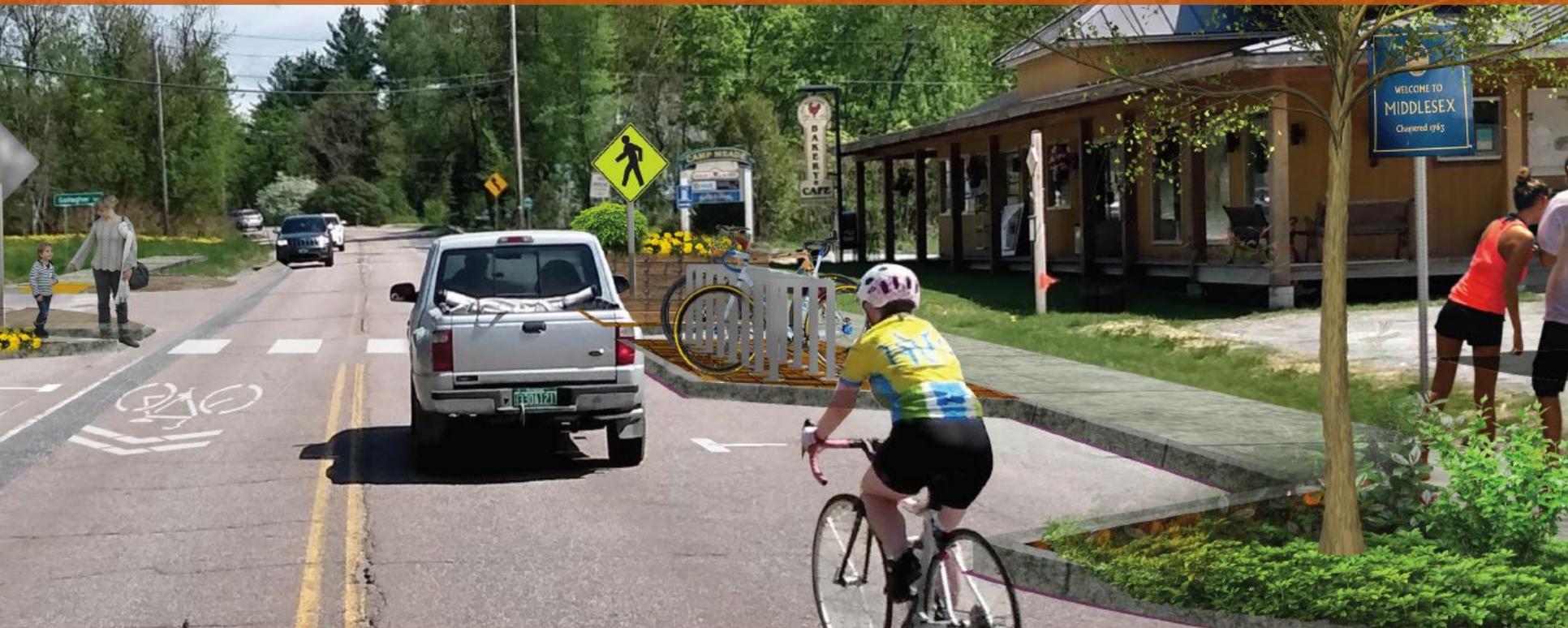


Municipal Planning Grant Program 2021-2022 | FY22



Jacob Hemmerick, Community Planning & Policy Manager
Jenni Lavoie, Grants Specialist

VT Department of Housing and Community Development

Annual Webinar Training

August 18, 2021

Agenda

Part 1: Program Overview – Jacob Hemmerick

Part 2: Online Application Overview – Jenni Lavoie



State of Vermont

Agency of Commerce & Community Development

Department of Housing & Community Development

Division of Community Planning + Revitalization

We provide tools, training, grants, and incentives for local leaders to plan and implement projects that support thriving and prosperous communities.

[Subscribe](#) to **Strong Communities Quarterly** for CP+R Opportunities



MPGs Make It Happen

- Define shared priorities
- Plan for wise investments
- Prepare for future development
- Strengthen assets
- Build partnerships and community
- Make great places.

Empowering local leaders



By The Numbers

99%

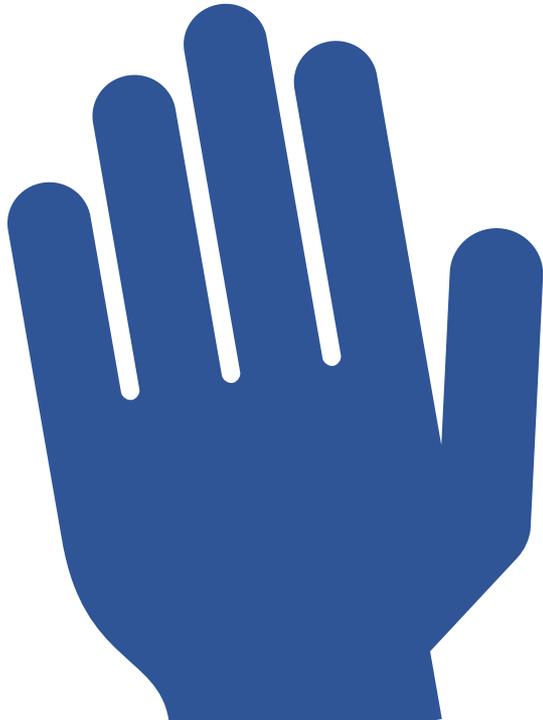
of survey respondents say
MPGs are important to achieve
planning goals



“Excellent program for small rural towns, who don’t have the resources to investigate or research solutions to community needs. My experience is that needs far outpace resources.”

