DATE: February 6, 2023
TO: Members of the Vermont General Assembly
           Honorable Philip B. Scott, Governor, State of Vermont
FROM: Ted Brady, Executive Director, VLCT
           Katie Buckley, Director, Federal Funding Assistance Program
RE: VLCT ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program and Federal Funding Assistance Program - 2022 Year-End Update

Welcome to those of you who are new to the State House, and welcome back to those of you who are returning!

In 2021, the Vermont General Assembly and Governor Scott appropriated funds to VLCT to stand up the ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program to assist municipalities in managing more than $200 million in local ARPA awards. Building off the huge success of the ARPA program, in 2022, VLCT was appropriated funds to expand its work to include the billions of dollars of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) and Inflation Reduction Act available to Vermont communities and create the Federal Funding Assistance Program. Although we are not required to report to the legislature on this work, we feel it is important for you to know how we are doing since we serve many of your constituents.

Over the last year and a half, we have enhanced and refined our services to support leaders in local government who are navigating the world of federal funding and doing so using new and unconventional programs. We have strengthened our team by adding a Government Finance Specialist (Sarah Macy, former Finance Director [then] Essex Town and Village) and additional legal assistance through our Municipal Assistance Center team. We have morphed our highly successful ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program into the vastly expanded Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) and brought on Bonnie Waninger (former Executive Director of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission) to work alongside Katie. We now assist municipal entities with the broad universe of funding that has continued to increase as the nation works toward economic recovery. We ensure that local officials have awareness of and access to this money, and we help connect them to the resources they need to advance their projects and priorities.

Without a lot of narrative, here is what we have accomplished in the last six months of the FFA program and year and a half of the ARPA program (which we track separately for our grant reporting):

Federal Funding Assistance Program:
- Officially launched the FFA Program in December 2022.
- Culled the ~500 new programs to curate only the ones that are both applicable to Vermont municipalities and for which they are eligible applicants.
- Created the Vermont Federal Funding Guidebook, a dynamic document that is updated as information becomes available from the federal government. We are partnering with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) to create a searchable online database of funding opportunities.

- Launched "Consults on Call" service to allow municipal officials ("clients") to self-book a 15-minute consultation with the FFA team ("consultants") to talk about their local initiative/project and discuss ways to advance it as well as funding sources to leverage. The official receives a summary report after their consultation.
- FFA's Tip of the Week –Tips, tricks, best practices, insider information, etc. based on firsthand experience to help local leaders who are trying their hand at grant writing to better understand the craft. As the number of Tips grows, it will become a searchable catalog.
- Dedicated email address – FFA@vlct.org. We receive inquiries through email and many phone calls. We assist larger communities with long project lists as well as the smallest, rural municipalities searching for funding to support basic needs like town offices, highway garages, and libraries.
- Dedicated webpages that link from the main FFA Program page; topic related pages for ARPA, Climate, Energy & Environment, Cybersecurity, Housing, Transportation, and Water, Wastewater & Stormwater.
- Below are performance metrics for the FFA Program to date:

Grant Period: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024 (24 months)	VLCT PERFORMANCE MEASURES	24 month Total Goal	Actuals June 1, 2022- December 31, 2022
	Municipal Inquiries: Answer questions via email, phone, virtual and in-person about IIJA/BIL (**program was launched December 15, 2022**)	1,200	106
	Website Visits: Page views of VLCT Federal Funding Assistance Program related webpages	3,000	1,282
	Webinars: Training and informational webinars	6	5
	Training Participants: Number of municipal officials trained via webinars and in-person trainings	500	402

ARPA:
- Established the ARPA Assistance and Coordination Program and hired a director (Katie Buckley) to oversee it.
- Provide expertise in the interpretation of the U.S. Department of the Treasury's rules, regulations, and compliance and reporting requirements.
- Assisted 276 eligible municipal entities in certifying/accepting their funding (all except one town accepted their award).
- Assisted 278 local ARPA award recipients (NEUs and metros) in successfully completing required reporting to Treasury. (Vermont had the highest reporting success rate in the nation and served as a model for other states.)
- Uses a dedicated ARPA email address (ARPA@vlct.org).
- Created dedicated webpages: homepage, FAQs, Compliance and Reporting; created an ARPA Advisory Committee Formation Toolkit; created reporting guidance documents customized for Vermont to ease/simplify the online reporting process, etc.

- Below are performance metrics for the ARPA Program to date:

	VLCT	36 month Goal	Actuals May 1, 2021 – October 31, 2022
ACCD Grant Period: May 1, 2021 - April 30, 2024 (36 months)	Municipal Inquiries: Answer questions via email, phone, in-person about pandemic response and ARPA	1000	4,602
	Website Visits: Unique Page views of VLCT ARPA resources page	5000	23,013
	Webinars: Training and informational webinars about the pandemic and ARPA funding	12	14
	Training Participants: # of municipal officials trained via webinars & in-person trainings	500	2,068
	* Numbers presented are <u>only</u> for the specific webpages https://www.vlct.org/resources/american-rescue-plan-information and https://www.vlct.org/coronavirus. They do not include data for any topic-related webpages.		

