

ACRPC Newsletter March 2023



ACRPC MARCH NEWSLETTER

The ACRPC Newsletter contains Addison County announcements, events, grants, and training for the upcoming month. Click below to see this newsletter and other resources on our website. Please contact Maddison Shropshire with questions, mshropshire@acrpc.org

ACRPC Update

Buying a Building (or Land) for your Municipality? It may be a Brownfield!

If your municipality is in the process of buying an existing building or land, or thinking about doing so, please reach out to ACRPC as you start the process.

The RPC currently has EPA funding for a Community Wide Assessment of Brownfields, which includes Regulated Building Materials (RBM) Surveys. Typical RBM surveys include assessment of Asbestos containing material (ACM), Lead-based paint (LBP), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in building materials, and universal wastes such as mercury-containing equipment, fluorescent light tubes, equipment with radioactive sources, ozone depleting substances, batteries, and more.

In addition, the RPC funding covers Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and enrollment in the state's Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Act (BRELLA) program, which limits legal and financial liability risks to the new owner, regardless of whether or not they caused the contamination. Further Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, Master Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAPs), Health and Safety Plans (HASPs), and some Site-Specific Cleanup/Reuse Plans can also be covered.

The presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants can significantly complicate the redevelopment or reuse of these properties, so ACRPC is working with the environmental consulting company Stantec to assess and remediate them. If you have building purchases in process or plans to purchase one, please contact ACRPC planner, Andrew L'Roe (alroe@acrpc.org).

COMING SOON: Municipal Energy Resilience Program

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.**

MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM

- Community Capacity Grants
- Free Energy Assessments
- Implementation Grants
- Revolving Loan Program



The program will provide multiple opportunities for municipalities including:

- 1. \$4,000 mini-grants for towns to educate their community on energy efficiency and generate buy-in and consensus around applications for the following opportunities below. **Applications open in March**
- 2. Free energy assessments of any building owned by the municipality except school buildings. **Applications open this spring**
- 3. Up to \$500,000 in construction funds for municipal buildings to undergo recommended improvements following the assessments above.
- 4. A revolving loan fund to provide additional construction funds beyond the one time funds available for the rest of the program.

Resources:

- Printable MERP <u>Handout</u>
- Find a list of Frequently Asked Questions Here
- VLCT is hosting a webinar on MERP with the BGS program staff available to answer questions. Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:00 am to 11:00 am Register Here
- The <u>ACRPC Energy Webpage</u> will provide updated information on this program moving forward.

ACRPC is available to provide support in identifying eligible projects and technical assistance with applications, assessments, and project implementation. If you are interested in applying for this program, please express your interest by providing information on each building you would like to consider to <u>this list</u>. To learn more about this program, please contact Maddison Shropshire <u>mshropshire@acrpc.org</u> or (802) 388-3141 ext 7.

Events

March Calendar

Date	Time	Meeting
March 7th	6:30 PM	ACRPC Energy Committee
March 8th	5:30 PM	ACRPC Housing Committee
March 8th	7:00 PM	ACRPC Full Commission Meeting
March 15th	6:30 PM	TAC Meeting
March 16th	7:00 PM	ACSWMD meeting
March 22nd	6:30 PM	ACRPC Executive Committee Meeting

Please find the meeting agendas and minutes on our <u>website using this link</u>. This newsletter is financed through the State of Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the State of Vermont. All programs of the Addison County Regional Planning Commission are ADA accessible.

Announcements

ARPA Local Recovery Funding

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF, aka ARPA) and directed nearly \$11 million of ARPA funding directly to Addison County's cities and towns. For questions about resources or reaching out to municipal residents, contact ACRPC planner Andrew L'Roe (alroe@acrpc.org) and see our website at: https://acrpc.org/regional-programs/arpa/

Maple Broadband is putting down roots in your neighborhood

We're bringing high speed future-proof fiber internet to Addison County and are excited to announce that service will be launching later this month in portions of Cornwall, Salisbury, and a small corner of Middlebury. You can see if you are in the launch area and learn more by visiting <u>maplebroadband.net</u>.

Farm Share Program

The NOFA-VT <u>Farm Share Program</u> application is now open for the spring and summer seasons! NOFA-VT's Farm Share Program reduces the cost of a local CSA (community supported agriculture) share or farm stand credit for Vermonters in need of financial assistance, while ensuring farmers are fully paid. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and will close on **March 31st**, **2023**, or when funds run out. More about this program and how to apply can be found at <u>nofavt.org/farmshare</u>. Attached is a

paper application for folks who prefer this option. The application and program materials are available this year in Spanish. Please reach out to farmshare@nofavt.org or 802-434-7162 with any questions.

