

GRANTS & FUNDING

Tips, Tricks, and Program Picks

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INTRODUCTION²

- Elizabeth Shumate, Grants & Funding Coordinator at General Engineering Company in Portage, WI
- GEC was founded in 1912 and offers a wide array of consulting services including:
 - Civil and Structural Engineering, Municipal Building Inspection, Zoning Administration, Land Surveying, Cross Connection Control, and Grants & Funding Services
- Joined GEC full time in 2008
 - Grants & Funding Administrator/Coordinator since 2012
 - Cross Connection Control Administrator since 2017
 - Experience with FEMA, USDA, Wisconsin DNR, DOA, DOT, Focus on Energy, and more
- In the last five years, assisted communities to acquire over \$10 million in grants and loans

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AGENDA

- Preparation & Planning
- Preparing an Application
- Award & Administration
- Program Picks
 - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
 - Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
 - Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Take-Aways & Disclaimers
- Questions?
- Contact Information

PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Key Players:
 - You – the Treasurers
 - Clerks (for some – *also YOU*)
 - Town/Village Board or City Council
 - DPW and Operators/Staff
 - Engineers & Grant Administrators
 - Funding Organizations
 - DNR, DOA, DOT, etc.
- Early Discussion is very important
 - 5-Year Plan
 - 10-Year Plan
- Even simple lists of proposed projects gain points on applications
 - Make sure it is approved by the Board/Council
 - A Plan does not have to be complicated or formal to count

PLANNING FOR FUNDING

- Be Aware of:
 - Eligibility Requirements
 - What are your community's demographics?
 - Population, Median Household Income, Low-to-Moderate Income Percent, Urban vs Rural, etc.
 - Do you need to pass resolutions and/or plans, hold public hearings, prepare reports?
 - Timelines
 - How long will take to prepare the application?
 - When is the application due?
 - How do you submit the application?
 - Email
 - Online Portal
 - Physical Drop Off
 - Snail Mail
 - How long do you have to wait before an award is made?
 - What is the payment process and how long will it take?

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PLANNING FOR FUNDING

- Be Aware of:
 - Payment Process
 - Some programs will reimburse or pay as the project progresses
 - Some programs only reimburse after the project is finished
 - Do you need interim financing?
 - How are you covering the match requirements?
 - Municipal Funds?
 - Local Bank Loan?
 - Donations?
 - Another Funding Program?
 - What is this program's timeline?
 - Do you need *more* time to make sure the two programs will line up for your project?
 - Forecasted Funding Changes
 - Rate Increase Requirements
 - Other Administrative or Programming Requirements

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PLANNING FOR FUNDING

- When should you apply?
 - When does your project **NEED** to be completed?
 - If you have an absolute deadline that your project must be done, start with the date the work needs to start and work backwards to figure out the latest date you can apply for funding and still complete the work on time.
 - Once you have the *latest application date*, try to apply a cycle earlier, if possible
 - Then you are covered and have time when obstacles come up.
- Many programs are changing their application requirements
 - The changes can increase the lead time for the application and therefore your project
 - Obstacles can and will come up
 - Do NOT assume you will be able to apply for funding and start construction in the same year
 - Plan to apply, **at least**, one year prior to construction starting

MTAW – Grants & Funding: Tips, Tricks, and Program Picks – Elizabeth Shumate, General Engineering Company

09/21/2023

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09/21/2023

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PREPARING AN APPLICATION

Best Practices for Any Application

COMMON QUESTIONS



DO I HAVE TO
HIRE A GRANT
WRITER?



WHERE DO I FIND
APPLICATIONS?



WHAT SHOULD I
INCLUDE IN THE
NARRATIVE?



DO I NEED
SUPPORT
DOCUMENTS?



WHAT IS THE
APPLICATION
DEADLINE?



HOW DO I SUBMIT
THE
APPLICATION?

DO I HAVE TO HIRE A GRANT WRITER?

- Simple answer – No!
- If you have the time and skills, you can do it yourself
 - Applications that only require a few forms to be filled out, do you require a grant writer
 - Applications that require some forms, support documents, and a narrative
 - Have someone review your narrative for grammar, clarity, and impact
 - Applications with lots of requirements, support documents, coordination, and narratives
 - You may want to consult a grant writer
 - They probably have experience with the program, the time to dedicate to the application, and can coordinate with multiple people to compile all the data and documents

WHERE DO I FIND PROGRAMS & APPLICATIONS?

