

Vermont Community Climate Change Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised March 26, 2009

Below you will find answers to frequently asked questions about the community climate change grant program. If you have a question that is not addressed, please e-mail your question to the following address. We will make every effort to post questions and answers in a timely manner.

E-mail questions to: anr.VTClimateChangeGrant@state.vt.us

Question 1: Are public school districts eligible to apply for a community climate change grant?

Answer: Yes. Public school districts are considered to be municipalities for the purpose of this program.

Question 2: When is the 10% cash match due?

Answer: The matching funds must be expended by the grant recipient during the approved project period.

Question 3: Hydro is not included in the eligible projects. Can hydro projects be considered for the climate change grants?

Answer: The list of eligible projects provides examples and is not an exhaustive list. Hydro projects are eligible for climate change grants provided that the grant recipient is a municipality or nonprofit, the project meets the review criteria, and the project is capable of being completed within the grant project period (e.g., May 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010).

Question 4: From the application, it looks like you're looking for big, single projects. East Montpelier is preparing an application for many smaller things that will, hopefully, result in the more efficient heating of town buildings. Should we be concentrating on big projects?

Answer: There is no preference for big single projects over a collection of smaller projects. What is important is showing that the project will achieve measurable reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and demonstrating how the project will otherwise meet the review criteria.

Question 5: The Climate Change website does not specifically include recycling activities as an example of an eligible project, and I just wanted to make sure that your team is aware of the connection between recycling and GGE.

Answer: The list of eligible projects provides examples and is not an exhaustive list. Recycling projects may be eligible for climate change grants provided that the grant recipient is a municipality or nonprofit, the project meets the review criteria, and the project is capable of being completed within the grant project period (e.g., May 1, 2009 – April 30, 2010).

Question 6: Are churches included among non-profit organizations eligible for the Vermont Community Climate Change Grants?

Churches are eligible to apply for the grants provided they are a non-profit organization.

Question 7: The email that I received from the VT Dept of Public Service and ANR's website both say the deadline for this grant application is Feb 2. But Vermont League of City and Town's (VLCT) newsletter says it is Jan 15, and I've read that same date in another newsletter. What is the correct due date?

The original date was January 15, 2009, however it was extended to allow adequate time for noticing and preparing the grant applications. Additionally, a second deadline for additional applications has been established on April 2, 2009. This was done to accommodate those organizations who may not have had adequate time to meet the first deadline. VLCT will be posting the revised dates in their next newsletter to help publicize this new information.

Question 8: We are investigating the Vermont Community Climate Change Grant Program. Under the section entitled Eligible Recipients, it talks about non-profits partnering with their local municipalities. It does not seem that partnering is a requirement; however, we wanted to make certain before we proceed.

Answer: Partnering is not required provided that the applicant is a non-profit or municipality. The partnering concept was developed to allow organizations that lack a formal structure or individuals to develop a submittal in conjunction with a municipality or non-profit.

Question 9: In reviewing the guidance for the grant program and application it is not clear if an energy audit with a host of recommendations in the case of a municipal building can be part of the application supported by the grant in addition to the primary use for bricks/motor. It seems to me that this is an essential precursor to developing baseline info and performance after the work is completed. And it would prioritize the improvements with the greatest bang for the buck. If it's not an allowable cost then a community will need to consider an

upfront cost for an audit or relying on some general assumptions – less quantifiable – as to what should be done. I'd like your thoughts.

Answer: Grants under this program are limited to costs associated with the implementation of actions that result in improved energy efficiency and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. While an energy audit is not a cost covered under this grant program, energy audits are encouraged as a technical resource for developing an application for implementation assistance under this grant program.

Question 10: If a group of three or four organizations partner together for a project in which the nonprofit organization is the lead applicant (the entity that will manage the funds and the project) does that preclude that nonprofit from being part of another partnership in which it is NOT the lead applicant and in which it will NOT receive funds through the proposed project? In short, in this "secondary" role the nonprofit would provide in-kind staff time (and possibly some cash match).

Answer: No, organizations or municipalities are not precluded from participating as a partner in more than one successful grant proposal. However, qualified entities are limited to receiving one grant as the project lead.

Question 11: I'm planning on requesting approximately \$9,000 to improve our off the grid system. The project we are proposing was designed by the energy consultant who has worked with us for many years and knows our system quite well. For us, it makes sense to have someone who knows the system do the labor. I'm wondering if it is necessary to get bids from other consultants, or if we can just have quotes from various suppliers for the equipment and materials we hope to purchase.

Answer: Three written quotes must be obtained when the proposed work will range from \$3,501-\$14,999 for a nonprofit grant applicant. (Please note the increased minimum from \$2,501 to \$3,501.) However, a grant applicant is not required to utilize the lowest quote. In instances where the lowest quote will not be used, the applicant must provide a reasonable explanation for utilizing a contractor that did not provide the lowest quote. Your example of utilizing a contractor that is familiar with your system would be reasonable if it will result in a benefit to your project.

Question 12: We are a non-profit that occupy and manage a municipal owned building. Are we, as a non-profit, eligible to apply for a grant for energy efficiency projects that would be made to the building even though it is owned by the town?

Answer: Yes.

Question 13: The energy efficiency improvements would be made as a part of a much larger project that will renovate and expand the building. Can we apply for a grant to cover the costs for the energy efficiency portion of the overall project?

Answer: Yes.

Question 14: Does our grant application need to be received by the Department by the due date, or is it acceptable that the application be postmarked by the due date?

Answer: It is acceptable for the application to be postmarked on or before the due date. (The due dates are February 2 for the first round and April 1 for the second round.) We are discouraging people from hand-delivering applications in the interest of conserving resources.

