

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
Saint Joseph Conference, Bridgewater
123 Pleasant Street
Bridgewater, NS B4V 1N3

April 16, 2018

Privy Council Office
Attn: Impact and Innovation Unit
Room 1000
85 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Re: Support for Town of Bridgewater Smart Cities Challenge Grant Application

To the Smart Cities Challenge jury panel,

This letter is to confirm the full support and confidence of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the Town of Bridgewater to address energy poverty by pursuing the Smart Cities Challenge grant.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is an international organization and registered charity. Our Conference has been operating in Lunenburg County for 30 years. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul provides immediate financial assistance to help meet basic needs. This includes electricity, fuel, rent, food, medical, dental and other expenses required to live a decent and productive life in our community.

71% of our budget is spent on providing assistance to individuals living in energy poverty who are spending a large amount of their income just to keep their houses warm. Individuals now have to make a decision between paying rent, paying for groceries, paying for medication or paying to heat their houses.

For a number of years, we have provided a financial “band aid”, temporary solution to requests for assistance from individuals experiencing energy poverty. We serve as liaisons with the NS Power low income advocate.

The Town of Bridgewater has been working to implement their plan to make Bridgewater a more equitable and a more livable community. Saint Vincent de Paul was invited to a “focus group” meeting, held last summer, which covered energy issues and opportunities for rental properties. A number of groups were invited, rental property owners, contractors, realtors, Housing Nova Scotia, Salvation Army, all contributing information to energy poverty issues and Bridgewater’s Community Energy Investment Plan.

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul hopes to continue to be in a position to provide direct financial assistance to our neighbours-in-need. We would be in a position to collect and provide, to the Town of Bridgewater, data/information related to energy poverty and promote available energy grants and assist individuals to complete the applications for these grants.

Proper housing, nutritious food, education, employment are all part of the general wellbeing of individuals and the community. Affordable energy is part of that equation.

Energy efficiency improvements are a worthwhile investment for the whole Community. Providing adequate and affordable housing and creating well-being for the whole community would be an outcome the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul would strongly support.

The Town of Bridgewater has put a lot of time and effort in establishing their plan for addressing Energy Poverty and would be in a position to provide invaluable information to other communities.

Winning the Smart Cities Challenge grant would be a great contribution toward reducing energy poverty here in Bridgewater.

Sincerely,



Patricia Mount, Ways and Means Committee

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Joseph Conference, Bridgewater

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