

1 * * * Municipal Technical Assistance to
2 Access State and Federal Funding * * *

3 Sec. X. MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ACCESS STATE
4 AND FEDERAL FUNDING

5 (a) Expanding municipal access to State and federal funding. The Agency
6 of Administration, consistent with the provisions of this section, shall design
7 and implement a process to provide expanded technical and administrative
8 assistance to municipalities with high need that may be eligible for State or
9 federal funding for the following activities:

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

13 (A) water supply and wastewater infrastructure;

14 (B) housing;

15 (C) community recovery, workforce development, and business

16 support;

17 (D) climate change mitigation and resilience; and

18 (E) other community economic development projects identified by a

19 municipality and approved by the Agency of Administration.

20 (2) Opportunity assessment. Assessing the technical assistance and
21 funding available from State, federal, and private sources; evaluating eligibility

1 and compliance requirements; and conducting a feasibility analysis of whether
2 the municipality has, or can develop, the capacity to complete a project and
3 meet applicable requirements.

4 (3) Application and permit assistance. Providing technical and
5 administrative assistance with completing funding applications, permit
6 applications, and satisfying initial regulatory requirements.

7 (4) Project management and implementation. Providing ongoing
8 support to successful grant recipients with project management, funding
9 program implementation, funding program compliance, and administrative and
10 regulatory compliance through project completion.

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

14 (b) Eligible service providers; service delivery.

15 (1) Eligibility.

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

20 (B) The Agency may exercise its discretion in structuring the terms
21 of service and payments, provided that the Agency shall adopt a set of

1 minimum standards, duties, and performance requirements applicable to all
2 service providers.

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

4 (A) award a grant or contract for services to a regional planning
5 commission, regional development corporation, or other similar
6 instrumentality; to a private for-profit or nonprofit contractor; or to a
7 combination of these;

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

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

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

16 (c) Eligible municipalities; communities index.

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

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

7 (d) Eligible municipalities; priority.

8 (1) The Agency shall approve funding on a first-come, first-served basis
9 to municipalities that rank in the top twenty-fifth percentile on the index
10 developed pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

11 (2) Notwithstanding subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Agency may
12 adopt a process to consider and approve funding for a municipality that ranks
13 below the top twenty-fifth percentile but demonstrates exceptional
14 circumstances.

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

18 (e) Outreach; implementation.

19 (1) The Agency, in coordination with the Vermont League of Cities and
20 Towns, shall conduct a general public engagement campaign to make

1 municipalities aware of the potential opportunity for services and funding
2 pursuant to this section.

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

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

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

13 (C) to determine whether the municipality intends to further pursue
14 funding for technical assistance and related services or waives its priority for
15 funding.

16 (f) Reporting. The Agency shall report to the House and Senate
17 Committees on Appropriations, to the Senate Committee on Government
18 Operations, to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military
19 Affairs, to the House Committee on Commerce and Economic Development,
20 and to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General

1 Affairs, concerning the status of the index, eligible service providers, and
2 eligible municipalities, on before the following dates:

3 (1) May 1, 2023.

4 (2) July 1, 2023.

5 (3) January 15, 2024.

6 (g) Appropriation. In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$3,000,000 is
7 appropriated from the General Fund to the Agency of Administration to
8 provide funding for municipal technical assistance and related services
9 pursuant to this section.