

Rebecca Wasserman
Office of Legislative Council
June 11, 2020
CRF/School HVAC proposal

Sec. X. SCHOOL INDOOR AIR QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM; CORONAVIRUS
RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

(a) Appropriation. The sum of \$6,500,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to Efficiency Vermont in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of providing grants to Vermont K–12 public schools to upgrade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and filtration and other methods of air treatment, in response to the COVID-19 emergency.

(b) Purpose or determination of necessity; due to COVID-19. The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section is necessary to make immediate improvements to the indoor air quality in K–12 public schools to improve health and safety and to mitigate the threat of the spread of COVID-19.

(c) Definition. As used in this section, “public school” means public schools and approved independent schools as defined under 16 V.S.A. § Sec. 11.

(d) Program established. There is established within Efficiency Vermont the School Indoor Air Quality Grant Program to provide grants to K–12 public schools in Vermont to repair, maintain, and upgrade heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems 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).

(e) Administration; implementation.

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(1) The Program shall be administered by Efficiency Vermont, which shall be responsible for:

(A) providing education and outreach to schools on the Program;

(B) providing informational guidance and best practices for school ventilation and air filtration systems; and

(C) awarding available grants to schools under the Program, which may be paid directly to a contractor on behalf of a school.

(2) Efficiency Vermont, in consultation with the Agency of Education, the Vermont Superintendents Association, and experts in the field of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, shall design the Program. The Program design shall establish:

(A) An outreach and education plan.

(B) An equitable system for distributing grants statewide based on geographic location, school size, and grant dollar amount.

(C) Guidelines for the ventilation, filtration, monitoring, humidification, and dehumidification measures and costs that will be eligible for grant funding. Eligible measures may include handheld meters, system evaluation, and retrocommissioning.

(3) Efficiency Vermont is authorized to use up to \$100,000.00 of the amount appropriated in subsection (a) of this section for administration. As the entity appointed to serve as Efficiency Vermont, the Vermont Energy Investment Corp. (VEIC) is authorized to collect their federally approved indirect rate of 9.3 percent on the Program funds expended.

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(f) Contracting with vendors; bidding exception. Due to the public health risk posed by COVID-19, any project receiving grant funds under the Program shall be deemed to be an emergency repair for the purposes of 16 V.S.A. § 559(e), and a school may enter into a contract with an independent third party without the need to competitively bid the contract.

(g) Report. On or before September 15, 2020, Efficiency Vermont shall submit an update on the Program to the House and Senate Committees on Education. On or before March 15, 2021, Efficiency Vermont shall submit a final report on the Program, which shall include a list of the schools served, projects completed, funds expended, results and benefits of the projects completed, and overall lessons learned and recommendations for possible future school ventilation improvement programs.