

Environmental Benefits Identification Activity
Interagency Committee, VT Environmental Justice Law
Joint Public Meeting – October 25, 2024

Instructions:

Locate your covered agency's table below.

For each type of environmental benefit listed in the VT EJ Law, try to think of applied examples of how your covered agency provides that benefit both directly and indirectly.

Refer back to the live, work, play framework to help think outside of the box!

You will have 10 minutes to work independently on populating your covered agency's table. Please try to provide at least one example for each environmental benefit type. If you think your agency does not provide that type of benefit, please type "Not applicable" in that cell and highlight it in yellow.

After your 10 minutes are up, we will come back together as a group and reflect on the following:

- How easy was it to identify environmental benefits for your agency?
- What are some examples of environmental benefits your agency provides directly and indirectly?
- Are there any benefits you listed that are actually an example of mitigating burdens? [i.e. "reduction of..."]
- What questions do you have about identifying environmental benefits in your covered agency? What kinds of answers/guidance would be helpful in supporting this part of the reporting process?

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Agency of Natural Resources
Clean air, water, and land	• Increased access to safe drinking water and sanitary sewer systems • Reduction in/prevention of waterborne and respiratory illnesses •
Green spaces	•
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	•
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	•
Public transportation	•
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	•
Healthy homes and buildings	•
Health care	•
Nutritious food	•
Indigenous food and cultural resources	•
Environmental enforcement	•
Training and funding	•

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Agency of Agriculture
Clean air, water, and land	• Tech assistance and financial assistance to make land-based practice improvements on farms
Green spaces	• Grant funding to support school gardens • Funding and programs to keep farms farming, open land open, and forest land managed
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	• Capital grants for agricultural fairs • Support viability of farms who manage open lands and forest lands
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• Support for on-farm renewable energy projects • Investment in methane digesters
Public transportation	•
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• Grants to invest in farm and food business viability resulting in job retention and creation
Healthy homes and buildings	• Farmworker housing inspections • Pesticide use (and storage) inspections
Health care	• Grants to support local food prescription programs (food is medicine) • Farm First investment toward mental health support to ag producers
Nutritious food	• Farm to Institution grants • All economic development grants to ag and food businesses increase production, access, viability of local food production • Meat, dairy, maple, produce, apiary inspections and technical assistance
Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Grants through LFPA program to support underinvested communities

Environmental enforcement	• Farm inspections • Grants and technical assistance to support water quality best practices on farms and ag land
Training and funding	• Economic development and water quality grants and contracts • AOFB trainings for municipalities

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Agency of Transportation
Clean air, water, and land	• Administering vehicle electrification programs to address GHG reductions. • Maintaining the state's railroad system with our lease holder to promote use of cleaner transportation (GHG). • Environmental permitting of projects to protect environmental resources. • Innovative stormwater management practices to promote clean water. • Administration of federal Transportation Alternatives grants to replace older salt sheds in towns to protect water resources.
Green spaces	• Better Connections Grant program to enhance public spaces & accessibility.
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	• Administration of 4 state rail trails. • Granting of bicycle and pedestrian grant programs.
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• Administering vehicle electrification programs to address GHG reductions. • Use of solar facilities at our highway garages and some state airports. • Use of the public highway right of way for solar installations. • Use of efficient heating and building construction practices.
Public transportation	• Administration of the state's public transportation system – through a variety of programs. • Sponsorship of a commuter van program. • Go! Vermont program for commuters. • Ride Sharing website.
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• Jobs in environmental resources, planning, green development (charging stations for fleet), policy, public transit, and others TBD.
Healthy homes and buildings	• Upgrading of transportation building.

Health care	• Not Applicable.
Nutritious food	• Not Applicable.
Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Avoidance of Indigenous and Cultural resources during transportation projects.
Environmental enforcement	• Compliance with state and federal environmental regulations.
Training and funding	• Extensive training & funding opportunities for agency staff, partner agencies, and municipalities.