ACRPC Accessory Dwelling Unit Program

ACRPC has been granted \$32,000 from St. Stephens Church as pass-through funds for individuals looking to support affordable housing in Addison County by building accessory dwelling units (ADUs). ACRPC is also putting together a guide and various resources to help interested homeowners navigate the entire process of creating an ADU (permitting, financing, design/construction, renting, etc.) and hopes to work further with St. Stephens to develop an outreach program. More information will become available as the program develops.

Addison County Legislative Breakfasts

The Bridport Grange #303 and the Addison County Farm Bureau are once again hosting a series of Addison County Legislative Breakfasts. All are welcome to attend come ask a question or make a comment about a bill. Breakfasts will start at 7am; the program begins at 7:30am and will end at 8:45am. Purchase of breakfast is not required to attend, but it helps the hosts defray the cost of opening their venues for the event. Dates and locations are as follows:

- March 13: Salisbury Congregational Church, 853 Maple Street, Salisbury
- March 27: Shoreham Congregational Church, 28 School Street, Shoreham
- April 10: Orwell Fire House, 604 Main Street, Orwell

Flood Hazard Maps and Zoning Bylaws Updates

FEMA is currently updating the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) in Vermont for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). When the new maps go into effect, FEMA requires that town bylaws meet current standards for participation in the NFIP. If your bylaws are not sufficient, residents will no longer be able to purchase nor renew flood insurance through the NFIP. Participation in NFIP also increases the percentage of your town's post-disaster Emergency Relief and Assistance Funding (ERAF), providing state coverage of public disaster recovery costs that can potentially save thousands of municipal dollars. ACRPC is reaching out to Planning Commissions and Zoning Administrators to help review bylaws and provide advice on updating language to meet NFIP standards.

Learn more: <u>Here</u> | Contact: ACRPC planner, Andrew L'Roe (<u>alroe@acrpc.org</u>).

Free Energy Savings Kits from Efficiency VT

Efficiency VT is making a big push to get FREE Energy Savings Kits into as many homes as we can before lighting incentives end on July 1st. Kits include 10 LED light

bulbs, 2 faucet aerators, a water-saving showerhead – valued at \$47– delivered free to your door. Order yours today at www.efficiencyvermont.com/Kits **Contact:** Maddison Shropshire at mshropshire@acrpc.org

Grants and Funding

Community

Library Capital Projects Funding

The <u>VT Department of Libraries</u> has received funding from two initiatives to support local libraries in pursuing capital projects.

• \$16.4M U.S. Treasury Capital Projects Fund for Libraries

The State of Vermont has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Treasury to grant \$16.4 million of our state's Capital Project funds toward capital improvements to Vermont's public libraries to be administered by the Vermont Department of Libraries.

• \$10M Public Facilities Preservation Initiative Grants

The Vermont Department of Libraries is poised to receive \$10M for Public Facilities Preservation Initiative Grants to be available for the state's small, rural public libraries.

To access this funding, libraries must respond to a needs assessment. An introductory webinar and additional information on the needs assessment can be found <u>here</u>. **Assessment Due:** March 31 | **Contact:** Maddison Shropshire mshropshire@acrpc.org

New Manufactured Home Improvement & Repair Program Launched

<u>Vermont State Housing Authority</u> has launched the Manufactured Home Improvement & Repair Program, offering financial assistance to manufactured home communities as well as current and prospective manufactured home owners. The program will provide financial assistance for park improvements, home repair and foundation installation. To learn more, visit: <u>www.VSHA.org</u>.

United Way of Addison County Community Impact Funding

UWAC is currently accepting <u>Letters of Interest</u> from nonprofits serving Addison County in the area of Education. Letters of Interest are due Wednesday, March 22, 2023. <u>Click here to read full eligibility requirements and submission guidelines</u>.

VLCT Announces New Federal Funding Assistance Program

In response to member requests, VLCT has created the Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFA). Modeled after the successful <u>ARPA Assistance and Coordination</u> <u>Program</u>, FFA expands VLCT's work with ARPA to include the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL, aka Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and other new and existing state and federal grant programs. They will do the work of sifting through the tsunami of information, and work with their broad network of state, federal, statewide, and national partners to curate only programs and resources for which municipalities are eligible and that are relevant to our Vermont scale. As the program launches, VLCT has developed the following resources:

- New Federal Funding Assistance Program webpage
- VLCT's Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook
- "Consults On Call" Book a 15-minute meeting with the FFA team during weekly office hours. Evening hours are available. Book your appointment <u>HERE</u>. Need more than 15 minutes? Email <u>ffa@vlct.org</u> to schedule a longer consultation.

