar One: Creative Community

HatchSpace will maintain a high quality, constantly improving facility and a growing suite of equipment that empower our members to learn, cultivate creative confidence, and build the things they love. HatchSpace will provide unmatched capabilities in both manual and computer aided fabrication, creating the conditions for collaboration, creative exploration and problem solving through woodworking. We'll nurture community growth and well-being through activities that foster connections among members, and invite exploration and resource sharing including time, talent, and opportunity. Finally, we will secure our future as a vibrant and sustainable resource when we acquire a building to be our permanent home.

HatchSpace will continuously improve the safety and productivity of our facility by making thoughtful investments in our infrastructure, the amenities that foster a productive work environment, and programs that build connections and nurture creativity with wood. Our growth and success will turn on a board and staff who cultivate a strong membership base, manage a robust volunteer program, thoughtfully grow a dynamic instruction team, and restlessly engage an ever growing number of students.

By 2028...

HatchSpace will maintain an unbeatable 7,000 SF woodworking facility that offers unmatched resources to advance the learning and practice of woodworking. We will be home to an energetic community of over 200 members who use wood to solve problems - their individual projects and those that exist in our community. Our shops will be alive with activity seven days a week, just about any day of the year.

How We'll Do It

1. Invest in the governance, policy and administrative requirements to scale our not-for-profit operations, locally and nationally.
2. Expand our membership from 106 members to 200 members; engage up to 900 students each year in our classes, of whom 5 percent will become members.
3. Maintain and continuously improve the technical infrastructure needed to manage access, social interaction and information exchange among our members, students and partners.

4. Ensure that we offer the fullest range of creative capabilities to our members by meeting high quality standards for purchased equipment, training courses, and amenities including storage, studios and recreational opportunities.
5. Carry out a capital campaign that will engage our entire community in setting the vision for a permanent downtown home. We will develop and execute a plan to raise the funds necessary to complete a building purchase by 2028.

Pillar Two: Access and Inclusion

At HatchSpace, we recognize that technology, structures, and even our ways of thinking are affected by a long history of exclusion. Craft is not neutral; craft traditions have marginalized the contributions of women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the arts and industry. The trades have not been welcoming occupations. We also recognize that the technologies central to much of our work generates a significant carbon footprint, contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect the lives of BIPOC communities. We are committed to an active, ongoing examination of our role in reconciliation and ally-ship with BIPOC and other marginalized communities.

Over the next five years HatchSpace will become a beloved refuge for woodworkers of all backgrounds. We will be a place where women, Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and GNC members share their fullest creative expression and bring their woodworking dreams to life. As HatchSpace grows locally and regionally, we will expand our member base and our service impact; we will become an ever more welcoming space responsive to the needs and aspirations of all, including women, BIPOC, GNC members and other marginalized communities.

By 2028...

HatchSpace will be a 200-member strong organization that is representative of all members of the communities we serve and the many creative traditions within them. HatchSpace will be governed by a diverse board, led by staff who reflect the diversity of our members, supported by volunteers of all backgrounds, and attract members who reflect the many diverse groups who make southern Vermont, southeastern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts their home. As an ally organization we will work with women-, BIPOC-, and GNC-led organizations to become ever more responsive to their voices in our work. Our communication and our brand will reflect the diversity among our members and the inclusive practices that power our community.

How We'll Do It

1. We'll expand the number of seats on our Board of Directors, from 7 to at least 11; we'll expand our National Advisory board from 4 to at least 7 members. We'll ensure that we are recruiting for and filling these seats with representation among historically marginalized groups including women and members who identify as BIPOC and GNC.
2. HatchSpace will perform an annual policy review to ensure that our bylaws and organization policies are aligned with our commitment to inclusion and equity. We will improve them where gaps are identified.
3. We will ensure that our staff (full-, part-time, and contractors) reflect our commitment to inclusion of the full diversity of the communities we serve.
4. HatchSpace will adopt member engagement practices that create safe spaces for community-building, organizing, and creative expression among our women, BIPOC and GNC members.
5. We will ensure that our strategic messaging reflects our commitment to inclusion of women, BIPOC and GNC members in our work; our brand, website and collateral will embody our commitment.

