

**133  
Municipalities  
Assisted by RPCs**

- ◇ ACRPC 15
- ◇ BCRC 9
- ◇ CCRPC 16
- ◇ CVRPC 20
- ◇ LCPC 4
- ◇ MARC\* 6
- ◇ NRPC 10
- ◇ NVDA 12
- ◇ RRPC 11
- ◇ TRORC 17
- ◇ WRC 13

\*Formerly SWCRPC

# EMPOWERING LOCAL COVID PLANNING AND RESPONSE

## *Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program*

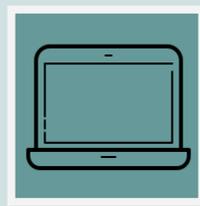
Act 137 of 2020 provided Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to entities in Vermont for necessary expenses incurred due to, or as a result of, the COVID-19 public health emergency. \$12.65 million was made available under the Local Government Expense Reimbursement (LGER) Grant to eligible units of local government. In partnership with the Vermont Department of Taxes, Vermont's 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) worked cooperatively to develop and deliver trainings and provide targeted support. Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission served as the fiscal agent and RPC program manager. Municipalities utilized LGER funding for a multitude of COVID planning and response actions outlined in this report.

**LGER reimbursed local governments for \$7.9 million in COVID-related expenses.**

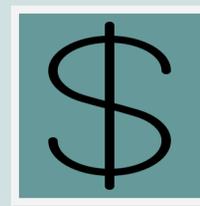
### Assistance Provided

- ◇ Regional training on program, timeline, and eligible expenses
- ◇ Determining eligible expenses
- ◇ Application assistance
- ◇ Expense documentation assistance

### Community Impact



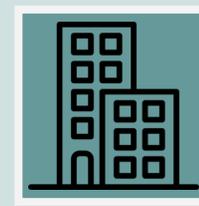
**\$1.46 million**  
Supplies & Equipment



**\$2.9 million**  
Wages



**\$257,380**  
Sanitation



**\$655,430**  
Facility Alterations

Other Expenses: **\$2.64 million**



### Supplies & Equipment

- ◇ Virtual meeting software
- ◇ Plexiglas screen for Town Clerk office
- ◇ Face masks
- ◇ Thermometers
- ◇ Cell phones for employees
- ◇ Laptops for remote work
- ◇ Upgrades to phone conference systems



### Wages

- ◇ Hazard pay
- ◇ Overtime pay
- ◇ Redirection of staff
- ◇ Sick leave/family leave

# EMPOWERING LOCAL COVID PLANNING AND RESPONSE

## *Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program*

### Strengthening Response with Emergency Operations and Critical Infrastructure Improvements

The **Town of Castleton** is one of the most populous towns in the Rutland region, providing the Town with unique challenges during COVID-19. At the pandemic's onset, the Town lacked proper communications equipment to provide information to first responders and residents. Castleton used LGER funds to purchase portable and base radios and to improve other communications infrastructure in its Emergency Operations Center. This allowed the Town to work more effectively during COVID-19 and to prepare for future events.

Prior to COVID-19, the **City of South Burlington's** Fire Station had one large space for on-duty firefighters. The City used LGER funds to add dividers which allowed firefighters to comply with social distancing while waiting for calls. This critical modification strengthens safety for staff while they are on duty.

The interior layout of the **Village of Swanton's** Police Department was too small to comply with social distancing if more than one staff member/officer was present. By removing a wall and installing protective shields, officers could be protected and the Department could meet social distancing guidelines. LGER funded these expenses.

### Coordinating Mutual Aid to Support Vulnerable Populations

The **Town of Rockingham** experienced a large surge in food insecurity during the early days of the pandemic and before distribution systems were established. Town staff was redirected from their normal duties to establish the Rockingham Help and Helpers mutual aid organization. This involved setting up an operations center to accept donations of gloves, masks, food, diapers, and personal hygiene products. Additionally, staff coordinated volunteers for pick up and delivery of food to residents who were unable to shop due to COVID quarantine or compromised immune systems. Rockingham utilized LGER for personnel wages dedicated to mutual aid, allowing this critical work to continue through the pandemic.

