

Vermont Community Climate Change Grant Program

Background and Guidance

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the Vermont Community Climate Change Grant Program is to enable Vermont communities to implement measures that will improve energy efficiency and reduce their Greenhouse Gas emissions in the near term. Grants of up to \$12,000 will be awarded to Vermont municipalities and non-profit organizations to support community based projects that will be completed within twelve months of the grant award.

Background

On December 5, 2005, Governor Jim Douglas issued Executive Order 07-05 establishing a Governor's Commission on Climate Change (Commission) – a broad-based group of six Vermont leaders – charged with developing a comprehensive Vermont Climate Change Action Plan. Released in October 2007, the Commission's final report identifies specific recommendations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont, including expanding Vermont's efficiency efforts from electricity to all-fuels, educating the public about climate change, protecting and promoting working farms and forests, improving transportation efficiency, and conducting critical research on climate change in Vermont.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, through its Department of Environmental Conservation (Department), is the lead agency responsible for overseeing the State's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Department is interested in helping Vermont communities improve energy efficiency as an effective means for reducing greenhouse gases, saving tax dollars, and benefitting local budgets. Vermont communities are ready to address the challenge of energy efficiency and climate change. Vermont currently has 60 town energy committees or comparable local volunteer groups helping their communities improve energy efficiency and promote low-carbon or no-carbon emitting energy sources.

Eligible Projects

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Increasing energy efficiency in municipal buildings, street lights, and vehicle fleets;
- Reducing energy use in new and existing buildings, including appliance efficiency improvement projects, weatherization projects, and green building, and projects to promote efficiency in rental markets;
- Change-out of inefficient fossil fuel using equipment and devices (e.g., programs to retrofit vehicles with battery hybrid technology or idle reduction technology, exchange gas-powered mowers and landscape equipment for electric-powered equipment, replacing and removing from service old wood-fired boilers and wood stoves with cleaner advanced units);

- Improving public and alternative transportation,
- Investment in renewable energy, including the purchase and installation of solar thermal and photovoltaic cells on buildings, and construction associated with the production of energy from wind, solar, and biomass;
- Multi-town efforts to foster efficiency improvements, such as regional transportation issues; and
- Other projects that meet the program goals and award criteria.

Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients are limited to Vermont municipalities and non-profit organizations. The Department encourages town energy committees and other local energy groups that are not registered as non-profit organizations to partner with their local municipality or a non-profit organization for the purposes of this grant. Indicate in the application if this is a partnership project, and identify the primary (municipality or non-profit) and secondary (energy committee, etc.) partners.

Application Review Criteria

The following criteria will be utilized in reviewing and scoring all applications. Applicants should provide documentation that demonstrates how their project meets these criteria.

1. Measurable reductions in energy consumption and/or greenhouse gas emissions. Quantifiable estimates of energy savings and/or greenhouse gas emission reductions from the proposed project. To the greatest degree possible, these improvements should be measurable and verifiable. **(30 points)**

- Indicate how the project will reduce energy consumption or greenhouse gas emissions, and to the extent possible, identify the amount of reductions anticipated in terms of tons of carbon emitted or amount of energy or fuel conserved.
- Explain how the anticipated reductions will be measured and verified.
- Indicate whether an energy audit or study has previously been performed and how the project relates to the recommendations of the energy audit or study. Applicants are encouraged to utilize established resources, such as Efficiency Vermont, to obtain professional guidance on identifying the most cost effective ways in which to reduce energy consumption.

2. Transferability. The degree to which the proposed project will lead to further energy savings and greenhouse gas emissions by transfer of the project approach to other municipalities and organizations. **(20 points)**

- Explain how the project, once completed, can be implemented by others to achieve similar reductions in energy consumption and emissions.
- Identify other places where similar projects have been successfully implemented.

3. Project Approach. The viability of the proposed project approach, how well the applicant proposes to achieve project results, and innovation of approach. **(30 points)**

- Explain how you will ensure a high likelihood of success for the project. Include the basis for identifying the type of project you are proposing, why this project was selected as one that is viable and how you will manage the project to increase the level of success.
- Indicate what is innovative about your project. Consideration is given to projects that are innovative as to the technology used, approach to organization or method of implementation.
- Describe the community that will be served by your project. Explain how the community will be served and discuss the benefits to be derived.

4. Cost-effectiveness. The relative cost-effectiveness for achieving the desired level of energy efficiency improvements. **(10 points)**

- Describe why this project is a more cost effective way to achieve reductions in energy consumption or greenhouse gas emissions.
- Indicate whether other alternatives were considered.

5. Public Education and Involvement. Opportunities for involving the public and potential stakeholders to promote awareness of the project and its goals. **(10 points)**

- Describe what level of community involvement took place during the process of identifying potential energy efficiency projects for your community and selecting the project that you are requesting assistance with.
- Describe what steps will be taken to increase community awareness of this project during its implementation and to inform the public of the purpose of the project.
- Explain how the project outcomes will be communicated to the community.

