



“BIG MONEY FOR BIG PROJECTS”

*Preparing for and Funding Local Infrastructure and
Energy Resilience in Your Town*

PRESENTERS

Chris Campany, Executive Director, Windham Regional Commission

Sue Westa, Associate Director, Windham Regional Commission

Martha Cornwell, Shaftsbury Select Board

Ted Brady, Executive Director, VLCT

Callie Fishburn, Regional Planner, BCRC

Sponsored by





Federal Funding Assistance Program



Katie Buckley, Director, Federal Funding Assistance Program

VLCT

HOUSING

Increase opportunities for housing development including funding, state and local regulatory reform, housing incentives, and integrated support service.

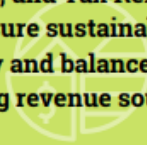
CAPACITY

Expand municipal capacity to find, apply for, and manage state and federal funding.



REVENUE

Set up municipal revenue sharing to provide reliable annual funding, authority to adopt Local Option Taxes, and Tax Reform to ensure sustainability, equity and balance among revenue sources.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Implement new ways to recruit, train, and retain law enforcement and EMS personnel and increase accountability.



2023-2024 MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

OPEN MEETINGS

Make fully remote meetings a permanent, voluntary option under Open Meeting Law.



COMMUNITY

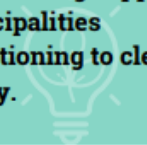
Supplement the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program with a project-based TIF accessible to smaller communities.



VLCT.ORG/
PRIORITIES

CLIMATE CHANGE

Empower municipalities to reduce emissions, increase resiliency to climate change, and ensure that federal and state funding supports municipalities transitioning to cleaner energy.



- Founded in 1967, VLCT is a member-owned, non-profit, non-partisan organization
- All 247 Vermont cities and towns are Members
- Another 142 “units of municipal government” = Associate Members (villages, counties, etc.)
- Membership provides top ROI by saving your municipality time and money.
- Think of the League as an extension of your office, providing comprehensive and specialized expertise and support.
- Want to know more? Check out our Member Guide ([HERE](#)).



Local ARPA - Vermont's Share

- Allocated to states based on population using 2019 Census data
- “Metro cities” (based on HUD definitions)
 - Burlington (pop. 42,819) & South Burlington** (pop. 19,509)
 - Received funding directly from Treasury
 - Largest awards in VT = \$27,176,144.49 and \$5,654,533, respectively
 - More rigid, quarterly reporting requirements
- “NEUs” (non-entitlement units, based on HUD definitions)
 - Everyone else
 - Received funding from Treasury distributed through the SOV
 - Largest award = Colchester (pop. 17,127), \$5,120,335
 - Smallest award = Victory (pop. 63), \$18,956
 - Simpler, annual reporting requirements
- Local ARPA works out to be ~\$300/Vermonters
- **VLCT created the ARPA Assistance & Coordination Program to assist Vermont municipalities in accepting, spending and complying with these federal funds.**

Local ARPA Funds:	
Metro Cities	\$20,721,902
Non-Entitlement Units of Government (NEUs)	\$58,788,245
Counties*	\$121,202,550
TOTAL Local ARPA Funds:	\$200,712,697
State of Vermont**	\$1,049,287,303
TOTAL VERMONT ARPA:	\$1,250,000,000

How much money did your community get?

Click [HERE](#)

*County money has been reallocated to municipalities.

**South Burlington has since been recategorized since they are not an entitlement community.



- Signed into law on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act created the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund – referred to simply as “ARPA”
- Unlike any other federal grant program
- Not competitive; no application process; one-size-fits-all “grant agreement”
- No public process requirement
- Cash up front in two tranches, one year apart (summer 2021, summer 2022)
- Protracted timeline to obligate (12/31/2024) & spend (12/31/2026)
- How many eligible Vermont municipalities accepted these federal funds? ALL except one.
- The best part....the “Standard Allowance”



LOCAL ARPA – A RARE & BEAUTIFUL THING



 **277 TOWNS**
WERE CERTIFIED TO ACCEPT ARPA FUNDS

 **65 TOWNS**
WILL RECEIVE MORE THAN \$750,000 EACH

 **97 MUNICIPALITIES (35%)**
RECEIVED MORE THAN \$500,000

 **186 MUNICIPALITIES (67%)**
RECEIVED MORE THAN \$250,000

 **249 MUNICIPALITIES (90%)**
RECEIVED MORE THAN \$100,000

THE “STANDARD ALLOWANCE”

- The “[final rule](#)” was issued January 6, 2022.
- Included a provision called the “[standard allowance](#).”
- Allowed up to **\$10M** to be treated as “lost revenue” (no need to demonstrate, calculate or document).
- What can these funds be spent on? The “[provision of government services](#).”
- What does that mean? Anything a government typically spends money on.
- How many municipalities in Vermont have local ARPA awards <\$10M? ALL of them except one (Burlington).
- Are these funds considered revenue sharing by Treasury? Yes (Final Rule, Section IV.G.).
- This means local ARPA awards can now be used as required grant match (“local share”) for other grants, even federal ones*!

