

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG)**

**Competitive Municipality Sub-Grants**

**Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**

**ORIGINAL TIMELINE**

**RFP Release Date: May 20, 2024**

**First Round Questions to PSD Due By: June 3, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT)**

**PSD Response to Questions: June 7, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT)**

**REVISED TIMELINE**

**RFP Revised on: July 3, 2024**

**Second Round Questions to PSD Due By: July 11, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT)**

**PSD Response to Questions: July 18, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT)**

**Applications Due: August 9, 2024 – 4:30 PM (EDT)**

Funding Opportunity Number:

DE-FOA-0002882

Assistance Listing Number: 81.128

Vermont Public Service Department

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### EECBG RFP REVISION

### This revised Request for Proposals provides additional information regarding the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. Please see text added in Yellow Highlight for revisions.

### OVERVIEW

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) of 2021—also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (“BIL”)—section 40552 provided funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program. The Vermont Department of Public Service (PSD) as the State Energy Office (SEO) received a formula allocation under the EECBG, at least sixty percent of which must be distributed to local governments that are ineligible for formula funding by the US Department of Energy (DOE).

The funding provided via the SEO will be for a set of EECBG categories described in this Request for Proposals (RFP). The EECBG program includes Federal requirements such as Build America Buy America, National Environmental Protection Act, and Davis Bacon Act provisions. Due to the tracking, verification, and administrative burden of complying with these federal provisions, the PSD has crafted this RFP to include categories of activities that are likely to have the most simplified administrative and reporting requirements. Priority for funding will be given to communities experiencing high energy burdens and those that meet the criteria for Disadvantaged Communities established by the Biden Administration’s Justice40 initiative (see **Appendix A** for a list of Disadvantaged Communities in eligible municipalities).

EECBG funding will complement energy work being undertaken by Vermont municipalities in the context of the Municipal Energy Resiliency Program (MERP) established by the Vermont General Assembly via Act 172 of 2022 and other energy-related greenhouse gas reduction activities related to the Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act. This funding shall also be available to municipalities that are not participating in the MERP.

Purpose

The purpose of the EECBG Program is to assist eligible local governments in creating and implementing strategies to:

• Reduce fossil fuel emissions in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and, to the maximum extent practicable, maximizes benefits for local and regional communities;

• Reduce the total energy use of the eligible entities;

• Improve energy efficiency in the transportation sector, the building sector, and other appropriate sectors; and

• Build a clean and equitable energy economy that prioritizes disadvantaged communities and promotes equity and inclusion in workforce opportunities and deployment activities, consistent with the Justice40 Initiative.

Entities may plan and conduct various programs or projects that address one or more of the EECBG purposes. Each activity an entity undertakes is not required to meet all the stated purposes. Entities may choose from the subset of eligible activities described below.

Each entity receiving EECBG Program funds is required to use the funds in a cost-effective manner that is of maximum benefit to the population of that entity and in a manner that will yield sustained long-term impacts in terms of energy, emission reductions, and equitable workforce and community investment opportunities.

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from municipalities (cities, towns, and incorporated villages).

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. If the program is oversubscribed and multiple jurisdictions within an area submit applications (for example both an incorporated village and a town) the PSD reserves the right to negotiate for budget reductions for these applications, which may be in proportion to the population in each area.

Per U.S. Department of Energy requirements, units of local government that were eligible for direct Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) formula funding **are not** eligible under this RFP:

**Ineligible Municipalities**: Town of Bennington, Town of Brattleboro, City of Burlington, Town of Colchester, Town of Essex, Town of Hartford, Town of Milton, City of Rutland, City of South Burlington, and Town of Williston

Other types of units of local government (for example fire, water, utility, county, and school districts) are also not eligible for this solicitation.

Eligible Activities

Applicants may submit proposals for projects in the following EECBG categories:

* *Category 1: Strategy Development and Implementation*
* *Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services*
* *Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits*
* *Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities*
* *Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy*
* *Category 8: Building Code and Inspection Services*

Information describing these categories may be found below.

Maximum and Minimum Awards

The **maximum** amount of funds available for any eligible entity is $100,000. The **minimum** amount that an applicant can apply for is $50,000. A total not to exceed $957,000 of EECBG funding will be awarded. No match is required for EECBG subgrants, however match is encouraged. Applicants may select from one or more program categories below with a total application value for all categories not to exceed $100,000 or be less than $50,000. Preference may be given to projects requesting lower funding amounts than comparable projects to maximize the impact of federal dollars. All grant funds must be used for activities directly related to the project during the grant period. Only one application will be allowed per eligible municipality.

Multi-Municipal Initiative, Collaborations, Partnerships

PSD will allow multi-municipal planning initiatives under the EECBG solicitation. Municipalities may only **submit or participate** **in one application either through a multi-municipal initiative or their own project**. Municipalities cannot participate in both a multi-municipal initiative and single application, regardless of the funding amount(s), and cannot participate in more than one multi-municipal initiative.

Multi-municipal initiatives may receive funding up to $100,000 per town participating in the funding request. For example, a 5-town planning process may request up to $500,000 of EECBG funding. Multiple municipalities may submit one application to reach the $50,000 minimum requirement for the EECBG solicitation. For example, five towns may request $10,000 each for a planning project for a total award of $50,000. See the Application Template section for more information.

PSD reserves the right to set the total amount of funding for multi-municipal awards based upon considerations of all applications submitted to the Department under the EECBG solicitation. All funding will be awarded to the lead municipality that will oversee fund distribution and project coordination.

