



Vermont Climate Economy Initiative Model Communities Program

Request for 2018 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 home, business, and community solutions to address climate change. Two communities will be selected to work with the program in 2018. A brief attached application is due December 18. After in-person meetings with finalists, selection of two communities will happen by January 19. The program will be initiated for the first community in February. Work with a second community will launch over the summer 2018.

Program Background and Goals

The Vermont Climate Economy Model Communities Program is designed to help communities build and implement priority actions that increase economic vitality and affordability in a time of climate change. The ultimate goal is to help communities model rapid change by implementing energy efficiency, transportation system transformation, renewable energy generation, working lands development, and entrepreneurship and business incubation to spur economic progress. The Model Communities Program is a partnership including Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD), Efficiency Vermont (EVT), Vermont utilities, and other partners. The Program provides 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 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 challenges. 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 covering:

- Home and business energy efficiency, energy transformation, and renewable energy generation.

Depending on local prioritization, the program may also advance initiatives including:

- Transportation systems improvement.
- Smart growth development.
- Working lands business development.
- Trails, paths, and alternative transportation.
- Local grid resilience, community-scale renewable energy generation, and storage.
- Business incubation and business networks.
- Waste diversion and utilization.

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program will:

- Provide towns with skilled facilitation and connect them to top level climate economy expertise and resources 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 use estimates including electric, transportation, heating/cooling, cooking, or water heating costs. Communities may utilize baseline energy use to establish goals and track progress.
- In collaboration with utilities and other partners 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 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, the Sustainable Future Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, the Bay and Paul Foundations, the Oakland Foundation, and VCRD's members for supporting the Model Communities Program.

Timeline

- Deadline for applications: December 18, 2017.
- Selection of 3-5 finalists: January 2, 2018.
- In-person community meetings: January 2-15, 2018.
- Final selection of two 2018 communities: Jan. 19, 2018.



Who Can Apply?

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program is looking for applications from towns and/or community groups that will work with VCRD to build strong and diverse local participation to identify priorities, work with partners, plan for implementation, and help make resource decisions to advance the climate economy in their locale. Towns with a population between 1,000 and 15,000 are eligible for participation. While a select board or city council need not take the lead on an application, a formal 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.
- Demonstration that a vibrant climate economy should directly address the challenges faced by low income members of the community and a plan for including all voices in the process.
- How this program fits into your community's vision, the economic opportunity you see represented by tackling climate change, and insights on local initiatives that could emerge from this program.

Application Process

The application questions and required cover sheets 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 Dec 18. After a review of written applications, 3 to 5 finalists will be selected. Meetings with applicant teams for the finalist communities will happen in advance of final selection of 2 communities for 2018. During the application process, check here <http://vtrural.org/model-communities> for answers to Frequently Asked Questions, details about a webinar for potential applicants in early December, and a way to sign-up for ongoing updates.

Questions? If you have any questions about the application and the program, contact Jon Copans at (802) 225-6393.

Application

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on December 18.

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 Application Lead [REQUIRED]:

Name:	
Affiliation, 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:	
Affiliation, if applicable:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Name:	
Affiliation, if applicable:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Name:	
Affiliation, if applicable:	
Phone:	
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Name:	
Affiliation, 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.
- Describe the organizations and local networks (even if informal) that will help drive participation in the program and specific strategies you may utilize to reach those populations including low income members of the community that might not normally be drawn into the process.
- Acknowledge the program requirement that participating communities cover the cost and logistics for a mailing to the full community and a community meal.

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 Dec. 18

Finalists will be announced by January 2, 2018 and the two selected communities will be announced by January 19. Organizing in a first community will begin in February 2018.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the requested information and program more generally, please contact Jon Copans at (802) 225-6393.