2019 MPG Survey Respondent

MPG. Quick 5



One. The Basics

- ✓ Competitive State grant program

FY2022 Municipal Planning Grant Program Description

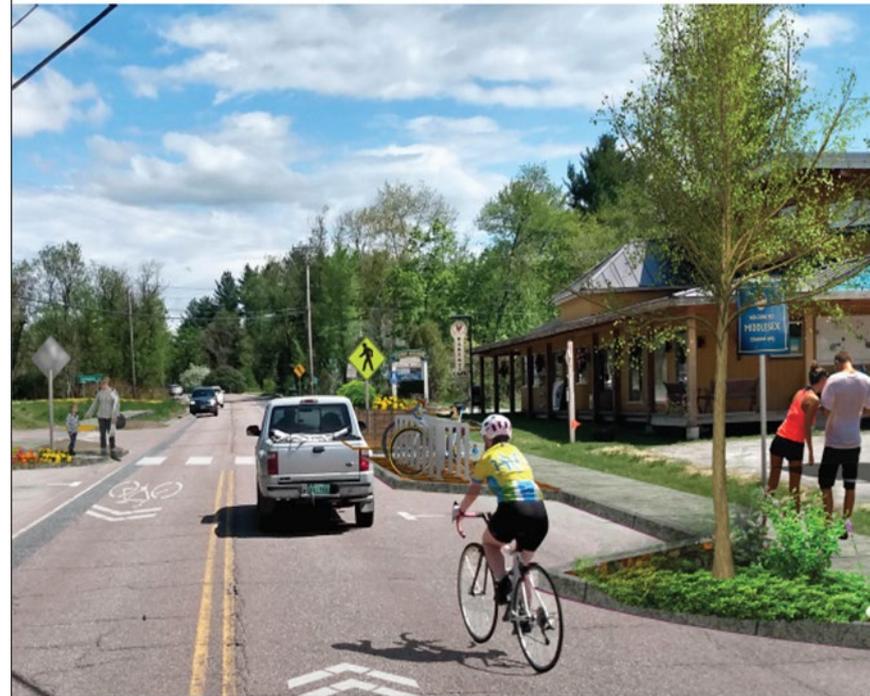


Walkable Middlesex Village Study
MPG-funded project and Vermont Planners Association 2021 Plan of the Year

One. The Basics

- ✓ Competitive State grant program
- ✓ Flexible funding, do-able administration

FY2022 Municipal Planning Grant Program Description

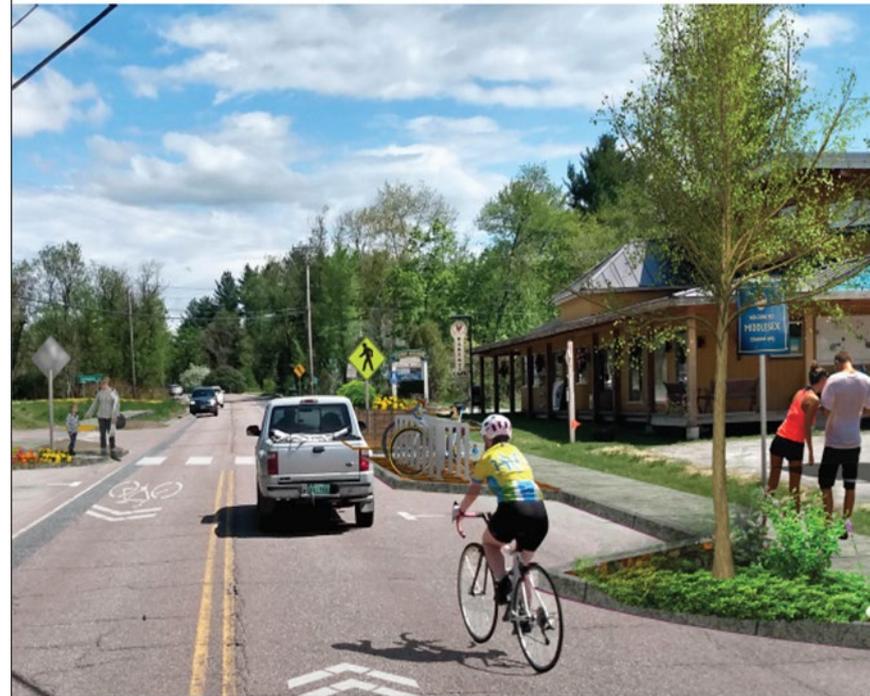


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- ✓ Flexible funding, do-able administration
- ✓ \$450,000 to award