**Collaborations or partnerships between sub-recipients are allowable as long as: 1) all subrecipients in the partnership are considered units of local government as defined above and 2) none of the sub-recipients received their own EECBG Program formula allocation.**

Federal Conditions

All grant awards made from this RFP will be funded using Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds and therefore applicants will be subjected to high levels of transparency and reporting requirements that may include, but not be limited to reporting, tracking and segregation of incurred costs, and access to records. Applicants are encouraged to review this RFP thoroughly.

Submission of Applications

**Applications are due to the PSD by 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on August 9, 2024**. Information on what to include is provided starting on page 14 of this document. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by PSD.

Awards to municipalities under this solicitation are subject to a 240-day period during which PSD is required by DOE to subgrant at least 60 percent of the State’s EECBG formula award. **To fulfill this timing requirement, EECBG subrecipients must sign and return their fully executed grant agreements to PSD no later than October 30, 2024**.

PSD has opened the Question period again. Applicants may submit questions on the EECBG program or application to PSD. Email any questions to [PSD.EECBGProgram@vermont.gov](mailto:PSD.EECBGProgram@vermont.gov) no later than **4:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time on** **July 11,** **2024**. PSD will post responses to the questions on the PSD website.

Applicants’ proposals should allow adequate time to ensure receipt of their proposal(s) by the deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. One electronic copy can be emailed to the Vermont Department of Public Service at the email address below. Applicants may elect to mail a hard copy of their submission by U.S. Mail addressed to:

Edward Delhagen

EECBG Program

Vermont Department of Public Service

112 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05620-2601

Email: [psd.eecbgprogram@vermont.gov](mailto:psd.eecbgprogram@vermont.gov)

### BACKGROUND

The Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program was created by the U.S. Congress, which appropriated funding for the Department of Energy to award formula-based grants to states, U.S. territories, units of local government, and Indian tribes. The EECBG Program is authorized by Title V, Subtitle E of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) as amended and signed into Public Law (PL 110-140). All awards made under this program shall comply with applicable laws and regulations including, but not limited to, 2 CFR Part 200 as amended by 2 CFR Part 910 and Section 40552 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (the IIJA or Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, PL 117-58).

Per President Biden’s Executive Order 14008, the Federal Government has established the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities5 (“DACs”). This government-wide effort is called the Justice40 Initiative. The EECBG Program is a Justice40-covered program and thus contributes to the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of federal investments in clean energy and climate solutions flow to DACs.

### PROJECT CATEGORIES

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to obtain proposals from eligible municipalities for projects that develop energy efficiency strategies or plans for buildings, transportation, and other eligible activities in the following categories. As previously mentioned, the PSD has crafted this RFP to include categories of activities that are likely to have the most simplified administrative and reporting requirements.

#### **EECBG Category 1: Strategy Development and Implementation**

Under this category, local governments can seek funding for development of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy including support for town energy committees. The activity must be in support of the development of a general strategy that outlines goals for energy efficiency or conservation but may not include actual weatherization work, equipment purchases, or installations. Proposed planning activities must not be designed to implement construction, installation of equipment, and/or approved scopes of work for energy improvement projects that include labor, including those associated with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP). These would be considered a “connected action”, which means that any construction or equipment installation associated with the planning activities that is already guaranteed to happen (e.g. the funds are already secured and permissions to move forward with the plan are approved) would require a NEPA Determination through the submission of an Environmental Questionnaire (EQ-1). Any planning activities proposed for this RFP must be distinct from those that municipalities may already be undertaking in conjunction with projects being scoped under the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) at BGS. So, for example, if a municipality wanted to use their funds for bike lane planning and had already secured the funds and authorizations necessary to construct the bike lanes, they would need to submit an EQ-1.

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Development and implementation of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy
* Support for town energy committees
* Development of the energy efficiency and conservation elements of an energy-related plan such as a climate action plan or local government’s sustainability plan (e.g., Vermont Municipal and Regional Energy Plans)
* Expansion of an existing strategy to address new goals
* Multi-municipal planning collaborations or initiatives

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

* Develop strategies around clearly defined, measurable, and ambitious goals for advancing energy efficiency and clean energy.
* Ensure that strategies are informed by stakeholder feedback and include opportunities for continued stakeholder engagement, with a particular focus on soliciting feedback from underrepresented and disadvantaged communities. EECBG Program recipients are encouraged to actively seek participation and feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders that reflects the demographics of their community.
* Incorporate equity and environmental justice objectives in developing energy efficiency and conservation goals and associated implementation strategies.
* Take a holistic approach that incorporates a variety of technologies and addresses the needs of different populations within the community leveraging tools such as the DOE [State and Local Planning for Energy (SLOPE) Platform](https://www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/state-and-local-planning-energy-slope-platform)[[1]](#footnote-2), a free, easy-to-use online platform to support data-driven state and local energy and decarbonization planning.

This category may include funds to enhance an applicant’s organizational capacity and expertise in managing energy resources. This can include hiring dedicated staff to develop, implement, and manage energy efficiency and conservation projects but may not include actual weatherization work, equipment purchases or installations. This category may include multi-municipal planning initiatives and capacity building in support thereof.