Pillar Three: Life-long Learning

We will enrich our community by providing unmatched opportunities for learning at all stages in life, from families with children to retirees. We'll offer exciting, affordable, and accessible learning experiences in traditional and contemporary woodworking processes, tools and materials. HatchSpace will attract the region's most gifted and exciting instructors to offer workshops and classes that expand the boundaries of our imagination, inspire the next generation of woodworkers, and meet local and regional employment needs.

HatchSpace will increase the breadth, depth and quality of our formal and informal learning opportunities. We'll provide differentiated, high quality instruction for families and their children, high school and college students, companies and their employees, and lifelong learners. Through partner collaboration we'll reach non-traditional and vulnerable populations with programs that cultivate the therapeutic, developmental, and psychological benefits of woodworking.

By 2028...

Lead the region in providing standards- and credential-aligned hands-on learning opportunities for learners of all ages. We'll offer more than 20 classes each month that provide over 900 in-person students each year with the skills they need to build knowledge, confidence, creativity and livelihoods in woodworking.

How We'll Do It

1. Recruit, train and continually develop a diverse, dynamic and irresistible cohort of instructors, growing our team from 24 to 50 in the years ahead.
2. Develop at least 6 standards-aligned curriculum units that ensure we are meeting the needs of students who seek workforce/skills development and training opportunities in woodworking careers.
3. Explore, experiment with, and adopt new methods of instruction that respond to immediate and long-term distance learning opportunities with the potential to make some areas in our facility suitable for recording online learning content.
4. Foster working partnerships with at least 3 companies, 3 local organizations, and 3 philanthropic leaders and government agencies, helping us reach new audiences, expand our value as a service organization, and deepen our education impact in meaningful ways.
5. Work with up to 3 social service organizations to provide ongoing individual and group experiences for vulnerable and non-traditional students who may be or are at risk of experiencing homelessness, addiction, and other challenging setbacks.

Pillar Four: Livelihood Support

HatchSpace will empower more entrepreneurs in the woodworking space to succeed by surrounding them with tools for prototyping within an environment that lowers startup risk. We will cultivate the networks that help them find talent, develop their products, and access markets. HatchSpace will be recognized as a dynamic environment for open innovation and an important regional platform for entrepreneurial activity in woodworking. We will serve as a key ally in filling growing worker shortages in the woodworking industry and other trades by providing skills training, professional development and employee benefits to local employers. We will help match the talent that comes through our doors with open positions in the region.

HatchSpace will build the physical, human and program infrastructure entrepreneurs need in order to grow. We'll find creative ways to help startups prototype products, develop manufacturing processes, and create tailored learning programs in partnership with regional resource organizations. HatchSpace will cultivate the relationships and networks startups need to access talent, capital, and supply, manufacturing, and distribution chains.

HatchSpace also recognizes that the growth of small and medium sized forest products businesses in the region is constrained by worker shortages. Turnover, combined with recruitment and retention challenges in the rural labor market, makes it difficult for many small and medium-sized companies in the woodworking industry to grow. HatchSpace will address this gap in the coming years by developing courses that meet employer needs through hands-on learning experiences that meet industry standards.

By 2028...

HatchSpace will be an essential resource within an ecosystem of people, organizations, and resources that empower woodworking entrepreneurs to build new businesses around their ideas. We'll provide support for dozens of home-based and early stage woodworkers to test their ideas, build prototypes, and launch new ventures.

