



Climate Economy Model Communities Program

Request for Proposals

The Vermont Climate Economy Model Communities Program welcomes proposals from Vermont towns and local leaders interested in increasing local economic prosperity by working together to identify community solutions to address climate change. Two communities will be selected to work with the program in 2017. A brief attached application is due March 22nd, selections will be made in early April, and the program will be initiated in a first community in April.

Program Background and Goals

The Vermont Climate Economy Model Communities Program will help communities build and implement state-of-the-art rural development in a time of climate change. The ultimate goal is to create “climate smart” communities, leveraging rapid change by implementing efficiencies efforts, transportation system transformation, energy generation, and entrepreneurship and business incubation to spur economic progress. The Model Communities Program is a partnership including Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD), Green Mountain Power (GMP), Efficiency Vermont (EVT), the Vermont Electric Coop (VEC), Washington Electric Coop, other utilities, and other partners. The Program will provide concentrated services with two communities annually to model effective change at a rapid rate.

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program evolved from a recommendation of the Vermont Climate Change Economy Council, a diverse group of stakeholders convened in 2015 to develop a platform to advance Vermont’s climate economy. By embracing the creative shift to innovative climate economy solutions, Vermont communities will be well-positioned to model rural development in the face of significant economic and environmental upheaval. This will happen by identifying and implementing strategies to reduce emissions and mitigate impacts while maintaining local leadership and encouraging economic innovation and local business incubation as foundations for future prosperity. With our ingenuity, history of innovation, and assets in business and organizational leadership, Vermont can be a national leader for business development and success in modeling economic answers to the challenge of climate change. There is a tremendous opportunity here for Vermont communities to take the lead in modeling economic solutions to climate change and to share their stories in the state and beyond.

Program Details

Working with the local electric and efficiency utilities along with other partners, VCRD will facilitate customized services in support of community goals. VCRD’s facilitation will include community priority setting and local project implementation by connecting local leadership with the expertise and offerings of partners.

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program will advance initiatives that may include:

- Home and business energy efficiency, energy transformation and renewable energy generation
- Transportation systems improvement
- Smart growth development
- Working lands business development
- Local grid resilience
- Trails, paths, and alternative transportation
- Community-scale renewable energy generation and storage
- Business incubation and business networks
- Waste diversion and utilization
- Local economic development, branding, and marketing

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program will:

- Connect towns with skilled facilitation and top level climate economy expertise and resources to enable communities to advance efficiency and renewable energy development, transportation transitions, smart growth, business incubation and other initiatives.
- Work with households and businesses and the community as a whole to establish baseline energy cost estimates including electric, transportation, heating/cooling, cooking, or water heating costs. Communities may utilize baseline energy costs and a community greenhouse gas emissions inventory to establish goals and track progress.
- Offer, in collaboration with utilities and other partners, to support energy transformation efforts that may include: efficient home, business, and municipal building retrofits and whole building services; lighting design; improving or upgrading heating, cooling, and ventilation systems; installation of efficient water heating systems; agricultural or industrial equipment improvements; and electronics and appliance upgrades.
- Work with the community to implement renewable energy projects in municipal operations, businesses, and homes including solar, wind, small hydro, biomass, or others depending on the desire of the community, the needs of the local grid, and the appropriateness of each alternative energy strategy for the local area.
- Work with local and statewide partners to identify potential funding sources for local projects as needed.
- Support communities in telling the town story and building the local brand.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to VLITE, the High Meadows Fund, and VCRD's members for supporting the Model Communities Program.

Timeline

- Request for Proposals published: February 17, 2017
- Deadline for applications: March 22, 2017
- Selection of participating towns: Early April, 2017
- Program kick-off in first selected community: May, 2017

Who Can Apply?

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program is looking for applications from towns and/or community groups that will lead the way in building a strong and diverse local team to identify priorities, work with partners, plan for implementation and help make resource decisions to advance the climate economy in their locale. For the first year of the program, towns with a population between 1,000 and 10,000 are eligible for participation. While a select board or city council need not take the lead on an application, a demonstration of municipal support for participation in this opportunity is important. Specific criteria for evaluation are as follows:

- Responsiveness to the Request for Proposals
- Demonstrated support and willingness to participate from representatives of a broad and diverse cross section of the community. Naming of potential steering committee members and letters of support provide an opportunity to address this.
- Appreciation that a vibrant climate economy should directly address the challenges faced by low income members of the community.
- Community understanding of the economic opportunity represented by tackling climate change and a vision for some of the local initiatives that could emerge from the facilitation offered by this program.

Application Process

The application questions and required cover sheets information are listed on the following pages. Place the cover sheet, the narrative, and the letters of support into a single PDF or Word file and submit to: Jon Copans at jon@vtrural.org Applications are due by 5:00 pm on March 22nd. As questions are received and responded to, a Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated and posted here: <http://vtrural.org/model-communities>

Questions?

- If you have any questions about the application, please contact Jon Copans at (802) 225-6393.
- If you have questions specific to formatting or problems with submission, please contact Margaret McCoy at (802) 223-6091.



The Vermont Council on Rural Development

PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601 | www.vtrural.org/programs/climate-economy

Application

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on March 22nd

Please limit your application to three pages plus cover sheets and letters of support.

Cover Sheets

The success of the Climate Economy Initiative will depend upon the active participation from all sectors of a community. We need to know that the appropriate support exists locally to take full advantage of the opportunity that this program represents. Please fill out the cover sheets that clearly commit lead contact people for the Climate Economy Initiative in your community, and the organizations / businesses they represent:

Overall Project Lead [REQUIRED]:

Name:	
Organization, if applicable:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Representative from Town Government [REQUIRED]:

Name:	
Position:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Business Leader [REQUIRED]:

Name:	
Company:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Any other community and business leaders who will participate in the local steering committee [UP TO 4 NAMES REQUIRED – more may be added, here and later]

Name:	
Organization, if applicable:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Name:	
Organization, if applicable:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Name:	
Organization, if applicable:	
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Name:	
Organization, if applicable:	
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Application Narrative

In narrative form, please address the following items, up to three total pages in length.

- Briefly describe the core goals your community has for the Climate Economy Model Communities Program.
- Describe existing needs in your community and how your participation will result in moving projects forward to meet these needs.
- Please describe the organizations and local networks (even if informal) that might champion these types of efforts.

Letters of Support

Please provide three (and no more than three) letters of support for your town's application to the Climate Economy Model Communities Program.

We want thoughtful letters from community leaders and/or potential partners. When reviewing these letters, the selection committee will be looking for:

- Understanding of the Climate Economy Model Communities Program
- Clear description of the desire and need for the Climate Economy Model Communities Program in your community
- Commitment to moving forward and sustaining the projects developed during the model communities process

Please include contact information on each letter so that the selection committee may follow up as needed.

Submissions

Electronic submissions only. Please submit the cover sheets, application, and letters of support in a single Word or PDF file to: Jon Copans at jon@vtrural.org.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on March 22nd

Decisions will be announced in early April and work in the first selected community will begin in April, 2017.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the requested information, please contact Jon Copans at (802) 225-6393. If you have questions specific to formatting or problems with submission, please contact Margaret McCoy at (802) 223-6091.