

# CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES GRANTS



Office of  
Climate Change

## Part of the New York State Environmental Protection Fund

The Climate Smart Communities Grant Program is a competitive 50/50 matching grant program for municipalities. It was established in 2016 under Article 54, Title 15 of Environmental Conservation Law, an excerpt of which is below. The program funds climate change adaptation and mitigation projects and includes support for projects that are part of a strategy to become a Certified Climate Smart Community. This fact sheet only provides an overview of the program; please refer to the current Request for Applications (RFA) for details on eligible project types for the current grant cycle.

### Project Types

“§ 54-1523. Climate adaptation and mitigation projects.

1. The commissioner is authorized to provide on a competitive basis, within amounts appropriated, state assistance payments to a municipality toward the cost of any climate adaptation or mitigation projects. Such projects shall include:

- a. the construction of natural resiliency measures, conservation or restoration of riparian areas and tidal marsh migration areas;
- b. nature-based solutions such as wetland protections to address physical climate risk due to sea level rise, and/or storm surges and/or flooding, based on available data predicting the likelihood of future extreme weather events, including hazard risk analysis data if applicable;
- c. relocation or retrofit of facilities to address physical climate risk due to sea level rise, and/or storm surges and/or flooding based on available data predicting the likelihood of future extreme weather events, including hazard risk analysis data if applicable;
- d. flood risk reduction;
- e. greenhouse gas emission reductions outside the power sector;
- f. enabling communities to become certified under the Climate Smart Communities Program, including by developing natural resources inventories, right sizing of municipal fleets and developing climate adaptation strategies; and
- g. climate change adaptation planning and supporting studies, including but not limited to vulnerability assessment and risk analysis of municipal drinking water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure.”

### Implementation Projects

Grants of up to \$2,000,000 are available for implementation projects in two major categories: adaptation and non-power mitigation (i.e., projects that reduce greenhouse gases from sources not related to the generation or consumption of electricity). These project types are described above in **sections a. to e.**

### Certification Projects

Grants of up to \$100,000 are available for assessments and planning activities that enable local governments to become Certified Climate Smart Communities, as described above in **sections f. and g.** Applicants under this category should review the online Climate Smart Communities Certification Portal at <https://climatesmart.ny.gov> to learn more about the certification program.

**Eligible Applicants.** Any county, city, town, borough, or village of the State of New York is eligible to apply. Registered or Certified Climate Smart Communities receive additional points in the competitive scoring system.

**Partners.** Non-eligible entities, e.g., non-profits, may participate in a project in partnership with a designated, eligible lead applicant if they submit letters of partnership and/or partnership agreements as part of the grant application.

**Award Distribution.** No more than 50% of the available funding in either the implementation or the certification category will be awarded to cities and towns with population size greater than 100,000 or to any single municipality.

**Funding Restrictions.** Most costs directly related to a project are eligible for funding, with the exception of overhead, contingencies, fund-raising and salaries of elected officials. Costs for purchase and installation of zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) and associated infrastructure that are eligible for funding under the DEC Municipal ZEV Rebate Program are not eligible for funding through the Climate Smart Communities Grant Program. Land acquisition is not eligible for funding through the Climate Smart Communities Grant Program.

**Match Restrictions.** State and federal funds are not eligible as match for a Climate Smart Communities grant award. Land acquisition or the value of a conservation easement may be used as match only.

**Contract Term.** Funded projects should be ready to begin upon award, and should generally be accomplished within one to three years of award. All projects must be completed within a five-year contract term.

**Reporting.** To satisfy the terms of the grant contract, grant recipients for climate change mitigation projects will be required to provide a report of estimated greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from the project. Grant recipients under other project types will also be required to conduct appropriate reporting.

**Climate Change Mitigation Easement.** To satisfy the terms of the grant contract, grant recipients for implementation projects that involve construction, physical improvements, restoration, rehabilitation, or other site work will be required to obtain a climate change mitigation easement (like a conservation easement) if the property is not owned by the grant recipient.

**Request for Applications.** The complete Request for Applications (RFA) for the Climate Smart Communities Grant Program will be posted, when available, on the DEC Office of Climate Change website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/109181.html> .

## Consolidated Funding Application

The Climate Smart Communities Grant Program is offered through the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), available online at <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/> . The CFA website includes the application portal, instructions for applicants, a schedule of statewide CFA workshops, and information on additional NYS grant opportunities.

The CFA application cycle varies from year to year. Materials and deadlines will be posted online when available.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Office of Climate Change

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

625 Broadway

P: (518) 402-8448 | F: (518) 402-8448 | [cscgrants@dec.ny.gov](mailto:cscgrants@dec.ny.gov)

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)