*Excluding the state's Medicaid and CHIP programs.

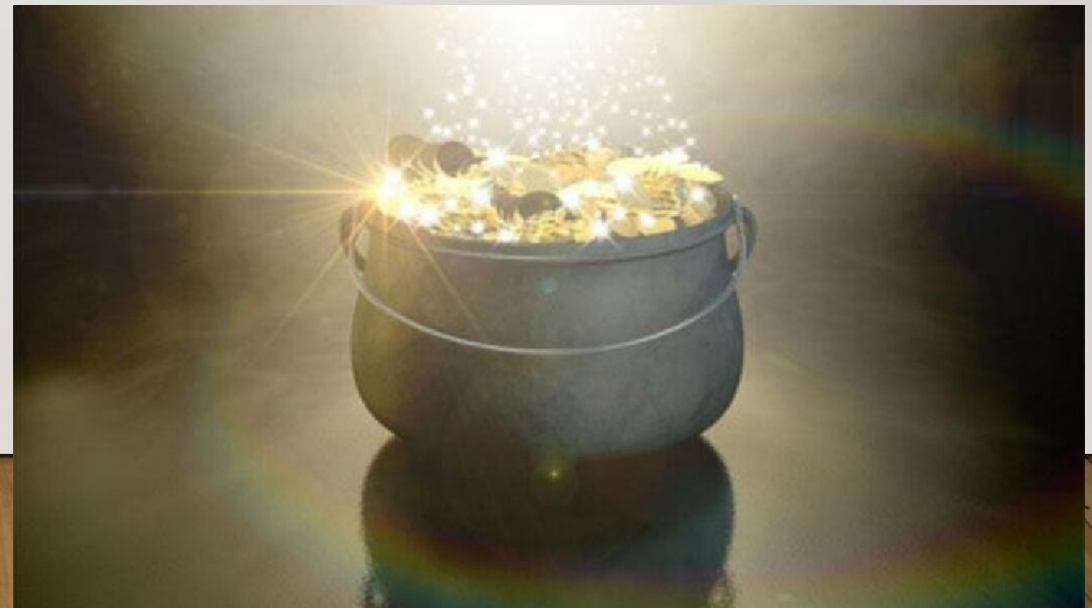


BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR VERMONT.

(NO, “BILLIONS” IS NOT A TYPO)

- **American Rescue Plan Act:** \$1.25B for Vermont. \$200M in flexible direct funds to municipalities and +\$1B that state agencies are now working to distribute.
- **The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL):** The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – More than \$2B for Vermont through hundreds of new federal programs.
- **Inflation Reduction Act:** \$500B nationally that includes significant climate investments impacting municipalities

*“In this watershed moment of federal funding opportunities, **now is the time to turn your ideas into actions but you need help.** Whether it is taking the very first step or removing a stumbling block along the way, we can provide added capacity ...”*



Take your time. Be patient. Think bigger.

(\$200 million in opportunity)

Planning Framework for Maximum Impact and Best Use of Municipal ARPA Funds



Vermont League
of Cities & Towns

1. PRIORITIZE GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Convene all Stakeholders & Build Consensus
- Follow Allowable Uses Under ARPA
- Meet all Accounting & Reporting Rules
- Comply w/ all Local & State Laws/Ordinances
- Ensure Transparency Throughout
- Do Not Create Future Budget Deficits

2. LEVERAGE YOUR ARPA AID

- Use a Thoughtful Strategic Planning Process
- Leverage w/ ARPA, FEMA & Other \$ Fed Sources
- Coordinate w/ Other State & Local Programs
- Collaborate w/ Community Partners & Orgs
- Use Existing Delivery Systems for Efficiency
- Don't Reinvent the Wheel: Learn from Others

3. INVEST IN BEST USES FOR LONG-TERM RECOVERY

- Invest in Urgent Health and Economic Needs
- Prioritize Short-Term Investments w/ Lasting Benefits
- ID and Address Pre-COVID Inhibitors to Growth
- Measure Progress Throughout to Inform Ongoing Plans

Where are we in the local ARPA funding continuum?

Right where we thought we would be.

Now is the moment to leverage but we have a capacity gap....not in financial capital, but in **human capital**.

May 2021





FEDERAL FUNDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

NEW!

CREATED FOR YOU!

Assistance with accessing the billions of dollars of federal funds is **available to all Vermont's towns, cities, and villages** regardless of their size or capacity level.



VLCT's **Federal Funding Assistance (FFA) Program** provides you with expertise and technical assistance as you pursue the unprecedented amounts of federal funding to **advance your local priorities and projects.**

Vermont League of
Cities and Towns

Want to
learn
more?



