

Vermont Conservation Plan (Act 59) Stakeholder Led Listening Sessions “Mini-Contracts”

Request for Proposals (RFP) Support for hosting a stakeholder led community listening session on the draft Vermont Conservation Plan

Program Overview

Vermont’s Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act ([Act 59](#)) calls for a statewide conservation plan, developed by the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources, that solicits input from communities, landowners, and partners across Vermont. To continue to support that engagement, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) will provide mini-contracts of up to \$4,000 for eligible groups, as defined below, to host community meetings for interested members of the public to review and respond to the draft Act 59 conservation plan. Meetings must be held between February 1, 2026, and 31, 2026, and a summary of input, in a format that will be provided, must be submitted to VHCB by the same date. VHCB will provide clear guidance, background materials, and templates for meeting facilitation and documentation. Applicants are not expected to design meeting content or reporting formats independently.

Eligible Applicants

Contracts may be issued to any organization or entity representing the stakeholder groups identified in Act 59, including:

- Organizations representing private owners of forestland or agricultural land
- Land trusts
- Conservation organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Working lands enterprises
- Outdoor recreation groups and businesses
- Indigenous groups and Tribes, and organizations representing historically marginalized or disadvantaged communities
- Watershed groups
- Municipalities, including Conservation Commissions
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Relevant State or federal agencies
- Other community-based organizations able to convene participants from one or more of the statutory stakeholder groups

Applicants will be asked to indicate which statutory stakeholder category they represent.

Purpose of Funding

Funding supports a single meeting designed to:

- Review draft Act 59 conservation plan content (objectives, pathways, and proposed actions)
- Provide structured input back to VHCB and ANR

Organizations subject to Vermont's Open Meeting Law (OML) will need to certify that meetings funded by VHCB are compliant with OML, and otherwise organizations must ensure that members of the public are broadly welcome and that meeting notes are made available in a timely manner.

Consistent with OML requirements for public access, VHCB will help to provide notice for all meetings by posting them on our web portal, and VHCB will provide a note taker, if requested, to ensure that notes from the meetings can be posted on the VHCB portal.

VHCB staff may be available to facilitate meetings upon request, however VHCB staff facilitation will require hybrid access (in person and online) for OML compliance.

Funding Amount & Disbursement

Each contract will be up to \$4,000.

Payment 1 – \$1,500

Issued after:

- A contract has been awarded and executed
- The host has secured a date, time, and location for the meeting and submitted this information to VHCB.
- VHCB confirms the meeting

Payment 2 – Remaining Contract Amount (up to \$2,500)

Issued after:

- The meeting is held on or before March 31, 2026
- The host submits meeting notes and a concise summary of input received on the draft Vermont Conservation Plan, using a format and guidance provided by VHCB. More guidance will be provided on the type of feedback to submit in the post meeting summary report if awarded a contract.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Hosts manage all logistics and costs directly, including:

- Venue rental
- Food and non-alcoholic beverages
- Outreach and communications
- Childcare or transportation assistance
- Interpretation/translation
- Participant stipends
- Facilitators or note-takers (if not utilizing VHCB support)
- Other reasonable meeting-related costs (to be described in applicant's interest form)

Application Process & Timeline

- Initial Proposal (Interest Form) Due: January 19, 2026
- Awards Announced: January 30, 2026
- Meetings Held: By March 31, 2026
- Final Deliverables Submitted: By March 31, 2026

Selection Criteria

If requests exceed available funding, VHCB will prioritize proposals that:

- Engage underrepresented or high-impact communities
- Represent a diversity of Act 59 stakeholder groups
- Contribute to geographic diversity across Vermont
- Demonstrate a realistic plan to host a public meeting (location, timing, and logistics)
- Describe a reasonable outreach approach to encourage participation
- Support organizations that would otherwise not have the resources to host this type of engagement

How to Apply

1. Submit the completed Interest Form on the Vermont Conservation Plan project website (<https://vermontconservationplan.com/vcp/stakeholder-led-listening-sessions/>)

Questions:

Please direct questions to vcpadmin@vhcb.org. If needed, you may also contact VHCB staff:

- **Annie Decker** – a.decker@vhcb.org | 802-661-8958
- **Trey Martin** – t.martin@vhcb.org
- **Isaac Bissell** – i.bissell@vhcb.org