



State Agency ARPA Tour Windham County 2/6/2023

The following summary, prepared by the Southern Vermont Economy Project (SVEP), is based on notes taken by BDCC Staff at a visit of VT state agencies to Windham County on February 6, 2023. Meetings took place at the Old School Community Center in Wilmington in the morning, and at the Bellows Falls Opera House lower theater in the afternoon. For those who were unable to attend, and to help those who were there access the day's information in one place, the notes that follow include links to referenced programs.

These notes reflect mainly the topics that were addressed on 2/6. For help with funding projects, we encourage you to reach out to local planning partners (such as [Windham Regional Commission](#)) and contact the state agency in your project area, as well as other prospective funders, to inform them of your project and funding needs.

For questions around using or managing local ARPA funding, [VLCT](#) will always be your best resource. In addition, their new [Federal Funds Assistance Program](#) (FFA) can also help match your priority projects to available funding programs.

VLCT has published a comprehensive guide to federal programs, linked [HERE](#). While it is daunting in size, using the 'search' function is very helpful for finding programs that reference your subject matter.

We also want to note that there are more federal programs 'in the pipeline' and which have not yet been made available. This is why staying in contact with resources like Windham Regional Commission, State Agencies, and consulting with the VLCT FFA is best practice.

Notes and links from presentations by State Agencies

- Much of this information is collected on a single State [website](#)
- There is also a companion [Powerpoint](#) download, dating from 10/2022, which goes through programs by agency.

Agency of Natural Resources

- [Village Wastewater Initiative Overview](#). Also: be in contact with [Windham Regional Commission](#), and directly with ANR about planning for wastewater and help with determining funding for projects. Important to note: **“These ARPA funds will be used in a “co-funding” model with the State Revolving Loan Funds, USDA -Rural Development support, or locally available funding. Co-funding means that ARPA funding will be used to complement other funding sources to achieve affordability.”** In other words, they will help you find programs to match the funding for these complex and costly projects.
- Helpful grid summary of all [DEC Grant and Loan Programs](#)



- For Towns: Rural infrastructure initiative to help **existing** systems to keep user rates low was mentioned – we recommend contacting ANR for information on this.

Agency of Commerce and Community Development:

- [Community recovery and revitalization program](#) - the first round of awardees announced next week will use 25% of funds – so there is still opportunity. Can be used for Affordable Housing, Childcare or Wastewater (that supports housing or business development) or for for or not profit organizations in impacted industries (agriculture, arts, education, accommodation/food services). **NOTE this is a reimbursement program so funding will be provided for awarded projects after expenses will be incurred.** There are lots of details so visit the [CRPP FAQ](#)
- Brownfields: both [Federal](#) and [State](#) (\$25m) funds are available – for pre-development assessment and cleanup of sites that are un-or-underdeveloped, and which have contamination from previous use. Locally, also contact [WRC](#).
- Northern Border Regional Commission – \$10 million in funding will be available for infrastructure and economic development projects (information coming soon). All VT counties are eligible for grant award, with varying levels of match (Windham County is in the transitional range with 50% match required). It's strongly recommended that applicants for NBRC funding contact Kristie Farnham about their projects in advance of submitting an application. Ms. Farnham can be reached by phone at (802) 398-5268 or by email at Kristie.Farnham@vermont.gov Information on submitting letters of interest for 2023 application will be shared in March. Review past program awards [HERE](#) for a sense of what has been funded.

Dept. of Housing and Community Development

- A full list of DHCD programs with links is available [HERE](#)
- [Bylaw modernization](#) and [municipal planning grants](#) – for community planning and housing bylaw updates (both are FALL applications – Bylaw modernization program was 'one time program' however not all funds were expended in 2022, so we will watch for whether that is funded again).
- State designations (Downtown, Village Center, Neighborhood Growth Area) – open up lots of specific funding programs (including tax credits which go to property owners directly, and downtown transportation grants). Summary of funding opportunities available [HERE](#)
- CDBG Vt community development program - has planning and implementation grants. Next target date for application submission is 4/11/2023. Program information should be read carefully [HERE](#) with full program guide [HERE](#). **VCDP funds must primarily benefit persons of low to moderate income.**
- Vermont Housing Improvement Program: [VHIP](#): more money likely to be going into this successful program to help bring vacant housing units online. Administered by local Housing partners, [Windham Windsor Housing Trust](#)



Dept. of Libraries

- The Vermont Department of Libraries has announced [two upcoming federal capital project grant opportunities](#) for capital improvement projects. Scroll down for helpful 'Get Ready' information they have made available.
- MORE: The VT Dept of Libraries not only has programs specifically for libraries, they will also help you look for external grant opportunities. Some listed [here](#) and for building renovations [here](#).

