

Vermont Department of Public Service

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program

Questions and Answers

Round 2 Q&A

Published July 5, 2024

Q1: Are municipalities eligible to submit joint applications for EECBG grants; specifically, to have multiple municipalities join in a transportation planning process?

A1: Yes, it is acceptable for multiple municipalities to join in a multi-municipal planning process such as a regional transportation plan. To do so, one municipality must be identified as the lead entity that will be responsible for managing the EECBG award and must submit the application.

PSD will allow municipalities to enter one such multi-municipal arrangement in the EECBG. Those that chose to do so may not submit an individual application or participate in another multi-municipal initiative. Please see revised RFP posted at: xxx for additional details.

Q2: Are villages within towns eligible?

A2: Provided that the village is an incorporated village, then it is eligible to apply under EECBG per the RFP, which states, “Eligible Towns – Except for the towns and cities listed below, all other Vermont cities, towns, and **incorporated villages** are eligible to apply for EECBG funding from the PSD.”

Q3: Can multiple towns go in together to hire a consultant? Specifically, “clerk of the works” to manage their MERP implementation activities?

A3: In cases such as technical assistance consultations for work related to energy goals or strategy, multiple towns may coordinate the hiring of a consultant (see the response to Q1 above). This is eligible under Category 2. However, if any current or proposed work entails or in the future will entail physical labor and installing equipment on properties it would not be eligible, so hiring of a clerk of the works would likely not be eligible. Even though the clerk of the works position would be administrative in nature, a current or proposed project that entails changes to buildings, properties, and/or landscapes would trigger certain federal requirements. Similarly, if the planning consultant is contracted to assist with implementation of approved projects that entail or will entail physical changes to buildings, properties, and/or landscapes, then such planning consultations are not eligible under this solicitation.

Q4: Can towns purchase EV's?

A4: Electric Vehicles are eligible under Category 7 in the RFP.

Q5: Can a town submit multiple applications or just one?

A5: Municipalities may submit only one application, but this application may contain more than one category. As stated above, municipalities may choose to participate in a multi-municipal arrangement as their one application. See the revised RFP for details.

Q6: What is the distinction between different levels of “planning”? Does this matter for the EECBG planning categories? For example, there are basic levels of planning, then as projects move along, they go to development planning then “implementation” planning. Would these advanced levels of planning still qualify?

A6: Planning is an eligible activity under the EECBG when the work is at the visionary, strategic, or conceptual level (See Categories 1 and 2). Planning for implementation of projects or programs that entail or will entail actual physical activity, construction, equipment installation, and/or changes made on the ground, and that have already been approved, are not eligible as these would trigger certain federal requirements.

Q7: Can towns use funds from savings of energy for long term capacity building?

A7: Financial savings accrued by implementation of energy improvements belong to the municipality. How these savings are used is determined by the municipality.

Q8: The EECBG deadline for applications is August 9, 2024, but the BGS MERP awards will not likely have been announced by that date. Is there a way to help municipalities coordinate between these two awards?

A8: PSD issued the EECBG RFP based on timeline parameters established by DOE. Municipalities are encouraged to coordinate with PSD, BGS, RPCs and other stakeholders to the best of their ability within the timelines established by federal agencies with regard to other funding streams.

Q9: Who to send emails to?

A9: General EECBG questions should be submitted to psd.eecbgprogram@vermont.gov. PSD-related questions may be submitted to Edward Delhagen at Ed.Delhagen@vermont.gov.

Q10: Can PSD re-open the Question & Answer session?

A10: Yes. See revised RFP.

Round 1 Q&A.

Published June 4, 2024

Q1: In determining a town's energy burden, are you using the 2019 Energy Burden report, or the 2023 Energy Burden report?

A1: Applicants are instructed to use the 2023 Energy Burden Report. See RFP page 14 footnote 10 for the link to the report.

Q2: May grant funds be used toward the assessment, procurement, and installation of solar panels and compatible heating system on/ for municipal buildings?

A2: Grant funds can be used for assessments but cannot be used for the procurement or installation of solar panels or heating systems.

Q3: A Town is interested in learning more about the EECBG grant Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy

Presently the Water/ Wastewater Department has one old and one new pick-up truck which are both fossil fuel.

These vehicles are used daily as a source of transportation to all projects & tasks. The vehicles are low mileage and replaced every 10 to 12 years. As we look to decrease energy consumption, we would like to switch the small fleet to electric vehicles where appropriate. We are not classified as a disadvantaged community (however we hear residents feel tax stressed and stretched).

Would the purchase of an electric pick-up truck for the town's water/wastewater department be appropriate for this grant?

A3: Under Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy, an example of eligible activities includes improvement of energy efficiency of government vehicle fleets through the purchase of electric, hybrid, or alternative fuel vehicles. Therefore, switching to an electric pick-up truck would be an eligible use of EECBG funds.

Regarding not being classified as a disadvantaged community, communities are comprised of citizens across a range of incomes. PSD will review all applications and strive to meet the requirements for distributing the EECBG resources in accordance with guidance provided by US DOE for disadvantaged communities.

Q4: Looking at the Transportation category 7 as our best fit. We have some action in motion for almost all of bullet points listed, but not enough funding to do it all. Within the example transportation activities, do you have any particular top priorities? In comparing the value-add between one EV truck, ten e-bikes, or a paths plan, how do you prioritize?

A4: The Department has not defined any priorities within the activities. Per the selection criteria listed in the RFP, programs/activities will be scored based on the following:

Program Characteristics

- Ability to start immediately and complete program within a 2-year period
- Potential for public visibility and/or plan for promoting the project
- Potential for annual energy generation, energy/fuel savings, and contribution to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions
- Degree to which proposed activities will help the municipality reduce energy costs and burdens for disadvantaged community members

- Degree to which proposed activities will provide economic and environmental benefits
- Potential number of jobs retained or created

PSD encourages applicants to identify their own municipal priorities, and to identify in their applications how the selected projects will address these priorities.