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NOTE: Blue underlined text are hyperlinks. Click for additional information.

COMPETITIVE GRANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Vermont and the owner of the Vermont Yankee plant in Windham County, Entergy agreed to provide \$10 million to the State of Vermont “to promote economic development in Windham County.” According to the terms of the MOU, the State of Vermont will receive \$2 million per year for five years, starting April 1, 2014. These funds are administered by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), in cooperation with the Windham County Economic Development Program Advisory Council ([Advisory Council](#)), through the Windham County Economic Development Program (WCEDP).

For more information on the WCEDP, or to be added to the Program’s email list, contact R.T. Brown, Project Manager at (802)257-7731 X 221 or email rbrown@brattleborodevelopment.com.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The WCEDP promotes economic development in Windham County by providing funds to stimulate job creation through business start-up, expansion, or relocation, encourage entrepreneurial activity, and strengthen the economic development infrastructure to ensure a strong foundation for transformational economic activity. The primary focus of the program is private sector job creation and retention, and direct support of entrepreneurial activities, followed by support of economic development systems and activities that encourage an entrepreneurial, innovation, and business start-up environment and culture.

ACCD works with regional partners such as the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the Windham Regional Commission, the Small Business Development Center, municipalities in the region, and others to market and administer the program. A regional advisory council was formed to review letters of intent to apply and provide annual feedback on program objectives and goals and a WCEDP Project Manager was hired to provide day-to-day and local program administration, undertake marketing activities, work with potential applicants and approved projects, and ensure the program is meeting goals and objectives in the region.

GENERAL PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All funded projects are required to promote economic development in Windham County. Specifically, the project or proposal must:

- Occur in, or directly benefit, Windham County; and
- Advance the goals and objectives of the region’s [comprehensive economic development strategy](#); and
- Retain employment, create new jobs, result in entrepreneurial activity, business start-ups, business expansions, business relocations; or
- Improve the region’s economic development infrastructure or stimulate indirect and induced job creation in the region through economic activity that is transformative for the economy in relation to the size of the grant or loan request; and

- Maximize partnerships, collaborations, and/or coordination in and among entities and programs in the region; and
- Leverage other funds to maximize program impact.

COMPETITIVE GRANT LOI AND APPLICATION INFORMATION

General Information:

- Based on needs established by the regional WCEDP Advisory Council, a Competitive Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) will be published each year in the spring. The types of projects that are eligible for funding may differ each year according to the needs identified by the regional Advisory Council. **Only** the types of projects described in the RFP will be eligible for funding and applicants must describe how their project fits one of the eligible categories.
- Potential Competitive Grant applicants must submit a Competitive Grant Letter of Intent to Apply (LOI) and have the LOI approved before submitting an application. Applicants should use the **Competitive Grant LOI Form** available on the WCEDP website.
- Potential applicants must contact and work with the [WCEDP Project Manager](#) to develop a Competitive Grant Letter of Intent to Apply. When the LOI is completed, submit it to the [WCEDP Project Manager](#).
- The LOI will be reviewed by the WCEDP Advisory Council and by ACCD to determine if the project meets program eligibility requirements.
- If the potential applicant’s LOI is approved, the applicant is required to contact the Vermont Small Business Development Center (VtSBDC) advisors in the region (See [Technical Assistance Providers](#)) for counseling and technical assistance with application preparation.
- Applications must be filed by the due date and will be scored by ACCD staff and reviewed by State and regional agencies and organizations appropriate for the type of project.
- The scoring and review will be submitted to the Vermont Economic Progress Council for review and prioritization in a recommendation to the Governor.
- The Governor will make the final funding decision.

Competitive Grant General Timeline:

Below is an approximate annual schedule for Competitive Grants. This schedule is subject to change. For a detailed timeline with deadlines and due dates for the current funding year, click [here](#).

