



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
For a Windham County
Low-income Residential Pellet Heating Program

Date Issued: August 30, 2017
Questions Due by: September 15, 2017
Proposals Due: September 27, 2017

Vermont Public Service Department
112 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2601
(802) 828-2811
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Internet: <http://publicservice.vermont.gov/>



OVERVIEW

The Clean Energy Development Fund (CEDF) requests proposals to for a residential wood pellet heating program targeted to benefit low-income residents of Windham County Vermont. There is \$270,500 available to be granted to one or more organizations through this request for proposals (RFP).

Through this RFP the CEDF plans to award one or more grants for the design, development, implementation, and administration of an advanced wood heating program (or programs) in Windham County. The CEDF goals for such a program are four-fold:

1. Maximize the number of advanced pellet wood heating systems installed in low-income homes in Windham County.
2. Maximize the home heating cost savings, fossil fuel displacement, indoor air-quality, and home safety improvements for the participating homes.
3. Build on and leverage State and County activities to build the advanced wood energy economy in Windham County.
4. Decrease the particulate emissions and inefficient use of wood heat in Windham County.

Proposed projects should promote the development and deployment of cost-effective, highly energy efficient, residential wood pellet heating technology that has low levels of particulate emissions and benefit the residents of Windham County.

Entities eligible for the grant include municipal units of government, businesses, and non-profit public-serving organizations. All awards will be made through this competitive RFP process.

Awardees will be subjected to transparency and reporting requirements including, but not limited to: reporting, tracking and documentation of incurred costs, and access to records. Respondents are encouraged to thoroughly review this RFP. Award recipients may be expected to provide operational data past the end of the grant term.

An applicant may only submit one proposal. Proposals must be for programs based in Windham County Vermont. All programs must be for the benefit of Windham County, VT residents. Programs receiving grant awards must be completed within 24 months of the award agreement being executed.

Cost share is preferred. As noted in the evaluation criterion, a higher percentage of cost-share will yield more points when the proposal is scored.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Award Description	
Eligible Entities:	Municipal & State Government, Businesses, Non-Profits, and Community Groups
Funding Type:	Program Grant
Total Amount available, Windham County: <i>Maximum Grant:</i> <i>Minimum Grant:</i>	\$270,500 \$270,500 \$100,000
Cost Share Required:	
Technologies Allowed:	Pellet Fueled Heating Appliances (stoves, boilers, furnaces) that are: Efficient (\geq 70% efficient) Low Emitting (\leq 2.0 grams per hour)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Proposals must arrive at the Public Service Department (PSD) office by 4 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27, 2017. Applicants should allow adequate time to ensure receipt of their proposal by the deadline. Proposals received after this time and date will not be considered.

The following documents must be delivered to the CEDF at the PSD:

1. One original, signed hard copy
2. An electronic copy, delivered by email

Proposals must include a one page over-view Cover Page, a Proposal Narrative, and a Budget Worksheet.

Any questions regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing, preferably by email, with the subject line, “Windham Co. Low-income Residential Pellet Heating RFP Question.” **Questions are due by** close of business, **Friday, September 15, 2017** and will be answered comprehensively at the CEDF web site (http://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewable_energy/cedf) alongside this RFP by Wednesday the 27th of September, 2017.

Proposals and questions should be addressed to:

Andrew Perchlik
 CEDF Director
 c/o Vermont Public Service Department
 112 State Street
 Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
 Phone: (802) 828-4017 Email: andrew.perchlik@Vermont.gov

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

General Information: This solicitation is open to new and previous applicants who have received or sought funding from the CEDF. Priority will be given to those that have not received funding before. Applicants may submit only one proposal, but subcontractors can be included in more than one proposal. Funds cannot be used for projects that have already begun construction or for equipment purchases that have already been made. Any and all awards will be made through this competitive RFP.

Term: All projects funded under this solicitation should be operational within three months of the grant award execution and completed within twenty-four months.

Reporting: Reporting shall be required for all projects receiving an award. Reporting shall include quarterly progress reports as well as a final report submitted within twenty-five months from the execution of the grant agreement with the CEDF.

Quarterly updates/reports and a final project report shall include program expenditures made, specific activities, and results. Five percent of grant funds will be held back until the final report has been received and approved by the CEDF.

Cost Share: Applicants must demonstrate their cost share as part of the application process, and must submit a letter of commitment identifying the cost share from the source of that funding. For example, if an applicant has received a commitment from an organization to provide funds that cover part of the cost for the program, the applicant must provide a copy of the commitment letter. Preference will be given to programs that demonstrate the most cost share.