Proposal Format

Applicants are required to use the Department's approved [application form](#) which may be downloaded as a Word document. All requested information must be provided and any required documentation must be submitted with the application. The Department reserves the right to reject incomplete applications and applications that do not comply with the required format. Limit your discussion of how the project will meet the criteria to no more than one page for each of the five criteria. Limit attachments to only those that are necessary to support the application and please use double sided printing to conserve resources and ease review by the Department.

One signed application is to be submitted to the below address. Submission of the application electronically is encouraged and preferred. Electronic submissions may be emailed to the below email address, or submitted by regular mail to the physical mailing address on a CD format. Applications must be postmarked, or emailed, on or before the application due dates established by the Department.

Send the application, and all attachments, to:

Don Einhorn
Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
103 South Main Street
West Office Building
Waterbury, VT 05671

or

anr.VTClimateChangeGrant@state.vt.us

Grant Amount

Grants of up to \$12,000 per project will be awarded on a competitive basis to applicants meeting the eligibility criteria. A total of \$360,000 is available for the combined funding rounds in the 2009 grant cycle. Each individual applicant, or specific partnership, is limited to one grant award in the 2009 grant cycle. Grant applicants are required to provide a cash match of 10%. Generally, payments under the grant will be on a reimbursement basis. However, there is the ability to obtain advance payment of up to 50% of the grant amount for projects that require advance payment in order to secure materials, equipment or services.

Ineligible Costs

Grant monies may not be used for:

- Financial assistance to individuals;
- Work on private land where written permission has not been granted;
- Work on private land where the landowner charges a fee;
- Payment that is in conflict with 501(C)(3) regulations (such as payment to board members);
- Employee benefits of sub-recipients; or
- Projects that are not in compliance with relevant state and federal laws and regulations.

Grant Application Deadlines and Award Timetables

This grant program will be administered in two separate funding rounds utilizing the following timetables. It is anticipated that 15 grants will be awarded for each funding round, for a total of 30 grants in 2009.

First Funding Round

Deadline for proposal submission:	February 2, 2009
Applicant selection announced:	March 9, 2009
Grant awards signed:	April 30, 2009
Project period:	May 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010
Grantee project report due:	June 1, 2010

Second Funding Round

Deadline for proposal submission:	May 1, 2009
Applicant selection announced:	June 4, 2009
Grant awards signed:	July 30, 2009
Project period:	August 1 2009 – July 30, 2010
Grantee project report due:	September 1, 2010

The above dates may be extended depending on staff resources, applicant response to this proposal request, and other special circumstances.

Purchasing and Contracts

The following State of Vermont purchasing and contract guidelines must be followed in all instances where applicants will be purchasing equipment, materials or supplies, or contracting for services, unless indicated otherwise.

- a. For municipal projects, the procurement procedures that are currently in place for that municipality shall apply to all grant-related procurement activities and contract work.
- b. For not-for-profit grant recipients, the procurement procedures are based on the total contract amount or on the total cost of materials, equipment, or services to be purchased or contracted as follows:
 - i. \$0-\$2,500: No bids are required. Verbal agreement is acceptable. It is recommended that different suppliers be checked to be sure you are getting the best price.*
 - ii. \$2,501-\$14,999: Documentation required to show that the sponsor tried to obtain at least three written quotes.
 - iii. \$15,000 and Over: Formal written bids are required. Several suppliers must be given the opportunity to bid. The written bids received must be maintained in the grant recipient's files for audit purposes.

** Multiple purchasing is not permitted. For example, purchasing \$3,000.00 worth of needed materials in two \$1,500.00 lots to avoid soliciting three quotes as required above is not allowed.*

Project Budget

The project budget format on the application form must be utilized and must show the 10% cash match. Indirect costs are not permitted under this grant. This grant may be used to satisfy a match requirement for a larger grant that an applicant has previously been awarded, provided that the work for which this grant is a match has not yet been performed and further provided that the 10% match required by this grant is satisfied.

Project Reporting

Grantees will be required to submit a written report on their project results at the completion of the project period. Reports shall describe: actual results achieved, including the amounts of reductions in emissions or energy consumed; whether the actual results met, exceeded or fell short of the anticipated results; what were the reasons the results differed from those anticipated (if applicable); whether the project was completed within or outside the original budget and timeline, and why; what lessons were learned; how the project could be replicated elsewhere; and outreach and educational efforts. Project reports shall be limited to six pages or less, and may include photographs and news articles as attachments.

Resources

The following resources are recommended for assisting applicants with planning and estimating reductions in energy use or greenhouse gas emissions that may be achieved by projects they are proposing.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Climate Leaders
<http://www.epa.gov/climateleaders/resources/index.html>

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
<http://www.icleiusa.org/action-center/tools/cacp-software>

Efficiency Vermont
<http://www.encyvermont.com/pages/>

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol Initiative
http://www.ghgprotocol.org/files/ghg_project_protocol.pdf
<http://www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools/all-tools>

Environment Canada
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&n=ED3D58C4-1>