March	Competitive Grant RFP Released
March-April	LOI Assistance Provided by WCEDP Project Manager
Late April	Deadline to Submit Letter of Intent to Apply to WCEDP Advisory Council
June	Letters of Intent reviewed by WCEDP Advisory Council and ACCD
July	Approved Letters of Intent Notified by WCEDP Advisory Council and ACCD
September	Deadline to Submit Competitive Grant Applications to ACCD
October	VEPC Board Meeting with Applicant Presentations
November	Competitive Grant Announcements

Letter of Intent to Apply Requirements:

Potential Applicants should utilize the **Letter of Intent to Apply Form for Competitive Grants**.

The Letter of Intent to Apply must include the following:

- Name of applicant organization. If the project involves more than one entity acting collaboratively or in a partnership, name the lead entity and include information on the other entities;

- Applicant organization mailing address and website URL.
- Contact person information for applicant (lead entity if more than one entity involved), including name, title, phone (including extension) and email address. Please provide an email address that will be checked often and respond to requests for information in a timely manner;
- Tax filing status, DUNS, and NAICS;
- A brief description of project: A clear, concise summary that includes a timeline, purpose of the request, and any positive and transformative goals outcomes expected;
- Physical location of project;
- Project sources and uses information, including:
 - Total project cost (if large project with several phases, summary and funding should pertain to the funding requested this round of grant funding);
 - Grant amount requested;
 - Sources and Uses of all project funds, including the status of all non-WCEDP funds;
 - If project involves more than one entity, describe roles and involvement of each entity and describe the resources each entity will contribute.
- Project timeline and brief description of implementation plan and goals. Be sure to take the funding cycle into account and ensure that your plan begins when funding will actually become available, including the time it takes to finalize a grant agreement. You should plan on grant funding availability no sooner than January.
- Description of how the project addresses one of the eligible types of projects included in Section 2.2 of the [RFP](#). Note that this requirement is **not** referring to the goals and objectives of the CEDS. You must describe how your project aligns with one of the eligible categories of funding for the grant cycle, as detailed in Section 2.2 of the RFP.
- Description of how project advances the goals and objectives of the SeVEDS [CEDS](#);
- Brief description of how the proposal addresses each of the competitive grant scoring criteria:
 - Return on Investment - Lasting Impact or Benefit
 - Coordination and Collaboration with Other Organizations
 - Leveraging of other Programs and Funding
 - Capacity and Experience to Carry Out the Project
 - Readiness to Proceed
 - Strengthening of Regional Economic Development Infrastructure
 - Addresses Unmet Funding or Programmatic Need
 - Assistance to Those Adversely Impacted by VY Closure
 - Long Term Viability
 - Coordination with Local and Regional Planning Efforts
 - Implementation Plan

Submitting a Letter of Intent to Apply:

Email Letter of Intent to Apply form to the [WCEDP Project Manager](#) for consideration by the WCEDP Advisory Council.

Review Process:

Letters of Intent to Apply will be reviewed by the WCEDP Advisory Council, who will provide a recommendation to ACCD for a final decision.

LOIs will be reviewed for:

- Consistency with program objectives;
- Consistency with RFP requirements (**must** address one of the areas that are eligible for funding listed in the RFP);
- Advancement of the goals and objectives of the regional CEDS;

- Appropriate use of WCEDP funds;
- Capacity and experience of applicant to execute project;
- Implementation plan with measurable outcomes;
- Extent of return on investment; long-term impact and benefit to the region
- Coordination and collaboration with and among regional partners and programs;
- Leveraging other funding (WCEDP cannot be sole funding source);
- Readiness of applicant(s) to proceed with proposal;
- Consistency with and competitiveness of other grant scoring criteria:
 - Strengthening of Regional Economic Development Infrastructure
 - Addresses Unmet Funding or Programmatic Need
 - Assistance to Those Adversely Impacted by VY Closure
 - Long Term Viability
 - Coordination with Local and Regional Planning Efforts
 - Implementation Plan with Measurable Outcomes.