FFAPROGRAM@VLCT.ORG

Meeting the Needs of Our Members.

- Launched in late December 2022
- Modeled after our successful ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program
- Includes ARPA + Bipartisan Infrastructure Law + Inflation Reduction Act + More
- Two dedicated VLCT staff to broaden and deepen assistance (Katie Buckley and Bonnie Waninger)
- Available to all Vermont's towns, cities, and villages, regardless of their size or capacity level
- Continued close partnership with Vermont's eleven regional planning commissions

<https://www.vlct.org/federal-funding-assistance-program-ffaarpa>



We have done the work, so you don't have to.

- VLCT's Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook

- VLCT culled ~500 BIL and IRA programs to present those:
 - Open to VT municipalities as *eligible* applicants
 - *Applicable* based on the scale and scope of projects undertaken in Vermont
- Dynamic document that will be revised as program information updates and changes.

- Open Funding Opportunities

- Upcoming Funding Opportunities



The Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook

A GUIDEBOOK TO THE BIPARTISAN
INFRASTRUCTURE LAW, INFLATION
REDUCTION ACT, AND MORE

(Adapted from the Building A Better America Guidebook)



No need to reinvent the wheel.

Click Here to Get Started with the Municipal Access Portal

Vermont League of Cities & Towns

FEDERAL FUNDING ASSISTANCE

ARPA

Tip of the Week

RELATED LINKS

ARPA

Climate, Energy & Environment

Cybersecurity

Housing

Transportation

Water, Wastewater, & Stormwater

Additional Grants & Funding

Home / Programs

Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFA+ARPA)

When you talk, VLCT listens.

Consistently, respondents to our annual Member Survey have cited **funding, access to grants, research and writing**, as top areas for needing help. It was the **#1 service need** for 67.7% of respondents in 2022! We understand that capacity is a major concern for towns of all sizes. Lack of paid staff and often only a small group of elected officials to shoulder all the work are challenging. Developing smart, sustainable projects – big or small – takes time, planning, resources, sustained commitment, and expertise. It starts with prioritizing local needs, assessing the funding landscape, and creating an implementation plan. In this **watershed moment of federal funding opportunities**, now is the time to turn your ideas into actions, but you need help. Whether for taking the very first step or removing a stumbling block along the way, **VLCT can provide added capacity** that allows your important projects to access additional funds and successfully complete.

VLCT has created the **Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFA)** with this at the forefront of our minds. Modeled after our highly successful **ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program**, FFA takes our work with ARPA under its wing and expands it 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. We do the work of sifting through the tsunami of information and working with our broad network of state, federal, statewide, and national partners to be your voice in their processes and to curate only programs and resources for which you are eligible and that are applicable to our Vermont scale. We know that no two projects are the same, but most have a lot in common. Creating consistency and support systems gives us bandwidth to work with you on drilling down to your unique challenges.

Which new federal grants opportunities are right for Vermont's municipalities?

There are three ways to find out:

[Open Funding Opportunities](#)

[Upcoming Funding Opportunities](#)

[Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook](#)

The Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook

A GUIDEBOOK TO THE BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT, THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT, AND MORE

Dedicated program web content and resources:

- FFA main page and topic specific pages:

- [FFA Main Page](#)
- [ARPA](#)
- [Climate, Energy & Environment](#)
- [Cybersecurity](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater](#)

- Send your inquiries to our dedicated email address: FFA@vlct.org



Local projects can be hard. We can help make them easier.

“Consults on Call”

- Self-book 30 minutes of one-on-one time with the FFA team.
- Talk with the FFA team about a local project, initiative or problem; brainstorm ideas, solutions, pathways forward; discuss other potential resources for support/assistance (RPCs); assess available funding options; create a plan for next steps for action and connections/partners to help in achieving them

Need one-on-one help?

Grab 30 minutes with us for a "Consults on Call" appointment! Whether your project is just in the idea phase, has started to gain momentum, has stalled completely or you just need help prioritizing projects before you get started, let us help you.

If you think you need more than 30 minutes, please email FFA@vlct.org to schedule a longer time slot.

[Book an Appointment](#)

Hours

Wednesday
1 PM to 3 PM
7 PM to 8 PM

Member Only Service

Available only to individuals with an official role (selectboard, town manager/administrator, clerk, treasurer, planning commissioner, etc) with a VLCT member.



Tip of the Week.

Sometimes a simple, small piece of information can make all the difference in saving valuable time, unnecessary frustration, and even precious dollars. One tip, trick or piece of advice can result in a more competitive grant application, a project budget staying on track or on budget, a more successful compliance audit, etc. Knowing the rules, the field and how to play the game is critical to success in the arena of public funding.