#### **EECBG Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services**

Under this category, local governments may retain technical consulting services to assist in the development of an energy efficiency and conservation strategy, including:

* Formulation of energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy usage goals
* Identification of strategies to achieve those goals:
  + Through efforts to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption, and
  + By encouraging behavioral changes among the population served by the eligible entity
* Development of methods to measure progress in achieving the goals
* Development and publication of annual reports to the population served by the eligible entity describing:
  + The strategies and goals, and
  + The progress made in achieving the strategies and goals during the preceding calendar year
* Other services to assist in the implementation of the energy efficiency and conservation strategy, but may not include actual weatherization work, equipment purchases or installations
* Technical Assistance provided to multi-municipal planning collaborations or initiatives

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Formulation of energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy usage goals, methods to achieve those goals or measure progress, and the publication of annual reports discussing progress
* Identification and development of an equity-centered strategy to achieve 2030 carbon neutral goals through the energy efficiency and conservation strategy
* Developing a detailed roadmap, as part of the energy efficiency and conservation strategy, to reduce costs and improve energy efficiency in communities and households with high energy burdens
* Development of internal metrics and evaluation system for strategies and measures in the energy efficiency and conservation strategy that address clean energy and climate resiliency objectives in the community
* Strategic planning for electrification of government transportation fleets

**IITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Consider local objectives, staff capacity, and support needs when selecting consultants. Look for firms with prior expertise and knowledge of local government energy considerations. Consider selecting eligible firms that reflect diversity in their business ownership and staff, understand local community needs, and are experienced in place-based approaches. Engage underrepresented or underserved groups to ensure that their needs are considered and addressed during technical consultation service delivery. This category may include technical assistance to support multi-municipal planning initiatives.

#### **EECBG Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits**

Under this category, local governments may receive funding for conducting energy audits of residential and commercial buildings[[2]](#footnote-3),[[3]](#footnote-4) within the jurisdiction of the local government. Under this category, funds may not be used for upgrades or improvements for any projects that would require the services of laborers or mechanics.

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Energy assessments to understand usage patterns in a portfolio of buildings and benchmark performance, including benchmarking building energy performance in the [ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager Tool](https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/benchmark)
* Any activities that support or facilitate the conduct of energy assessments of residential or commercial buildings

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Consider ensuring that energy assessments are implemented in communities that have traditionally experienced energy injustice or have disproportionate energy burdens by using tools such as the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5) and [Low-Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool](https://www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/lead-tool) and partnering with relevant community stakeholders. Coordinate energy assessment activities with existing federal, state, local, and utility energy efficiency programs, as well as existing and anticipated sources of additional funding. Also, coordinate energy assessment activities with energy efficiency and conservation elements of any existing or planned energy-related plan, such as a climate action plan or local government’s sustainability plan. Factor in the energy impacts of long lifetime building upgrades, and their implications for existing climate or sustainability plans.

#### **EECBG Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities**

This funding opportunity allows local governments to develop and implement energy efficiency and conservation programs specifically for buildings and facilities within their area of authority. The programs should focus on designing and operating comprehensive energy efficiency initiatives but may not include actual weatherization work, equipment purchases or installations or planning for implementation of those activities.

The funding can be used for:

* Design and operation of the programs
* Identifying the most effective methods for achieving maximum participation and efficiency
* Public education on energy efficiency including support and engagement of town energy committees
* Measurement and verification protocols, and
* Identification of energy efficient technologies

The funded activity must be for the development and/or implementation of an energy efficiency or energy conservation program. The activities must be related to the buildings or facilities[[4]](#footnote-5) within the local government's jurisdiction.

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Workforce development/training programs supporting eligible activities, such as training community members on green technology installation or residential and commercial energy audits
* Programs for public education including training or workshops
* Development and implementation of building performance standards, including benchmarking and disclosure requirements for the purpose of promoting energy efficiency in commercial buildings
* Development and implementation of measures and verification protocols
* Programs to partner with local non-profits and community organizations to support weatherization, efficiency retrofits and technologies, and installations
* Programs to promote architecture, design, and engineering work for energy efficient buildings
* Non-capital strategies to improve facility efficiency through an Energy Data Management Program and/or operations and maintenance strategies such as Strategic Energy Management (or similar methods)
* Development of an energy rating, disclosure and/or labeling system for the purpose of promoting energy efficiency in residential or commercial buildings

**ITEMS TO CONSIDER**

* Coordinate buildings and facilities programs with energy efficiency and conservation elements of any existing energy-related plan such as a climate action plan or local government’s sustainability plan (e.g., Vermont Municipal and Regional Energy Plans).
* Factor in the energy impacts of long lifetime building upgrades and their implications for existing climate or sustainability plans (e.g., Vermont Municipal and Regional Energy Plans).

#### **EECBG Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy**

Local governments may develop and implement the following projects to conserve energy used in transportation including:

* Use of flex time by employers
* Satellite work centers
* Development and promotion of zoning guidelines or requirements that promote energy-efficient development
* Planning for infrastructure such as bike lanes, pathways, and pedestrian walkways
* Synchronization of traffic signals
* Other measures that increase energy efficiency and decrease energy consumption

Activities must result in or support the conservation of transportation fuel within the jurisdiction of the eligible entity. Conservation of transportation fuel may be for the population (e.g., privately owned vehicles) within the jurisdiction of the eligible entity or for government purposes (e.g., government fleets).