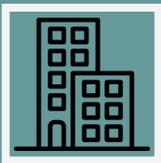


Photo credit: Rockingham Free Public Library



### Sanitation

- ◇ Disinfecting wipes
- ◇ Hand sanitizer
- ◇ Cleaning supplies
- ◇ Gloves
- ◇ Increased cleaning services for municipal buildings



### Facility Alterations

- ◇ Glass partitions
- ◇ Keyless entry to Town Offices
- ◇ Removal of partitions to comply with social distancing
- ◇ Improvement for drive through voting

# EMPOWERING LOCAL COVID PLANNING AND RESPONSE

## *Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program*

### Keeping Residents Informed and Engaged

In spring and summer 2020, the **Town of Orange** developed and distributed a COVID-19 newsletter to residents. It described the Town's response to COVID, including information on COVID symptoms and changes in municipal services and hours. This newsletter kept residents informed on how to attend town-sponsored meetings and access services amid frequent State policy changes. LGER reimbursed the cost of newsletter preparation and distribution.

In July 2020, the **Town of Waitsfield** was considering an ordinance requiring facial coverings in indoor public spaces where social distancing was not possible. To gather public input, the Town

utilized LGER for a Zoom meeting subscription capable of supporting 500 attendees. This ensured residents could access the virtual Selectboard meeting to discuss and provide comment on the mask ordinance.

### To Mandate Or Not To Mandate? A Look At Waitsfield's Mask Deliberation

By ANNA VAN DINE • JUL 24, 2020

PROGRAM VPE News [Share](#) [Tweet](#) [Email](#)



Three of the five members of Waitsfield's select board on Zoom as they reconsider a local mask mandate. Jon Jamieson, left; Darryl Forest, center; Paul Horshorn, selectboard chair, right. SCREENSHOT / ZOOM

Credit: VPR.org



Photo credit: Dreamstime.com

The **Town of Woodstock** is a popular year-round destination that draws visitors from near and far. In July, the Town and Village instituted a mask mandate for public places and businesses to protect residents and business owners amid the busy summer season. Nearly 30 informational metal signs were placed throughout Woodstock,. LGER funding reimbursed the Town for the expense. The signs continue to remind Woodstock's residents and visitors that masks are required.



### Other Expenses

- ◇ Labor costs for installation of air filtration and circulation equipment
- ◇ Contracted snow plow drivers in case of road crew quarantine
- ◇ IT services for server and firewall installation at municipal offices to facilitate remote work
- ◇ Portable radios and other equipment for Emergency Operations Centers
- ◇ Purchase of portable toilets for public spaces
- ◇ Drive through voting (tent, signage, supplies)

# EMPOWERING LOCAL COVID PLANNING AND RESPONSE

## *Local Government Expense Reimbursement Program*

### Increasing Wi-Fi Access for Remote Work, Education, and Telehealth

The **Town of Fairfax** used LGER funds to retrofit a community center into a public Wi-Fi hub for remote education, telehealth and remote work. Many areas in the community are unserved or underserved by internet service providers, and the Wi-Fi hub served as a valuable asset for Fairfax residents. Fairfax used LGER funds for IT equipment, sanitization supplies, cleaning services, and other equipment. The facility will serve as a year-round Wi-Fi hub as part of the community's efforts to bridge its digital divide.

### Stabilizing Local Businesses

For a ski town like Dover, the quick shut down for COVID was a hard hit for local businesses during ski season. The Town's Economic Development Department rapidly responded by providing initial support to local businesses affected by COVID-19. The Town provided emergency relief grants, resiliency webinars focused on business transition, and a shop local stimulus program. Eric Durocher, the Dover Economic Development Director said, "The idea that we were able to recover these funds through the LGER program has been a massive boost to our community and our future support of these businesses."

### Community Mask Initiatives

The **Town of Barre** leveraged EMS employees to distribute State-provided masks at sites around town. The Town utilized LGER funding to reimburse wages for the redirected employees.

