

Revised April 2025



Mountains of Opportunity

Department of Grants Administration
100 North Street, Monticello, NY 12701
845-807-0468

Grants Best Practices Guide



*Equipping You to Prepare, Write, and
Manage Grants on Behalf of Sullivan County*

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Don't let this guide overwhelm you. Yes, there is a lot to know about grants, and this guide offers a rather comprehensive overview, but it's simply a training tool and handy reference guide for any County staff involved in grant-related projects. Consider it a "cliff notes" version of the expansive grant information available that the average person does not have time to read and digest. A word of gratitude to the County staff from OMB, Audit, Purchasing, Treasurer's Office and Planning Division who contributed feedback in an effort to make this guide as informative as possible!

The mission of the Department of Grants Administration (DGA) is to facilitate access to funding for Division/Department needs of the Sullivan County Government, while improving the administration of existing funding secured by the Sullivan County Government.

In other words, we're here to help.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS GUIDE

GCAF = Grant Concept Approval Form

GL = General Ledger

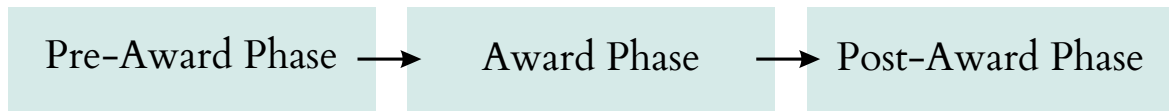
NOFA/NOFO = Notice of Funding Availability/Opportunity

PAC = Project Account Code

RFP/RFA = Request for Proposal/Application

INTRODUCTION: GRANT BASICS

THE GRANT CYCLE



IDENTIFYING NUMBERS

There are identifying numbers funding agencies may require for grant applications, including the UEI, DUNS, FEIN numbers and others. Sullivan County's assigned identifying numbers are available by contacting the Department of Grants Administration.

TYPES OF GRANTS

Discretionary – funding is awarded following a competitive process. The federal or state funding source reviews the legislative and regulatory requirements and published selection criteria established for the program. The review process gives the funding source discretion to determine which applications best address the program requirements and are therefore, most suitable.

Private Foundation – this is a category of discretionary funding which is offered by foundations. Generally, foundations are nonprofit organizations donating funds to organizations through a competitive process.

Allocations – considered non-competitive, with awards based upon local data / stats, and made on an annual basis. Of note: County-awarded allocations requiring execution (for the application and/or contract) are subject to similar internal tracking processes as discretionary grants.



A WORD ON FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

DON'T LET THE TAIL WAG THE DOG

When County Government staff identify a funding need, they should first engage in project planning and notify the Department of Grants Administration. DGA staff can be of assistance in the identification of potential funding resources. While Departments may explore funding opportunities on their own, they can rely on the work and expertise of DGA staff to find suitable sources.

CAUTION: It can be tempting to try to fit a "good idea" to a grant opportunity when it comes up, but this is not best practice. *"The first rule in grantseeking is that you don't write a grant request without first completing a comprehensive planning process that involves the grant applicant or organization's key stakeholders."* (Dr. Beverly A. Browning, *Grant Writing for Dummies*) Develop a well-conceived project addressing a particular County need, so you're grant ready when an opportunity arises. Refer to the County's Preparing a Winning Grant Proposal Guide in the Appendix.

THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GRANTS ADMINISTRATION (DGA)

The DGA works with County Government staff to identify funding needs, locates available funding opportunities, provides grant readiness training and resources, and assists with the grant process. Priority is given to funding requests from Divisions, Departments, Agencies, and other units of the Sullivan County Government, the County Legislature and the County Manager. Assistance for municipalities and nonprofit organizations will be determined by the availability of DGA staff, and the decision to provide external assistance is made by the County Manager.

Sullivan County may consider collaborating with community partners who can demonstrate project readiness, capacity to manage the administration of the grant, thorough planning and budget preparation, and alignment with County goals benefitting local residents and businesses. Since the grant process requires a significant allocation of time and resources, the DGA assists in determining project readiness for potential collaborating agencies.

THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

- Works with County Government staff to identify and prioritize funding needs
- Provides resources for effective grant proposals/project development
- Matches identified needs and priorities with available funding opportunities
- Centralizes funding management, including assistance with the following as requested:
 - coordinates application preparation (*tracks progress and deadlines, obtains signatures and support letters, etc.*)
 - facilitates collaboration between departments, towns, villages, agencies, organizations, etc.
 - reviews grant and provides final edit
 - prepares grant packaging
 - writes the grant narrative, documentation, etc.
- Consults with Departments/Divisions as needed
- Serves as a resource for questions related to grant management
- Provides grant readiness tools and training

THE ROLE OF THE DIVISION OR DEPARTMENT

- Identifies a potential project in alignment with County needs and Legislative goals
- Engages in project planning and proposal writing (*collaborating with Purchasing, OMB and ITS as needed*)
- Seeks County Manager approval (via GCAF) and obtains authorizing resolution
- Provides copies of fully executed applications, award notices, agreements/contracts to DGA
- Works with Treasurer to designate Project Account Codes & GL Codes
- Manages the day to day functions associated with funding award:
 - implements awarded grant projects according to the terms of the award agreement/contract
 - tracks amendments and obtains authorizing resolutions as required
 - completes grant drawdown forms and monitors project funding
- Meets reporting requirements and deadlines as specified by the funding agency
- Consults with DGA on a regular basis

Grant Process Work Flow

For a list of abbreviations, refer to the Table of Contents page.