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Improvement of energy efficiency of government vehicle fleets through the purchase of electric, hybrid, or alternative fuel vehicles such as buses, recycling / waste collection vehicles, etc.
* Incentives to town residents to purchase electric or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles
* Micromobility programs, devices, and associated facilities, including conventional bicycles, e-bicycles, e-scooters, and other personal transport devices for public use
* Planning for the addition of bike lanes, pathways, or other alternative transportation infrastructure (actual construction costs of these items are not allowed). See exclusions in Category 1 above for limitations on planning activities.
* Geomapping for ideal placement of electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure
* Strategies to reduce vehicle miles travelled, including the use of satellite offices, flex time, telecommuting policies, and implementation of carpooling or vanpooling strategies
* Development and promotion of zoning and siting guidelines or requirements that promote energy efficient development
* Implementing planning measures to improve transportation efficiency, including the development and promotion of alternative transportation infrastructure, synchronizing traffic signals, and mapping the ideal placement of vehicle charging and other alternative fueling infrastructure
* This category may include multi-municipal planning initiatives.

#### **EECBG Category 8: Building Codes and Inspection Services**

Under this category, local governments can seek funding for the development and implementation of building codes and inspection services to promote building energy efficiency.

The activity must be for the development, adoption and/or implementation of building codes, inspection services or trainings/workshops to promote building energy efficiency. Programs for development, adoption and implementation of the state-adopted building energy standard stretch codes that exceed baseline energy codes are eligible under this category. Subgrantees may also develop energy efficiency rating and/or labeling systems for the purpose of promoting energy efficient devices, equipment, or buildings under this category. The activity must occur within the jurisdiction of the eligible entity.

**EXAMPLE ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

* Adoption and implementation of building energy codes, including supporting the adoption and implementation of the state-adopted building energy standard stretch code for residential buildings
* Training and certification support for architects, builders, building inspectors, code officials, and other stakeholders that are responsible for implementing building codes
* Development, adoption, and implementation of a Building Performance Standard, including benchmarking and disclosure requirements
* Conducting an energy code field study, which would document typical design and construction practices, target areas for improvement through workforce education and training initiatives, and quantify energy efficiency and environmental impacts in buildings

### INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

**Exclusions**: EECBG funds cannot be used for projects that have already begun or for construction and/or equipment purchases that have already been made, and/or planning or consultations that have already commenced. Proposed planning activities must not be designed to implement construction, installation of equipment, and/or approved scopes of work for energy improvement projects that include labor, including those associated with the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP). These would be considered a “connected action”, which means that any construction or equipment installation associated with the planning activities that is already guaranteed to happen (e.g. the funds are already secured and permissions to move forward with the plan are approved) would require a NEPA Determination through the submission of an Environmental Questionnaire (EQ-1). Any planning activities proposed for this RFP must be distinct from those that municipalities may already be undertaking in conjunction with projects being scoped under the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) at BGS. All projects must be based in Vermont.

**Term:** Projects for which grant funds are awarded must be completed within two years from the date of the award.

**Cost Share**: There is no cost share required under EECBG, but it is encouraged.

**Revisions**: The Department of Public Service reserves the right to make necessary changes or adjustments to the program design or to any statements made in this RFP including but not limited to receiving further guidance from DOE or Office of Management and Budget (OMB). PSD also reserves the right to terminate this RFP at any time.

**Federal Grants and Agreements Information**: Federal awards are managed under Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200); Office of Management and Budget (OMB) at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1> .

**New Grant Management System**: Beginning in 2024, the Department of Public Service will be implementing a new grant management system through which awards will be issued and managed. This online system is designed to streamline the process for soliciting, issuing, monitoring, and evaluating programs and projects funded through PSD. Grantees will be required to create and maintain a grantee profile, as well as submit all invoices through any payment or grant management system currently or subsequently employed by the Department.

**Reporting**: Reporting shall include quarterly progress reports as well as a final report submitted within three months of the grant end date.

All grantees will be required to meet DOE IIJA reporting requirements, including quarterly information on specific activities and achievements. These activities can be outputs (actions taken by grant recipients) but also short-term outcomes (results achieved relatively soon after outputs occur that lead toward attainment of ultimate project objectives).

*Expenditures***:** Accurate records should be kept for project expenditures for all IIJA EECBG funded efforts. The specific information to be gathered and tracked is listed below. It will be the same for all project types:

* Expenditures for project activities
* Expenditures for administration
* Expenditures for evaluation (if allowable)

*Metrics for Program Activity****:*** Subrecipients will be required to supply data to PSD on select metrics associated with their programs and/or projects. The metrics described below are designed to track the accomplishments of projects funded by EECBG. Grantees will be presented with reporting requirements at the time they receive a funding award and will be expected to report their achievements in terms of specified metrics such as those by project activity type presented below.

*For all categories*

* Administrative expenses ($)

*Category 1: Strategy Development and Implementation*.