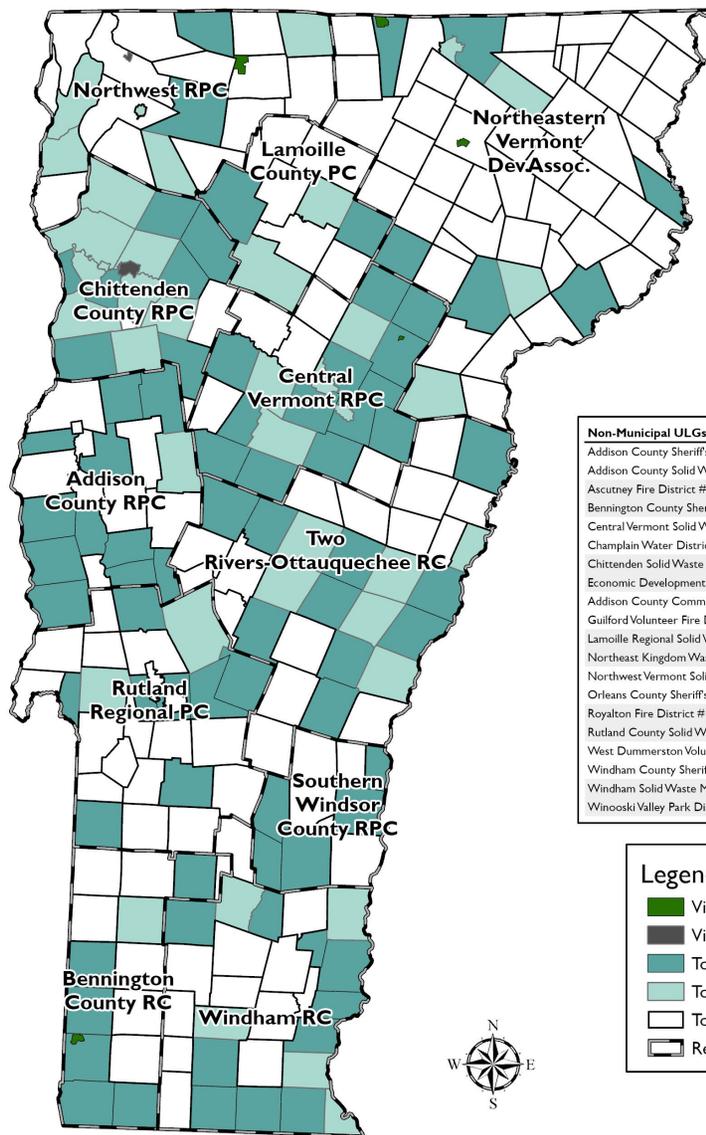
In March 2020, the **City of Burlington** launched a community effort to produce and distribute high-quality masks to any resident who wanted one. Burlington's effort started by producing and distributing masks to essential workers. Burlington met its goal of distributing 20,000 masks by May 15. The City then distributed BTV Community Masks to residents, prioritizing distribution to vulnerable residents including nursing homes, School District meal sites, the Howard Center, Burlington Housing Authority, COTS, and other non-profit housing partners. More than 26,000 masks were made and distributed to more than 80 organizations and individuals as of the end of 2020



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**Vermont Municipal FEMA and LGER Assistance**

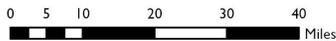


The FEMA Public Assistance (PA) program provides reimbursement funding for eligible COVID-19 emergency protective measures. RPCs assisted municipalities to navigate the programs and determine eligible expenses. This map shows municipalities that applied to LGER and PA and LGER only.

Non-Municipal ULGs	LGER	FEMA & LGER
Addison County Sheriff's Department	Yes	No
Addison County Solid Waste Management District	Yes	No
Ascutey Fire District #2	Yes	No
Bennington County Sheriff's Department	Yes	No
Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District	Yes	Yes
Champlain Water District	Yes	No
Chittenden Solid Waste District	Yes	No
Economic Development Department - Town of Dover, VT	Yes	Yes
Addison County Community Trust	Yes	No
Guilford Volunteer Fire Department	Yes	No
Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District	Yes	No
Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District	Yes	No
Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District	Yes	Yes
Orleans County Sheriff's Department	Yes	No
Royalton Fire District #1	Yes	No
Rutland County Solid Waste District	Yes	Yes
West Dummerston Volunteer Fire Department	Yes	No
Windham County Sheriff's Office	Yes	No
Windham Solid Waste Management District	Yes	No
Winooski Valley Park District	Yes	No

