



Upper Valley **T M A**

Working to Reduce Reliance on Driving Alone



## **Request for Proposals from Vermont Communities to Participate in Smart Commute Program for Towns**

**Applications will be accepted through November 14, 2014**

This RFP is available online at <http://www.vitalcommunities.org/uvtma/news.cfm>.

### **Program Summary:**

Vital Communities requests proposals from communities in our [service area](#) to participate in the second round of our Smart Commute program for towns. This is an exciting opportunity for four municipalities to partner with Vital Communities and promote biking, walking, transit, carpooling, telecommuting, and high-efficiency vehicles in their communities. Smart Commute can help save residents money, reduce the environmental impact of driving, and improve the health and wellness of residents.

This work is based on our traditional and older “[Smart Commute](#)” program, which has helped 34 Upper Valley workplaces decrease their drive-alone rate from 84% to 76%, saving approximately 300,000 gallons of fuel and an estimated \$1.3 million in fuel costs. We transferred our model of consulting workplaces (the “end point” of a commute) to communities (the “start point” of a commute) with four pilot communities in summer 2014. Our first four communities were Bradford, Hartford, Norwich, and Windsor, Vermont. These communities are now pursuing a wide range of activities, from promoting existing bus services to examining the feasibility of a car-share program. The second round of Smart Commute for towns, now open for RFPs, will engage four Vermont communities.

With the help of selected partner communities, we will survey residents about their driving patterns. The survey will identify common barriers to transportation options and possible new transportation policies, infrastructure, and projects. Vital Communities will help develop a Smart Commute Action Plan, which might include ways to promote existing options, such as rideshare or bus, or even recommend the development of new infrastructure, such as bike lanes. Partner communities will engage residents through outreach and program implementation, and Vital Communities will provide technical assistance, promotional materials, focus groups, and additional educational opportunities.

### Small Grant

Vermont-based communities are eligible to receive \$500 in general operating support for promoting the Go! Vermont program of the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Vermont

communities chosen for this round of Smart Commute will promote Go! Vermont as part of the Smart Commute program and thus be automatically eligible for the Go! Vermont small grant. While there is no match requirement, this is federal funding passed through the state and cannot be used as match for federal dollars. For more information on Go! Vermont, please visit [www.connectingcommuters.org](http://www.connectingcommuters.org).

### Timeline

*October 8, 2014* – Informational workshop for interested communities from 7:00-8:00pm at the offices of Vital Communities, 195 North Main Street, White River Junction, VT.

### **November 14, 2014 – Proposals due to Vital Communities**

*November 21, 2014* – Smart Commute partner communities announced

*Late-November-Mid-December, 2014* – Kick-off meetings with partner communities

*January 2015* – Partner communities promote community transportation surveys

*Mid-March, 2015* – Vital Communities presents Smart Commute Action Plans to partner communities.

*Spring and summer, 2015* – Smart Commute program implementation: communities will receive tailored outreach documents from Vital Communities and engage with town residents through a promotional campaign. Communities will help plan, promote, and participate in events, such as the Way to Go commuter challenge, a town rideshare meet-up, or community vanpool exploration session.

*January 2015* – Program evaluation including follow-up community transportation survey and focus groups.

### Eligible Applicants

Towns and villages within Vital Communities' [service area](#) may apply. Up to three villages or towns may apply as a coalition. Examples of eligible entities include the following: selectboards, planning commissions, energy committees, conservation committees, town managers, planning departments, and public works departments, as well as transition town coalitions and other groups that have the endorsement of an official municipal entity. In our experience, the more time and energy a project team can devote to the project, the better the outcomes.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Communities

- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement with Vital Communities.
- Designate a primary contact person and core team with at least two highly motivated people to lead the program in the community. This team could consist of municipal staff, officials, or volunteers.
- Promote a baseline community transportation survey in January and a follow-up survey one year later.
- Market existing resources in their community in collaboration with Vital Communities.
- Work with Vital Communities to implement other projects identified in the community's Smart Commute Action Plan.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Vital Communities

- Sign a Memorandum of Agreement with partner community.

- Develop and administer community transportation survey.
- Develop and help community implement an outreach strategy.
- Develop Smart Commute Action Plan for each partner community.
- Provide technical assistance, feedback, discussion groups and information about grant opportunities.
- Follow-up community survey and program evaluation in winter of 2015.

**Proposal Requirements:** (Please limit your application to 5 pages.)

### Application Questions

1. Why should we choose your community to be part of Smart Commute?
2. What are your community's transportation goals?
3. Please describe the transportation opportunities and challenges that face your community and what experience your community has in addressing them.
4. What resources exist in your community that can be devoted to Smart Commute (for example, volunteers and staff, technical resources, and expertise)? Who will comprise your core team?
5. What outreach channels would you use to a) gather community transportation survey responses from residents and b) engage your town's residents to reduce their drive-alone rate?
6. If you are applying as a coalition of towns, please tell us why you are choosing to do so, what experience you have working together, and what relationships exist between or among the partner towns.

### Letter of Support

If you are applying as an unofficial town group, please include a letter of support from an official municipal entity (for example, from the chair of your town's energy or conservation committee, selectboard chair, town manager, or town planner). Though not required, we strongly encourage letters of support for town committees and commissions as well.

### Evaluation of Proposals

Candidates will be selected by Vital Communities transportation staff and members of the [Upper Valley Transportation Management Association Steering Committee](#). Selection of applications will be based on potential community impact, community need, clear commitment to reducing reliance on driving alone, and the strength of the team devoted to the project.

Questions or clarifications about this RFP should be directed to:  
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