- Webinars hosted by VLCT:

VLCT HOSTED ARPA WEBINARS		
Title	*Date Offered*	*Attendance*
Intro to CLFRF	5/19/2021	242
Accessing Local Fiscal Recovery Funding	6/16/2021	212
Municipal Budgeting & Finance/ARPA	9/15/2021	113
ARPA: Imagine What Your Money Can Do for Your Community	10/4/2021	201
ARPA: We Have An Idea … Now What?	10/4/2021	193
ARPA: Keep Your Money and Avoid Claw Back	10/4/2021	174
ARPA Roundtable: Using Your ARPA Dollars to Host a Better Hybrid Meeting	10/4/2021	121
Take Time & Think Big - Funders Webinar	10/19/2021	187
ARPA and Broadband: A Road Map to the Last Mile	12/1/2021	102
VLCT TOEC Series - SB Special Topics: ARPA	3/31/2022	68
VLCT ARPA: The Final Rule, Compliance & Reporting	4/5/2022	260
Want Greater Housing Affordability - Then Let's Talk About Infrastructure (Part 1)	10/6/2022	65
Want Greater Housing Affordability - Then Let's Talk About Infrastructure (Part 2)	10/7/2022	65
Where's The Money?	10/7/2022	65
	Total:	**2068**

- Events hosted by others with VLCT invited: community television talk shows, press events, statewide conferences, regional information meetings, local public meetings, webinars:

ARPA PRESENTATIONS/WEBINARS HOSTED BY OTHERS	
Organization	*Date*
Addison County ARPA Press Event	5/4/2021
Craftsbury Planning Commission "Intro to ARPA"	5/13/2021
VTCMA "Intro to ARPA"	5/14/2021
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston ARPA Webinar	6/16/2021
Community Response & Recovery Corps	7/14/2021
NVEDD - Board Presentation	8/3/2021
Town of Glover and surrounding towns - "Intro to ARPA"	8/23/2021
SVEP Knowledge Bites Lunch-n-Learn	8/31/2021
UV North	9/7/2021
Arkansas Municipal League	9/8/2021
Collaborative Funders Group	9/8/2021
Rural Communities and Climate Resiliency	9/15/2021
NVDA Annual Meeting "Update on ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funding"	9/30/2021
Town of Elmore Selectboard "Intro to ARPA"	10/13/2021
VTCMA Conference - ARPA Update	10/14/2021
NRPC Towns - ARPA 2.0	10/20/2021
Montpelier Happy Hour (BCTV & Blog)	10/22/2021
ARPA Roundtable GNAT	10/26/2021
Town of Franklin ARPA Committee "Intro to ARPA"	10/26/2021
WRC-BCRC SoVT ARPA Presentation	11/3/2021
Town of Westminster ARPA Committee Meeting	11/4/2021
ARPA & Energy Information Session - TRORC	11/10/2021
ARPA & the Creative Sector - Vermont Arts Council	11/15/2021
Town of Westford ARPA Committee Meeting	11/17/2021
Caledonia County ARPA Session/St. Johnsbury - NVDA	11/18/2021
Town of Putney TM & SB (w/WRC)	11/23/2021
Town of Wardsboro ARPA Committee	11/30/2021
Town of Bakersfield ARPA Info Session	12/7/2021
Town of Richmond ARPA Committee	12/8/2021
Town of Woodbury ARPA Committee	1/4/2022
ARPA Networking Session - SoVT Creative Network	1/5/2022
Get More Money Webinar	2/2/2022
VLCT-NVDA NEK ARPA Webinar	2/2/2022
Woodbury ARPA Committee Presentation	2/16/2022
VTGFOA Workshop	2/17/2022
ARPA Presentation at Waterville Selectboard Public Meeting	2/28/2022
Woodstock Town & Village ARPA Information Session	2/28/2022
ARPA Presentation at Northfield Public Meeting	3/11/2022

ARPA PRESENTATIONS/WEBINARS HOSTED BY OTHERS	
Organization	*Date*
ARPA Presentation - DHCD Monthly Staff Mtg	3/16/2022
VECAN 2022 Workshop Series	3/16/2022
ARPA Presentation to Randolph ARPA Committee Public Meeting	3/29/2022
VLCT-VHFA Homeowner Assistance Program	4/12/2022
ARPA Presentation to Moretown ARPA Committee Public Meeting	4/13/2022
Vermont Rural Water Presentation	5/12/2022
SoVT Economy Summit - Sparks to Shovel	5/12/2022
Town of Topsham ARPA Committee	5/20/2022
Town of Hyde Park SB ARPA Presentation	5/24/2022
Town of Guilford ARPA Presentation to SB & Committee Chair	6/15/2022
Town of Marlboro SB ARPA Presentation	6/23/2022
Town of Thetford SB ARPA Presentation	6/27/2022
Town of Putney ARPA Committee	7/28/2022
Town of Roxbury ARPA Committee Presentation	8/25/2022
Vermont Municipal Clerks & Treasurers Fall Conference	9/21/2022
Mad River Valley Housing Summit	10/12/2022
Vermont Town and City Management Association	10/13/2022

- Additionally, for both programs:
  - Email blasts when there is time-sensitive, important information to share.
  - Regular biweekly emails that contain important deadlines, updates, and new resources.
  - Connection to state funding partners to help advance larger projects.
  - Serve as a voice with the State of Vermont to help ensure the deployment of their ARPA funds is well coordinated, timely, and effectively communicated.
  - Worked collaboratively and in coordination with the 11 regional planning commissions (RPCs) and 12 regional development corporations (RDCs) as well as statewide organizations throughout Vermont.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact Katie Buckley at kbuckley@vlct.org or 802-343-6323.

We look forward to working with you in 2023!

cc: Kendal Smith, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor
Kristin Clouser, Secretary, Agency of Administration
Douglas R. Farnham, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Administration
Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Josh Hanford, Commissioner, Department of Housing and Community Development
Chris Cochran, Director, Community Planning & Revitalization, Department of Housing and Community Development