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H.145

Representatives Durfee of Shaftsbury, Marcotte of Coventry, and McCarthy of St. Albans City move that the bill be amended as follows:

First: In Sec. 45, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100, in subdivision (a)(7)(H), by striking out the final sentence in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new sentence to read: “The plan shall be submitted not later than March 15, 2023 and shall be reviewed by the committees of jurisdiction and enacted into law by the General Assembly prior to implementation.”

Second: In Sec. 45, 2022 Acts and Resolves No. 185, Sec. B.1100, in subsection (a), by striking out subdivision (24) in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new subdivision (24) to read:

(24) \$3,000,000 to the Secretary of Administration to provide funding for municipal technical assistance and related services pursuant to Sec. 87a of this act.

Third: By adding a Sec. 87a to read:  
Sec. 87a. MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS STATE  
AND FEDERAL FUNDING

(a) Expanding municipal access to State and federal funding. The Agency of Administration, consistent with the provisions of this section, shall design and implement a process to provide expanded technical and administrative

1 assistance to municipalities with high need that may be eligible for State or  
2 federal funding for the following activities:

3 (1) Community needs assessment. Conducting a review of community  
4 assets and needs, strategic planning, and identifying potential eligible projects,  
5 including in the following categories:

6 (A) water supply and wastewater infrastructure;

7 (B) housing;

8 (C) community recovery, workforce development, and business  
9 support;

10 (D) climate change mitigation and resilience; and

11 (E) other community economic development projects identified by a  
12 municipality and approved by the Agency of Administration.

13 (2) Opportunity assessment. Assessing the technical assistance and  
14 funding available from State, federal, and private sources; evaluating eligibility  
15 and compliance requirements; and conducting a feasibility analysis of whether  
16 the municipality has, or can develop, the capacity to complete a project and  
17 meet applicable requirements.

18 (3) Application and permit assistance. Providing technical and  
19 administrative assistance with completing funding applications, permit  
20 applications, and satisfying initial regulatory requirements.

1           (4) Project management and implementation. Providing ongoing  
2           support to successful grant recipients with project management, funding  
3           program implementation, funding program compliance, and administrative and  
4           regulatory compliance through project completion.

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

8           (b) Eligible service providers; service delivery.

9           (1) Eligibility.

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

14           (B) The Agency may exercise its discretion in structuring the terms  
15           of service and payments, provided that the Agency shall adopt a set of  
16           minimum standards, duties, and performance requirements applicable to all  
17           service providers.

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

19           (A) award a grant or contract for services to a regional planning  
20           commission, regional development corporation, or other similar

1 instrumentality; to a private for-profit or nonprofit contractor; or to a  
2 combination of these;

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

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

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

11 (c) Eligible municipalities; communities index.

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

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

1           (d) Eligible municipalities; priority.

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

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

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

11           (e) Outreach; implementation.

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

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

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

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

6           (C) to determine whether the municipality intends to further pursue  
7           funding for technical assistance and related services or waives its priority for  
8           funding.

9           (f) Reporting.

10           (1) The Agency shall report to the House and Senate Committees on  
11           Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Government Operations, the House  
12           Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, the House  
13           Committee on Commerce and Economic Development, and the Senate  
14           Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs on or  
15           before the following dates:

16           (A) April 1, 2023;

17           (B) July 1, 2023; and

18           (C) January 15, 2024.

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

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

4           (B) the eligibility criteria, request for proposals, and approval process  
5           for service providers; the standards, duties, and performance requirements  
6           applicable to service providers; and the identity and scope of services  
7           performed by approved service providers;

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

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

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