Question 15: We are looking at an electrified street legal battery-run utility vehicle to replace many of the uses of our current 1993 Ford F250 pickup truck (gas) and our 2004 Chevrolet 1 Ton Dump Truck (diesel). In searching the internet I have been able to find a CO₂ calculator for passenger type vehicles and pickup trucks; however, I have not been able to locate something similar for dump trucks. Do you know of a source, either on the internet or an individual, who might be able to help us with various calculations?

Answer: Gasoline and diesel vehicles emit a variety of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other pollutants during their operation. As the engine burns the fuel, it releases GHGs such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Combustion of diesel fuel also releases fine particles of black carbon that have a warming effect on the atmosphere. In addition, vehicles can release other GHGs through non-combustion processes like air conditioning refrigerant leaks.

CO₂ is emitted by vehicles in much larger quantities than other GHGs. As a result, estimating CO₂ emissions will provide a reasonable estimate of GHG emissions. In addition, for the purposes of these calculations, we will assume complete combustion.

Estimating the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from a fossil-fueled vehicle requires that you know the following pieces of information:

- The amount of CO₂ released by burning a gallon of fuel

- For gasoline this equals 19.5 lbs of CO₂ emitted per gallon
- For diesel this equals 22.2 lbs of CO₂ emitted per gallon
- What is the fuel economy of the vehicle (in miles per gallon)?
- How many miles is the vehicle driven annually?

Use the following equations to estimate CO₂ emissions from a specific vehicle:

- 1) (Miles driven annually) / (miles per gallon) = Gallons of fuel burned annually
- 2) (Gallons of fuel burned) x (lbs of CO₂ emitted per gallon from the fuel type your vehicle uses) = Lbs of CO₂ per year emitted by your vehicle

When comparing this to an electric vehicle, don't forget to account for power plant emissions from generating the electricity that will be used to charge the batteries of the electric vehicle. On average, roughly 1.26 lbs of CO₂ is released for a kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity used in Vermont. Now all you need to know is roughly how many kWh the electric vehicle will consume in a year (the manufacturer should be able to assist with this).

(Please note that if grant funds are used to support the acquisition of a motor vehicle, it must comply with all state and federal motor vehicle laws and that the State of Vermont holds no liability toward its safety or performance.)

Question 16: Is the cash match requirement 10% of the total project budget or 10% of the grant amount?

Answer: The cash match requirement is 10% of the grant amount.

Question 17: Do we need to include the estimates from contractors with the grant application or can we seek estimates after the grant is awarded?

Proposed Answer: You do not need to submit written cost estimates with your grant application. However, you are required to explain your proposed budget, and are therefore encouraged to obtain estimates in order to formulate a realistic budget.

Question 18: We are a start-up and have registered as a nonprofit with the State of Vermont. However, we have not yet received our IRS determination letter. We have a MOU with another Vermont based nonprofit (a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit) for them to act as our fiscal sponsor, receiving grants and donations on our behalf for our sole use. Should our fiscal sponsor be the applicant for our grant even though we will be implementing the proposed project?

Answer: Yes, your fiscal sponsor should be the applicant and you should list your organization as the partner who will implement the project.

Question 19: What document should nonprofits submit with their application to show proof of nonprofit status?

Answer: The certificate of nonprofit status issued by the State of Vermont.

Question 20: Can a discount obtained on services, materials or equipment be used to satisfy the 10% cash match requirement?

Answer: No.

Question 21: Can a Vermont registered nonprofit that has not obtained a 501(c)(3) designation act as a fiscal agent for this grant?

Answer: Yes.

Question 22: Can a Vermont nonprofit act as a fiscal agent on multiple grants?

Answer: Yes, provided that the projects are being carried out by different organizations.

Question 23: We are working on a project that will have a 3 to 4 month trial period. Due to the nature of the new technology involved with this project, this gives us a chance to back out if the trial is deemed unsuccessful. Our question is...In the unlikely event that we were not going to purchase the trial equipment, and we were awarded a portion of the grant, would the grant terms and conditions be flexible enough to allow us to return the grant money or keep it whatever the outcome of the trial may be?

Answer: Grants cannot be awarded for "trial periods." If a grant were awarded for the actual project, as opposed to the trial period, the award would be revoked if the project was not completed. Any payment made under the grant would have to be returned.

Question 24: Our town is considering upgrading 10 street lights from Mercury Vapor to High Pressure Sodium. Barton Electric estimates the cost at less than \$2000. Would this be eligible for your grant funds?

Answer: Yes, this would be an eligible project assuming that the upgrade will achieve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Question 25: Can a first round applicant that is not funded re-apply in the second round?

Answer: Yes.

Question 26: How much funding is available for each funding round?

Answer: Approximately \$180,000 for each round.

Question 27: If a grant application requests partial funding for a project (i.e. \$12,000 in grant funding for a project with a total budget of \$15,000) and the other funding is still in the works, will a \$12,000 grant be awarded and if so is it set up conditionally?

Answer: Applicants are responsible for securing all funds needed beyond the grant award to implement the proposed project, including their 10% cash match. A grant will be revoked if the project is not implemented. Projects that do not appear to have their funding secured at the time of the application may not be considered for award.

Question 28: Will projects be partially funded if funding is not available for the entire grant amount requested?

Answer: No.

Question 29: The name of our group is registered in the State of Vermont as a Trade Name. However, it does not have a 501(c) (3) status. It is an ad hoc nonprofit. Are we eligible for a grant from you under this status?

Answer: No. You must partner with a Vermont nonprofit organization or a municipality in order to be eligible to apply for a grant.