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888-921-5990 | 802-860-4095

TO: Senator Philip Baruth, Chair of the Senate Committee on Education
Representative Kathryn Webb, Chair of the House Committee on Education

FROM: Daniel Reilly, Public Affairs Director, Efficiency Vermont
Jody Lesko, Programs & Implementation Director, Efficiency Vermont

DATE: September 15, 2020

RE: Report Pursuant to Act 120 of 2020, Sec. A.51

On June 30, 2020, Governor Scott signed Act 120 into law, which included a provision appropriating \$6.5 million of the Federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to the School Indoor Air Quality Grant Program (the Program). The funding was made available to Vermont K-12 schools to improve the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in their buildings, in reference to COVID-19-specific guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Efficiency Vermont was selected to administer the Program. With 20 years of experience working with schools and the contractor community, Efficiency Vermont has been able to build on those strong ties to ramp up the Program quickly.

Together with the Agency of Education, the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont Independent Schools Association, and other stakeholders, Efficiency Vermont developed an outreach and education plan, an equitable system for statewide subgrant distribution based on schools' existing HVAC conditions, geographic location, and size, and technical guidance that distilled the ASHRAE and CDC specifications into actionable measures that schools could implement under the terms of the Program.

In accordance with Sec. A.51. (g) of Act 120, below please find a brief interim report on the Program design and activities to date. Efficiency Vermont will provide a final report on the Program to the Legislature on or before March 15, 2021.

Program Design & Guidance

Efficiency Vermont developed a program overview and guidance packet, which was provided to all schools in early July and is summarized below.

The technical guidance includes a breakdown of different problems a school may face, potential mitigation measures and the right type of contractor to perform the work.

The process for schools to receive funding includes:

- Submission of an intake form, found at www.efficiencyvermont.com/schools
- Consultation with an Energy Consultant at Efficiency Vermont to define the project scope

- Identification of a contractor to complete the scope of work (Efficiency Vermont provided schools a list of contractors who self-identified to complete these projects, which can be viewed at <https://www.encyvermont.com/find-contractor-retailer?provider=contractors&search=indoor-air-quality>)
- Approval of the scope of work and completion of a Subgrant Agreement between Efficiency Vermont and the school, supervisory union, or district
- Completion of the scope of work and submission of invoices to Efficiency Vermont
- Payment of the invoices, within 30 days of receipt

Funding is available for:

- HVAC improvements meeting ASHRAE and CDC COVID-19-specific guidelines for indoor air quality improvements (see sample measures below).
- All eligible project costs including, but not limited to, labor, equipment, and materials.

There is no cap on funding per school. However, every school participating in the program is eligible to receive an indoor air quality monitor and a minimum allocation of \$2,500 for eligible projects and equipment while funds last. Funds are being allocated based on schools' existing HVAC conditions, geographic location, and size.

Outreach Conducted

Efficiency Vermont worked with the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Agency of Education, and the Vermont Independent Schools Association to create and execute an outreach and enrollment plan that prioritized schools with the highest need and considered geographic equity and size. We have enrolled schools of all sizes, with widely varying needs, and from nearly every county.

Outreach activities included:

- Regular email communication to superintendents, heads of schools, and facility managers
- Informational bi-weekly webinars to inform schools about the steps to take to participate in the Program, provide technical guidance on prevalent HVAC issues in Vermont schools, and answer questions
- Direct consultations and support for schools from Efficiency Vermont Energy Consultants, once the school had submitted an intake form
- Outreach to the trade ally community in Vermont and neighboring states to recruit specialized HVAC professionals to work with schools and complete projects on the timeframe required
- Ongoing communication with the supply chain on contractor availability for new projects, status of existing projects, and equipment availability

Status of School Projects

As of September 15, 2020:

- 313 eligible schools have submitted intake forms, out of 411 eligible schools. That includes:
 - **Public schools:** 250 out of 312 public schools (80%)
 - **Approved independent schools:** 63 out of 99 approved independent schools (64%)

- \$5.8M in projects at 121 schools have been approved to receive grant funding and projects are underway
- A further \$5.7M in projects have been identified at 159 schools that have enrolled but not yet been approved for funding. 24 schools are enrolled but have not yet completed scopes of work.
- Research and bulk purchasing of equipment on behalf of schools has been completed. All enrolled schools will receive an Indoor Air Quality Monitor by September 30 (and have access to training on using the monitors). Schools also have been provided with research findings and guidance on other common standalone measures like air purifiers.

