MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM

WHAT TO KNOW

The Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) is a new grant program funded by Vermont Building and General Services (BGS) and administered by regional planning commissions to help communities become more energy resilient. Established by Act 172, MERP will provide $45M in funding to help reduce municipal building energy usage, operating costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. Existing buildings owned by cities, towns, fire districts, and all other municipal units are eligible. School districts are not eligible for this program. **No local match is required for this funding.**

TIMELINE

MARCH 2023 (TBD)
Applications open for $4,000 community grants

SPRING 2023 (TBD)
Applications open for energy assessments

SPRING 2024
Applications open for implementation projects

JANUARY 15, 2024
Energy assessments completed

DECEMBER 31, 2024
All grant awards are obligated

DECEMBER 31, 2026
All grant awards must be expended

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

For each municipal building:

- Access to or a plan to access high speed internet by 2025. Participation in a CUD qualifies.
- ADA compliant by project completion.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

All Addison County municipality-owned buildings are eligible for the MERP programs. Allocation of funds to communities will be prioritized based on need. Towns with a high energy burden defined as the proportion of income spent on energy, including heating, electricity, and transportation will receive highest priority. Other prioritization criteria include: administrative capacity, geographic location, and community size.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY BURDEN RANKING

HIGH	**Whiting** (13%), **Goshen** (12.3%), **Bristol** (11.9%), **Ripton** (11.3%), **Orwell** (11.2%), **Panton** (11.2%)
MODERATE	**Shoreham** (10.7%), **Bridport** (10.6%), **Middlebury** (10.6%), **Vergennes** (10.3%), **New Haven** (10.1%), **Salisbury** (10%), **Ferrisburgh** (9.7%), **Leicester** (9.6%), **Lincoln** (9.3%), **Starksboro** (9.2%)
LOW	**Addison** (8.8%), **Waltham** (8.7%), **Weybridge** (8%), **Cornwall** (7.9%), **Monkton** (7.7%)

MERP Program Components

COMMUNITY CAPACITY GRANTS

These grants provide up to $4,000 to support energy resilience community capacity building. Selectboard approval for proposed projects is required

Potential Uses:

- Hire a grant writer
- Host educational events
- Promotional materials
- Start an energy committee

To use these funds efficiently applicants are encouraged to develop projects shared across multiple municipalities.

FREE ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

Towns can apply for building assessments of any municipally owned building except schools. These assessments will provide recommendations and cost estimates for HVAC and thermal envelope improvements, weatherization, renewable energy equipment, battery storage and EV charging equipment. Two levels of assessment are available:

Level 1: Walk-through assessment.
Takes ~1.5 hours and goes beyond Efficiency VT assessment qualifies the building for MERP Implementation Funds.

Level 2: Investment grade audit.
Takes ~4 hours and qualifies the building for MERP implementation funds and other Federal and State funding sources.

If you don't have the documents (utility bills, architectural drawings, etc.) for a Level 2 assessment, or you want to swiftly access the MERP implementation grant, consider a Level 1 assessment. Covered municipalities may apply for either. Both are free and will qualify for a MERP implementation grant.

IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Each municipality can apply for a maximum of **$500,000** for building renovation projects regarding weatherization, thermal efficiency, and supplementing or replacing fossil fuel heating systems with more efficient renewable or electric alternatives. Any municipal building that receives an energy assessment through the MERP program is eligible for this funding. These funds can be split across several eligible buildings under one project grant.

REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

Will provide low interest loan to pursue energy efficiency projects in municipal buildings. A Level 2 assessment is required to qualify.

CONTACT ACRPC FOR HELP

ACRPC is here to provide technical assistance for applications, assessments, and project implementation.

Please contact Maddison Shropshire at mshropshire@acrpc.org | (802) 388 3141
ACRPC.org

Scan for program website