- State Agencies
 - [DNR](#), [DOT](#), [DOA](#), [USDA-Rural Development](#)
- League of Wisconsin Municipalities
 - [Grants and Loans](#)
- Wisconsin Towns Association
 - [Information Library](#) - Grants
- [Grants.gov](#)
 - Federal Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)
 - Search, Get Support and Resources
- Other Municipalities & Contacts
- Consultants

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A NARRATIVE

- The application narrative is your chance to tell your story
 - Provide a clear picture of your community
 - Let the reviewer know who you are.
 - What is it about your community or project that makes it uniquely suited to the program?
 - Provide concrete examples of your financial need – don't be vague
 - If available, review the metric the agency will use to score your narrative
 - What are the program priorities?
 - Emphasize how your project fits these priorities
 - How are the points divided (if at all) across the questions?
 - Answer all the questions
 - Make sure to remain within the constraints of size and page limit
- Have someone else review your narrative

WHAT SUPPORT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED?

- This can vary depending on the program – Review the application guidance carefully
- Most commonly –
 - Financial Need
 - Proof of the inability to fund the project on your own
 - Budgets, bank statements, budget projections, proof of loan coverage, other funding commitments
 - Planning & Need
 - Proof that the community has planned for the project
 - Proof that the project **needs** to be done
 - Letters of Support – Not usually needed, but can *always* help
- May be needed –
 - Plans and Specifications
 - Environmental Review

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE & HOW DO I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

- Review the guidelines and requirements thoroughly.
- Deadline -
 - Check if there is a time deadline as well as a date.
 - Does the deadline change every cycle?
 - Will it change if the deadline falls on a weekend?
- Submittal – Get verification it was received
 - If emailed – Make sure you get a read receipt for proof
 - If submitted via Online Portal – Save/Print the Confirmation page
 - If mailed – Send it with a tracking number
 - If dropped off – Make sure it is stamped with time and date, possibly get a receipt

AWARD & ADMINISTRATION

You Got Funded. Now What?



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COMMON QUESTIONS



WHERE SHOULD I HAVE THE MONEY DEPOSITED?



WHAT DO I NEED TO GET REIMBURSED?



WHAT REPORTS ARE NEEDED?



WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO KEEP?



HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO KEEP THE DOCUMENTS?



HOW DO I HAVE TO KEEP THE DOCUMENTS?

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WHERE SHOULD THE MONEY BE DEPOSITED?

- Ideal – Separate Non-Interest-Bearing Account
 - Most Federal and State Funding Programs require money to go to a non-interest-bearing account
 - Not allowed to accrue interest on these funds.
- Separate accounts are best – there is no question how the money was spent or where it went.
 - Every deposit, withdrawal, and fund transfer is easy to track.
 - No questions about for which project the money was used.
 - Simplifies your time and record keeping.
- If you can't get a completely separate account, see if a separate fund within an existing account is possible.
 - This still separates all transactions
 - Should be able to be non-interest-bearing, as necessary



WHAT DO I NEED TO GET REIMBURSED?

- Invoices
- Check Stubs, Copies of Checks, or Fund Transfer Requests
 - A document that proves to whom, when, and how much was paid.
 - If a check is paying for multiple invoices
 - If possible, make notes on the check stub or fund transfer that clearly labels which invoices are paid and how much is paid for each invoice
 - Example: Check total is \$5,000
 - \$2,000 = 2019 Street Reconstruction Project
 - \$1,500 = 2020 Community Center Renovation
 - \$1,000 = 2021 General Consultation
 - \$500 = 2022 Sanitary Sewer Upgrades

Type	Reference	Original Amt.	Balance Due	Discount	Payment
Bill	2017-220	333.55	333.55		333.55
Bill	2017-4	17,878.00	17,878.00		17,878.00

WHAT DO I NEED TO GET REIMBURSED?

- If you have multiple funding sources:

- Place notes on invoices that show how much each program is paying for each invoice

ENGINEERING SERVICES - 1		15,368.27
CDBG GRANT - 2.1		2,890.30
SDWLP - 2.2	SDWLP Engineering = \$6,413.18	345.00
CWFP - 2.3	CWFP Engineering = \$2,329.83	165.00

- If there is Force Account work:
 - Track the hours your staff spend working on the funded project.
 - Federal Wages do NOT need to be paid for Force Account work, but it does need to be documented.
 - If possible, provide your staff with a work code or project number to assign the time for the funded project. This makes it easy for reviewers to calculate the Force Account work.
- The purpose of the documentation is to prove how the grant funds have been spent.
 - The easier it is for a reviewer, the more quickly you will receive the funding.
 - It is less likely to cause delays or extended reviews if everything is laid out in black and white.