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FFA Program - Tip of the Week

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [g](#) [s](#)

Information is power, and sometimes a simple, small piece of information can make all the difference in saving valuable time, frustration, and even money. In the arena of public funding, knowing the rules and how to play the game is critical to success. One tip, trick, or piece of advice can result in a more competitive grant application, a more successful compliance audit, a project budget staying on track or on budget, etc. Our Tips of the Week are designed to help you have an advantage.

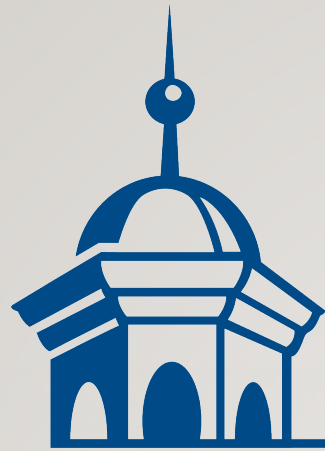
[Prepare for Grants - January 27, 2023](#)

[Grant Writing - April 21, 2023](#)

[Grant Writing - March 24, 2023](#)

[Grant Writing - February 3, 2023](#)





**Vermont League
of Cities & Towns**

Thank You!

Ted Brady
Executive Director
tbrady@vlct.org
(802) 316-4475

www.vlct.org

A photograph of a white wind turbine against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. A dark rectangular text box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the title in white capital letters. A thin blue horizontal line is positioned above the text.

THE MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- 
- ❖ Community Capacity Mini-Grants – **available now!**
 - ❖ Free Energy Assessments
 - ❖ Implementation Grants

WHAT IS MERP?

- ❖ Act 172 of 2022 created the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) and allocated \$45 million to the program.
- ❖ MERP will provide funding and technical assistance to municipalities to increase their energy resilience, reduce energy use, and curb greenhouse gas emissions by promoting renewable energy, weatherization, fuel switching, thermal improvements, and enhance building comfort.
- ❖ Municipalities with a high energy burden, as defined by Efficiency VT's Energy Burden Report, will be prioritized.
- ❖ Eligibility:
 - ❖ Cities, towns, incorporated villages, fire districts, and all other governmental incorporated units except for school districts.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY MINI- GRANTS

- Up to \$4,000 to support energy resilience and building community capacity. **AVAILABLE NOW!**
- More than one municipality can apply jointly, but the maximum award will be \$4,000.
- Possible uses:
 - Host educational energy events (workshops, energy fairs)
 - Develop and distribute promotional materials (flyers, web content etc.)
 - Start an energy committee
 - Hire a consultant to assist with project management or do an ADA assessment.

FREE ENERGY ASSESSMENTS



Conducted by BGS contractors



Application coming soon!



Two levels available (both levels qualify a town for an implementation grant).

Level 1: 0.5 – 1 hours in duration. High level overview of building systems.

Level 2: Approx. 4 hours in duration. Building documents required. May qualify the town for additional loans/grants.

**Buildings must be municipally-owned or have a long-term/perpetual lease by a municipality to be eligible*

IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS



Grants of up to \$500,000 for building renovation projects such as weatherization and air sealing, and replacement of fossil fuel heating system with a more efficient system.



Must receive a Level 1 or Level 2 assessment to qualify (previous assessment may be considered).



Funding must be used for one project that can be split across several buildings.



Application expected later this year.