Exclusions: No funding will be awarded for programs consisting of feasibility studies. All projects must be based in Windham County, VT. Funds cannot be used for projects that have already begun construction or for equipment purchases that have already been made or ordered.

Revisions: The PSD/CEDF reserves the right to make necessary changes to this RFP at any time.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM APPLICANTS

Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Fancy bindings, colored displays, promotional materials, and so forth are not desired. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Proposals should be no longer than 10 pages, with no less than a 12-point font and one-inch margins. Resumes, letters of support, and the Budget Worksheet, or appendixes **do not** count toward the 10-page limit. The Cover Page and all other information count towards the 10-page limit.

Proposals must include at minimum the following information:

A. Cover Page

Applicants must include a one page Cover Page that includes the following:

1. **Project Title**

Provide a descriptive title for the project.

2. **Project Summary**

Provide a short paragraph or two describing the essential elements of the proposal.

3. **Identification of Applicant Organization**

State the full name and address of the organization responsible for the proposal and list the main contact and her or his contact information.

4. **Identification of Subcontractors**

If applicable, list any subcontractors that will perform, or assist in performing, the work. Include their name(s), address, and contact information.

5. **Estimated outcomes**

List the estimated number of pellet stoves to be installed, fossil fuel to be displaced, and other metrics of the proposed program's anticipated successes.

6. **Project Budget**

Include the total project costs and the amount of grant funds requested (this information should also be included in the budget, see Appendix A).

7. **Signature:**

Please sign to indicate you have read and acknowledge all of the conditions of this request for proposals, and that, to the best of your knowledge, the information you have supplied is accurate.

B. Project Narrative

Describe the program for which funding is requested. Provide a statement of the program's goal(s) and objectives. Describe what the program will accomplish if successful. State why this project should receive CEDF grant funding and if the program would happen without CEDF grant funding.

C. Personnel

Applicants should have demonstrable knowledge, skills, and experience as it relates to the required work of the proposal. Proposals should include a description of the applicant's prior experience in all areas relevant to the proposed program. The proposal must identify all persons that will be employed in the proposed program by skill and qualifications. Identify key personnel by name and title and provide their prior experience (if resumes are included they **do not** count toward the 10-page limit). Subcontractors (if known) must be listed, including the firm name and address and contact person (on the cover page as well), and complete description of work to be subcontracted. Include descriptive information concerning subcontractor's organization and abilities.

D. Work Plan & Time Line

Describe in narrative form the plan for accomplishing the work required to create and deploy the program. Include a description of any activities in support of the proposal that have already been completed or are in process.

Describe the plan for project oversight, quality assurance measures, and financial management and which team member(s) will have this responsibility.

Provide a time line for the program development and implementation.

F. Environmental, Economic, & Community Impact

Applicants should describe the specific environmental, economic, and/or community benefits to be created through the proposed program such as: number of pellet stoves to be installed, jobs created, monetary value of the program to the recipients, impacts on the local community, and any other benefits.

G. Budget & Budget Narrative

Applicants must submit a proposed budget for the project and include narrative explanations of the budget items. The budget worksheet must be submitted electronically. An image of the budget worksheet is included as Appendix A of this RFP as a reference. The electronic version is available as a spreadsheet at: http://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewable_energy/cedf . Alternatively, the spreadsheet can be obtained from the grant administrator (andrew.perchlik@vermont.gov).

The budget should include the applicant's cash and any in-kind cost-share for the program. For each cost element, the applicant must show what portion will be paid with CEDF funds and what portion will be paid with cost-share funds. The applicant should distinguish between cash and in-kind cost-share.

For this grant RFP, applicant's time/labor committed to the project is considered in-kind match. Subcontractors'/third-party **donated** labor/services, equipment, and materials would also be considered in-kind match.

All match (both cash and in-kind) must be necessary for the accomplishment of program objectives and must be applicable to the grant period (i.e., cash or time previously spent on the project cannot be used as match).

The CEDF will expect to share in any cost savings realized by an awardee. Therefore, the CEDF's final share of each budgeted line-item expenditure will be reimbursed to the grantee at the proportionate rate of participation as established by that line item in the grant budget and/or any approved amendment to the budget.

H. Additional Information

Applications must include information described in sections A-G above. Applications should include any other information that they believe to be pertinent and important.