* Number of sustainability or climate plans developed or updated
* Number of policies developed or updated
* Capacity of solar PV electric systems planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of wind energy systems planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of biomass (non-transport) systems planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of hydropower systems planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of solar thermal systems planning supported (square feet)
* Capacity of other renewable thermal systems planning supported (Btu/hr)
* Capacity of ground source geothermal systems planning supported (tons)
* Capacity of biofuel systems planning supported (gallons/year)
* Capacity of EV planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of other renewable systems planning supported (kW)
* Capacity of electricity savings supported (kW)
* Capacity of fuel oil savings supported (gallons)
* Capacity of natural gas savings supported (MMcf)
* Capacity of propane savings supported (Therms)
* Number of disadvantaged communities served by a plan

*Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services*

* Total number of unique organizations receiving technical assistance
* Number of organizations receiving technical assistance that are in or support DACs
* Number of organizations receiving technical assistance that are in or support fossil energy communities
* Number of organizations receiving technical assistance that are in or support rural communities

*Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits*

* Number of investment grade audits (IGAs) performed
* Square footage of IGAs performed (ft²)
* Number of building energy audits performed
* Square footage of building energy audits performed (ft²)

*Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities*

* Capacity of electricity savings supported (kW)
* Capacity of fuel oil savings supported (gallons)
* Capacity of natural gas savings supported (MMcf)
* Capacity of propane savings supported (Therms)
* Number of customers newly utilizing program (count)
* Total dollars invested as a result of financial mechanism (dollars)
* Projected energy, cost savings (user-specified units)
* Number of financial programs developed or updated (count)

*Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy*

* Number of new carpools and vanpools formed
* Number of vehicle miles traveled reduced annually (VMT/year)
* Number of charging station site assessments completed (e.g., expected usage)
* Number of alternative fuel vehicles purchased
* Number of conventional vehicles converted to alternative fuel use

*Category 8: Building Code and Inspection Services*

* Number of new building codes adopted
* Number of building performance standards adopted
* Number of labels generated
* Number of investment grade audits (IGAs) performed
* Square footage of IGAs performed (ft²)
* Number of buildings inspected
* Number of building energy audits performed
* Square footage of building energy audits performed (ft²)

### DOE SPECIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

**EECBG Funding Requirements**

US DOE provided detailed information on the EECBG program to PSD in its award terms and conditions. While this RFP limits eligible categories to those activities that are likely to have the most simplified administrative and reporting requirements, PSD will carefully review applications to ensure that no proposed activities would trigger Davis Bacon Act or Build America Buy America Act requirements, or extensive National Environmental Protection Act reporting obligations. However, applicants are advised that these provisions may be included with subgrants based upon guidance from DOE or further PSD review.

Subgrant awards will include Special Terms and Conditions from DOE that may include but are not limited to:

* Flow down requirements of terms and conditions from PSD down to all subrecipients who receive EECBG funds
* Purchase of American-made equipment and products to the greatest extent practicable
* Reporting requirements
* Lobbying restrictions
* Record retention
* Potential for Audits
* Restrictions on allowable costs
* Registration in SAM and Universal Entity Identifier (UEI)
* Conflict of Interest provisions
* Fraud, waste, and abuse provisions
* Reporting, tracking, and segregation of incurred costs
* Affirmative Action and pay transparency requirements
* Potentially duplicative funding
* Transparency of foreign connections
* Foreign collaboration considerations

The full set of DOE Special Terms and Conditions for the EECBG program will be included as Attachment D to EECBG subgrants and may be reviewed on the PSD website at: [https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Attachment D\_EECBG\_Special Terms and Conditions\_5.16.24.pdf](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Attachment%20D_EECBG_Special%20Terms%20and%20Conditions_5.16.24.pdf)

### INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM APPLICANTS

Applicants must submit their proposals electronically via the email or U.S. Mail using the application template found in **Appendix B**. Applications are due **August 9, 2024,** at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by PSD staff members. See “**Selection Criteria**” on page 19 for more information.

Proposals should be prepared economically, providing a concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP using the template provided in **Appendix B**. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content within the space limits provided. **Proposals may not exceed 10 pages**.

All applications are subject to Vermont’s Public Records law. Information in the applicant’s proposal that should be held confidential must be clearly marked as confidential and comply with an exemption from public inspection as per 1 V.S.A. § 317(c) (available online at: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/01/005/00317>. It is not acceptable to mark the entire proposal as confidential.

### APPLICATION TEMPLATE EXPLANATION

Below are explanations of the information that applicants are required to provide. **Applicants must use the template in Appendix B for their application.**

1. **Summary**

#### Program Title Add a short title that describes your program or project. Limit to no more than 15 words.

#### Program Category

State which EECBG project category (or categories) under which your municipality is seeking funding:

* Category 1: Strategy Development and Implementation
* Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services
* Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits
* Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities
* Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy
* Category 8: Building Codes and Inspection Services

#### Contact Information

State the full name and address of the applicant organization. Also list the primary point of contact and their contact information. If this is a multi-municipality initiative, provide contact information for each of the participating communities.

#### Federal Funds Questionnaire:

All funds provided through this RFP are from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program. All applicants awarded federal funding must be registered in the federal System for Award Management or SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) and provide to PSD a Unique Entity ID (UEI). This process can take time, so applicants should prepare well in advance. Projects awarded federal funds must adhere to federal requirements, including auditing and reporting requirements.

Please answer the following:

* Are you registered with SAM, and do you have a Unique Entity ID number?
* If yes, what is the UEI number assigned by SAM upon registration?
* If not, will you be able to apply for a number before a grant agreement is issued?
* Is there any reason you cannot accept federal funds

If this is a multi-municipality initiative, the application must only provide this information for the lead municipality.

1. **Program Narrative, Work Plan & Timeline**

#### Narrative

Include a concise description of the program that includes a list of tasks to complete the project; project timeline, which includes a start date and estimated completion date; project oversight and plan to track and report required metrics; and description of the financial management plan. Describe why this project is important to your community.