AARP VT Accepting 2023 Community Challenge Grant Applications -

The annual program aims to make communities in Vermont more livable for people of all ages. AARP invites local eligible organizations and governments across the state to apply for the 2023 AARP Community Challenge grant program, now through March 15 at 5:00 p.m. Grants fund quick-action projects that help communities become more livable in the long-term by improving public spaces, transportation, housing, civic engagement, diversity and inclusion.

Learn More: Here | Due: March 15th

Community Recovery and Revitalization Program

The Community Recovery and Revitalization Program (CRRP) will provide recovery funding for projects that spur economic recovery and revitalization to mitigate the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 in communities across the state. Program guidelines have now been posted on the ACCD website and the application will become available in the coming weeks.

Learn more: <u>Here</u>

Vermont Community Development Grants

The Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) assists communities on a competitive basis by providing financial and technical assistance to identify and address local needs in the areas of housing, economic development, public facilities, public services, handicapped accessibility and modification planning.

Accessibility, Equity, & Inclusion

Vermont Healthy Communities

From safer, walkable, universally accessible streets to more green spaces, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) in partnership with the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is excited to announce the launch of a technical assistance pilot to support community-led design, placemaking, and healthy equity projects across Vermont. Applications are now open for interested communities* and Health Equity Ambassadors.

VDH and DHCD invite eligible Vermont communities* and residents over 18 years of age to apply for the <u>Health Equity and Community Design Technical Assistance (TA)</u> <u>Pilot</u>. Approximately 20 to 35 communities will be accepted for in-person and virtual engagement sessions between December 2022 and October 2023.

- The TA Pilot will provide extra capacity and resources to communities to develop healthy community design and placemaking plans, ideas, and projects that center on equity.
- The TA Pilot will also help prepare communities that are interested in, but not yet ready to apply for, <u>DHCD's Better Places</u> placemaking grants.

Trusted community members who want to be directly involved in bringing health equity to their community are also encouraged to apply to be a <u>Health Equity Ambassador</u>. Ambassadors are important to the success and sustainability of the TA pilot. Ambassadors will:

Support and co-lead on navigating community issues and opportunities,

- Engage community members, stakeholders, and state and local agencies,
- Co-develop community ideas and action plans to advance health equity in their community,
- Receive training and compensation for their time and contributions in support of local communities.

Visit the Healthy Communities Vermont website to learn more.

*Communities are flexibly defined- may include nonprofits, municipalities, & volunteer groups.

VCF Equitable and Inclusive Communities grant

The Vermont Community Foundation is seeking proposals from Vermont villages, towns, and cities that close the <u>opportunity gap</u> by supporting local efforts to foster inclusion and belonging for people of all races and backgrounds. The Foundation offers grants of up to \$10,000 to fund projects that generate a greater sense of community and equity education in town.

Learn more: <u>Here</u> | Due: rolling basis until funds are used

Energy

Municipal Energy Resilience Program

See ACRPC Update article above

Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program

WRAP will allow Vermont households to pay for qualifying weatherization projects like insulation and air sealing as well as heat pumps and advanced wood heating systems through a monthly charge on their utility bill that can be paid back over time. The program is open to Vermonters of all incomes and both homeowners and renters can participate in the program. **Learn more**: <u>Here</u>

Natural Resources

NBRC Forest Economy Program (FEP) Now Open

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) has opened its 2023 Forest Economy Program (FEP) competition. The Commission will make up to \$7 million in grants available, with a maximum award of \$1 million. Potential applicants must express interest through Letters of Interest (LOI) and will have two opportunities to submit: March 10, 2023 by 5pm, or September 15, 2023 by 5pm. For more information, including program materials and to register to attend FEP information sessions, visit the <u>Northern Border Regional Commission FEP webpage</u>.

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions Tiny Grant

Small awards of up to \$600 to assist local committees/groups to become conservation commissions, increase the functioning capacity of existing conservation commissions, or provide seed money and/or matching funds for specific projects in the broad categories of land conservation, education and outreach, stewardship and management, and planning.

Learn more: <u>Here</u> | Due: March 31st

Clean Water

Green Schools Initiative Phase 2 Program

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Administration of the Green Schools Initiative Phase 2 Program. Please submit any questions related to this RFP to Jean Nicolai at jean.nicolai@vermont.gov by the deadline listed below using the subject line "Green Schools Phase 2 RFP Questions." Responses to questions will be posted to the Vermont Bid Registry on or before March 24, 2023.

