



Municipal Energy Resilience Program Mini Grant Use Recommendations

Municipal Energy Resilience Program \$4,000 Mini- Grants

Many towns received Mini Grants in 2023. While you have until December 31st, 2026 to expend these funds, Many towns have experience turnover or had planned to use them to complement an implementation award that was not awarded.

CVRPC IS HERE TO HELP!

These grants fund municipal efforts for capacity building and active participation in energy resilience initiatives, specific to MERP and beyond. These are just a few ways that a town could expend these funds.

For support identifying a plan for your MERP mini-grant or implementation your planned uses, please reach out to **Sam Lash**, Climate & Energy Planner, CVRPC at lash@cvregion.com or 802-262-1053.

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

Not In CVRPC's region?
Reach out to your RPC for support:
<https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program>

1 Technical Assistance

- design/engineering to implement projects in the future (building envelope, HVAC, renewable generation, sidewalk or other alternative transportation projects, etc.)
- project management current MERP or related project,
- remediation, ADA assessment, or other technical assistance to expand capacity to implement MERP recommendations in the future
- technical assistance to work on Enhanced Energy Plan, Energy Element of the Town Plan, integrate energy and climate resilience into, other planning or projects

2 WindowDressers

WindowDressers brings community volunteers together to build insulating window inserts that function as custom, interior-mounted storm windows at low to no cost for community members. This initiative:

- lowers heating costs
- reduces fuel use
- increases warmth & comfort
- builds community

We have several successful WindowDressers Community Builds in Central Vermont that build hundreds of inserts every year with and for community including long-standing Montpelier/Barre City and the Mad River Valley/Middlesex community builds.

Towns can use their mini grant funds to build local capacity for their own community build, or for a local measuring team to work with one of the existing Central VT builds. These mini-grant funds can support the builds in a number of ways:

- food/space for the community build,
- materials and advertising to build a local measuring team,
- subsidize participation in the community build for low-income residents,
- advertising and coordinating with additional local non-profits to provide materials and resources on weatherization,
- support public outreach and spaces including libraries and schools to participate and have seasonal or permanent demonstration insert with signage.

For help, questions, or interest please reach out to Sam Lash (lash@cvregion.com), for partnering with existing community build and mentorship Amy Gamble (agamble1203@gmail.com)



3 Build Resilient Power

Another community build-type program, Build Power (from The Footprint Project) partners with municipalities, among others, to assemble off-grid, mobile solar generators to support community-resilience embedded in a training and education workshop to empower communities to safely deploy and plug into clean, reliable, energy.

Towns might consider partnering to co-host and co-build a portable solar generator and/or mobile solar trailer. Note many towns have similar actions already listed in their town plans and/or Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, this grant helps the town build the capacity to implement!

See More at
<https://www.footprintproject.org/build-power>

and reach out to neighboring towns and CVRPC for support.

4 Host Local Energy Events

Mini grant funds can be used to host local energy events covering advertising, vendors, venue, entertainment/food, door prizes, demonstration materials, etc. Work with CVRPC and/or a neighboring town, or build off an existing local event.

Examples:

- Energy Fair
- Energy Nights on specific topics like Residential Weatherization, Info on Energy for Landlords, Wasteheat Recovery, etc.)
- Electric Fleet Demo Days
- Vermont Energy Education Program Event (VEEP)- great for schools, libraries, and community events
- Town Plan Update (Energy Element or Enhanced Energy Plan) Community Session

This events could be held as standalone events or in tandem with a town plan/enhanced energy plan update community engagement process. Reach out Sam Lash (lash@cvregion.com) or a neighboring town for existing partner lists and contacts, activity templates, and support!



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5 Didactic Signage

Does your town have an implementation award, a new town energy element, solar or EV charger project? Use mini grant funds to work with a consultant to develop a didactic sign to hang or install by the project and let folks know and learn more.

See Iceberg Consulting for examples!
<https://www.icebergconsulting.net/>

6 EV(SE) Planning & Demonstration

Solaflect has made available a 1 year lease option for a temporary off-grid EV charger to enable towns to use their mini grant funds towards demonstration/pilot project to explore interest and placement of EV chargers at town and public places.

This enables a town to collect data on charger use to support future fleet electrification and/or EV charger planning while making use of a year of free-charging (weather-dependent).

- No Interconnection Needed (off-grid EV Charging)
- No Construction Project (pre-assembled- no digging or re-paving!)
- Pair with community-use feedback survey, data report, etc. to support future projects!

Many towns have action items around exploring EV chargers and/or fleet electrification already in their town plans- this provides additional community engagement and information for future projects!

Check out Solaflect at <https://solaflect.com/>



7 Energy Committee

Use your mini grant funds to establish a municipal energy committee or amplify/build capacity for an existing committee's work on energy and resilience:

- Conduct community outreach efforts (recruitment and retention),
- Print energy resilience materials including posters or mailers for local residents and businesses.
- Use for expenses related to community energy resilience meetings—event space rental, equipment, food, childcare, etc.
- Create or enhance a website or social media presence related to energy resilience
- Other efforts to promote community energy resilience
- Municipal energy use data tracking software
- Traffic and/or weather tracking equipment to inform municipal planning and project decisions (reducing vehicle miles traveled, EVSE, carpooling, resilience hubs, etc)
- see technical assistance, education and other ideas on this list!

8 Education

Work with a school, club, committee, or at community meals or the like to implement an education project of your design... some towns have proposed:

- Town weather station linked to town webpage and building weather and climate pact awareness, linking energy projects and planning to emergency preparedness and resilience
- Library/Community Loans: buy FLIR compact thermal imaging cameras and/or other items to support residential energy nights and neighbor-to-neighbor networks which can demonstrate need and connect community members to expertise at Efficiency VT and Capstone Community Action Agency
- Host Vermont Energy Education Programs (VEEP) learn more at <https://veep.org/>
- Propose your own idea!

Contact Sam Lash, CVRPC for support making a plan for, and implementing, your mini grant award! lash@cvregion.com 802-262-1053

Contact BGS for questions and additional support: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program/mini-grants>

Thus far Towns have used these funds, for example, to:

- Worcester used some funds to host a community meeting as they drafted their Enhanced Energy Plan
- Orange used their mini grant to hire an architect to review their recommended measures and conduct ADA assessments
- Berlin used their mini grant to receive technical assistance developing and designing their solar ice rink canopy project
- Middlesex use some of their funds to hold their annual energy fair at Camp Meade with 26 vendors and non profits providing information and services to community members (marketing, entertainment, traffic control). They have used their remaining award to host community weatherization workshops in and on municipal buildings including the fire station.
- Many Central Vermont towns plan to use mini grant funds, in full or partially, to support low-income residents to participate in WindowDressers as well as cover measuring team, food, and venue costs for the community builds.
- Other towns across the state have participated in mobile solar charger workshops, created videos for community use and education, etc.