



## STRONG PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, A WELL-ARTICULATED NEED, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT ARE ALL KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION.

We have created this resource for communities and organizations seeking grant funding for their projects. While all of these items are important, not all items are required with every grant. Please pay attention to the specific requirements of the grant you are applying for.

### 1. Demonstrate a need for your project.

- Show that it addresses an unmet need in your community.
- Show that it is recommended in a comprehensive, strategic, marketing, recreation, or other planning document. Show that the plan was adopted, if possible (resolution, meeting minutes, etc.).
- Demonstrate that it is identified as an area of focus in a county, regional, REDC, or state plan.
- Demonstrate that it is identified as an area of focus in the grant or is a priority of the agency sponsoring the grant.
- Show that it is a national or statewide objective, as applicable:
  - Benefits low-moderate income persons
  - Addresses slums or blight
  - Meets a particularly urgent community development need
  - NYSDEC Potential Environmental Justice Area
  - NYSERDA Disadvantaged Communities
  - Describe the project in terms of job creation, if possible.
- Show that you have made every effort to raise funds on your own but that the project will not happen without the funder.

### 2. Show that your project is well planned.

- If your community uses an engineering firm, consider reaching out to them about your project to determine their ability to assist.
- Write a **scope of work** or a **narrative** of the work to be done. This can and likely will change as you gather more information about your project.
- Technical work that you may need to develop your scope of work (hire consultant if needed, or work with your engineering firm) can include:
  - Conceptual designs
  - Maps and photos
  - Schematic and/or construction drawings of proposed work
  - Obtain opinions from contractors on steps, process, and cost estimates.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

State and federal granting agencies and many foundation-sponsored funding opportunities require grant applications to be submitted electronically online.

*Before you get started, check the specific submission requirements and logins needed for each grant you submit. Be aware that you will likely need to obtain a username and password and you will be required to use an email address for communications and verifications.*

Requirements can differ if you are applying as a municipality vs applying as a non-profit.



- Work with regulatory agencies to determine permitting needs/hearing requirements (pre- construction analysis).
- Begin or discuss SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review) process.
- Develop a **schedule of work**- you don't need to use specific dates yet—e.g. Month 1-3: execute contract with funder; issue Request for Proposals (RFP) to subcontractor (with less complicated projects this can be a very simple timeline).

### 3. Prove that your project has public support and has been properly vetted.

- Hold public informational meetings or an “open house” to both introduce the project and get feedback from stakeholders.
- Make public feedback easy by using:
  - Websites
  - Social media
  - Questionnaires or surveys (i.e. Google form, Survey Monkey)
- Show that the project is included as a recommendation in an adopted plan.
- Gather supporting evidence:
  - Newspaper clippings
  - Letters of support
  - Local, state, and federal legislator support
  - Supporting resolutions
  - Favorable questionnaire or survey results

### 4. Accurately cost your project.

- **MANY GRANTS ARE REIMBURSABLE, which means the community bears the entire cost of the project UP-FRONT and is reimbursed a percentage of the project cost by the grant.**
- Ask for vendor quotes, if possible. A quote does not commit you!
- Research the cost of similar projects.
- Attach proof and use a known standard of how you calculated in-kind (value of donated materials, borrowed equipment & volunteer time), such as:
  - DOT's equipment rental rate schedule
  - the potential funder's own standard for valuing volunteer hours
  - prove actual market rate and explain how you derived it
  - document the actual value of professional services (review specific grant guidelines for eligibility).
- You will most likely be required to provide a matching contribution in cash and/or donated time, equipment, supplies, services, etc.

### 5. Provide evidence of good management.

- Talk about how awesome your group is and how its membership contributes to the project.
- Talk-up your project manager, grant administrator, and fiscal folks - some grants ask for resumes.
- Briefly discuss past successful projects and grant administration history.



## 6. Illustrate how the project will make a difference.

- The project provides a unique service or amenity, improving residents' quality of life.
- It will spur the local economy, capture underserved market demand and create jobs!

## 7. Make your project attractive!

- Many applications are strengthened by the ability of the funder to publicize your project. Some questions to ask your group:
  - Is the project unique or does it improve something that is already being done?
  - Have we solicited unique partnerships and resources?
  - Are we sharing a service with a neighbor or streamlining a municipal function?
  - Could this be a demonstration project or model for other communities?
  - How can we leverage funding through smaller sources, such as local foundations?

## 8. LAST, BUT NOT LEAST! Keep your positive attitude!

- If you do not get funded, get the application score, comments, and feedback if available. Is it possible to improve for the next round? Some applications will take multiple submissions before they are funded.