- Release Date: February 24, 2023
- Questions Due: March 15, 2023 | 4:00 pm
- Proposals Due: April 7, 2023 | 4:00 pm
- <u>View the Request for Proposals</u>

2023 Dam Removal Block Grant Open Round

Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) is pleased to announce a new round of funding under the Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant (Dam Removal DIBG). Funding is provided by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) and is administered by WUV. Please note that this funding round is governed under the DEC <u>CWIP State Fiscal Year 2023</u> <u>Funding Policy</u> — review the policy carefully before applying for funding. **Learn More**: <u>Here</u> | **Proposals Due**: March 29, 2023 **Contact**: Christian Pelletier, (christian@whiteriverpartnership.org)

If you plan on submitting an application for this funding source, consider attending the upcoming training on State Historic Preservation Review of Clean Water Projects (see Training Opportunity: Save the Date below).

Date: March 8, 2023 | **Time**: 2:00 - 3:30 pm | **How to Attend:** <u>Join Microsoft Teams</u> <u>Meeting</u> or dial 1-802-828-7667 and enter phone conference ID: 480 272 396#

Emergency Preparedness

Flood Resilient Communities Fund (FRCF)

Reducing the future public safety and water quality impacts of climate-related flood hazards, <u>focusing on buyouts of flood-vulnerable properties</u>. This program funds 100% of costs and is a limited time opportunity, so please reach out to property-owners that might benefit!

Learn More: <u>Here</u> | Due: Rolling Basis, before March 31, 2023 Contact: Andrew L'Roe (<u>alroe@acrpc.org</u>)

Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMP) updates

Annual Local Emergency Management Plans (LEMPs) will be due for update and Select Board signature after Town Meeting Day and before May 1st. ACRPC will be reaching out to municipalities in March with drafts of the LEMPS, which can be updated and adopted. Adoption can be reported by submitting a signed pdf form, or new this year, by submitting it to the state's WebEOC system. If your municipality is interested in submitting using this new method, a town official will need to request a WebEOC account and watch a short training video. Please reach out to ACRPC's Emergency Management Planner, Andrew L'Roe at alroe@acrpc.org if you have questions.

Vermont Local Emergency Management Course

Each municipality has an appointed Emergency Management Director (EMD), who has direct responsibility for the organization, administration, and coordination of local emergency management. Some municipalities have an appointed Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) to support their work. If you are interested in learning more about this position in your city or town, please reach out to Andrew L'Roe at ACRPC (alroe@acrpc.org) and taking an upcoming course offered by Vermont Emergency Management;

This course will familiarize local EMDs and EMCs with major roles, responsibilities, and "how to do it" guidance, across all four phases of Emergency Management: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

LOCATION: Virtual | DATE/TIME: April 10-13, 2023, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. REGISTRATION: <u>Click Here</u> | NOTE: A laptop is required for this class

Tools and Training

Community

2023 AARP VT Walking College – Want to create positive change in your community?

AARP VT and America Walks are looking for volunteers to participate in a distance-learning fellowship program that results in creating healthy, walkable communities throughout Vermont. Fellows will learn leadership development, community organizing, coalition-building, walkable community design, local public policy, and strategic planning.

There is no cost associated with participating in the program, all ages are encouraged to apply. Deadline for applying is March 10th. For more information, and to apply visit <u>https://states.aarp.org/vermont/calling-all-walking-enthusiasts</u>

Who Can Help? Federal Funding Assistance and Support

Many Vermont communities are aware of the plethora of new state and federal funding opportunities. New and existing resources are available to help community leaders access this funding. Hear from a panel of providers about the support they offer and how communities can benefit from their services.

Friday, March 24 | 10:00-11:30 | Register here.

Energy

CEAC's Low Carbon Diet 30-Day Program Kicks Off on March 6

Try the "Low Carbon Diet" 30-Day Program to reduce your household's carbon footprint while gaining energy savings rapidly. Learn how to measure your household's carbon footprint in the first session on March 6 and about the biggest sources of energy use and carbon emissions for your household. Next, make an Action Plan from choices in the Low Carbon Diet Workbook working toward a goal of reducing your household's carbon footprint by 5,000 pounds in 30 days. Report on your results and learn more about energy savings and options in subsequent sessions. This easy-to-follow series meets for four Mondays beginning March 6, from 7-8 pm at the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society (CVUUS) on 2 Duane Ct near Middlebury Union High School. Sessions facilitated by Laura Asermily. For more info or to register for the program, call 802-349-4157 or email lasermily@yahoo.com.