**Buildings must be municipally-owned or have a long-term/perpetual lease by a municipality to be eligible*



Bennington County Regional
Commission

Callie Fishburn

cfishburn@bcrcvt.org

802-442-0713 x309



Windham Regional Commission

Margo Ghia

mghia@windhamregional.org

802-257-4547 x116

Mike McConnell

mgm@windhamregional.org

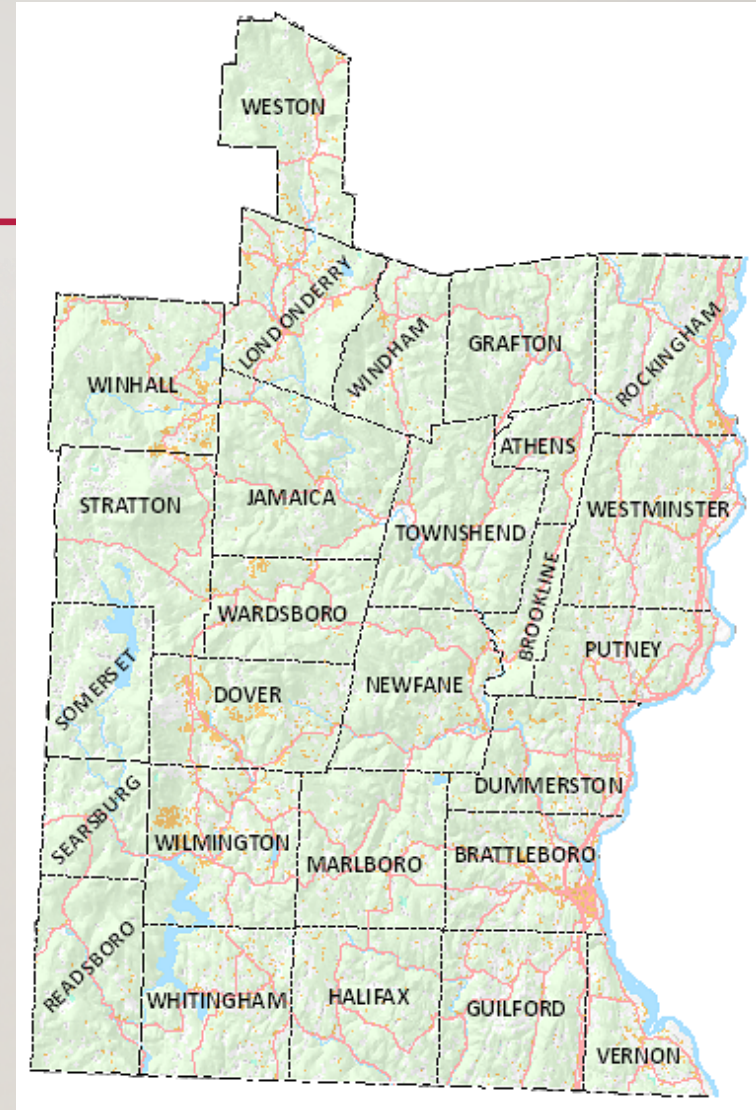
802-257-4547 x110

REACH OUT TO YOUR RPC!

[https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-
program](https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program)

THE WINDHAM REGIONAL COMMISSION

- Established in 1965.
- Serves 27 towns in Windham, Bennington and Windsor counties over a 920 square mile area of southeastern Vermont.
- Our mission is to assist towns to provide effective local governance and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.
- In the absence of county government, we provide the essential link between local, state and federal government.



PLANNING & LOCAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT HIGHLY DECENTRALIZED IN VERMONT



**237 towns, 10 cities, 5
unincorporated towns, 4
gores**

Gore: an unincorporated area of a county that is not part of any town, has limited self-government, and may be unpopulated



**Towns can choose to
have a plan, follow state
planning goals, adopt
zoning (including flood
hazard) or otherwise
implement plans, and
engage in state
regulatory frameworks
(Act 250 – land use;
Section 248 – energy &
transmission)**