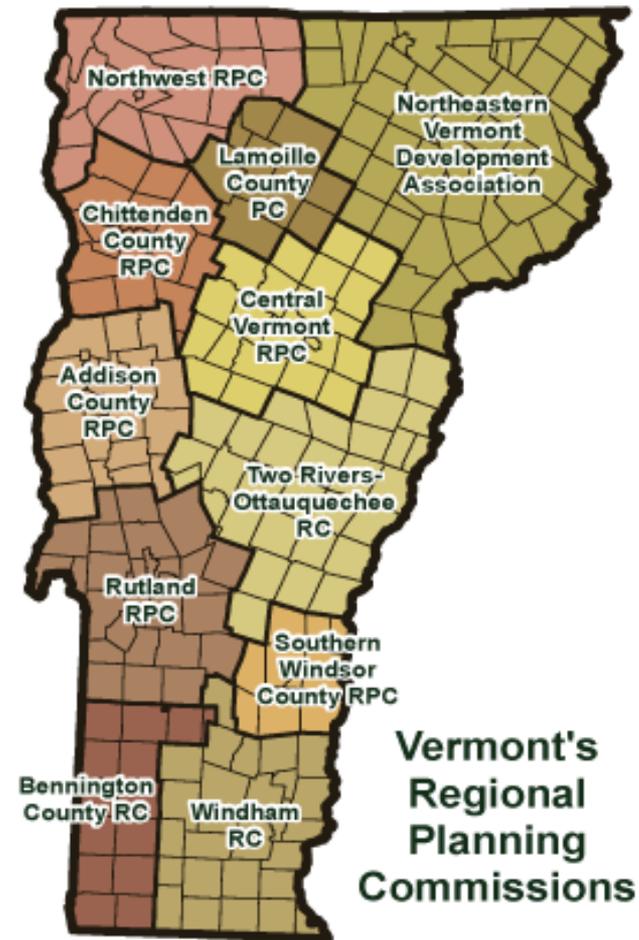
FY2022 Municipal Planning Grant Program Description



Walkable Middlesex Village Study
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- ✓ Competitive State grant program
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- ✓ \$450,000 to award (if level funded)
- ✓ Regional allocations and competitive criteria rewards innovation within & across regions



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- ✓ Focus on statewide planning goals 24VSA4302

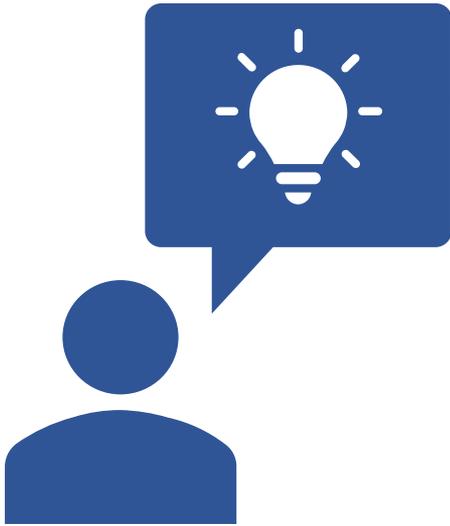
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Last Year (2021)
45 applications
\$690,000 requested
32 awards

Two. Who can apply?

**Single
Municipality**



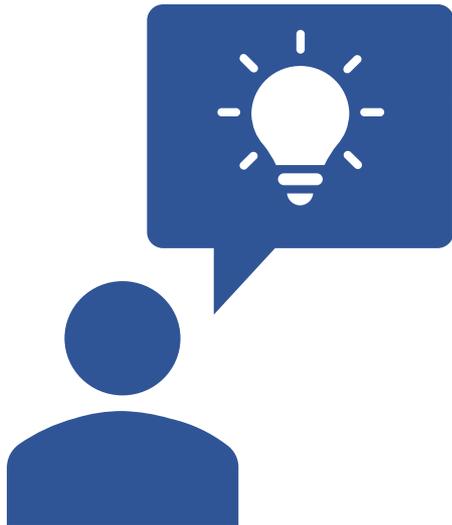
Two. Who can apply?

**Municipal
Consortium**



Two. Who can apply?