"WHO'S ON FIRST?"

A DIVISION OR DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO GRANTS

Grants are a lot of work, but the funding obtained helps Sullivan County provide necessary resources for the community. Ownership is a key component of grant work. The Division/Department Head is accountable for all funding/grants within his/her jurisdiction. For those instances where more than one Department is responsible for a grant, a lead Department should be designated for accountability.

Division/Department heads and key technical staff are responsible for:

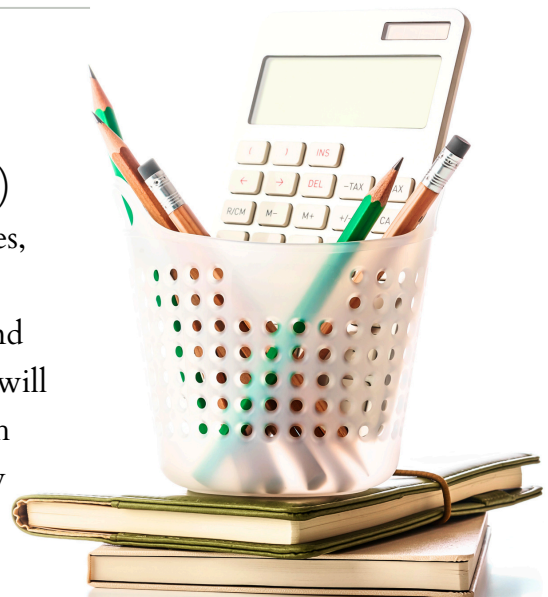
- Helping to identify funding opportunities
- Participating in program planning and proposal writing
- Managing the day to day functions associated with a successful funding/grant award

Each Division/Department head shall take ownership of a Grant by:

- Designating a project manager for funding/grants awarded to the Department;
- Implementing awarded grant projects according to the terms, conditions and requirements of each grant award, as identified within the respective funding source award agreement and/or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Application (RFA), etc.;
- Ensuring that the designated funding/grant liaison for the Department tracks grant awards and consults with the DGA on a regular basis;
- Confirming that the grant contact person and all project managers know how to request Project Account Codes and appropriate GL Codes, complete grant drawdown forms & submit to Treasurer, and monitor project funding;
- Making sure claims are promptly submitted to minimize the prolonged use of County funds; and
- Ensuring that project reporting requirements and deadlines for submission are observed.

GRANT STAKEHOLDERS: PURCHASING, MANAGEMENT & BUDGET, AUDIT, & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS)

The grant process is complex and may involve multiple processes, including developing cost estimates, building out budgets, procuring goods and services properly, and processing claims and supporting documentation required to draw down funding. It will likely be necessary for the grant project manager to consult with Purchasing and Management and Budget, as well as ITS for any technology-related goods or services associated with grant funding. It is important to maintain tidy records and involve relevant stakeholders along the way as needed.



Compliance and Grants

Yes, it really matters.

PREVENTING WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

Staff who engage in grant-related work are expected to adhere to grants best practices and County policies and procedures related to financial management.

Why it's important to be mindful of compliance and grants...

Fraud, waste and abuse take away funding from a project, and increase the chance that a grant will be terminated prematurely. Misuse of funds, *even if unintentional*, can result in suspension of availability of current/future funding, Sullivan County having to pay back some of the grant, and jeopardize the County's ability to secure future grant awards. Everyone who deals with funding is responsible for helping combat fraud. Following all County procedures is your best insurance against waste, fraud, and abuse of funds.

Grant Fraud: The use of grant funding for a purpose other than intended.

- *Charging for costs which have not been incurred or are not attributable to a grant*
- *Failure to maintain accurate time and effort documentation*
- *Charging personal expenses as business expenses against a grant*
- *Charging for inflated labor costs or hours against a grant*

Waste: Failure to receive a grant's full value due to poor planning/lack of controls leading to wasted resources.

- *Poor financial or administrative management of grants*
- *Improper grant payments*
- *Buying overpriced office equipment from a favored vendor*
- *Buying unnecessary equipment for personal use or gain*
- *Lack of controls in the payment process*

Abuse: Behaving improperly or unreasonably or misusing one's position or authority.

