



Climate Economy Model Communities Program

The Vermont Climate Economy Model Communities Program will help communities build and implement plans that model state-of-the-art rural development in an age of climate change. The ultimate goal is to create “climate smart” communities throughout Vermont and brand them, leveraging rapid change by implementing comprehensive efficiencies efforts, transportation system improvements, energy generation, entrepreneurship and business incubation to spur economic progress. The program is a partnership between the Vermont Council on Rural Development, Green Mountain Power, Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Electric Coop, Washington Electric Coop, other utilities and other partners to provide concentrated services to homes and businesses and project development to the community. The program will work with two communities annually to model transformative change.

Community Selection and Start Up

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program launched with the release of a Request for Proposals soliciting interest from communities. After a 30-day application period in the spring of 2017, two communities, Pownal and Middlebury, were selected to participate in the program in 2017. Another application period will open in fall of 2017 for communities interested in participating in 2018.

Community Engagement and Mobilization

The first step in community engagement will be to build a Steering Committee of key local leaders, stakeholders, and representatives from the full geographic, demographic, and vocational spectrum to guide the local Climate Economy effort. The Steering Committee will help plan for the project kick-off and help to systematically invite the entire community together. The project will kick-off with a day-long session for the full community with a Climate Economy Visiting Team of experts, leaders, and potential program implementers, investors, and supporters. Breakout sessions will be held to envision possible community initiatives. Partners including the electric and efficiency utilities will also join conversations about potential efficiency, energy transformation, and renewable generation offerings for households, businesses, municipalities and organizations.

Priority Setting

Building from the kick-off meeting, the full community will be invited together a month later for an evening session to hear specific concepts for community climate economy initiatives. Community members will select 3 to 5 goal areas for action. Interested community members will be asked to join task forces focused on planning for and implementing these goals. Task forces focused on Home and Business renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy transformation offerings will also continue work to define and promote those offerings.

Planning and Implementation

A planning effort will be facilitated uniting the task forces with expert partners including the utilities. Once planning is complete, work will begin to implement the chosen initiatives. Utility and efficiency partners will continue to collaborate with local partners to implement efficiency and energy transformation measures with households and businesses.

Measuring and Celebrating

As the local facilitation process concludes and implementation continues, an evaluation will be performed to assess the economic and carbon reduction impacts of the ongoing initiatives. The success will be celebrated by publishing a report, by branding the Community’s story and sharing with the media and other interested communities and stakeholders.