WHAT REPORTS ARE NEEDED?

- Reporting requirements vary greatly across grant programs
- Some have very few and only require disbursement requests and completion reports
 - Basic completion reports can include:
 - Material verification certifications
 - Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Good Faith Efforts
 - Simple statements or photographic proof of project completion
- Others (usually federal funding) can require a great deal of reporting
 - These reports can include:
 - Quarterly status reports
 - Section 3 Reports
 - Certified Payroll Review
 - DBE reporting



DOCUMENTS

What documents do I have to keep?

- Invoices
- Check Stubs, Copies of Checks, or Fund Transfer Requests
- All documentation of money coming in and going out for the project.
- Required reports
- Copy of the application
- Photos of the project
- All documents submitted to the funding agency and proof of submittal

How long do I have to keep the documents?

- As long as the funding program requires
- This can vary –
 - Many have a limit of 3-5 years
 - Some are 6-10 years
 - Others are until the agency tells you it is ok to destroy them
 - Plan to keep them forever!

How do I have to keep the documents?

- Electronic copies are the norm now.
- Save files to a flash drive, server, or external hard drive
 - Make sure, if saved externally, the drive is labeled and kept where you can find it if needed.
- In many cases, digital signatures are accepted, if not preferred.
- Many ways to do digital signatures -
 - Physically sign and scan the signed page
 - Use Adobe Acrobat or DocuSign or similar program to have timestamped signature
 - "Signature" font for name
 - Best to have email or other document from signer authorizing signature

PROGRAM PICKS

A Sampling of Programs to Fund Common Municipal Projects

CDBG, DNR, DOT



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)

- Must benefit Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) persons **OR** Prevent or Eliminate Slum & Blight
 - Priority given to LMI Projects
 - LMI must be 51% or higher – entire community or area the project will benefit
- Most common programs –
 - Public Facilities (CDBG PF)
 - Planning (CDBG PLNG)
- Applications due –
 - PF – Annually in May (usually mid-May)
 - PLNG – Year-Round (first come, first served)
- Funding is 2:1 grant to match ratio: You pay \$1 in match for every \$2 in grant

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)

- Public Facilities Grant awards up to \$1,000,000 with minimum \$50,000 match
 - For construction projects: streets, utilities, senior centers, fire stations, libraries, etc.
 - If not removing slum & blight, beneficiaries must be 51% LMI or more
 - Depending on the project, this may only be residents in the project area, not whole community
- Planning Grant awards up to \$50,000 with a minimum \$25,000 match
 - Create or update plans: comprehensive plans, feasibility studies, outdoor recreation plans, capitol improvement plans, community development, etc.
 - For most plans, the entire community must be LMI eligible
- LMI data is published by HUD every 5 years
 - New data should come out soon
 - If data is inaccurate or unavailable, complete an income survey to verify LMI percent

DNR ENVIRONMENTAL LOANS

- Clean Water Fund Program (CWFP)
 - Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure, Wastewater Treatment Plants, and Storm Sewer Infrastructure
- Safe Drinking Water Loan Program (SDWLP)
 - Drinking Water Infrastructure
- SDWLP Private Lead Service Line Replacement Program
 - Help communities complete full replacement of lead water lines

DNR ENVIRONMENTAL LOANS

- Low-Interest Loans and Principal Forgiveness
 - 20-year loans with low interest rates
 - Interest rate is based on population and Median Household Income (MHI)
 - Current Market Rate = 3.900% for ≤20 year loan
 - 33% Rate = 1.287%
 - 55% Rate = 2.145%
 - Can change each quarter
 - The interest rate in effect on the date of the municipal bond meeting is applied to the loan
- Loans are always* available – Principal Forgiveness (PF) is not
 - Eligibility for PF is based on population and income levels of community
 - Need at least 60 PF points for principal forgiveness
 - 10% - 65% of project funding depending on your points

DNR ENVIRONMENTAL LOANS

- Timeline –
 - Intent to Apply (ITA) & Priority Evaluation & Ranking Formula (PERF)
 - Online Submittal due October 31 for following State Fiscal Year
 - Projects are then placed on the Project Priority List
 - **MUST** complete ITA & PERF to apply for funding
 - Do not have to apply for funding, if complete ITA & PERF
 - Application Deadlines:
 - SDWLP for loans & PF = June 30
 - CWFP for PF = September 30
 - CWFP loans accepted year round
- Must accept loan to get PF, they are spent concurrently.