**Absence of county
government means no
aggregator of taxes to
plan and implement
intermunicipal projects.**

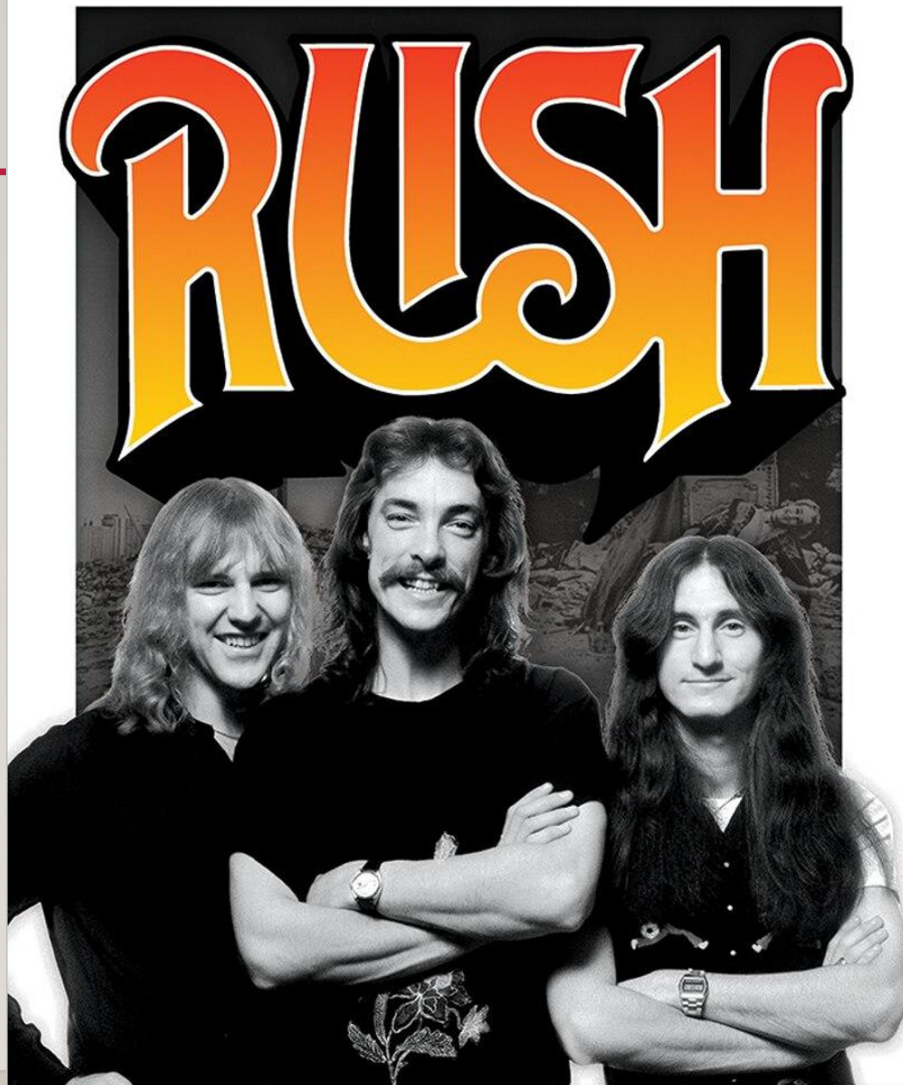


**Federal programs are
generally not designed
with Vermont in mind.
Tend to assume county
government. Regional at
the federal scale tends
to assume multiple
counties or even parts of
multiple states.**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? IT'S UP TO YOU.

- Towns are responsible for investing in their own future.
- The time horizon to access current and forthcoming programs is short.
- Most towns have little to no experience planning for infrastructure beyond roads and town buildings and will need help.
- In all cases towns will have to invest their own tax dollars into planning for projects and building them.





-
- “If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice.” – Freewill

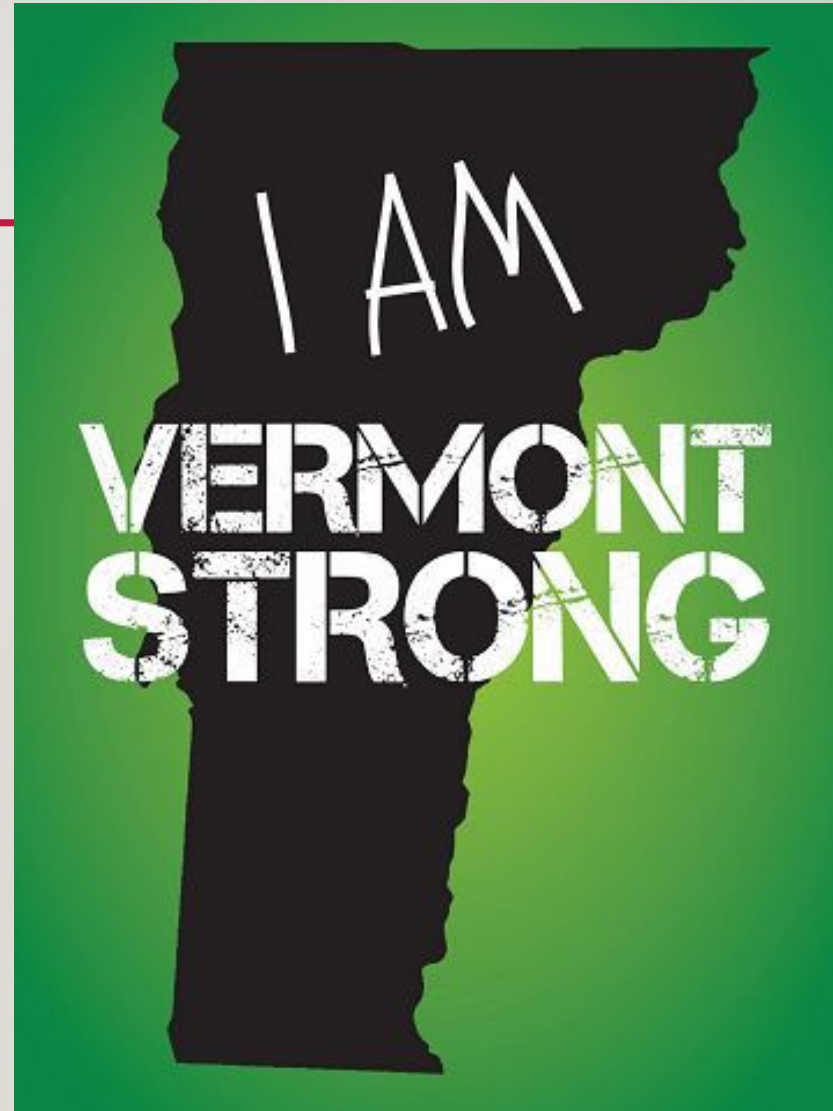
TICK TOCK TICK TOCK....

- Municipal decision making takes time. Even deciding to have a conversation can take months or years.
- You cannot wait until a grant or funding notice is released. The response time is too short.
- Towns that develop successful applications have typically been working towards that goal for months and MUCH more often, years.
- The opportunities that now exist will likely not come around again for generations.