VECAN Winter Workshop Series

Join VECAN Every Other Wednesday at Noon in 2023! - Starting Wednesday, January 18th at noon, VECAN will kick off our Winter Workshop Series, covering timely clean energy and climate action topics! These virtual workshops will be free and open to anyone who wants to join. Learn more and register to join here.

Vermont Community Geothermal Alliance Webinar Series

Tune into the <u>Thermal Energy Networks for Vermont</u> series to learn from leaders in the rapidly growing world of thermal energy exchange on the opportunities and benefits of adding thermal energy networks to our clean energy solutions.

- Putting Thermal Networks to Work: Achieving Climate Goals and Policy Solutions
 Monday, March 20th at noon. Hosted by Energy Action Network <u>Learn more</u> and register to attend here.
- The Benefits and Business of Thermal Energy Networks Tuesday, April 4th at noon. Hosted by Renewable Energy Vermont - <u>Learn more and register to attend</u> <u>here.</u>

Green Saving Smart Program

Reaching Energy Equity Goals with GreenSavingSmart - <u>GreenSavingSmart</u> is a new service administered by Vermont's five community action agencies that connects financial coaching with energy savings for low- and moderate-income Vermonters to ensure a cleaner, greener Vermont. <u>Learn all about this initiative here.</u> Contact Maddison Shropshire: <u>mshropshire@acrpc.org</u> for more information.

Public Service Department Electricity Webinars - To kickstart public engagement opportunities related to reviewing renewable electricity programs in Vermont, the Public Service Department is hosting an informational webinar series to share information and

answer questions about Vermont's current electric system. <u>Learn more and register to</u> <u>attend here.</u>

- Parking Lot Session
 - March 9th from 12:00 PM -1:30 PM register here
 - March 13th from 6:00 PM 7:30 PM register here

Efficiency Vermont 2023 Rebates - Are home or apartment improvement projects in store for 2023? If you plan to buy new appliances, make your space less drafty, or lower your energy costs, there may be a rebate for you. Combine those with federal tax credits and additional rebates from your electric or gas utility, and you're on your way to some serious energy savings. Explore 2023 rebates here.

Rewiring America's Inflation Reduction Act Savings Calculator - This tool provides personalized incentives, including upfront discounts, available tax credits, and estimated bill savings per year. <u>Calculate your personal savings here!</u>

Equity

VLCT Equity Resources for Municipalities

The VLCT Municipal Equity Toolkit is a ten-part online resource that covers everything from creating a municipal equity committee to building a framework and action plan to listing equity-related books, podcasts, and videos. It is free and available to all VLCT members and the public at vlct.org/JDEIB-resources. VLCT's equity consultants, Nikki Fuller Esq-SHRM-SCP of Workplace Matters and Dr. Wanda Heading Grant, helped create the toolkit in collaboration with the VLCT Equity committee and with the support of a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation. The toolkit includes resources for both internally focused equity efforts (ensuring a community is a model employer) and external equity resources (ensuring the community itself is a welcoming place to all). More information and resources on equity can also be found through the <u>State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity</u>.

Natural Resources

Vermont Coverts Woodlands for Wildlife Cooperator Training

Do you love woodlands, enjoy seeing wildlife and want to learn how a healthy forest can enhance wildlife habitat, provide recreational and timber benefits? This training is for you if you are a landowner, a conservation or planning commission member or someone who helps to influence land management. Learn about managing woodlands and reaching out to others in your community by attending. This program connects you with resource professionals, landowners and others while learning how you can improve your woodlands. There are two opportunities to attend in 2023;

- April 21-23 at Northwoods Stewardship Center in East Charleston or
- September 8-10 at Kehoe Conservation Camp in Castleton.

To learn more, see a sample agenda or download an application visit our website at <u>www.vtcoverts.org</u>. You can also contact us by calling Lisa Sausville at 802-877-2777 or e-mail lisa@vtcoverts.org. This Training is* FREE *(a \$100 deposit, refundable upon completion, is required to hold your spot).

Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program Events

- Vermont Land Trust's upcoming Tree Talk Tuesdays: <u>Ash and Basswood</u> on Feb. 28th and <u>Spruce, Fir, and Pines</u> on Mar. 21st.
- March 26th, 10am, Burlington, <u>Winter Tree ID in the City</u> with VT UCF's Elise Schadler and Vermont Land Trust's Caitlin Cusack.
- March 29th, 12:30pm, <u>Black Ash webinar</u> with VT UCF's Field Naturalist Program graduate student, Charlotte Cadow.