

# Climate Economy Action Center

## 2023 Program Plans

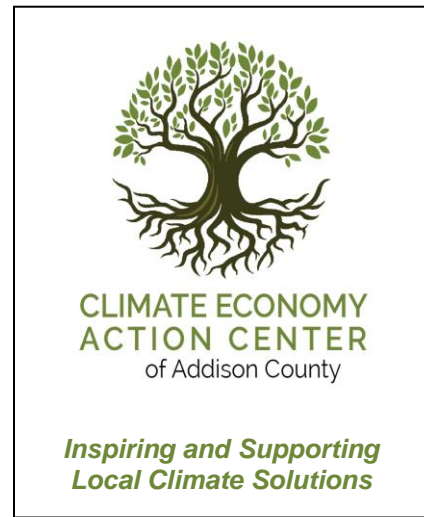
### Overview

CEAC works to meet the pressing challenges of our climate crisis by laying the groundwork for localized climate action; producing measured climate change studies; and developing action plans based on and defined by the people of Addison County.

The United Nations recently stated:

“Climate change is the defining crisis of our time, and it is happening even more quickly than we feared. But we are far from powerless in the face of this global threat. As Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out in September, ‘the climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win.’

As the infinite cost of climate change reaches irreversible highs, now is the time for bold collective action.”



### The Climate Economy Action Center’s History

Incorporated in 2019, the Climate Economy Action Center (CEAC) is led by an all-volunteer, six-member board of directors in collaboration with members of the greater Addison County community. Recently, CEAC hired its first program manager, and the nonprofit has expanded its support to include a loyal donor base and private foundations.

**CEAC’s mission is to** promote a healthy economy through deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in Addison County.

CEAC has set the stage for significant climate progress in Addison County through its [Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) and its recently completed [Climate Action Plan](#). In addition, CEAC has formed an Advisory Board of over 25 local community and business leaders; co-created “LiveGreenVT: Champlain Valley Climate and Renewable Energy Guide” (with the Acorn Energy Co-Op); implemented a public EV Charger program in partnership with Green Mountain Power; and supervised Middlebury College student internship projects.

### CEAC’s core values focus on the following:

**Economy** – Cultivating a thriving, diverse, inclusive, and resilient economy comprising many low-carbon enterprises and small businesses

**Energy** – Serving as a Vermont leader in home and business participation in energy efficiency, energy transformation, and renewable energy generation opportunities, while ensuring that these opportunities are available to all socio-economic sectors of the community

**Mobility and a Healthy Downtown** – Creating and supporting a transportation system that provides reliable, efficient, and affordable mobility choices including walking, biking, transit, rail, and ride-sharing, and maintaining a vibrant downtown essential to the success of this effort

**Youth** – Engaging young people by inviting their energy and creativity in support of tackling the climate crisis and also attracting younger residents and families to settle in the area. Mentorship,

apprenticeship, and job training are key strategies to create multiple pathways toward community engagement and employment

**Working Lands** – Preserving and utilizing the productive lands and natural areas in and around the community to provide ecological services, forest and food production, and recreational opportunities and supporting forestry and farming practices that minimize environmental impacts and maximize carbon sequestration

**Inclusivity** – Respecting the dignity of each individual in our community, and ensuring that reliable, safe sources of food, housing, and other basic necessities are affordable and available and that all individuals and families have the resources needed to thrive

**Infrastructure** – Investing in resilient, efficient, and ecologically sensitive infrastructure that can withstand an increase in extreme weather, facilitate energy efficiency and reduce environmental impacts

**Sustainable community** – Meeting economic, environmental, and social health challenges through integrated solutions

## The Work Ahead

CEAC and its newly hired Community Climate Program Manager will support newly formed **Climate Action Teams** (CATs). These teams will focus on actions identified in the [Addison County Climate Action Plan](#) as being important to reaching greenhouse gas reduction goals. Our first two CATs will pursue building electrification initiatives, with one team focused on larger commercial/ institutional buildings and one on residential buildings, and will serve as replicable models for future teams. CEAC will update its Greenhouse Gas Inventory every two years, allowing us to monitor progress over time.

CEAC is also developing and supporting a **Climate Action Coalition** of community partners, both organizations and individuals, who are engaged with climate justice initiatives, climate-friendly activities, sustainable business practices, and others who will need to play important roles in the future as Addison County tackles the climate crisis.

Over the coming year, CEAC’s board and staff will expand its collaborations and partnerships with:

- Public entities, such as municipalities, town energy committees, and the Addison County Regional Planning Commission
- The Addison County Economic Development Corporation, the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations
- State and federal government entities responsible for climate work and climate funding, capitalizing on momentum generated by the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the climate funding approved in Vermont’s FY 2023 State budgets
- Efficiency Vermont, Green Mountain Power, CVOEO, and other entities already engaged in climate and energy work in Addison County
- Middlebury College and Community College of Vermont students, faculty, and administration, building on past successes with student interns, “Climate Fellows,” other college groups and resources
- Vermont, New England, and National Climate Organizations such as VECAN, EAN, Electrify America, that are working on similar issues at the state, regional, and country level.
- Organizations and individuals focused on climate justice issues, including those focused on BIPOC, low-income, and under-resourced populations, including NAACP of Rutland area; SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice); Migrant Justice; Addison Allies, New Frameworks (affordable

housing) and others supporting migrant farmworkers; and HOPE (Helping Overcome Poverty's Effects), Addison County's foremost service organization for low-income people.

### **Support Needed for CEAC and Local Climate Action**

CEAC works to inspire and support local climate solutions. While Federal, State, and local governments establish important goals, requirements, and incentives, CEAC looks to fill the gaps with information and programs that will help Addison County businesses and residents meet the demands of the climate crisis.

For example, Vermont's State Climate Action Plan sets specific goals for number of homes weatherized by 2030 (90,000) and number of new cold-climate heat pumps installed (112,000). Addison County's prorated share (5.6%) of these goals would be 5,040 homes weatherized and 6,272 new heat pumps by 2030. Addison County has between 14,000-15,000 households. To meet these goals, many thousands of individuals — homeowners, renters, landlords, owners/managers of commercial and industrial facilities, HVAC installers, fuel dealers, architects and builders, banks, and other financial institutions — will face decisions to support weatherization projects and install new electric heating and cooling systems. CEAC seeks to build its capacity to inspire and enable these decisions.

No other entity exists with this mission and commitment to work within sectors, neighborhoods, towns and villages to lay the groundwork for localized climate solutions and develop action plans based on and assisted by the people of Addison County.

As we build staff and resources, and through our CATs and Coalition, we will work to overcome the barriers to the widespread adoption of climate-friendly solutions by increasing:

- information on costs, benefits, savings, and financing options
- logistical support — connecting people with solutions
- outreach of every kind — meeting people where they are, literally and figuratively
- leadership, support, and collaboration within and among communities, neighborhoods, organizations, and institutions
- accountability for our collective progress

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