

1 and compliance requirements; and conducting a feasibility analysis of whether
2 the municipality has, or can develop, the capacity to complete a project and
3 meet applicable requirements.

4 (3) Application and permit assistance. Providing technical and
5 administrative assistance with completing funding applications, permit
6 applications, and satisfying initial regulatory requirements.

7 (4) Project management and implementation. Providing ongoing
8 support to successful grant recipients with project management, funding
9 program implementation, funding program compliance, and administrative and
10 regulatory compliance through project completion.

11 (5) Other capacity-building activities. Providing additional assistance,
12 subject to approval by the Agency, to advance priority projects identified by
13 municipalities.

14 (b) Eligible service providers; service delivery.

15 (1) Eligibility.

16 (A) The Agency shall develop eligibility criteria, issue a request for
17 proposals, and implement an approval process for service providers within
18 each region to provide the technical assistance and services specified in
19 subsection (a) of this section.

20 (B) The Agency may exercise its discretion in structuring the terms
21 of service and payments, provided that the Agency shall adopt a set of

1 minimum standards, duties, and performance requirements applicable to all
2 service providers.

3 (2) Providers; mode of delivery. The Agency may:

4 (A) award a grant or contract for services to a regional planning
5 commission, regional development corporation, or other similar
6 instrumentality; to a private for-profit or nonprofit contractor; or to a
7 combination of these;

8 (B) award funding to two or more municipalities to create a shared
9 full-time, part-time, or limited-service position; or

10 (C) authorize an eligible municipality to directly contract for services
11 from one or more providers approved by the Agency, subject to terms
12 approved by the Agency.

13 (3) Regional collaboration. In approving service providers, the Agency
14 shall give priority to applicants that demonstrate a commitment and ability to
15 promote regional collaboration and maximize the efficient use of resources.

16 (c) Eligible municipalities; communities index.

17 (1) The Agency shall develop an index that ranks Vermont
18 municipalities based on their relative administrative capacity to access and
19 maximize the benefits of technical assistance and funding that is available from
20 State, federal, and other sources.

1 (2) In developing the index, for each municipality in this State, the
2 Agency shall consider its demographic profile, geographic location, and
3 economic resources; the current size and administrative capacity of the
4 municipal government; the availability of regional partners and supports; and
5 other factors the Agency determines to be relevant in assessing the
6 municipality’s capacity to fully access available funding and related assistance.

7 (d) Eligible municipalities; priority.

8 (1) The Agency shall approve funding on a first-come, first-served basis
9 to municipalities that rank in the top 25th percentile on the index developed
10 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

11 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Agency may
12 adopt a process to consider and approve funding for a municipality that ranks
13 below the top 25th percentile but demonstrates exceptional circumstances.

14 (3) If funds remain available after meeting the funding requirements of
15 municipalities that qualify under subdivisions (1)–(2) of this subsection, the
16 Agency may award funding to other municipalities according to index ranking.

17 (e) Outreach; implementation.

18 (1) The Agency, in coordination with the Vermont League of Cities and
19 Towns, shall conduct a general public engagement campaign to make
20 municipalities aware of the potential opportunity for services and funding
21 pursuant to this section.

1 (2) The Agency, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, and each
2 regional planning commission and regional development corporation that
3 serves a municipality that is eligible for funding priority under subdivision
4 (d)(1) of this section, shall work collaboratively to ensure that individual
5 outreach to each eligible municipality occurs:

6 (A) to inform the municipality that it is eligible for funding for
7 technical assistance and related services based on its index ranking;

8 (B) to educate the municipality on the process for identifying the
9 types of services and assistance available, identifying eligible service
10 providers, and accessing funding pursuant to this section; and

11 (C) to determine whether the municipality intends to further pursue
12 funding for technical assistance and related services or waives its priority for
13 funding.

14 (f) Reporting.

15 (1) The Agency shall report to the House and Senate Committees on
16 Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Government Operations, the House
17 Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the House
18 Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate
19 Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on or
20 before the following dates:

21 (A) April 1, 2023;

1 (B) July 1, 2023; and

2 (C) January 15, 2024.

3 (2) The Agency shall address in its reports the design and
4 implementation of the process for providing municipal technical assistance
5 pursuant to this section, including information addressing:

6 (A) the activities specified in subsection (a) of this section for which
7 the Agency provided funding and the type and amount of State, federal, or
8 other funds that were leveraged for each activity;

9 (B) the eligibility criteria, request for proposals, and approval process
10 for service providers; the standards, duties, and performance requirements
11 applicable to service providers; and the identity and scope of services
12 performed by approved service providers;

13 (C) the mode of delivery, amount, and purpose of funding awarded to
14 municipalities;

15 (D) the design, methodology, and efficacy of the index; the
16 effectiveness of the index in identifying relative priority and capacity of
17 municipalities; and, if applicable, the basis of any funding awards made due to
18 exceptional circumstances pursuant to subdivision (d)(3) of this section; and

19 (E) the design, implementation, and effectiveness of outreach efforts
20 undertaken pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

1 (g) Appropriation. In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$3,000,000 is
2 appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Administration to
3 provide funding for municipal technical assistance and related services
4 pursuant to this section.