**Legend**

- Village LGER Assistance Only
- Village FEMA and LGER Assistance
- Town LGER Assistance Only
- Town FEMA and LGER Assistance
- Town Boundary
- Regional Planning Commission Boundary



Data Source:  
Town Boundaries: VCGI, 2006  
RPC Boundaries: VCGI, 2006

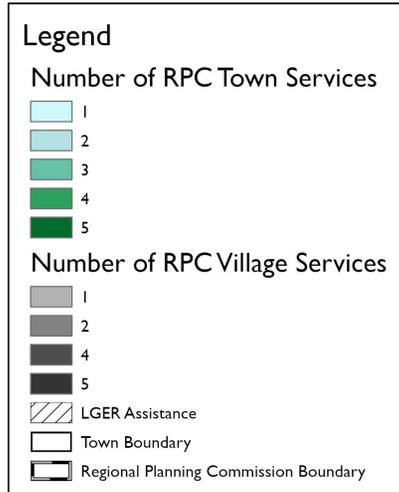
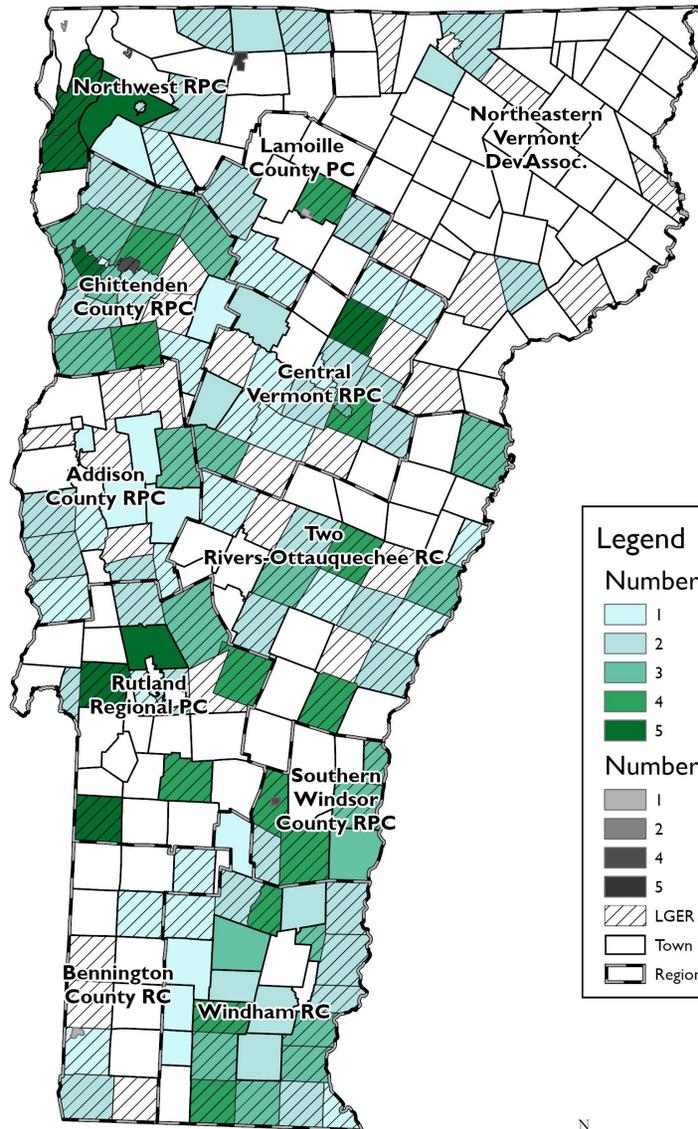
Map created December 2020  
Data is only as accurate as the original sources.  
This map is for planning purposes only.  
This map may contain errors and/or omissions.

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**Vermont Municipal Level of Assistance**



RPCs provided multiple types of assistance to municipalities in support of LGER. This map shows the wide range of support provided. Colors denote levels of assistance.

Data Source:  
Town Boundaries: VCGI, 2006  
RPC Boundaries: VCGI, 2006  
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