Buildings and General Services

- Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) (AKA "Act 172") [Overview](#)
- Several layers: \$2.4 m to regional planning commissions to facilitate the program. **WRC has been doing email outreach out to towns to get a point of contact for grant information.** Your Energy Committee Chair, Planning Commission Chair, Town Manager, and/or Select Board Chair are all good contacts for this! **Be sure the right person/people are on the list.** If for some reason the right person is not yet on the list, you should put them in contact with Margo Ghia who will make sure they are added: mghia@windhamregional.org
- Towns will be eligible to apply for \$4,000 mini-grants which can be used for community education and prioritization meetings.
- Municipal Energy Audits – will be done as part of this program for applying communities – free while funding lasts, there are two levels of audit.
- \$2.8M revolving loan fund – requires data on energy payback period to determine repayment (they will help facilitate this information collection)
- Up to \$500k in grants for energy upgrades, using high energy burden/low resource priority list
- NOTE: while projects can include things like fuel switching, installation of EV charging stations, and the like, projects should first and foremost prioritize weatherization (improved thermal envelope and efficiency). (questions around solar installation, etc. were asked and it is potentially eligible, with the weatherization-first caveat!)

Dept. of Agriculture

- [Working lands program](#) overview
- Grant opportunities [Summary](#)
- Note that Dairy includes sheep and goat

VT Emergency Management

- Best moment ever for municipalities to address flood mitigation - **An additional \$14,750,000 was allocated by the Vermont Legislature in FY23** in addition to \$4.6 million obligated fiscal year 2022.
- [flood resilient communities program Program overview](#)



Report from Agency of Administration, Deputy Secretary Doug Farnham

- Annual report last year showed funds were concentrated in some parts of the state. The administration position is that everyone in VT needs equal access to the funds. Therefore, this series of tours is concentrating on undersubscribed areas. And there is also a proposed program to help towns with navigating available funding: [Rural Infrastructure Assistance Program](#)
- RIAP will use funds to distribute to partners to provide technical support to communities with high need and low resources prioritized by the index (with exceptions allowed as funding permits). While this is
- Reminder: ARPA funds must be obligated by the end of 2024 then two more years to expend. (Obligation can mean many things. Questions on how you can use ARPA funds? Contact VLCT!
- Revenue loss funds are being used for Vt climate change programs (such as MERP - allows it to be state not federal awards which reduces compliance requirements for municipalities and allows funds to be used as federal match as part of larger projects).
- Doug Farnham is meeting weekly with Katie Buckley at VLCT – the [VLCT FFA](#) program is a great program to use for help with identifying funding sources and stacks for your program.
 - Watch a recent short webinar with SVEP [HERE](#) to learn more about the FFA program.

Additional Notes and links

- Don't forget existing programs like the [Vermont local roads program](#)
- Questions on how you can use ARPA funds? Contact VLCT and check in with [FFA](#).
- [VLCT](#) will be mapping how towns can **stack** state funds with upcoming federal funds
- Town ARPA funding can **match** federal funds.

Important Note: Unique Entity Identifiers*

To apply for any Federal funding, towns need to be sure they have gotten their Unique Entity Identification refreshed! You can do that via <https://sam.gov/content/home> **This could take some time if yours is expired.** You can add multiple people to the listing and set it to public in case multiple people are managing grants.

**From Sam.gov: On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (generated by SAM.gov).*

- The Unique Entity ID (UEI) is a 12-character alphanumeric ID assigned to an entity by SAM.gov.
- As part of this transition, the DUNS Number has been removed from SAM.gov.
- Entity registration, searching, and data entry in SAM.gov now require use of the new Unique Entity ID.
- Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by following the steps [here](#).



- New entities (even if you had a DUNS number in the past you need a new UEI) can get their Unique Entity ID at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to complete an entity registration. **This may take some time, so do this even before identifying your funding sources – do not delay!**

About the Southern Vermont Economy Project

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Southern Vermont Economy Project (SVEP) works to stabilize, improve and expand the rural economic and workforce development network in Southern Vermont. Its goal is to increase capacity and collaboration among partnering organizations and communities. SVEP is funded by the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative, as a program of BDCC & SeVEDS. For more information on the program, including goals, resources, and partners, visit www.brattleborodevelopment.com/svep/ or contact Program Manager Meg Staloff, at mstaloff@brattleborodevelopment.com