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Agency of Education
Clean air, water, and land	Significant funding from COVID pandemic federal funds supported infrastructure projects to improve indoor air quality in schools
Green spaces	Significant funding from COVID pandemic federal funds supported infrastructure projects to improve outdoor learning spaces to improve learning opportunities
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	- Many schools used their COVID pandemic federal funds to support outdoor recreation programs to support student mental health and well-being - Many schools utilize local partnerships to provide these opportunities to under-served communities (relies on philanthropic resources or available grant funding)
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	- Schools are able to apply for federal funds, but this is a highly competitive process and VT schools are not usually awarded these funds. - Schools looking to make energy/efficiency improvements can leverage performance contracting to make their projects more affordable
Public transportation	Not Applicable
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	Indirectly through green energy initiatives incorporated into school designs
Healthy homes and buildings	Not Applicable
Health care	Indirectly through health facilities incorporated into school designs/renovations
Nutritious food	Universal meals program provides breakfast and lunch for all students

Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Not Applicable
Environmental enforcement	• Not Applicable Currently (with a future school construction program adherence to all relevant environmental regulations would be a requirement for state aid)
Training and funding	• Not Applicable

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Department of Public Service
Clean air, water, and land	•
Green spaces	•
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	•
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• Solar for All funding from the EPA / CPRG seeking to increase access to renewable energy (solar) and reduce electricity bills (aiming for an average savings of 20%) for Vermonters with low income • COVID-related funding to support arrearage assistance / payment of utility bills • Affordable Community Renewable Energy (ACRE) program – ARPA funded community solar pilot • Funding to support storage deployment (GRID)
Public transportation	•
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• Funding to support workforce development efforts in renewable energy / energy efficiency
Healthy homes and buildings	• Funding to support weatherization and other home heating equipment upgrades (ex. IRA Home Energy Rebate programs) •
Health care	• Weatherization & Health Initiative with VDH
Nutritious food	• N/A

Indigenous food and cultural resources	• N/A
Environmental enforcement	•
Training and funding	• Technical assistance to regional planning commissions to support enhanced energy planning

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Department of Public Safety
Clean air, water, and land	• Broadly – hazard mitigation funding to do floodplain restoration work or conserve land has a benefit on air, water and land.
Green spaces	• Federal and state hazard mitigation funding is used for property buyouts that are required to be maintained as green open space in perpetuity. • Federal and state hazard mitigation funding is used to do floodplain restoration work and create community great space that supports future flood resilience.
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	• Federal and state hazard mitigation funding is used to do buyouts and floodplain restoration work which often includes outdoor space which is generally community owned and available for public use and/or outdoor recreation.
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• Federal funding follow disasters can fund utility resilience improvements that lead to better energy sources for areas that have been damaged – it is responsive.
Public transportation	• Federal funding through Public Assistance is used to fix infrastructure that is damaged during federally declared disasters. Federal and state hazard mitigation funding is used to do infrastructure improvements to improve resilience and reduce future flood risk.
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• N/A
Healthy homes and buildings	• Federal and state hazard mitigation funding can be used to elevate housing structure or flood-proof municipal and commercial structures. Fire Safety completes building inspections.

Health care	Support was provided through FEMA funding during and following Covid-19 to supply hospitals and support PPE purchases.
Nutritious food	Support was provided through FEMA funding during and following Covid-19 related to providing food.
Indigenous food and cultural resources	N/A
Environmental enforcement	N/A
Training and funding	VEM and Fire Safety do significant training work. VEM provides significant funding, predominately to municipalities.

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Department of Health
Clean air, water, and land	• Toxicology work: Water testing and data gathering • Climate & Health: Work with DEC on Air Quality
Green spaces	• N/A
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	• N/A
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• N/A
Public transportation	• N/A
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• N/A
Healthy homes and buildings	• Climate & Health: Weatherization work • EPA EJ Grant: CVOEO/Community Ambassadors Health Homes Project
Health care	• Health Disparities Funding
Nutritious food	• Family & Child Health: WIC
Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Indigenous MyPlate, Fish Cards
Environmental enforcement	• Regulatory Programs: Food & Lodging, ALRP, and Radiological Sciences
Training and funding	•

