Submitting Competitive Grant Applications
Tips for rural communities

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McCall: A beautiful town in the Idaho mountains (pop. 2990)
McCall: We need funding, too!
Applying for grants: Lessons we’ve learned:

Before you apply for funding, ask...

➢ Do we have a competitive project that meets the intent of the funding? Are we applying just because there’s money out there?

    Advise against creating a project because of funding available; seek funding that fits the project instead.

    Sometimes it’s too good to pass up, so be creative!

➢ Is the project supported by a plan?

    Have a strategic plan in place that includes the proposed project such as Comprehensive Plan, Transportation plan, Capital Improvement plan, downtown master plan, etc.

➢ If the answer is no, do some planning work first.
➢ Is the project supported by the community?

Determine public interest and input into proposed project.

Provide time to gather meaningful public comments.

Ensure the support of your elected officials and citizen advisory committees.

➢ Have you identified project partners?

Identify agencies, businesses, organizations, or groups that can assist with the project: financially, commitment of materials or labor.

These entities could be sources of matching funds for the grant application. Involve them early in the process.
Do you have the capacity to submit a quality application?

Grant writing team: project leader; technical staff (engineering and design); financial staff; and writer

Some rural communities task their consulting engineers to compile applications.

Do you have the capacity to implement the project if it is funded?

Match often required so budget accordingly

Budget impacts for large awards: a single audit or a budget amendment

Federal projects have numerous requirements for regular reporting and monitoring

Elected officials need to know obligations!
Ready to apply? Keep in mind:

- Give yourself enough time to do a thorough job
- Read and understand the NOFA
- Identify needed information and assign responsibility to provide it
- Set deadlines for tasks. Artificial deadlines help.
- Provide a realistic budget and identify matching funds
- Write clearly, concisely and answer the questions completely
- Seek meaningful letters of support
- Ensure elected officials understand the commitment required and the assurances made at signing
After funding is awarded:

- Read the award documents! Follow up with any other required submissions or compliance steps.

- Set up grant meeting prior to implementation with project manager, finance staff, other staff involved in any aspect of the project to discuss timeline, record keeping, rules and regulations.

- Keep accurate records, contact your grant representative with questions, take photos of the work in progress.

- If a change is needed in time, scope, or budget, **ask permission first** before making the change.
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