KNOWLES-NELSON STEWARDSHIP

- DNR program to fund parks and recreational trails
 - One application to apply to six programs (4 state programs, 2 federal programs)
- Common Projects:
 - Land acquisition for parks & trails, including riverfront property
 - Hiking trail & bike path construction and maintenance
 - Canoe/kayak launch construction
 - Riverfront park amenity construction
 - Park shelters & restroom facilities construction
 - Active, outdoor recreation facilities – ballfields, splash pads, playground equipment, etc.
- Applications are due annually on May 1
 - Work with DNR Regional Project Manager to plan projects, follow requirements, & complete application

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)
- Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (LRIP)

- Should be opening soon!
- Pays up to 50% of eligible project costs
- Eligible for Road Improvements, Discretionary, and Supplemental
 - Road Improvements: Competing against other communities in your County
 - Discretionary & Supplemental: State-wide competitive application for high-cost (\geq \$100,000) projects
 - Must have an Improvement Plan & project must be included
 - Should be reconstruction projects – resurfacing will not get funded
- Applications are submitted online via DOT LRIPWeb portal.
 - Simple application, make sure WISLR data is updated accurately, especially if you know you want to apply for specific project.
- Must have a Five-Year Road Plan approved by your Board or Council

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP)

- Deadline: **5:00 PM, October 27, 2023** for 2024-2029 program cycle,
- BIL funding will allow total funds available to be greatly increased from previous cycles.
- Cost-Share = "20%" of Participating Construction Cost
 - Design can be 100% locally funded or 80% federally funded
 - If using federal funding for design – must follow QBS process to hire consultant.
 - Qualification Based Selection – No discussion of cost until consultant is chosen
- WisDOT will bid, award construction contract, and inspect construction if awarded funding
 - Municipality (sponsor) will be invoiced after project is complete for cost-share amount and any/all costs that exceed cost estimate

HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP)

- Program for highway safety projects at sites with high crash history.
 - Emphasis on low-cost options that can be implemented quickly.
- Safety is a MAJOR priority for DOT this year.
 - Emphasize safety concerns and solutions to safety issues for maximum points.
- Cost-Share is *usually* 10% match, with 90% HSIP funding
- Application is available now on WisDOT website
 - To Submit – Email Application to HSIP Coordinator for region
- Must submit specific data to show safety issues and how project will solve the problem and increase safety.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)

- Applications available every other year
 - **Deadline: 5:00 PM, October 27, 2023** for 2024 – 2028 cycle
- Program includes (not exhaustive list)
 - Bicycle-Pedestrian (BP)
 - Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
- Requires at least 20% match from community
- To bid the project yourself – attend one-day training to receive certification to administer the project
 - Otherwise, WisDOT will bid and coordinate the project, similar to STP

WRAP UP

Take-Aways, Disclaimers, Questions

TAKE-AWAYS & DISCLAIMERS

- Each program has its own specific requirements and deadlines.
- It is never too early to discuss projects with your staff, consultants, and funding organizations.
 - You probably need to be submitting applications at least a year prior to construction.
- Be aware of your community's demographics and how they may be changing.
 - Population, Income Levels, Employment Levels/Types are often eligibility factors in grants.
- For grants, it is **ALWAYS** better to ask permission rather than forgiveness.
 - Forgiveness may mean returning/losing funds.

QUESTIONS?

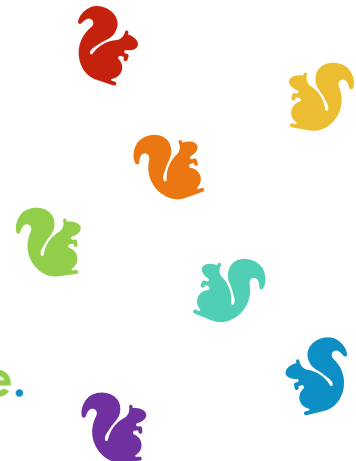


I do not have ducks.

I do not have a row.

I have squirrels...

And they are at a **rave**.



MORE INFORMATION

- Elizabeth Shumate, Grants & Funding Coordinator
 - eshumate@generalengineering.net
- General Engineering Company
 - (608) 742-2169
 - www.GeneralEngineering.net
- If you or your community is interested in learning more about grant programs, please contact me.
 - I am happy to present to you or your Board or Council about the specific programs and options that you may be eligible for at no cost to you.