If the project is a multi-municipal initiative, include information on how this arrangement is beneficial to all parties. The application will need to identify the lead and all other participating municipalities, and must include letters of support from the town manager or an authorized representative from each jurisdiction involved.

#### Disadvantaged Communities Impact

Justice40 directs that 40 percent of the overall benefits realized from Covered Programs flow to “disadvantaged communities.” OMB’s Interim Implementation Guidance defines a community as either: (1) a group of individuals living in geographic proximity (such as census tract), or (2) a geographically dispersed set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions. [M-21-28 (whitehouse.gov)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf).[[5]](#footnote-6)

Pursuant to the Interim Implementation Guidance, DOE has developed DOE’s working definition and tool to identify applicable Disadvantaged Communities at [Energy Justice Dashboard (anl.gov)](https://energyjustice.egs.anl.gov/).[[6]](#footnote-7) DOE will also recognize Disadvantaged Communities as defined and identified by the White House Council of Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5) (CEJST), which can be located at <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/>.[[7]](#footnote-8)

To be considered a Disadvantaged Communities under the DOE definition, a census tract must rank in or above the 80th percentile of the cumulative sum of the 36 burden indicators for its state and have at least 30 households classified as low-income.

Applicants should identify whether all or part of their municipality may be considered as a Disadvantaged Community. See DOE’s website on the [Justice40 Initiative](https://www.energy.gov/justice/justice40-initiative) for more information.[[8]](#footnote-9) **Appendix A** has a listing of Vermont’s Disadvantaged Communities by Census Tract in eligible municipalities.

Applicants may also describe the energy burden associated with the geographic locations covered by this application. Interim guidance on Disadvantaged Communities on the Justice40 Initiative includes “high energy cost burden and low energy access” as a criterion to determine disadvantaged communities.[[9]](#footnote-10) The [2023 Vermont Energy Burden Report](https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/Media/Default/docs/landing-pages/energy-burden-report/2023-EfficiencyVermont-EnergyBurdenReport.pdf) presents data on energy burdened communities by Census tracts.[[10]](#footnote-11) This report may be used to identify the relative energy burden in the community and where the proposed programs will reduce energy burdens in these locations.

1. Preliminary Planning/Project Development Work

Provide information on any initial work by the municipality or municipalities for the proposed activities.

#### Authorized Negotiator(s)

Include the name, title, phone number, and email address for individuals authorized to negotiate any and all aspects of the proposed grant. If this is a multi-municipal initiative, include information for authorized negotiators for each participating jurisdiction.

#### Signature and Date:

Please sign and date to indicate you have read and acknowledge all the terms and conditions of this request for proposals, and that, to the best of your knowledge, the information you have supplied is accurate. If this is a multi-municipal initiative, a signature must be provided for all participating jurisdictions.

1. **Personnel**
2. Key Personnel

Applicants shall have demonstrable knowledge, skills, and qualifications as it relates to the required work. Proposals should include a description of the applicant’s prior experience in areas relevant to the proposed work. Identify key personnel by name, title, role in the project.

1. Identification of Subcontractors

If applicable, list any subcontractor(s) that will perform, or assist in performing, the work including their name, address, contact information, description of work to be subcontracted, and descriptive information concerning subcontractor’s organization and abilities. If the subcontractor hasn’t yet been selected note that it’s still “to be determined”. Once the subcontractor is selected applicants will need to notify and receive approval from the Department before proceeding with a contract.

1. **Budget**

#### Project Costs

#### EECBG Funds Requested: Applicants must specify the amount of EECBG funding requested for their project (not to exceed $100,000 with a minimum request of $50,000; if this is a multi-municipal initiative, identify a budget not to exceed $100,000 times the number of participating municipalities).

#### Other Funding Contributions: List funds from other sources that will cover a portion of the total project costs if applicable.

* Total Project Budget

**NOTE: There is no requirement for matching funds under this EECBG funding opportunity, but match is encouraged.**

#### Proposed Budget Detail

Applicants must submit a proposed budget for the project and include narrative explanations. The Budget narrative should sufficiently describe and justify each line item (explaining the necessity of each item) as well as describing in general the need for financial assistance. If an indirect rate is charged applicants must specify if they have a federally approved indirect rate and attach the approval (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement - NICRA). If an applicant does not have a federally approved NICRA, they cannot charge more than a 10% de minimis indirect rate. The following cost elements should be included in the budget:

Expense Item

* Personnel (position, rate, hours)
* Fringe Benefits
* Travel (mileage cannot exceed the prevailing state rate at the time of travel)
* Supplies
* Consultants/Contracts
* Other (specify)
* Total Direct Costs
* Indirect Costs (including copy of Federally approved indirect rate)
* BUDGET TOTAL

1. **Additional Information (Attachments)**

Include any other information that is believed to be pertinent but not specifically requested elsewhere in this RFP. Additional information on the budget can be included as separate “Attachments” to the application including supporting documents showing bids, descriptions of materials to be purchased, or other relevant items that justify the budget expense. For multi-municipal initiatives, include letters of support from each jurisdiction. These items do not count towards application page total.

### METHOD OF AWARD

All proposals are subject to an evaluation by the PSD (and any other reviewers deemed necessary). Awards will be made in the best interest of the State. The Department reserves the right (but in no way is obligated) to interview the top prospective candidates to aid in the selection process. Acceptance or rejection of any or all proposals will be determined by the exercise of the PSD.