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Public Utility Commission
Clean air, water, and land	Indirect – ensures projects it regulates do not have undue adverse impacts on air, water, land
Green spaces	Indirect – ensures projects it regulates do not have undue adverse impacts on green spaces
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	Indirect – ensures projects it regulates do not have undue adverse impacts on outdoor recreational facilities and venues
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	Direct – regulates siting of clean renewable energy sources; sets rates for net-metering; ensures utility compliance with the state Renewable Energy Standard; approves utility rate increases
Public transportation	Indirect – electric utilities may satisfy Tier III (energy transformation projects) of the state Renewable Energy Standard by providing support for transportation demand management strategies and support for EVs or related infrastructure
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	Indirect – considers whether projects it regulates will result in an economic benefit to the State and its residents (jobs resulting from projects may qualify as a benefit)
Healthy homes and buildings	Indirect – electric utilities may satisfy Tier III (energy transformation projects) of the state Renewable Energy Standard by providing support for home weatherization or other thermal energy efficiency measures, air source or geothermal heat pumps; high efficiency heating systems, etc., which may improve home heating/cooling, air quality, etc.
Health care	Indirect – may prevent utility disconnection of a customer who is behind on payment if disconnection

	would result in an immediate and serious health hazard for the customer or a resident in the customer's household
Nutritious food	• Not applicable
Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Not applicable
Environmental enforcement	• Direct – may revoke a certificate of public good, impose monetary penalties, etc., if a project is not in compliance with conditions to protect the environment
Training and funding	• Direct – provides training for the public to use ePUC (online document filing/management system used to get certificates of public good for projects, including renewables projects); provides educational documents about how to navigate the Commission's processes

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Natural Resources Board
Clean air, water, and land	Jurisdictional projects must satisfy Criterion 1 (air and water pollution); Criterion 9(B) (primary agricultural soils); and Criterion 9(D) (earth resources)
Green spaces	Jurisdictional projects must satisfy Criterion 9(H) (costs of scattered development); 9(K) (development affecting public investments); and 9(L) (settlement patterns)
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	Jurisdictional projects must satisfy Criterion 9(K) (development affecting public investments)
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	Not applicable
Public transportation	Jurisdictional projects must satisfy Criterion 5(B) (transportation demand management)
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	Not applicable
Healthy homes and buildings	Not applicable
Health care	Not applicable
Nutritious food	Jurisdictional projects must satisfy Criterion 9(B) (primary agricultural soils)
Indigenous food and cultural resources	Not applicable
Environmental enforcement	Jurisdictional projects are subject to enforcement of permit conditions under 10 VSA Chapter 201
Training and funding	Not applicable

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Clean air, water, and land	• Clean water infrastructure improvements • Clean Water Fund in partnership w/ ANR • Downtown stormwater project planning • EV charging station program • Brownfields
Green spaces	• Better Places
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	• VCDP providing grants to restore some of these spaces • VT Outdoor Business Alliance Grant
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	• EV Charging station program
Public transportation	• Downtown Transportation Fund
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	• Recruitment and Workforce Development—New and Remote Worker Grant Program
Healthy homes and buildings	• Environmental review process of VCDP checking for things like mold, lead, asbestos, etc. • Brownfield programs • VHIP • HUD-CDBG • MHIR
Health care	• n/a
Nutritious food	• Everyone Eats
Indigenous food and cultural resources	• Historic Preservation Grant Program, Historic Sites Program • Barn Grants

	• Federal RITC
Environmental enforcement	• Environmental review and historic preservation processes
Training and funding	• DED Workforce training • CRRP municipal training • VT Training Program

Environmental Benefit Type	Applied Examples from Office of Racial Equity
Clean air, water, and land	•
Green spaces	•
Outdoor recreational facilities and venues	•
Affordable clean renewable energy sources	•
Public transportation	•
Fulfilling and dignified green jobs	•
Healthy homes and buildings	•
Health care	•
Nutritious food	•
Indigenous food and cultural resources	•
Environmental enforcement	•
Training and funding	•