



Climate Catalysts: A Community Leadership Program



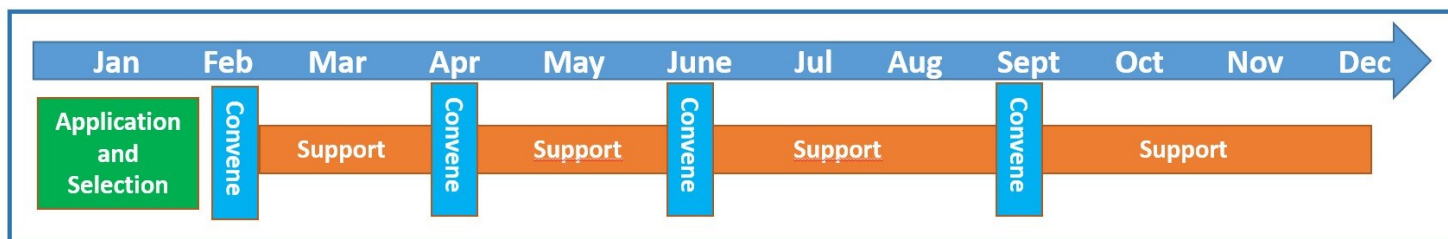
The key ingredient in successful community projects is an effective and persistent local champion. The Climate Catalysts Leadership Program supports the power of individuals and their communities to achieve transformational climate economy progress.

Facing the climate challenge means mobilizing at all levels of human organization. Strong and inspirational leaders are key in sparking and unifying around collective action. With hundreds of tight-knit communities, Vermont is a place that can model unique, powerful, and replicable local actions for growing the climate economy. **The Climate Catalysts Program will bring together 10 local leaders from Vermont communities for a year-long process focused on building peer connections, strengthening leadership skills and providing project development support.** Participants will design and implement a local project as a focus of their program participation. Program partners will provide material support and expertise. The goal will be to move projects from concept to reality while investing in leaders who provide multi-faceted service to their communities.

Ideal candidates for the program will come from large and small communities, all walks of life, and have leadership experience ranging from decades to none-at-all. Their focus and project may be part of their paid work or something they are doing as an elected/appointed leader or as an unaffiliated volunteer. All that we ask is that they have a deep commitment to the work and time to dedicate to their project. Projects should be both ambitious and achievable. The can be a new idea or something already in development. Examples include a neighbor-to-neighbor weatherization campaign, a community solar project, energy improvements at a school or municipal building, electrification of vehicle fleets, mowers, or heating systems, strengthening downtown, starting an energy committee and developing an energy action plan, hosting an e-bike lending library, modern wood heating projects, hosting a series of workshops, **or whatever else participants can imagine that grows the economy and tackles climate change.**

2020 Timeline

A simple application will be available in early January with a deadline of January 27. Each of the four in-person sessions will take place on Thursdays from 5 to 9 PM, on February 13, April 9, June 4 and September 17. For more details feel free to be in touch with Jon Copans at jon@vtrural.org or (802) 225-6393. Information will also be available here – <https://www.vtrural.org/climatecatalysts>



Curriculum

Strengthening Leadership and Building Connections - Strong leaders understand and unleash the power of connection. Participants will build new connections within the cohort and with potential partners and will learn to strengthen connections with home communities and stakeholders. Four in-person sessions make up the core of this program:

Session 1 - Feb. 13	Build connection and cohesion within the cohort through one-on-one, small group, and full group exercises. Over dinner host a group discussion with 3 successful leaders invited to share their story and personal reflections.
Session 2 - April 9	Build deeper cohesion within the cohort and welcome, connect with, and learn from key partners.
Session 3 - June 4	Build communication skills and strategies by working together on effective techniques and connecting with communications experts.
Session 4 - Sept. 17	This session will focus on effectively leading a group and engaging stakeholders and community members. Participants will be asked to bring along a community partner.

Sample Session 1 Schedule:

5:00 – Welcome, introductions and orientation
 5:30 – Full group exercise – reflections on leadership
 6:00 – Dinner and panel discussion featuring 3 successful local leaders sharing their story
 7:00 – 3 x Partner exercises - elevator pitches
 8:00 – Small group exercise – action planning
 8:30 – Full group reflections and wrap-up

	Peer Connections	Leadership Skills	Partners and Resources	Project Development
Goal	To foster strong peer connections to facilitate the sharing of subject matter expertise, skills, and general moral support.	To provide some basic building blocks of strong leadership - communications, diplomacy, humility, self-awareness, ability to inspire.....	To provide an overview of policies and programs and to establish connections to partners that are key in moving a project forward.	To provide direct support to program participants as they work to design and implement their local project.
Methods	Mentors/Buddies	Speakers	Speakers	One-on-one consultation
	Group/Partner Exercises	Group/Partner Exercises	Networking/ Introductions	Connection with partners
	Email/Networking Tools	Materials/Resources	Webinars	Research/Development
			Materials/Resources	Possible Financial Support

Between the four sessions there will be regular one-on-one consultations (with VCRD staff and with cohort partners) and full group zoom meetings. There also will be short assignments to prepare for each session. Much of this work including exercises, consultations and assignments will be focused on planning and implementing participant projects.



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