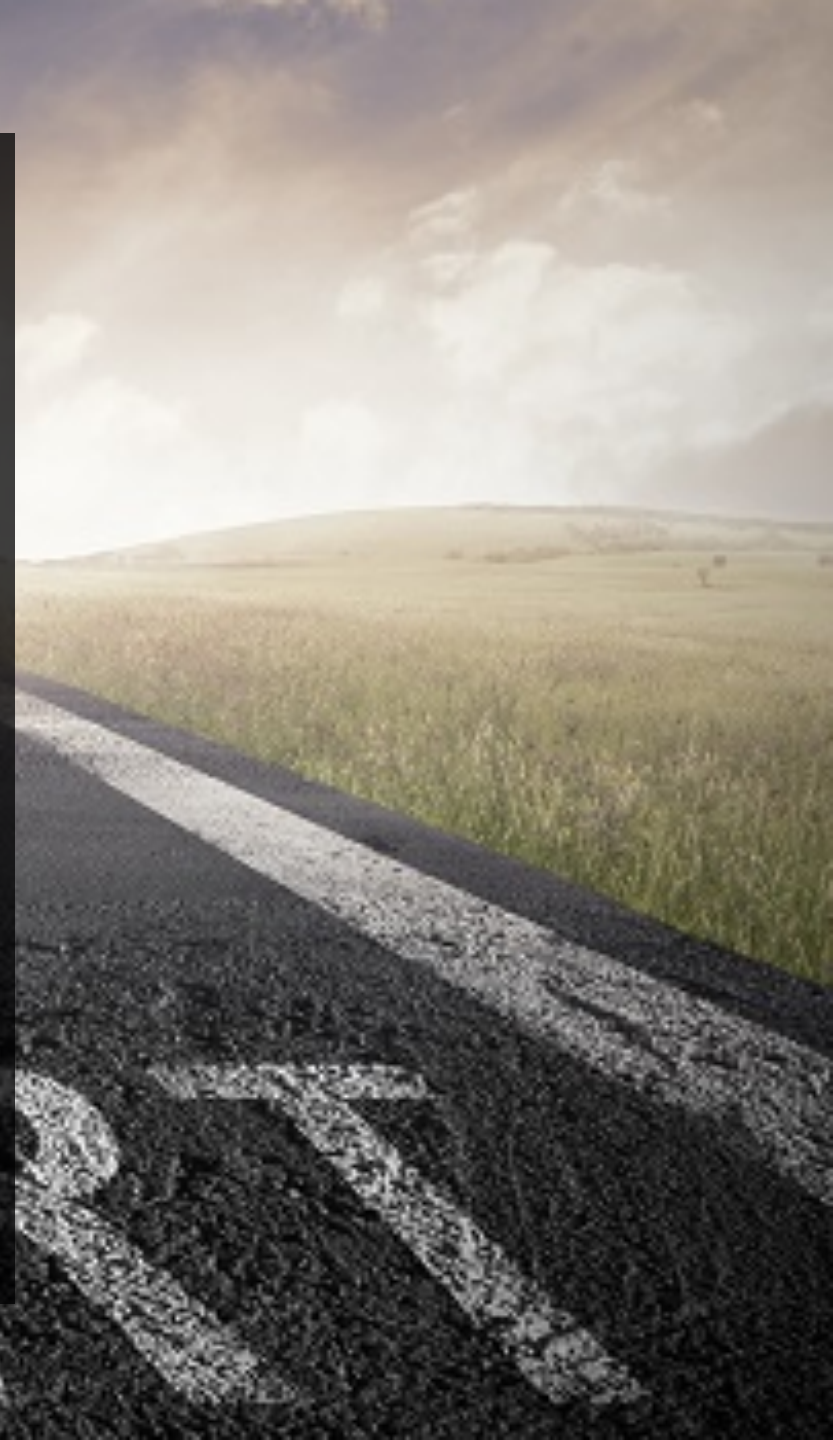
ACT NOW.

- Actions made now will have a profound impact on the sustainability and well-being of our communities well into the future.
- Selectboards must lead and they must act. They are the decision makers. Choosing not to act is a decision.
- Selectboards need public support to act. It is not fair to expect them to perform their responsibilities in a vacuum.



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO DO IS START.

- There are a number of drivers of the current sense of urgency: lack of housing, increasing public needs and lack of civic services, availability of funding, etc.
- Start engagement in your own town now, or build upon what you've already started.
- Don't let questions create paralysis. The point of engagement is to define questions and find answers.
- Even if you decide not to pursue a project, at least it is a conscious decision.



A map of Vermont is shown in the background, with numerous colored dots (red, green, blue, and yellow) scattered across the state, representing the locations of wastewater infrastructure. The dots are concentrated in the northern and central parts of the state, particularly around Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains. The text 'A FEW FACTS ABOUT COMMUNITY WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE' is overlaid on the left side of the map.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT COMMUNITY WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

- On-site systems in existence as of 2007 are “grandfathered,” but small lot sizes and septic-well “shadowing” make any expansion of wastewater or water demands challenging if not impossible.
- This situation also creates the potential for very real public health risks if septic effluent finds its way into wells, ground water, and surface water.
- In many if not most of the state’s villages without community water or wastewater it would be difficult to add a single new dwelling unit due to a number of regulatory factors including small lot sizes, soils, water table, etc.
- Expansion of existing businesses, especially markets, restaurants, inns, etc. is difficult if not impossible. Retention at risk.
- Further complicated by frequent proximity of settlements to streams and rivers.

