

MEMORANDUM

To: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Government Operations
Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs
House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development

From: Kristin L. Clouser, Secretary of Administration

Date: March 31, 2023

Subject: Act 3 Sec. 95 Status Report (Municipal Technical Assistance)

Section 95 of [Act 3](#) of the 2023 Legislative Session appropriated \$3 million of general fund dollars to the Agency of Administration (“the Agency”) to provide technical assistance to municipalities with the goal of expanding access to State and federal funding. Due to the abnormally high amount of State and federal funds currently available to municipalities and the short timeframes on many federal programs, Section 95 included the requirement for three reports to Legislative committees on April 1, 2023, July 1, 2023, and January 15, 2024. This report is the first of those three reports.

Implementation Progress

The Agency, with the support from procurement staff from the Agency of Transportation and the Office of Purchasing and Contracting within the Department of Buildings and General Services, began preparations several weeks prior to passage in order to publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) as close to passage as possible. Act 3 became law on 03/20/23. The RFP was published on 03/22/23 and can be found online at <http://www.bgs.state.vt.us/pca/bids/pdf/AOA%20RURAL%20INFRASTRUCTURE%20ASSISTANCE%20PROGRAM%20RFP%203.22.2023.pdf>.

The purpose of the RFP is to establish the retainer agreement contracts with commercial entities and grants to regional planning commissions (RPCs), or other interested non-profit or statutorily created entities, to provide technical assistance to eligible municipalities with a minimum administrative burden. Questions from respondents were due by 03/30/23 and the RFP includes instructions to respond as soon as possible, as multiple selections will be made on a rolling basis.

In parallel, the Agency began developing the framework for a consolidated grant agreement with the RPCs and plans to reserve \$1.5 million for that consolidated grant. The goal is to have the grant

agreement finalized and provide municipalities with instructions on securing services by early May. Contracts with vendors will take longer to establish and will be added to the list on a rolling basis.

The Agency has also developed a website ([Municipal Technical Assistance | Department of Finance and Management \(vermont.gov\)](https://www.vermont.gov/department-of-finance-and-management)) for outreach and coordination purposes. All reports, instructions, and other relevant documents will be posted to this site. Inquiries from towns which are not prequalified are going to be encouraged and tracked to be included in the July 1 report.

Action Items

Between May 1st and June 30th, the Agency will focus on outreach and coordination with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) and the RPCs to ensure that all prequalified towns are directly contacted and fully understand the opportunity in front of them. To that end, a weekly meeting has been set up with VLCT, representatives of the RPCs, and the Agency of Administration and will continue through the summer. Requests for assistance will be scoped out during this process and established based on the allowed activities and project types in Act 3 for a duration of up to two years. The Agency shall approve funds for pre-qualified municipalities on a first-come first-served basis as instructed in Act 3.

Exceptions will be collected but not considered until scoping is complete on the prequalified. It is likely that exceptions will be considered in the September to October timeframe and will certainly inform the January 15 report to the Legislature.

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