**Single
Municipality**



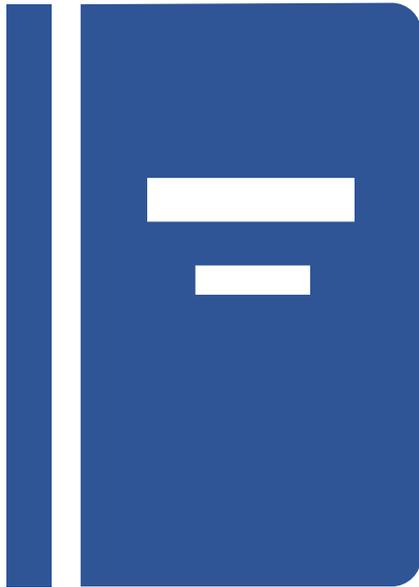
**Municipal
Consortium**



one application per municipality

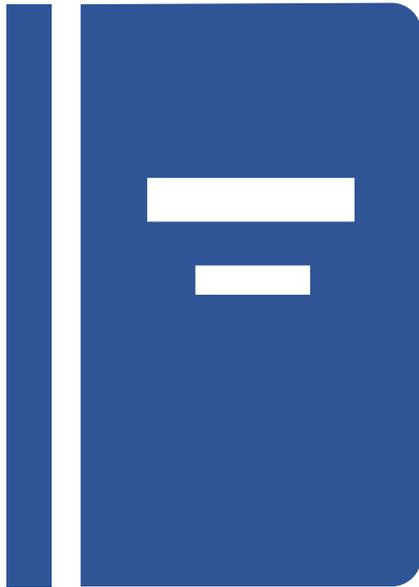
Three. What can you do?

Municipal Plan



Three. What can you do?

Municipal
Plan



Municipal Plan
Implementation



*and with an RPC- confirmed
planning process by **September 30.***

Three. What can you do?

- ✓ A COVID-19 recovery **economic development strategy**
- ✓ Development of a **capital program** (plan & budget) for municipal investments
- ✓ Strategic **housing action plan** to develop housing in the village center
- ✓ Regional initiative to explore the **feasibility of shared services**, such as health officer inspections or emergency services
- ✓ A **bylaw project** that prepares a community for a neighborhood development area or downtown designation
- ✓ An innovative **placemaking/community arts project**

Three. What can you do?

Fair Haven Downtown Streetscape Improvement Plan

Project Year: 2018 Grant Award: \$16,000



With the goal of increasing economic activity in the downtown, Fair Haven is taking steps large and small to implement the vision of making the downtown more walkable and vibrant for businesses and visitors.

Final Plan: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MuuLhHgdKnJFTmuJXhGuOYk0F0r5Inq2/view>

St. Johnsbury Riverfront Conceptual Access Study

Project Year: 2016 Grant Award: \$8,000



With strong community interest in redeveloping the downtown Passumpsic riverfront for recreational uses, St. Johnsbury discovered opportunities to gain public access to the river from the downtown and developed an action plan for future projects, now underway incrementally.

Final Plan: <http://www.nvda.net/files/st-j-riverfront-concept-study.pdf>

Vernon Village Center Master Plan

Project Year: 2018 Grant Award: \$20,000



Audience Poll

What types of municipal planning projects are you considering?

- Municipal Plan
- Bylaw Updates (Zoning/Subdivision/Unified)
- Planning for Designated Area
- Infrastructure or Capital Improvement Planning
- Economic Development / COVID Recovery Plans
- Natural Resources Planning
- Specific-Site or Building Planning



Four. Are there funding limits?

- ✓ Min. grant: \$2,500
- ✓ Max. grant: \$22,000 (single)
- ✓ Max. grant: \$35,000 (consortium)
- ✓ 10% cash match; no in-kind; any source eligible



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- ✓ Max. grant: \$35,000 (consortium)
- ✓ 10% cash match; no in-kind; any source eligible
ex.: \$10,000 grant w/\$1,000 match = \$11,000 project



Five. *When do you apply?*

- ✓ November 1, 2021 application deadline
- ✓ December awards
- ✓ 18-month implementation, no extensions