**Selection Criteria**

All proposals received will be evaluated based upon the following selection criteria. Projects will be selected based upon the information provided in the grant applications and how they meet the evaluation criteria. If the program is oversubscribed and multiple jurisdictions within an area submit applications (for example both an incorporated village and a town) the PSD reserves the right to negotiate for budget reductions for these applications, which may be in proportion to the population in each area. These criteria are not necessarily listed in order of importance.

* *Disadvantaged Community Designation and Energy Burdened Communities*

Locations of one or more of the [Justice40](https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/Final%20DOE%20Justice40%20General%20Guidance%20072522.pdf) communities under the IIJA will be a priority for funding under EECBG.

* Disadvantaged Communities as defined by US DOE in the [Energy Mapper](https://energyjustice.egs.anl.gov/).[[11]](#footnote-12)
* To determine if your municipality contains one or more of the J40 locations, see [DOE CJEST Tool](https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5), and/or **Appendix A** of the RFP.[[12]](#footnote-13)
* Communities experiencing high energy burdens including highly burdened Census Block Groups defined in the [2023 Energy Burden Report](https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/Media/Default/docs/landing-pages/energy-burden-report/2023-EfficiencyVermont-EnergyBurdenReport.pdf).[[13]](#footnote-14)
* *Experience & Qualifications*
* Knowledge and/or experience of personnel in the relevant project area, including experience with similar projects
* Adequate capacity/staffing for the described work
* Previous experience managing state or federal grants/contracts
* *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
* *Completeness and Quality of Application: Work Plan/Project Description*
* Clarity and reasonableness of work plan, including definition and timeliness of tasks to be performed
* Plan and capacity for project control and financial management are clear and reasonable (including a strategy to implement, operate, monitor, and evaluate the project)
* *Budget and Reasonableness of Cost*
* Budget line items and amounts are sufficiently described and justified to explain the necessity of each item
* Costs are reasonable and competitive
* The need for financial assistance is well established/justified
* Cost match is included

### GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The PSD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP for any reason, to waive minor irregularities in any proposals received, and to negotiate with any party in any manner deemed necessary to best serve the interests of the State.
2. The PSD shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any party in preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
3. The PSD reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP at any time if the best interest of the State requires such action.
4. News releases pertaining to this RFP, grant award, or the project shall not be made without prior written approval from the PSD.
5. All parties submitting proposals shall be Equal Opportunity Employers. During the duration of the performance of any grant agreement resulting from this RFP, the awardee shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws respecting non-discrimination in employment.
6. After a grant agreement is executed, the PSD will reimburse subgrantees for actual work performed and expenses incurred up to the specified grant amount. Specific payment provisions will be arrived at upon mutual agreement of the parties. All payments will require the submission of an itemized billing of work performed to date in sufficient detail to justify payment. Final payment will require the submission of a final report.
7. Grantees will need to adhere to all provisions in “***Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants****” (revision version dated December 7, 2023*), which will be incorporated into all agreements made as a result of this funding solicitation. Applicants are encouraged to review these provisions which are available online at: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/purchasing-contracting/forms>.
8. The PSD and the State assume no liability in any fashion with respect to this RFP or any matters related thereto. All applicants, contractors and their subcontractors or successors, by their participation in the RFP process, shall indemnify, save and hold the State and its employees and agents free and harmless from all lawsuits, causes of action, debts, rights, judgments, claims, demands, damages, losses and expenses or whatsoever kind in law or equity, known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, arising from or out of this RFP and/or any subsequent acts related thereto, including but not limited to the recommendation of a contractor and any action brought by an unsuccessful applicant.
9. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.
10. All funding for awards will be federal Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act – Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (IIJA-BIL) funds and therefore all IIJA-BIL fund requirements and restrictions will apply. The full set of DOE Special Terms and Conditions for the EECBG program will be included as **Attachment D** to EECBG subgrants and may be reviewed on the PSD website at: [https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Attachment D\_EECBG\_Special Terms and Conditions\_5.16.24.pdf](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/sites/dps/files/documents/Attachment%20D_EECBG_Special%20Terms%20and%20Conditions_5.16.24.pdf).

**Appendix A: List of Disadvantaged Communities in eligible municipalities**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **County** | **Locality** | **Census Tract ID of Disadvantaged Tract** | **Population of Census Tract** |
| Bennington | Pownal | 50003971300 | 3,427 |
| Caledonia | St. Johnsbury | 50005957400 | 3,540 |
| St. Johnsbury | 50005957500 | 3,684 |
| Chittenden | Winooski | 50007002400 | 3,286 |
| Essex | Lewis | 50009950100 | 1,657 |
| Victory | 50009950500 | 3,358 |
| Franklin | Montgomery | 50011010300 | 3,507 |
| St. Albans | 50011010700 | 3,334 |
| Orange | Newbury | 50017959000 | 2,241 |
| Bradford | 50017959800 | 2,713 |
| Orleans | Morgan | 50019951100 | 2,069 |
| Newport | 50019951500 | 2,400 |
| Troy | 50019951600 | 5,291 |
| Barton | 50019951800 | 2,728 |
| Greensboro | 50019952000 | 1,777 |
| Rutland | Fair Haven | 50021963700 | 2,585 |
| Washington | Barre | 50023955200 | 4,179 |
| Windham | Bellows Falls | 50025967000 | 3,017 |
| Windsor | Bethel | 50027965200 | 2,913 |
| Ludlow | 50027966300 | 1,828 |