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals are subject to an evaluation by CEDF and PSD staff, and any other reviewers they deem necessary. The PSD reserves the right (but is not obligated) to interview the top prospective awardees to aid in the selection process. Acceptance or rejection of any or all proposals will be at the sole discretion of the CEDF and PSD.

All proposals will be evaluated based upon the evaluation criteria listed below:

1. Program Characteristics:

- Fossil fuels displaced per year per dollar of CEDF funding
- Reduction in amount of greenhouse gas emitted
- Reduction in particulate emissions
- Suitability/feasibility of the proposed program
- Program risks (for example securing necessary permits) are acknowledged and are compared to similar proposed projects
- Whether the program improves the energy efficiency of the homes involved
- Whether the program leverages other programs and funding
- Whether the program would be replicable in other parts of Vermont

2. The program supports the CEDF's primary goal of maximizing cost-effective and environmentally sustainable renewable energy generation, and/or one or more other CEDF goals:

- Minimize the environmental impact of Vermont's energy portfolio
- Improve the cost effectiveness of pellet heating in Vermont
- Supports low-income Vermonters
- Accelerate economic development for the clean energy sector in Vermont, for example:
 - Jobs retained and created
 - Creation of new businesses
 - Increase of local business revenue especially that which cycles within VT
 - Support and/or development of the clean energy industry/sector
- Community involvement and acceptance of the program

3. Experience & Qualifications:

- Knowledge and experience in the relevant project area, including successful experience with similar projects
- Demonstrated ability to complete project on time, on budget, and to completely reporting requirements
- Previous experience with state and/or federal grants

4. Budget:

- Budget line items and amounts are sufficiently described and justified to explain the necessity of each item
- Costs are reasonable and competitive
- Degree of financial leverage
- The need for financial assistance is well-established and justified
- Amount of cost share included

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The CEDF/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 CEDF shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by any party in preparation of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.
3. The CEDF 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 CEDF.
5. All parties submitting proposals shall be Equal Opportunity Employers. During the duration of the performance 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 CEDF will reimburse the grantee(s) 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 a final report.
7. In most instances, the grant payments made under this program will be treated as taxable income by the IRS and the State of Vermont. It is the responsibility of the recipient of this grant payment to consult with their tax advisor to determine the correct treatment of this payment for Federal and State tax purposes.
8. Insurance:
Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont.
General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under the contract, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:

Premises - Operations
Products and Completed Operations
Personal Injury Liability
Contractual Liability

The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:

\$1,000,000 per Occurrence
\$1,000,000 General Aggregate
\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
\$ 50,000 Fire/ Legal/Liability

Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than: \$1,000,000 combined single limit.

The Grantee shall name the State of Vermont and its officers and employees as additional insureds for liability arising out of this Agreement.

9. The CEDF and the State assume no liability in any fashion with respect to this RFP or any matters related thereto. All prospective grantees 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 grantee and any action brought by an unsuccessful applicant.
10. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.

APPENDIX A- Budget Worksheet

The budget worksheet must be submitted electronically. An image of the budget worksheet is included below for reference.

The electronic version is available as an Excel spreadsheet at http://publicservice.vermont.gov/renewable_energy/cedf.

Alternatively, the spreadsheet can be obtained from the grant administrator (andrew.perchlik@vermont.gov)

PROPOSED BUDGET - Pellet Heating for Low Income Residents of Windham County				
APPLICANT NAME:				
PROJECT TITLE:				
1. PROGRAM COSTS <i>(provide supporting info and/or detail in budget narrative)</i>				
List items	CEDF Grant \$ Requested	Funds from Applicant (Cash Match) \$	Value of In-kind contributions \$	Project Total
				\$0
				\$0
				\$0
				\$0
Subtotal Capital Costs:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. SUBCONTRACTOR SERVICES & SALARIES <i>(provide supporting info and/or detail in budget narrative)</i>				
List provider and service (e.g., Installation), including hours and rates	CEDF Grant \$ Requested	Funds from Applicant (Cash Match) \$	Value of In-kind contributions \$	Project Total
				\$0
				\$0
				\$0
Subtotal Subcontractor Services:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
3. OTHER <i>(itemize and explain)</i>				
List item (e.g. Travel, Insurance, etc.)	CEDF Grant \$ Requested	Funds from Applicant (Cash Match) \$	Value of In-kind contributions \$	Project Total
				\$0
				\$0
Subtotal Other:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-3)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0