

Community-Scale Renewable Energy Program for Low-Income Vermonters Draft Proposal

1. The PSD staff will create a detailed plan and processes for the Community-Scale Renewable Energy Program (CSREP) that includes goals, timelines, eligibility, outreach and applications, compliance with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) requirements, renewable energy project selection, program evaluation, verification, and reporting.
2. The PSD staff together with a group of willing distribution utilities (DU) will develop a tariff for the program and submit the tariff to the Public Utilities Commission for approval. The tariff would establish, among other parameters of the Program, a process for establishing the benefit for the participating low-income customers. A goal of the tariff would be to set up a mechanism to fund the CSREP in the future after the ARPA funds are expended.
3. The PSD staff and the DU Group would develop a request for proposals (RFP) to sell renewable power to the DU Group. The DU Group would issue the RFP and the DU Group, and the PSD would select the renewable energy proposals and the DU Group would negotiate power purchase agreement(s) (PPA) with the developers of the selected proposals.
4. The PSD staff would issue a grant to the DU Group that would:
 - a. Cover their administration costs incurred administering the Program for the first two years.
 - b. Provide a one-time upfront payment that the DU Group would use to reduce the fixed long-term PPA price for the selected renewable energy project.
 - c. If allowable under ARPA, provide funding for a pilot project for incentives for upgrades to CSREP eligible customers' electrical service that are necessary for the installation and safe use of cold-climate heat pumps and/or electric vehicle charging equipment.
5. The PSD staff would issue a grant to an entity to:
 - a. Create and set up a state-wide portal for enrollment (*could be similar to the utility bill arrearages program*).
 - b. Create and deliver an outreach and education campaign for the Program.
 - c. Create a system to verify and report on participants' income eligibility and collect Program data.
6. Once the selected renewable energy projects are producing power the DU Group would:
 - a. Provide kWh or dollar credits to customer participant's electric bills for 12 or 24 months. The credit would be based on the delta between the as bid cost for the selected renewable energy and the contracted PPA price discounted by the ARPA grant to the utilities for the benefit of their low-income customers.
 - b. Work collaboratively and effectively with the selected entity that is providing the outreach and education of the program and the income verification of the participants.
 - c. Report to the PSD on the Program
7. After the Program is up and running the PSD staff would:
 - a. Implement the Program monitoring and evaluation plan
 - b. Report to the Agency of Administration and Legislature
 - c. Work collaboratively with all DUs and others on the program's continued operation for the benefit of low-income customers.