HatchSpace will also be a valued partner in the delivery of workforce development and training programs for local and regional employers. In ongoing collaboration with our members, skilled instructors and community partners, HatchSpace will offer a consistent calendar of high quality training courses in key industry areas such as workplace safety, computer aided design, and wood manufacturing. HatchSpace will also support worker retention and growth by developing exciting group learning experiences that meet the personal and professional development needs of employees.

How We'll Do It

1. Provide at least one networking event each quarter designed to help creative entrepreneurs share their ideas, connecting with one another and regional resources.
2. Support at least 10 entrepreneurs each year with tailored access to the spaces, tools and resources that they need to develop their products and launch new ventures.
3. Recruit and engage at least a dozen advisors—including investors—who provide consistent, high-quality coaching and mentoring to woodworking startups.
4. Support workforce training by offering at least 6 "essentials" courses that prepare

students with skills that meet a clear industry demand and at least one quarterly training course that delivers an industry-standard certification for 25 participants.

5. Develop a menu of at least 4 unique group learning experiences that engage as many as 12 employees at a time in personal and professional advancement opportunities.

Pillar Five: Nurture a Movement

Founded and built in a rural New England town with a mission of strengthening our community through woodworking, HatchSpace has begun to experience first hand the ways we can contribute to rural renewal. In the coming years we will take what we have learned about growing a community fabrication hub and “bottle it up” with the goal of inspiring similarly stressed rural communities. We will develop a fee-for-service technical assistance offering that will make insights from our operations and growth useful and adaptable to leaders in rural communities. We will partner with a limited number of communities to help them build independently owned and operated community fabrication spaces linked to a growing national movement to renew rural communities and restore the recognition of careers in the trades as satisfying, flexible, and well-paying.

HatchSpace will document our core operations – systems, tools, protocols, and essential documents – and tie them together into a series of toolkits that support each stage of growth for a community fabrication space. Beginning with early scoping and community-building exercises and ending with strategic growth mapping tools, the basic toolkits will be provided to rural partners for free. HatchSpace will support a limited number of these communities with direct technical assistance to nurture their growth and success. We will become the host of a national network of rural fabrication spaces that contribute to the social, cultural, and economic vitality of rural communities.

By 2028...

HatchSpace will be a national resource for inspiration, insight and assistance to rural organizations who seek to enliven their communities with local fabrication hubs. We will provide inspiration through public speaking engagements, media appearances, technical assistance through a well-documented series of “how to” toolkits, and direct support for a limited number of aligned community organizations. We will help to “grow a movement” for rural renewal through creativity and the trades by lending our voice, our expertise, and our resources to communities across the country.

How We'll Do It

1. Invest in the documentation and production of printed materials that explain our model and provide templated instruction for early planning, opening and operations, and growth of rural fabrication spaces.
2. Raise the visibility of the HatchSpace story and technical assistance resources by developing and implementing a rural outreach strategy. Present our story to at least 3 national conferences each year, with at least 1 keynote presentation each year.
3. Develop an "affiliate" program through which HatchSpace makes available our technical assistance tool kit to organizations in rural communities across the country.
4. Select up to 3 rural organizations each year with whom to work closely in the development of "partner" spaces aligned with the HatchSpace vision, mission and programs.
5. Support ongoing connection and resource-sharing among affiliate and partner organizations by facilitating a network for rural renewal.

ABOUT US

At HatchSpace we're committed to fostering the experiences of belonging, creativity, learning and joy through woodworking. We're doing this locally by building an irresistible space for woodworking in downtown Brattleboro. Taking what we've learned over the years, we'll contribute to the growth a national movement for rural renewal by inspiring, connecting and nurturing local spaces across the country.

From Northampton to Hartland, Keene to Dover HatchSpace serves a growing number of people who are finding purpose, joy and connection through woodworking. Today we are an energetic 100-member community that empowers anyone to build things they love. We host a dozen classes each month for novice to experienced woodworkers. And we run outreach and service projects that connect schools, community organizations, and businesses to the benefits of woodworking.

Join with us!