



15 Tips for Successful Grants

1. The best grant is the one that fits:
 - a. Your resources to prepare the proposal
 - b. Your agency's (or collaborative's) ability and desire to complete the funded project
 - c. Your resources for grants management and reporting
 - d. The funder's aims, legal constraints, and expectations
2. Make looking for grants a routine practice.
3. Register for your agency's unique entity identification number (UEI) with sam.gov, and also create accounts with grants.gov and the EERE Funding eXCHANGE to pursue federal funding.
4. Have grant components ready "on the shelf" to make preparation more efficient. This includes:
 - a. Generic descriptions of your utility
 - b. Generic statements of need
 - c. Cost estimates with backup documentation
 - d. Agency documentation
 - e. Contact information for support letter writers
 - f. Government templates
5. Teamwork (part 1): Once you have a grant in mind, gather the team responsible for preparation. This is not a one-person operation. Your budget people will especially be valuable because forms, accounting records, and justifications are precise and call on information you don't readily have.
6. Teamwork (part 2): Consider collaborating with other departments in your city or with other utilities/organizations in your region. The work required by a grant often will go beyond the scope and capacity of a single organization. It can also increase the chances of getting funded.
7. Create a timeline for grant preparation, indicating who is responsible for key deliverables and deadlines for completion. Build in time for document access, letters of support, and review. Make sure you account for vacations, holidays, and other "lost time" so you aren't under pressure at the end.



8. The full project budget will contain multiple sources: grant funds, matching, partner and in-kind.
9. Seek any assistance you need to complete the grant.
 - a. Do not guess or try to interpret wording in the FOA. Call the agency technical assistance.
 - b. Attend webinars and pay attention to other supports provided by the agency about the specific grant. Often you'll hear questions from others that are helpful
 - c. Have those who are objective review sections of the proposal for readability and clarity and for careful proofreading. Your proposal should be complete, easy to read, and professionally presented.
10. Understand the clear requirements of the funding. It is negotiated? Is it a lump sum paid out to perform the project? Is it reimbursing expenditures?
 - Identify who and how the flow of funds and accounting for the project will occur. This is an essential step when and if the grant is awarded.
11. As you prepare the grant, review the FOA (funding opportunity announcement) or other document outlining the requirements. Carefully identify requirements, including those stated below. In short, FOLLOW THE RULES laid out by the funder. This is no time to be creative and try to stand out.
 - a. Formatting, font, word count and page length
 - b. Date and time of final submission (if a different time zone, attend to that).
 - c. Method of submission and signatures required.
 - d. Budget requirements, forms, and justifications.
 - e. Use (or not) of appendices or other documentation not requested.
 - f. Criteria for evaluation. Remember you are writing to the audience reviewing your grant.
12. Secure letters of support from those most valuable to your project. This will include legislators and others who can speak in favor of your project—and of you doing it. Considering that these letters can take time to obtain, be sure to budget plenty of time for this step.
13. Your grant will also likely require signatures and possibly review by those outside your department. Build in time for this—don't leave the signatures until the day you submit the grant.
14. Celebrate! Whether you get the grant or not (well, you'll celebrate when you get it), your team will need to celebrate the hard, collaborative, and (hopefully) rewarding work of preparing the grant. At the very least you have learned a great deal.
15. Be prepared for more than a YES or NO in response to your grant. Agencies may have additional questions, may want to negotiate, may ask for more documentation. Regardless of the outcome this time, you have made yourself known to the agency as a viable partner for future funding.