

# Knowledge Bites



**Thursday  
March 23**

**12:00-12:45 p.m.**

***Learn while you lunch!***

**MERP Community Capacity Mini-grants:** Join our Regional Planning Commissions to learn about the Municipal Energy Resilience program (MERP), including why and how to apply for a mini-grant to help your community build capacity for energy resilience planning.





# Municipal Energy Resilience Program

MERP

# Program Design

- ▶ **State ARPA funding:** Administered by VT Building & General Services and Implemented through Regional Planning Commissions
- ▶ For **Municipalities to become more energy resilient, reduce energy use and operating costs, and curb greenhouse gas emissions** by promoting renewable energy, battery storage, electric vehicle charging, weatherization, thermal improvements, fuel switching, and enhanced building comfort in municipal buildings and facilities.
- ▶ Applies only to **Municipally Owned Buildings**

# Community Capacity Mini-Grants



- ▶ Up to **\$4000** available
- ▶ **Applications are now open**
- ▶ To **support energy resilience community capacity building**
  - ▶ Educational and Community Engagement activities

# Energy Assessments/Audits



- ▶ **Free**
- ▶ **Applications** are likely to open in the Spring
- ▶ **Assessments will provide** recommendations and cost estimates for HVAC and thermal envelope improvements, weatherization, renewable energy equipment, battery storage and EV charging equipment.
- ▶ **Two Levels of Assessment**
  - ▶ **Level 1: Walk-through assessment.** Takes ~1.5 hours and goes beyond Efficiency VT assessment. Qualifies the building for MERP Implementation Funds.
  - ▶ **Level 2: Investment grade assessment.** Takes ~4 hours and qualifies the building for MERP implementation funds, MERP Loans and other Federal and State funding sources. Requires information at the time of application including past utility data, architectural drawings, past energy audits, etc.
- ▶ **Recommendation:** Prioritize buildings (municipalities will receive at least one building assessment, but may possibly receive more)

# Funding



## ▶ **MERP Implementation Funds**

- ▶ Each municipality can apply for a maximum of \$500,000 for building energy weatherization projects and/or supplementing or replacing fossil fuel heating systems
- ▶ Projects to come from Energy Assessment recommendations
- ▶ May be released later 2023 or early 2024

## ▶ **MERP Municipal Energy Loan Fund**

- ▶ **2.8 million available**
- ▶ **Equipment replacement, studies, weatherization, etc.**

# Windham Regional Commission Contacts

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# Community Capacity- Building Mini-Grants

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MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM



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*“The Department of Buildings and General Services...shall administer the Program, which shall award grants for the following:*

*Not more than \$4,000.00 to each covered municipality to facilitate community meetings and communication about municipal energy resilience.”*

# Basic Information

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- ❖ The application is live on the MERP webpage but there is no rush to apply! You can wait to apply until you have clearer idea of how to use the money.
- ❖ Municipalities can apply jointly for the mini-grant, but the maximum award will be no more than \$4,000.
- ❖ BGS is reviewing applications in batches as they come in, and expects to make award decisions quickly.
- ❖ Simple reporting requirements.

# What can the mini-grants be used for?

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- ❖ Creating, mailing, and distributing flyers about energy efficiency programs, weatherization programs, and/or rebates.
- ❖ Education about energy efficiency via social media and/or website.
- ❖ Translation of energy efficiency materials into other languages.
- ❖ Host a public meeting or other community event to educate people about energy efficiency.
- ❖ Host training for municipal officials/staff on energy efficiency topics.
- ❖ Purchase energy efficiency materials (such as window inserts) for **demonstration/educational purposes**.
- ❖ Hire a consultant to:
  - ❖ Help with direct outreach to residents about energy efficiency programs.
  - ❖ Research and apply for other state and federal grants to stack with MERP.
  - ❖ Help manage a MERP implementation project.

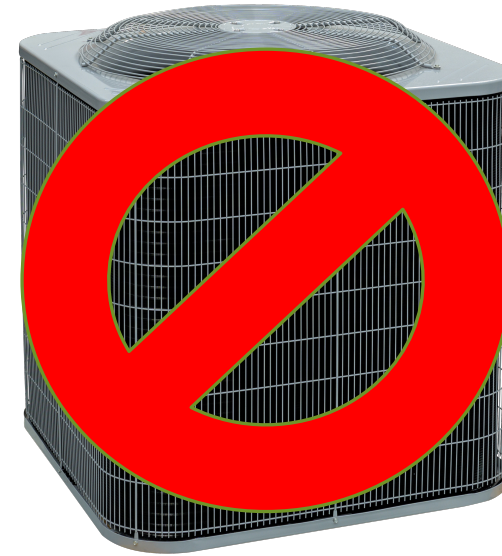
**And more!**

If you have an idea you are unsure about, please reach out to your RPC!

# Ineligible Uses

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- ❖ Direct project expenses such as buying solar panels, heat pumps, light fixtures, and window inserts.
- ❖ **If you submit a mini-grant application for an ineligible/unclear use, you will be able to resubmit.**




# The Application


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- ❖ 23-question Microsoft Form, mostly basic information and certifications.
- ❖ No lengthy budget or narrative questions
- ❖ What you will need ahead of time:
  - ❖ Federal Tax ID
  - ❖ Name and contact information for the following roles:
    - ❖ Authorized municipal official (someone authorized to make decisions on behalf of the municipality – typically town staff or an elected official).
    - ❖ Fiscal contact (whoever handles the money for the municipality).
    - ❖ Project director (whoever will be implementing the project – this can be an energy committee member).

If more than one municipality is applying jointly, only the lead municipality needs to complete the application and provide the above information.

<https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program>

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An Official **Vermont** Government Website 

Agency of Administration  
**Buildings and General Services**

🔍


[Vermont.gov](#) [Outlook Online](#) [State Phone Book](#) [Transparency](#)

**NEW!**

Our first program offering, the Community Capacity Building Mini-Grants of up to \$4,000, is now accepting applications! Please read Governor Phil Scott's [press release](#) from March 8, 2023.

To learn more, please see our [FAQ](#).

Interested in applying? Review the draft [Grant Agreement](#) for these funds.



**APPLY HERE!**

Community Capacity Building Mini-Grant

# Municipal Energy Resilience Program- Community Capacity Building Mini-Grant

Covered municipalities may apply for up to \$4,000 to facilitate public communication, education, outreach, and engagement about municipal energy resilience. 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 172 defines a covered municipality as "a city, town, fire district or incorporated village, and all other governmental incorporated units except for school districts".

To complete the application, please be ready with the following information:

- Contact information for: the municipal representative completing the application, a fiscal contact, and a 'project director' (one contact may fill one or more of these roles)
- Applicant Federal Tax ID
- If applying jointly with other covered municipalities, please list their name and municipal designation (contact info and Tax ID NOT required from joint applicants, just the lead applicant)

For more details, please review Act 172 on our website: [bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program](https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program) under 'More Information'.

# Recommendations

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- ❖ The application does not require a project budget, however, once you have identified your project, developing a budget and timeline is highly recommended!
- ❖ If you are an energy committee member or individual, you cannot apply for this grant on your own! An authorized municipal official must be the one to complete the application (and sign the grant agreement). Start working with your municipality now!
- ❖ Reach out to your regional planning commission! RPCs have received funding from BGS to provide technical assistance to municipalities. We can help brainstorm ideas, assist with applications and answer questions!
- ❖ Sign up for the MERP email list to be notified of the latest updates (scroll down to the bottom of the [MERP webpage](#)).



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