

For Immediate Release

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Governor Allocates \$814,000 for Projects in Windham County

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – Governor Shumlin announced today that \$814,000 from Round 1 of the Windham County Economic Development Program will be allocated to five projects. A small amount will be dedicated to legal costs and technical assistance to applicants and the remainder of the \$2 million from this round will roll over to the next round in 2015 and the program will be redesigned to attract more business applications for loans and grant applications that meet specific entrepreneurial economic development objectives.

“I am allocating funds to a limited number of projects that promise job creation and investment in Windham County,” said Governor Shumlin. “The rest of the funding will roll over to the next round and I’ve asked Commerce Secretary Pat Moulton to redesign the application and allocation process.”

The funds were made available thanks to a settlement that Gov. Shumlin and his team negotiated in 2013 regarding the closure of the Entergy VY plant in Vernon. Details of the settlement were stated in a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) between the State of Vermont and Entergy, which included, among other considerations that Entergy would provide \$10 million over five years to the State of Vermont “to promote economic development in Windham County.” The funds, \$2 million a year, are administered by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) over the five year period through the Windham County Economic Development Program (WCEDP).

Over \$5.6 million in requests were received for the \$2 million available in Round 1. Of that, \$814,000 will be allocated as follows:

<u>Applicant:</u>	<u>Project:</u>	<u>Amount:</u>
Bellows Falls Area Development Corp.	Island Redevelopment	\$300,000
Brattleboro Development Credit Corp.	Green Building/Accelerator	\$170,000
Sustainable Timber Investment Exch.	Advanced Practice Training	\$200,000
Strolling of the Heifers	Business Plan Competition	\$79,000*
United Way Windham County	Working Bridges Program	\$65,000*

*Funding contingent on receipt of clarifications and additional information from these applicants.

Also, Governor Shumlin has allocated \$25,000 as a contingency to cover potential interest and legal costs by the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) who is servicing loans for

the program and \$25,000 to fund a contract with the Vermont Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide technical assistance to potential business applicants to the program. The remaining funds from this round will be combined with the next \$2 million round and made available in 2015.

The Governor expressed appreciation for the work accomplished in a very short time by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to set up an application process for the new program, the diligence of the scoring team and the VEPC Board to review the applications and make a funding recommendation.

“I especially appreciate the time and effort of organizations in the region to develop the applications received,” the Governor said. “Everyone did what they were asked to do. But when I reviewed the applications with my team, I found that most of the proposals didn’t offer the sort of transformational new jobs and economic opportunity we were hoping for, and that they wouldn’t have the desired long-term impact on the region’s economy.”

“We need to help create new jobs,” Governor Shumlin added, “encourage entrepreneurial activity and business start-ups, and get businesses to expand into Windham County. In short, we need to make sure these funds help to soften the blow that is coming to the region’s economy.”

The Governor has tasked Secretary Pat Moulton to redesign the WCEDP application and allocation process with these guidelines:

- Allocate a specific amount for loans and grants each fiscal year;
- Make the application process easier and continuous for businesses, that is, no deadlines for loan applications.
- Work with businesses in the region, and those who might expand into the region, to help them to apply for loans.
- Contract with the SBDC to provide technical assistance to businesses to help them apply.
- For grants, issue a request for only proposals that carry out very specific economic development goals, require an intent to apply to help identify eligible applications and steer applicants to potential collaborators and additional funding sources, and lengthen the application process to give applicants time to collaborate and apply for matching funds.
- Release more details on the revised process in March.