All projects must be completed by December 30, 2020.

See Figures 1 & 2 for a map of the schools that submitted an Intake Form and schools that have been approved for Program funding. The map shows the zip code of the submitting entity, which may be the school or supervisory union. The dot size denotes the number of schools in that zip code.¹

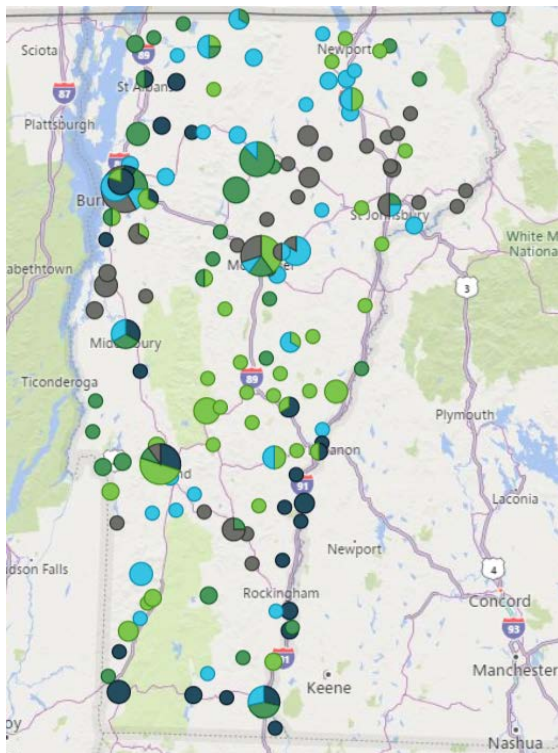


Figure 1: Schools that have submitted Intake Forms

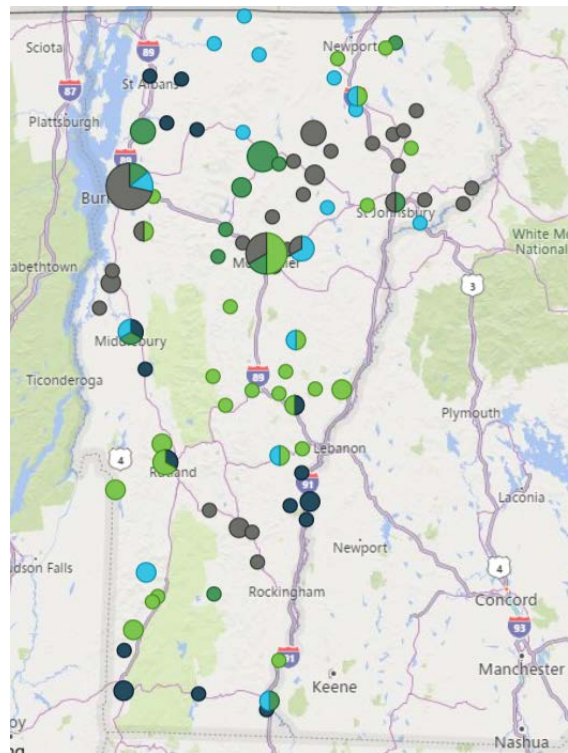


Figure 2: Schools approved for Program funding

Sample List of Measures

Based on ASHRAE guidance for re-opening during the COVID-19 pandemic, Efficiency Vermont recommended prioritizing the following actions. This is not an exhaustive list of measures that schools may be completing under this grant program.

1. Install, modify, or perform maintenance on existing ventilation and filtration systems
2. Modify control sequences to meet industry recommendations and calibrate sensors

¹ Note: the dot color refers to the assigned staff at EVT and is unrelated to the status of the project.

3. Implement supplemental equipment where needed
4. Regularly check indoor air quality using monitors, which will be provided to schools through this program
5. Create isolation zones for nurse rooms