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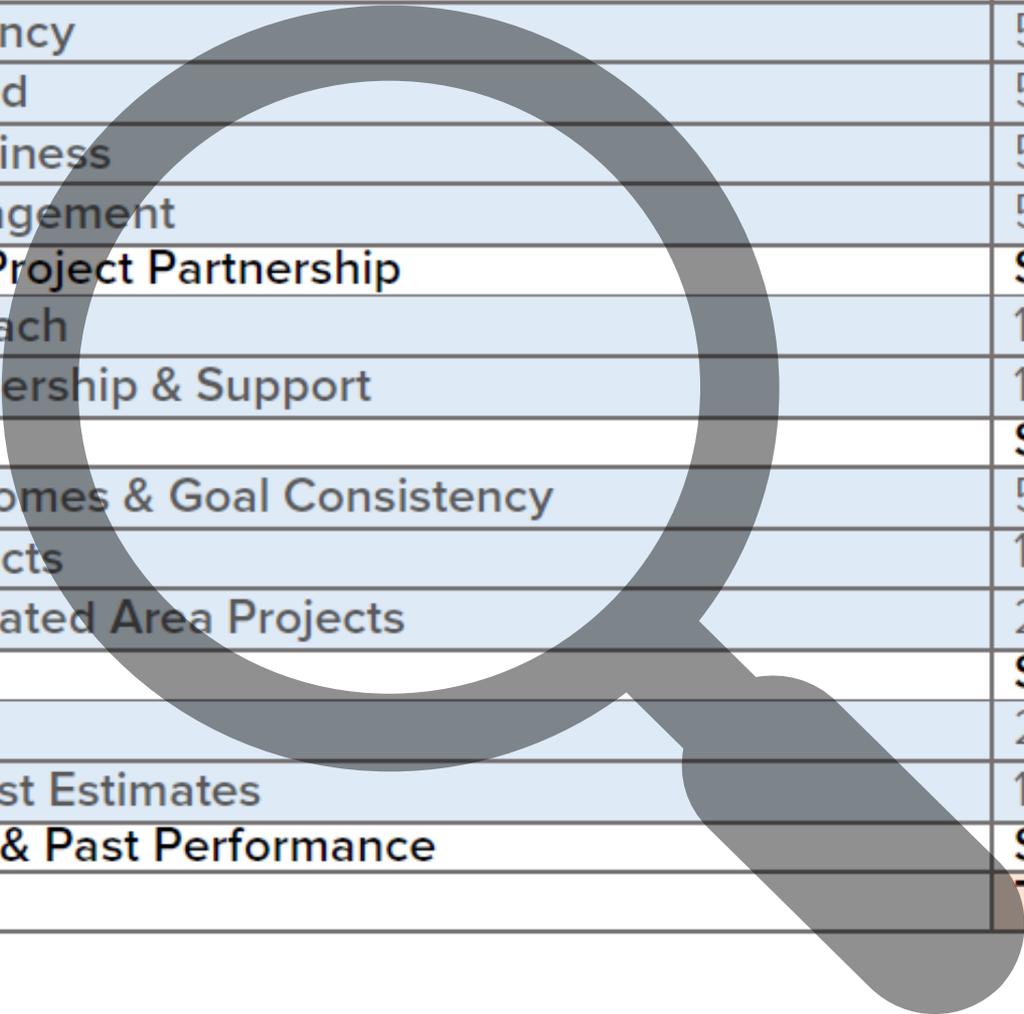


Five. When do you apply?

- ✓ November 1, 2021 application deadline
- ✓ December awards
- ✓ 18-month implementation, no extensions



ABCs of Competitive Applications



Competitive Criteria Scoring Summary	Points
Project Readiness & Need	Section: 20
Issue & Urgency	5
Funding Need	5
Project Readiness	5
Project Management	5
Public Outreach & Project Partnership	Section: 20
Public Outreach	10
Project Partnership & Support	10
Statewide Priorities	Section: 35
Project Outcomes & Goal Consistency	5
Priority Projects	10
State Designated Area Projects	20
Project Approach	Section: 35
Work Plan	20
Budget & Cost Estimates	15
Application Quality & Past Performance	Section: 10
	TOTAL: 120

A. Use the Application Guide

VERMONT OFFICIAL STATE WEBSITE 

STATE OF VERMONT
Agency of Commerce and Community Development

FUNDING AND INCENTIVES PROGRAMS RESOURCES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS NEWS AND EVENTS

SEARCH

- Home
- COVID-19 Recovery Resource Center
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Community Development
 - Planning Your Town's Future
 - Planning for Tomorrow's Flood
 - State Designation Programs
- Funding and Incentives
 - Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP)
 - CDBG Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
 - Municipal Planning Grant (MPG)
 - Applicant Guidance**
 - Grantee Guidance
 - Town Plan Training
- Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits
- Downtown Sales Tax Reallocation

APPLICANT GUIDANCE

APPLY ONLINE

All Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) applications must be submitted through the [online Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System \(GEARS\)](#). (Online application available **NOW**.) Grants are available to municipalities with a confirmed local planning process. Municipalities without a confirmed local planning process may only apply for funding to prepare a municipal plan (necessary to obtain confirmation). The work documents below should be used to prepare the content of your application before you begin the online application process.

Before Applying

- [2021 Program Description](#) – provides an overview of the grant program including the purpose, available funding, competitive criteria, and this year's grant priorities. Review to determine the eligibility of your town and project. Pay special attention to the competitive criteria and statewide priorities to determine if your project is a good candidate for funding through this program. (PDF Document)
- [Application Guide](#) - Presents the application questions, guidance on preparing a competitive application, and provides space for writing draft responses. (Word Document)
- [2021 Application Training Webinar](#) - Register [HERE](#) for assistance preparing a competitive application, and using the online system to submit your application, Wednesday, August 19 @2pm.

