

What should my municipality do with the \$4,000 Community Capacity Building Grant?

The first of three Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grant opportunities is now available!

\$4,000 Community Capacity Building Grants

- Community conversations
- Outreach
- Capacity building
- Community events
- Demonstration projects
- and more!

Take steps - big or small - in your community today!

See below for some tested tips and potential strategies to foster community conversation and engagement around the local-scale energy transition. This list is not exhaustive; any other effort to promote the importance of energy resilience in the community, establish a municipal energy resilience plan, etc., is welcomed and encouraged.



Materials for Outreach

Flyers

- **Print materials** including posters or mailers, to municipal residents and businesses regarding energy efficiency programs, weatherization programs, and/or rebates
- **Translation** of energy efficiency outreach materials into other languages
- **Purchase** standing racks to hold handouts on efficiency programs, weatherization programs, and/or rebates to place in municipalities and hardware stores
- *Example: Create a handout with basic facts about heat pumps, including benefits, costs, rebates, how they work, and the steps involved in getting one*

Flyer Resources

- [Canva](#) is an excellent tool for making promotional materials

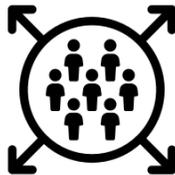
Website/Social Media

- **Webpage** enhancement or creation on energy-related topics,
- **Social media strategy** to connect your community.

Social Media Resources

- [VECAN Website Guide](#)
- [VECAN Social Media Overview Guide](#)

- [GreenMemes Social Media Guide](#)
- [VECAN Facebook Guide](#)
- [VECAN Front Porch Forum Guide](#)
- [VECAN Contact List and Bulk Email Guide](#)



Expanding Capacity

Training

- **Train Municipal Staff** on energy efficiency topics (basics of weatherization, heat pumps, etc.) by a hired environmental education organization

Consultant

- **Hire a consultant**
 - to reach out to residents directly about efficiency programs, weatherization programs, and/or rebates.
 - to identify candidate municipally owned buildings in need of energy efficiency improvements and provide grant application assistance for free energy resilience assessments.
 - to ensure project readiness and competitiveness when other MERP funding opens.
 - to oversee project management and invoices for energy projects.
 - to identify necessary improvements to bring a covered municipal building into Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance *Buildings and General Services will have contractors on retainer, and covered municipalities are welcome to utilize them.
- **Pay a municipal official** to be an Act 172 community engagement project manager.
- **Contract with a technical assistance provider** such as the Vermont League of Cities and Towns or a Regional Planning Commission for items related to a MERP project but outside of the Act 172 scope.
 - *Examples:*
 - *Identify level II Electric Vehicle charging station locations*
 - *Support planning for a community solar project*

Establish a Municipal Energy Committee

- *Resource:* [Getting Started](#)



Events and Community Conversations

Community Meeting

- **Expenses** associated with community meetings - event space rental, equipment, food, materials, childcare, etc.
- *Examples:*
 - *Host an info night about heat pumps, invite installers*
 - *Host a conversation about environmental justice aimed at learning how to support lower-income households in the energy transition, provide stipends and childcare for attendance*

Amplify Existing Energy Committee Work

- **Purchase demonstrational energy efficiency equipment** to promote to the community through energy committee events (e.g., demo window dresser insert, or a portable solar panel and energy storage system to take around and educate people). **Use of this grant to purchase energy-efficient equipment, not for demonstrational purposes, is NOT eligible and such applications will be denied.*

Community Event

- **Electric Mobility Festival**
 - *Example: Waterbury LEAP has had many successful EV Festivals, which you can [learn about here](#)*
- **Energy Fair**
 - *Example: Waterbury LEAP has had many successful Energy Fairs, which you can [learn about here](#)*

Events and Community Conversation Resources

- **Communication Steps** (from [VECAN's Communications Toolkit](#))

Develop an inventory of existing internal, local, and regional communications channels/resources. This inventory will serve as a menu of options for building outreach plans for specific events or campaigns.

- [Community Outreach Inventory Template](#)
- **Outreach plan:** customize and create for each particular event or campaign
 - *Identify your objective(s)*
 - *Develop your message(s)*
 - *Identify your target audiences*
 - *Establish your calendar/plan*
 - [Outreach Planning Template](#)
 - [Example of Completed Outreach Planning Document](#)

- **Activate your plan**
- **Evaluate results and adjust as necessary**

TAKE ACTION:

- Communicate with your Selectboard to sign up to receive up to \$4,000 for your municipality.
- Contact your local Regional Planning Commission (RPC) for additional assistance; as part of this program, RPCs received funding to provide application and technical assistance.

Stay tuned!

This is the first rollout of the larger Municipal Energy Resilience Program.

Free building energy assessments

Energy resilience project grants of up to \$500,000 per municipality will be launched soon.

Visit bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program for updates and more information.