The WCEDP Advisory Council will provide a copy of the LOI and a recommendation to ACCD, who will approve or deny the LOI. If the LOI receives a positive review by the Advisory Council and ACCD approves the LOI, a letter will be provided by the Advisory Council and an approval email will be sent to the applicant by ACCD. If approved, the WCEDP Advisory Council and/or ACCD may provide advice on issues that should be addressed to strengthen the application. The applicant may then proceed to prepare a competitive grant application. Applicants are **required** to seek counseling and technical assistance from the VtSBDC (See [Technical Assistance Providers](#)) to complete the application.

If the LOI is not supported by the Advisory Council or is denied by ACCD, the Windham County Advisory Council may suggest that the applicant seek further assistance from a [regional technical provider](#), suggest that the LOI be withdrawn, and/or suggest other sources of funding or financing for the project. The communications from the WCEDP Advisory Council and/or ACCD will include reasons for the denial.

Submitting a Competitive Grant Application:

If an LOI is approved, applicants are required to seek counseling and technical assistance from the VtSBDC (See [Technical Assistance Providers](#)) to complete the application.

The [Competitive Grant application](#), which is a fillable PDF, is available on the WCEDP website. You **must** download the application to your computer before completing the application. To download the application:

- Hold CTRL and click [here](#).
- Do not fill out the application that appears on your screen.
- First, follow your browser’s instructions for saving the document to your computer. For most systems, click the download arrow in the bar at the top of the browser screen and then select the folder on your computer to which you want to save the application.
- Use the following protocol to name your application: “projectname_nameofdocument_date.pdf (For example: BMH_Application_10-7-16.pdf).
- Once you have saved the application to your computer, close your browser and open the saved application.
- Be sure to use the same naming protocol to name the attachments that you must upload to Section VI of the application: “projectname_nameofdocument_date.pdf. (For example: BMH_FY2016Budget_10-7-16.PDF)

Competitive Grant applications must be filed by 4:00 p.m. on the due date. Click [here](#) for the timeline for the current year.

To submit the application:

- Complete the application.
- Upload required attachments by clicking the “Upload Documents” button on Page 20 Section VI Supplemental Documents.
- Complete the Certification and electronic signature on Page 21, “Certification.”
- Click the “Submit Form” button at the top right of application.

Once submitted, you will be notified if the application is considered complete. Then the application will be scored by ACCD staff and reviewed by appropriate state agencies. VEPC staff will summarize the application and present it to the VEPC Board, who will prioritize the applications and make a funding recommendation to the Governor.

Scoring Criteria:

All competitive grant applications must promote the goals and objectives of the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) for the region, must address one of the economic development activities eligible for funding in the RFP for the year you are applying, and will be competitively scored by ACCD staff using the following criteria:

	<u>Possible Points</u>
Response to requirements of RFP	20
Return on Investment - Lasting Impact or Benefit	10
Coordination and Collaboration with Other Organizations	10
Leveraging of other Programs and Funding	10
Capacity and Experience to Carry Out the Project	10
Readiness to Proceed	10
Strengthening of Regional Economic Devel. Infrastructure	5
Addresses Unmet Funding or Programmatic Need	5
Assistance to Those Adversely Impacted by VY Closure	5
Long Term Viability	5
Coordination with Local and Regional Planning Efforts	5
<u>Implementation Plan</u>	<u>5</u>
Total Score	100

Applications will also be reviewed by appropriate state agencies depending on the subject matter of the application. An application summary, staff scores and agency review comments will be provided to the Vermont Economic Progress Council. The Council may hold a public hearing in the region to hear presentations by the applicants. VEPC will then prioritize the applications, allocate available funds and submit a funding recommendation to the Governor. The Governor will make the final determination of funding for the competitive grants and applicants will be notified.