A. Use the Application Guide

Questions

Questions	Guidance to Applicants	DHCD Evaluation Criteria	Scoring
<p>6.1 Project Outcomes & Goals. Beyond the project itself, what long-term outcomes would demonstrate the success of the project and further statewide planning goals?</p>	<p>▪ You have explained the issues you are working to solve above, and you will explain what you are going to do below in the work plan, explain the long-term value you hope the project will deliver here.</p> <p>▪ Emphasize outcomes consistent with any relevant provision of the Regional Plan, Vermont’s planning goals (<u>24 V.S.A. 4302</u>), smart growth principles (<u>24 V.S.A 2791(13)</u>), and other statute.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the response communicate a clear policy direction long-term result?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Will the outcomes resolve the community needs identified in a way that is consistent with the regional plan(s), Vermont planning goals, smart growth principles and other relevant law?</p>	<p>5 points</p>
<p>Response: [enter draft response here] (2,000 space character limit)</p>		<p>Sample Response: Long-term outcomes that would demonstrate the success of Pond Village’s “empowering small-scale makers project” include infill and redevelopment of a vacant brownfield site for multi-tenant and low-impact production, processing, and repair uses. These project outcomes are consistent with the regional plan and Vermont’s statewide emphasis on development and re-development in and around centers.</p>	

A. Use the Application Guide

Questions

Applicant Guidance

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Evaluation Criteria

Applicant Guidance

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Sample Response

A. Use the Application Guide

Questions

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Draft Response Box

Sample Response

B. Communicate Need & Readiness

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- ✓ Municipal plan projects are ready if they focus on well-documented needs and shifts (go beyond housekeeping).
- ✓ Implementation projects are ready if well-defined by the plan.
- ✓ Other relevant background info is helpful.

B. Communicate Need & Readiness

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- ✓ Think through and explain project management.

C. Public Outreach & Project Partnership

- ✓ Include creative ways to include the public in your project.



C. Public Outreach & Project Partnership

- ✓ Include creative ways to include the public in your project.
- ✓ Showcase how your projects have community support from the outset.



D. Statewide Priorities

- ✓ Clear long-term outcomes consistent with planning goals

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- ✓ Clear long-term outcomes consistent with planning goals
- ✓ Priority Project Types
 - COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plans and/or Investment
 - Fair & Affordable Housing Plans and/or Regulations that Implement *Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods*
 - Plans for a NEW Designated Area² or Specific-Area Visual/Physical Master Planning for a Designated Area
 - Innovative Statewide Model Projects

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 - Innovative Statewide Model Projects
- ✓ Projects Related to State Designated Areas: Downtowns, Villages, Neighborhood Development Areas, New Town Centers & Growth Centers

E. Project Approach

- ✓ Feasible scope of work
- ✓ Realistic budget based on estimates



E. Project Approach



- ✓ Competitive Procurement
- ✓ RPC Agent Status

Applicant/Project \$	<\$10K Project	>\$10K Project
Standard Applications	2 QUOTES REQUIRED	COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT (RFP/RFQ) REQUIRED
Rural Town (<2,500 pop.)	AGENT EXCEPTION	AGENT EXCEPTION
Consortium (multiple munis.)	AGENT EXCEPTION	AGENT EXCEPTION

E. Project Approach



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Takeaways

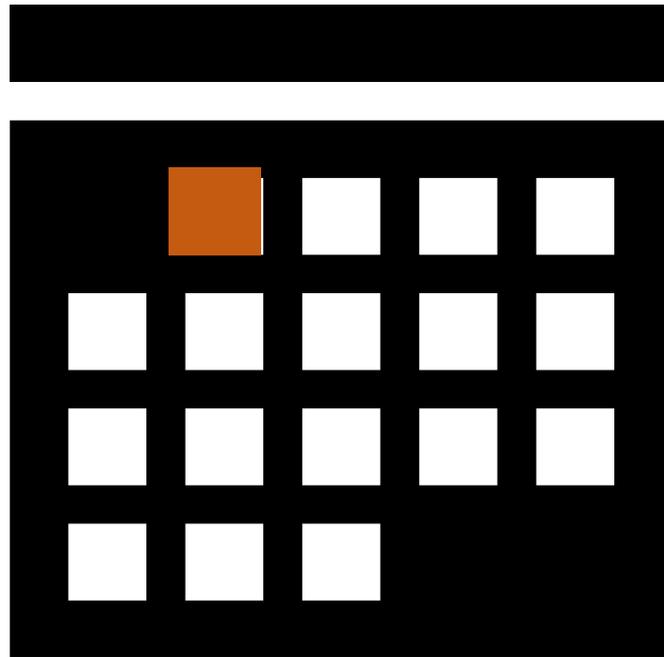
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Takeaways

- ✓ Focus planning efforts on what matters most to the community.
- ✓ MPGs are flexible – they can be used for a wide range of municipal activities.
- ✓ Projects that implement a clearly defined municipal need or vision and have strong community support are most competitive.
- ✓ MPGs open additional funding and regulatory incentives and opportunities to support revitalization.

Deadline Reminder

✓ November 1, 2021 application deadline



Summary

- Flexible planning & implementation funding for 30+ years
- \$450,000 to award
- Deadline to apply is Nov. 1
- Regionally allocated
- Max. grant amounts:
 - \$22,000 for one town
 - \$35,000 for multi-town
- 10% local cash match
- 18 months to complete
- More information available online, [here](#).