**APPENDIX B:**

**APPLICATION TEMPLATE**

1. **Summary**

#### **Program Title (**Add a title for your program of no more than 15 words)

#### **EECBG Program Categories** (Select one or more of the eligible categories below)

Category 1: Strategy Development and Implementation

Category 2: Retaining Technical Consulting Services

Category 3: Residential and Commercial Building Audits

Category 6: Energy Efficiency and Conservation Programs for Buildings and Facilities

Category 7: Conservation of Transportation Energy

Category 8: Building Codes and Inspection

#### **Contact Information**

#### **Applicant Organization:**

#### **Applicant Address:**

**Primary Point of Contact: Name, Telephone, and Email Address:**

1. **Federal Funds Questions**

**Are you registered in SAM? Yes or No**

**If yes, Federal Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):**

**If not, will your organization be able to get a UEI before receiving an award?**

**Is there any reason your organization cannot accept federal funds?**

1. **Program Narrative, Workplan & Timeline**

#### **Narrative**

Include information on the work to be completed, as well as the specific information requested below.

#### **Disadvantaged Communities Impact**

Provide information describing the location of the community according to the DOE Energy Justice Dashboard, CJEST, and VT Energy Burden Report.

#### **Preliminary Planning/Project Development Work**

Describe any planning or project development that has already been completed for the project, such as an energy audit or feasibility study.

#### **Name, Title, Phone, and Email of Authorized Negotiator(s)**

#### **Signature of Authorized Representative(s)**

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

1. **Personnel**
2. Key Personnel

Name and title of primary project personnel and their role in the project plus qualifications/experience relevant to the project.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Title** | **Role, Qualifications, and Prior Experience** |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |  |  |
| **7** |  |  |  |  |

#### Sub-Contractors Contact Name, Address, and Email Address

List subcontractors including firm name, name of principal, work to be subcontracted, and nature of subcontractor’s abilities**.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Firm Name** | **Address** | **City** | **State** | **Zip Code** | **Principal Contact Person and email** | **Description of Work to be Subcontracted** | **Descriptive information concerning subcontractor’s organization and abilities** |
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1. **Budget**

#### Project Costs

**EECBG Funds Requested: $**

**Other Funding Contributions: $**

**Total Project Budget: $**

**Cash Match Required:** None

#### Proposed Budget Detail

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expense Item** | **Grant Funded ($)** | **Non-Grant Funded ($)** | **Total Budgeted ($)** |
| Personnel |  |  |  |
| Fringe Benefits |  |  |  |
| Travel (mileage cannot exceed the prevailing state rate at the time of travel) |  |  |  |
| Supplies |  |  |  |
| Consultants/Contracts |  |  |  |
| Other (specify) |  |  |  |
| Total Direct Costs |  |  |  |
| Indirect Costs |  |  |  |
| **BUDGET TOTAL** |  |  |  |

#### Budget Narrative

Personnel (by position, rate, hours)

Fringe Benefit Rates

Supplies description

Consultants/Contracts description (list each consultant/contractor by firm, personnel, rate, hours)

Other

Indirect Costs

1. State and Local Planning for Energy Platform, U.S. Department of Energy. <https://www.energy.gov/scep/slsc/state-and-local-planning-energy-slope-platform> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Energy audits include assessments of residential and commercial buildings to evaluate the energy performance of the building, and identify and prioritize energy savings opportunities, including operational or behavioral changes. Assessments may include recommendations for installation of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy and/or grid-interactive systems, such as battery storage, and energy monitoring systems. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For the purpose of eligibility under the EECBG Program, “building” generally means a usually roofed and walled structure built for permanent use. Commercial buildings include all buildings in which at least half of the of floor space is used for a purpose that is not residential (used as a dwelling for one or more households), manufacturing/industrial (used for processing or procurement of goods, merchandise, raw materials or food) or agricultural (used for the production, processing, sale, storage, or housing of agriculture process, including livestock), so they include building types that might not traditionally be considered “commercial,” such as schools, correctional institutions, and buildings used for religious worship. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. For the purpose of eligibility under the EECBG Program, “facility” generally means an installation, building, group of buildings, or group of structures designed to support a related purpose. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. ***M-21-28. Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative***. Brenda Mallory, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. ***Energy Justice Mapping Tool – Disadvantaged Communities Reporter***. U.S. Department of Energy. <https://energyjustice.egs.anl.gov/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. ***Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool*** (CJEST), U.S. Council on Environmental Quality. <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/about#3/33.47/-97.5> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. ***Justice40 Initiative***. U.S. Department of Energy, <https://www.energy.gov/justice/justice40-initiative> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. ***M-21-28. Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative***. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. ***2023 Vermont Energy Burden Report***, August 2023. Vermont Energy Investment Corporation. <https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/Media/Default/docs/landing-pages/energy-burden-report/2023-EfficiencyVermont-EnergyBurdenReport.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. ***Energy Justice Mapping Tool – Disadvantaged Communities Reporter***. U.S. Department of Energy. <https://energyjustice.egs.anl.gov/> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. ***Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool*** (CJEST), U.S. Council on Environmental Quality. <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/about#3/33.47/-97.5> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. ***2023 Vermont Energy Burden Report***, August 2023. Vermont Energy Investment Corporation. <https://www.efficiencyvermont.com/Media/Default/docs/landing-pages/energy-burden-report/2023-EfficiencyVermont-EnergyBurdenReport.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)