



**CLEAN ENERGY NH**

Your Voice in All Energy Matters

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# Energy Circuit Rider Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Energy Circuit Rider (ECR) Program?**

In December 2018, Clean Energy NH was awarded a three-year grant from the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund to deliver technical assistance for energy projects to North Country municipalities and communities. Over the past three years, the North Country Circuit Rider has helped more than a dozen communities complete more than 30 energy efficiency and clean energy projects. The program has helped the communities to receive more than \$500,000 worth of incentives and grants, which have resulted in more than \$2 million dollars of investment in clean energy projects in Coos County communities. We are now seeking to expand that program statewide.

### **What is an Energy Circuit Rider?**

An Energy Circuit Rider is a shared staff person providing services to multiple cities and towns across a region. The Energy Circuit Rider will help municipalities plan, finance, and implement energy-saving upgrades to buildings and infrastructure, as well as clean energy technologies such as renewable energy or electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Working side-by-side with municipal officials, ECRs provide capacity and expertise to support informed decision-making.

### **Why is the Energy Circuit Rider program needed?**

The need for the North Country ECR Program was identified during a series of stakeholder workshops organized by the Tillotson Fund and Vermont Energy Investment Corporation. Municipalities often lack dedicated staff capacity necessary to implement beneficial energy projects, despite being ideally positioned to capitalize on the financial benefits of these capital intensive, but long-lived investments. While energy funding, financing, and technical assistance services exist, there is often a gap between the organizations offering these services and the demand. The ECR program will address these challenges. The ECR program began in Coos County because North Country communities experience higher energy burdens (proportion of income spent on energy) than the rest of the state.

### **What are the benefits of the ECR program?**

The ECR program will result in energy projects that reduce energy costs for participating municipalities, thereby freeing up local property tax revenue for enhanced local services or decreased tax burden. These investments stimulate economic activity in the local energy economy. The ECR program will also build the capacity of municipalities to implement future beneficial energy projects. These public projects also serve as powerful examples to community members, and educate the local electorate about the financial benefits of investing in clean energy and energy efficiency.

### **Who will implement the ECR Program?**

Clean Energy NH will manage the ECR Program, but will work in close collaboration with a network of local organizations in different regions throughout the state. The organizations include but are not limited to local and regionally focused non-profits and other NGOs, the regional planning commissions and economic development councils, and local clean energy business partners.



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### **Who are the partners contributing to the ECR program?**

Energy projects are complex and often involve numerous entities including utilities, federal and state agencies, funding and financing institutions, contractors, and more. Clean Energy NH has established relationships with many of these organizations and will work to coordinate resources and information among them to streamline municipal energy projects.

### **What kinds of energy projects will the ECR Program pursue?**

Any energy projects that reduce costs for municipalities and provide other local benefits will be considered, and we intend the ECR program to remain responsive and nimble to changing an economic and policy landscape. Already the types of projects that have been considered by partner communities have expanded to include more renewable energy and transportation projects. Oftentimes it will make sense to prioritize energy efficiency projects, including lighting and appliance upgrades, building weatherization, and retrofits, as these types of projects realize excellent returns. The program will examine the potential for fuel switching, beneficial electrification, modern wood heating, solar energy, electric vehicle charging, and any other priorities identified by community partners. The program will also seek to create economies of scale through project aggregations and partnerships.

### **Which municipalities are eligible to participate in the ECR program?**

Long-term, CENH intends to expand the ECR program statewide. However, currently our service is available to all municipalities in Coös County. We intend to expand to the Monadnock region in Southwestern New Hampshire next, and are actively seeking out funding sources to grow the ECR team. Municipalities will be selected for participation based on need and willingness to work collaboratively to realize the benefits of local energy projects in their communities.

### **How do I learn more about the ECR Program?**

To learn more about the ECR Program, please contact Clean Energy NH's Executive Director, Sam Evans-Brown at [sam@cleanenergynh.org](mailto:sam@cleanenergynh.org).