



For Immediate Release  
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## **Getting E-Bikes to People Who Need Them Most**

### ***Subsidy Helps Low- and Moderate-Income Vermonters Buy E-Bikes For Daily Transportation***

**August 19, 2021, White River Junction, VT** – A new program by Vital Communities aims to get e-bikes into the hands of people who can use them most but might have trouble affording them.

Vital Communities is accepting applications for our E-Bike Subsidy Program, sponsored by VTTrans. This program will help low- and moderate-income Vermonters purchase an e-bike by providing 25 to 100% of an e-bike's cost. We hope to help approximately 12 people buy e-bikes this year, the pilot phase of the program.

Applicants to the program will self-assess their economic need and apply for one of (4) subsidy levels that will either offer access to a 0% interest loan in partnership with Mascoma Bank, or amounts of \$1,000, \$1500, or up to \$2300 for purchasing an e-bike and necessary accessories. Program participants will attend Vital Communities e-bike workshops and complete surveys over the course of the first two years of their e-bike ownerships.

Find out more and apply by any of these means:

- Calling Vital Communities Program Coordinator Anna Guenther at 802-291-9100x117
- Emailing her at [Anna@vitalcommunities.org](mailto:Anna@vitalcommunities.org)
- Go to [vitalcommunities.org/ebikeapp](https://vitalcommunities.org/ebikeapp)

### **Why E-Bikes?**

Regular bikes are still a great form of transportation, efficiently turning human power into miles, lessening traffic and parking costs and congestion, increasing our fitness, and decreasing carbon emissions. An e-bike also does all this but with an electric motor and battery that help with the hills, long distances, and loads that can make regular biking not work for Upper Valley residents.

To help people determine if e-bikes could work for them, Vital Communities has partnered with Local Motion and Upper Valley town energy committees over the past two summers on the Upper Valley E-Bike Library, a collection of e-bikes that people can try for free. Find the library's schedule [here](#).

### **How Do People Apply?**

The first step is to fill out our application, which includes a self-assessment to find out which level of subsidy - Full (up to \$2300), Medium (\$1500), Small (\$1000), or access to a 0% interest one year personal loan - applies to your situation.

Once we receive your application, Vital Communities will follow up with you within two weeks to confirm receipt of your application, and to discuss your interest and eligibility. If you are chosen for the

program, Vital Communities will follow up with you within two weeks of your eligibility discussion by phone or email to let you know if you have been accepted.

If you are chosen to participate in the program, we can help you decide which E-Bike and accessories work best for you and help you through the steps to purchase your E-Bike.

Our rolling application period is open until October 1, 2021. If you are interested in the program, please apply, as availability may change, or we might be able to bump you up on our waiting list even if you do not make our October 1 application deadline.

### **Requirements for Being Considered for the Program**

Applicants should:

- Live in Vermont (the State of Vermont grant money requires this);
- Have tested out an e-bike (so you know you really want one, and will use it);
- Be age 18 or older (our insurance requires this);
- Meet a sliding scale of eligibility that includes, but is not limited to, less than 80% of the medium income in your area;
- Agree to answer 2-3 short surveys (either written or in person) over the next year about how they use their e-bike (so Vital Communities and VTrans can track data and improve the program for the future);
- Agree to attend an e-bike skills training hosted by Vital Communities (so you can learn or refresh yourself on how to use, store, and maintain an e-bike, and gain skills and confidence for riding in traffic);
- Agree to use the e-bike 75% of the time for transportation (instead of a car, and not only for recreation);
- Use and maintain the e-bike themselves; no subsidies will be provided for e-bikes intended for immediate resale (within two years) (grant intention is that e-bikes are used by Vermont residents for transportation).

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*[Vital Communities](https://vitalcommunities.org) cultivates the civic, environmental and economic vitality of the Upper Valley. We bring people together, bridging boundaries and engaging our whole community to create positive change. Learn more at [vitalcommunities.org](https://vitalcommunities.org).*