A photograph of a community event in a park. In the background, a white church with a steeple is visible, surrounded by trees with autumn foliage. In the foreground, many people are gathered on a grassy area, some sitting on picnic tables and others standing. The scene is set under a cloudy sky.

INFRASTRUCTURE & HAVING A PLACE TO LIVE

- Current-day compact settlement – retention, infill, expansion, new – is dependent upon basic wastewater and water infrastructure necessary to make it possible regardless of what a plan or bylaw/ordinance says – though having the right zoning language is necessary.
- Housing development at any kind of meaningful scale requires this infrastructure, and is necessary to keep housing prices down.
- Housing yourself, your family, your friends, your neighbors throughout different stages of life and life circumstances depends upon the infrastructure to support it.
- Infrastructure is not free or cheap, but what are the costs of not having a suitable place to live?
- **What are the costs of having to leave?**

Town of Shaftsbury
PO Box 409
Shaftsbury, VT 05262



Hi Shaftsbury Residents,

As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, the federal government is making historic investments in towns across America. Shaftsbury will be receiving \$1.025 million dollars. Our Selectboard and ARPA Advisory Committee would like to hear from you to provide feedback about what you want to see in Shaftsbury's future and how the money should be spent. Please share your feedback on the following questions by Monday, August 1, 2022. You can also answer online. **Each member of your household is encouraged to respond.**

See back for details.

Thank you for helping Shaftsbury thrive,

The Shaftsbury ARPA Advisory Committee



1. What do you value *most* about living in Shaftsbury?

2. What could be *better* here in Shaftsbury?

3. What would you do to *solve* the problem you listed in question 2?

To share your answers, please CHOOSE ONE of the following options:

Option 1

Answer the questions
above & **drop off postcard**
at the Town Offices, Cole
Hall, 61 Buck Road,
Shaftsbury **or, Mail** to Town
of Shaftsbury, PO Box 409,
Shaftsbury, VT 05262

OR

Option 2

Answer questions online

Visit link below:

**[https://bit.ly/Shafsbury-VT-
ARPA-Committee-Funding-
Survey](https://bit.ly/Shafsbury-VT-ARPA-Committee-Funding-Survey)**

Thank You!

OR

Option 3

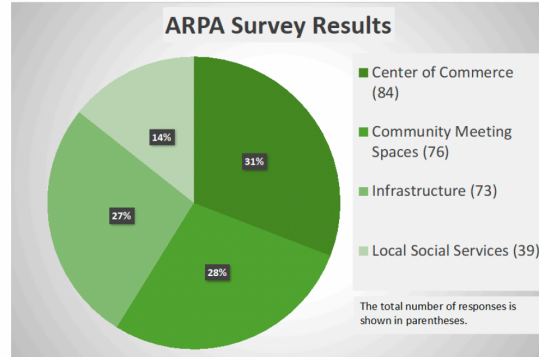
Scan QR Code below with
your **smartphone** to visit link
to enter your answers on
online survey



******Please RSVP By Monday, August 1, 2022******

For updates, please visit Town of Shaftsbury website at: <https://shaftsburyvt.gov/>

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
Shaftsbury, Vermont
Survey Results/Committee Recommendations



CENTER OF COMMERCE: Most often mentioned was the need to invest in a revitalized commercial center. People are concerned about the absence of restaurants, coffee shops, and other businesses that serve as gathering places and bring jobs into the community.

COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES: The next biggest suggestion was the creation of communal spaces: people want *places to connect with their community*. The most often-made suggestion was a “Town Green” on the land next to Cole Hall; other suggestions ran the gamut of indoor and outdoor, small and large, but most were for places where community events could be held.

INFRASTRUCTURE: This data also presents a clear message that people want some of this money to be used to expand our infrastructure – to make daily life easier, to increase potential commerce, and to create opportunities for joint recreation. People are interested in spending ARPA funds on the creation of sidewalks, hiking trails and bike paths; efforts to beautify our downtown; installation of a bus stop; electric vehicle charging stations; and a variety of improvements to Howard Park’s facilities.

LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES: Respondents also made many comments about the need to build community through developing more avenues for local social services, with a particular focus on meeting places for the oldest and youngest among us.



AFTERNOON SCHEDULE

- *Emerging Leaders Awards Presentation
2:50 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.*
- *Afternoon sessions: Taking Action from
Today –Roundtables, Q&A, & Small
Groups 3:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.*
- *Closing & Reception, Main Level Bar,
4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*