FY2022 Municipal Planning Grant Program Description



Walkable Middlesex Village Study
MPG-funded project and Vermont Planners Association 2021 Plan of the Year

EXTRA FY22 FUNDING:

Bylaw Modernization Grants

- Act 74 of 2021 makes special, one-time funding for bylaw updates that expand choice and opportunity for homes in pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods
- \$500,000 to award
- Supports [Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont neighborhoods](#) implementation -- also called 'Zoning for Great Neighborhoods'.

ENABLING BETTER PLACES:
A ZONING GUIDE FOR
VERMONT NEIGHBORHOODS



EXTRA FUNDING:

Bylaw Modernization Grants

- **Deadline to apply: November 15 (2 weeks after MPG deadline); awards in January**
- **Max. grant amounts: up to \$25,000 for one town; up to \$60,000 for multi-town (based on participating no. of towns)**
- **10% local cash match, forgivable upon successful adoption prior to closeout**

ENABLING BETTER PLACES:
A ZONING GUIDE FOR
VERMONT NEIGHBORHOODS



EXTRA FUNDING:

Bylaw Modernization Grants

- 24 months to complete project (6 more months than MPG)
- You may apply for Bylaw Modernization Funds and MPG funds in the same year if there is capacity to complete both projects.
- BMP project eligibility is linked to companion policy bill, S.101
- Program announcements and more information posted [here](#).

Questions on Segment #1



Next up . . .



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Planning & Policy Manager

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802.828.5249

MPG STAFF

MPG – Online Application Training



Online Applications

Accessing the Online System

New Users:

- [Registration](#)
- New Account Approval
- Assigning a Role

Troubleshooting for Returning Users:

- [Forgot Username?](#)
- [Forgot Password?](#)
- Locked Out?

- A user only has to register once to gain access to any of the available grant programs.
- Municipalities have established accounts – individual users are attached to the municipality or municipalities.
- If you've tried logging in unsuccessfully a few times you may get a message saying that you have been locked out of system. Just wait 15 minutes for the account to unlock and contact me to verify the username that your trying to get into the system with.

Online System Web Address:

<https://egrants.vermont.gov/Login2.aspx?APPTHEME=VTACCD>

Online Applications

System Roles

System role	Assigned to	Designated by	Create an application	View	Edit	Submit	Approve accounts
 Municipal/ Authorizing Official (M/AO)	Selectboard member, Town or City Manager, or Town Administrator	Municipal Resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Administrator	Town staff, planning commissioner or RPC staff	Municipal Resolution	✓	✓	✓	✓	
 Writer	RPC or town staff, or consultant	Email from M/AO or Administrator		✓	✓		
 Viewer	RPC or town staff, or consultant	Email from M/AO or Administrator		✓			

FY22 Municipal Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant

WHEREAS, the Municipality of _____ is applying for funding as provided for in the FY22 Budget Act and may receive an award of funds under said provisions; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Community Development may offer a Grant Agreement to this Municipality for said funding; and

WHEREAS, the municipality is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes or that the municipality has voted at an annual or special meeting to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes,

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the Legislative Body of this Municipality enters into and agrees to the requirements and obligations of this grant program including a commitment to match funds.
2. That the Municipal Planning Commission recommends applying for said Grant;

(Name of Planning Commission Chair)

(Signature)

3a. That (Name) _____ Title _____

who is either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as defined by 10 VSA §683(8), or is a Select Board Member, the Town Manager, the City Manager, or the Town Administrator, is hereby designated to serve as the Municipal/Authorizing Official (M/AO) for the Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System (GEARS), and to execute the Grant Agreement and other such Documents as may be necessary to secure these funds.

3b. (Alternate Authorizing Official for redundancy)

That (Name) _____ Title _____

who is either the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as defined by 10 VSA §683(8), or a Select Board Member, is the Town Manager, the City Manager, or the Town Administrator, is hereby designated to serve as the Municipal/ Authorizing Official (M/AO) for the Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System (GEARS), and to execute the Grant Agreement and other such Documents as may be necessary to secure these funds.

3c. That (Name) _____ Title _____

is hereby designated as the Grant Administrator, the person with the overall Administrative responsibility for the Municipal Planning Grant program activities related to the application, and any subsequent Grant Agreement provisions.

Passed this _____ day of _____, _____.

Municipal Resolution Form

- The primary responsibilities of the M/AO are:
 - Signing the grant agreement
 - Submitting requests for grant funds
- When possible, please try to select a Municipal / Authorizing Official (M/AO) whose term **WILL NOT** expire prior to the end of the grant term.
- Program staff are the **ONLY** people that can add a Municipal / Authorizing Official to the grant application.
- One way to avoid having program staff add an M/AO, is to have the M/AO initiate the application. This way they are already attached to the application.