POST APPROVAL PROCESS

- Any award will require compliance with [Attachment C](#).
- If a project is selected for funding, all awardees will receive a general award letter from ACCD providing further detail on the post-approval process.
- The award is subject to executing a grant agreement. ACCD will provide a draft grant agreement to review and execute.
- The Award Letter conditionally offers a grant from the WCEDP. Certain award conditions may have to be met before the Grant Agreement can be fully executed and funds dispersed. These may include, as applicable:
 - Proof of Insurance provided
 - Gain site control
 - Secure rights-of-way and easements
 - Firm commitments from other resources
 - Permitting
 - Real Estate Appraisal
 - Environmental Site Assessment
 - Voter approval
 - Specific conditions relating to the project
- The Grant Agreement will detail grant activities, goals and performance requirements, disbursement schedule, compliance, record-keeping, monitoring, reporting, resolution of non-compliance, and close-out requirements.
- All awardees will be required to assign a grant administrator, set up financial and recordkeeping systems that will allow the awardee to administer, track, and report on the grant, project progress and project goals.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Prospective applicants are strongly advised to utilize available technical assistance to learn more about the application process and program requirements. Prospective applicants must contact and work with the WCEDC Project Manager before filing a Letter of Intent to Apply and if an LOI is approved, applicants are required to seek counseling and technical assistance from the regional VTSBDC advisors to prepare an application. All program contacts are listed below.

Small Business Development Center

One-on-one, confidential, no-cost advising for businesses and non-profit organizations.

Debra Boudrieau or Steve Paddock, Area Business Advisors

dboudrieau@vtsbdc.org or spaddock@vtsbdc.org

76 Cotton Mill Hill, C-1

Brattleboro, VT 05301

(802) 257-7731

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

One-on-one, confidential, no-cost advising for businesses and non-profit organizations.

R.T. Brown, WCEDP Project Manager

rbrown@brattleborodevelopment.com

76 Cotton Mill Hill

Brattleboro, VT, 05301

(802) 257-7731

Windham Regional Commission

Application assistance for municipalities, including public infrastructure investment projects; assistance with town response to applications.

Susan McMahon, Associate Director

susan@windhamregional.org

139 Main Street, Suite 505

Brattleboro, VT 05301

(802) 257-4547 X114

Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Assistance to all applicants regarding the application process, requirements, timeline, approvals, monitoring and reporting.

Kimberly Baker, Grants Management Specialist

kimberly.baker@vermont.gov

Deane C. Davis State Office Building, 6th Floor, 1 National Life Drive

Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

(802) 828-3230

Vermont Economic Development Authority

Assistance to loan applicants regarding the application process and information requirements.

Steve Greenfield, COO

sgreenfield@veda.org

58 East State Street, Suite 5

Montpelier, Vermont 05602

(802) 828-5627

WINDHAM COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Windham County Economic Development Program Advisory Council was formed by the regional partners to provide local and regional input and advice to the Windham County Economic Development Program. The Council is involved in program development and marketing and is responsible for reviewing Letters of Intent to Apply. The Council will also provide annual program reviews and suggest ways to improve and redirect the program. The Council consists of state-funded regional partners and towns with designated downtowns, plus Vernon, as follows:

- Adam Grinold, Executive Director, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC), Chair
- Chris Company, Executive Director, Windham Regional Commission (WRC), Vice Chair
- Laura Sibia, Director, Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategy (SeVEDS)
- Peter Yost, Board Member, SeVEDS
- Peter Elwell, Town Manager, Town of Brattleboro
- Gretchen Havreluk, Economic Development, Town of Wilmington
- To Be Determined, Town of Rockingham
- Bronna Zlochiver, Selectboard Appointee, Town of Vernon
- Fred Kenney, Executive Director, Vermont Economic Progress Council
- Debra Boudrieau, Regional Advisor, Vermont Small Business Development Center (Non-Voting)

Advisory Council Staff:

R.T. Brown, WCEDP Project Manager
rbrown@brattleborodevelopment.com
76 Cotton Mill Hill
Brattleboro, VT, 05301
(802) 257-7731 X221 (o) (802) 451-0442 (c)

Note: Individuals representing each organization are subject to change and delegates may send designees to attend meetings.