Online Applications

Tips for Success

- Save often
- Spell check in a word processing program first
- No special formatting
- Do not use the browser back button

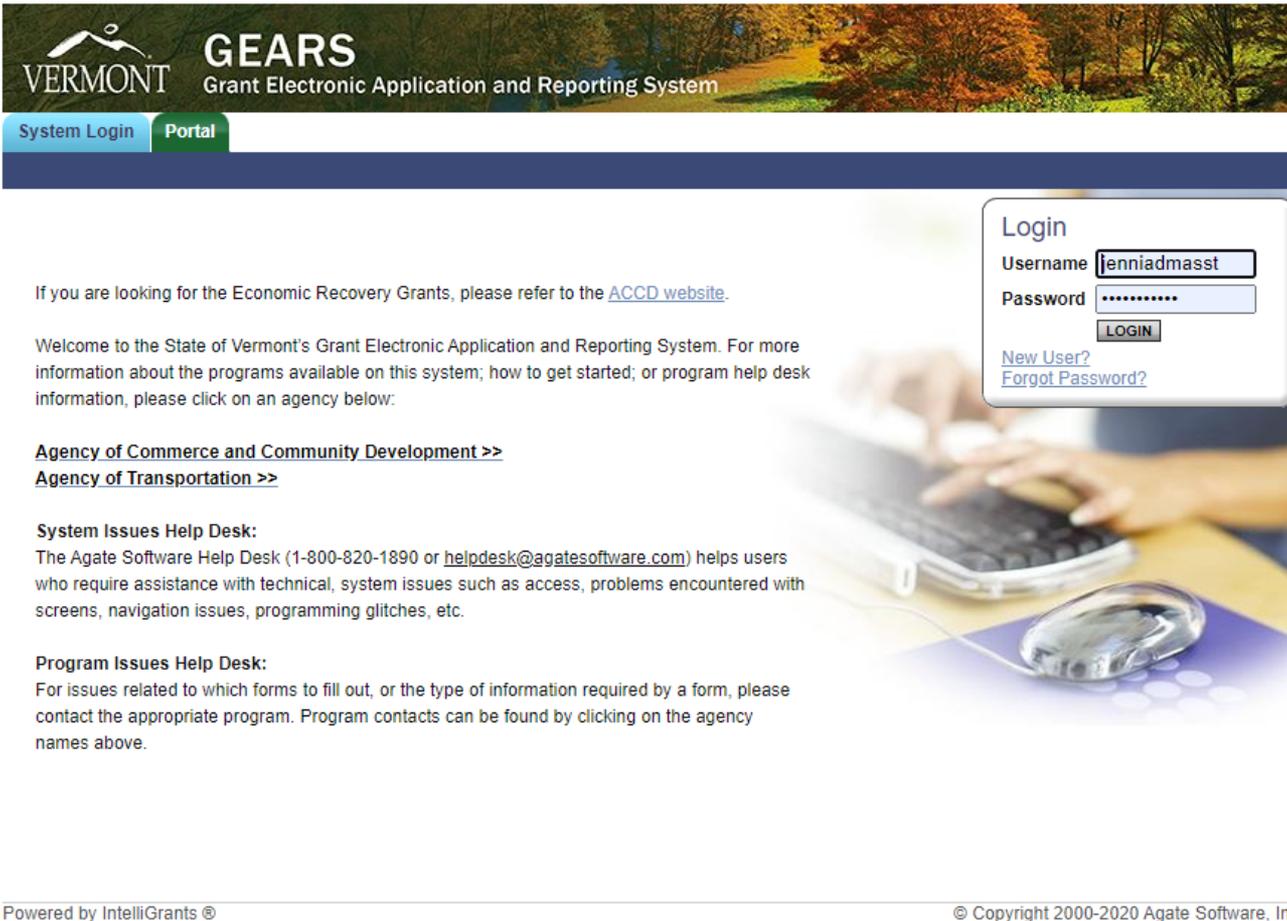


Online Applications

If you're ever stuck, please don't hesitate to contact me. The online system isn't quite intuitive, and I'm always happy to help folks navigate through.



For the next part of our training, we're going to go live to the GEARs online application system to walk through completing the online application.



The screenshot shows the GEARs (Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System) login page for Vermont. The header features the Vermont state logo and the text "GEARS Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System". Below the header are two buttons: "System Login" and "Portal". The main content area includes a login form with fields for "Username" (containing "jenniadmasst") and "Password" (masked with dots), a "LOGIN" button, and links for "New User?" and "Forgot Password?". To the left of the login form, there is a welcome message and several links for help desks and agency information.

VERMONT **GEARS**
Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System

System Login Portal

If you are looking for the Economic Recovery Grants, please refer to the [ACCD website](#).

Welcome to the State of Vermont's Grant Electronic Application and Reporting System. For more information about the programs available on this system; how to get started; or program help desk information, please click on an agency below:

[Agency of Commerce and Community Development >>](#)
[Agency of Transportation >>](#)

System Issues Help Desk:
The Agate Software Help Desk (1-800-820-1890 or helpdesk@agatesoftware.com) helps users who require assistance with technical, system issues such as access, problems encountered with screens, navigation issues, programming glitches, etc.

Program Issues Help Desk:
For issues related to which forms to fill out, or the type of information required by a form, please contact the appropriate program. Program contacts can be found by clicking on the agency names above.

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