- *Writing technical specification or contract terms to favor a specific contractor*
- *Utilizing County resources (staff, time, equipment, supplies) to apply for "pet project" grants as a favor to entities outside the County and/or not in alignment with a department's service area or the County's mission or strategic plan*
- *Using a County computer to download explicit materials*

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO GRANT MANAGEMENT & COMPLIANCE:

Mismanagement can jeopardize a grant award or place the County at risk. Examples include:

- Not obtaining authorizing resolutions as required, (i.e. for multi-year contracts/award agreements)
- Failure to obtain cost estimates properly or to follow procurement guidelines
- Failure to provide confirmation that additional funding sources are secured
- Deficiencies in maintaining accurate records/receipts for time and effort/expenditures
- Making purchases against a grant/allocation prior to the contract being fully executed
- Failure to complete workplans, adhere to grant requirements, or complete reporting accurately and on time
- Unresponsiveness to funding agency requests for information and/or project updates or modifications
- Failure to reassign project to qualified personnel if original project manager leaves his/her position

TIPS FOR MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT MANAGERS

Fraud Prevention for Management (Division/Department Heads)

How Management can prevent fraud, waste, and abuse:

- Does the record-keeping system make it possible to quickly and accurately answer questions from auditors and funding agencies?
- Are any identified shortcomings of internal controls recurring?
- Are there new procedures in place that would prevent losses from recurring? (Trainings, file organization/sharing strategies, etc.)
- What functions are under-staffed or over-burdened?
 - *Does this create vulnerabilities?*
- Have the internal controls been subjected to a third-party review?
- What losses have been previously experienced?
- What was the nature of those losses?
 - *Theft*
 - *Data corruption*
 - *Unallowable expenditures*



Fraud Prevention for Project Managers

How Grant Project Managers can prevent fraud, waste, and abuse:

- Follow Sullivan County and Department of Grants Administration internal control procedures:
 - *Procurement Policy*
 - *Information and data security*
 - *Grant monitoring*
- Be mindful of budget and timelines
- Review documents thoroughly, watching for anomalies
 - *Inflated invoices*
 - *Payments to unknown vendors for unknown services*
 - *Invoices for services or equipment not provided*
 - *Administrator cuts a check and asks for a portion of proceeds*
 - *Consulting contracts - not enough detail to verify costs*
- Question documents and verify authenticity
- Request additional information for the vendors or administration
- Compare information on different documents



Your Compliance Toolbox: Important County Documents

Available on Sullivan County Portal or from Relevant Department

- *Purchasing Department Procurement Policy*
- *Audit Fixed Assets and Equipment Policy and Procedures*
- *Employee Handbook*
- *Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, Corporate Compliance/Whistleblower Policy* and other policy & procedures identified by a Division/Department

THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (CFR)

A department that has secured funding via Federal , State or Private Foundation funding sources is expected to comply with the specific regulatory requirements that apply to the funding award.

Specific to funding secured from a Federal agency, recipients must comply with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The CFR is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive Departments and agencies of the Federal Government. It's divided into fifty (50) titles that represent broad areas subject to Federal regulation. Each volume of the CFR is updated once each calendar year and is issued on a quarterly basis.

Of note:

- *Titles 1-16 are updated as of January 1st*
- *Titles 17-27 are updated as of April 1st*
- *Titles 28-41 are updated as of July 1st*
- *Titles 42-50 are updated as of October 1st*

Each title is divided into chapters by issuing agency. Each chapter is further subdivided into parts that cover specific regulatory areas. All parts are organized in sections, and most citations in the CFR are provided at the section level. The entire CFR is available at <https://www.ecfr.gov/>.

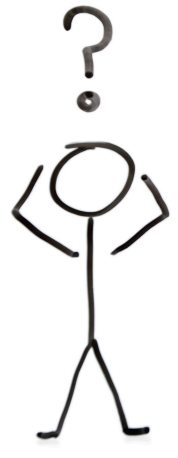
How the DGA Can Help You...

Each Division/Department Head has the responsibility to ensure that grant projects/programs are implemented according to the terms, conditions and regulatory requirements of each grant award. However, since the CFR can be complex, some teamwork is required. The DGA works with the respective Department staff and the County Attorney's Office to identify and review Federal/New York State regulations, as well as the regulations of private foundations. Specific regulations are normally identified within the funding sources Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Application (RFA), and Sample Award Agreement.

The DGA will work with the grant project manager to identify, review and confirm the County's acceptance of the regulatory requirements. Once the DGA and Department Grant Project Manager have identified all the applicable regulatory requirements, a meeting will be set-up with the County Attorney's Office to further the regulatory review, and ensure the County's acceptance of same; said action to be taken prior to the submission of the funding proposal application.



Becoming Grant Ready



Are You Really Project Ready?

"Grant readiness is the foundation or framework for successful grantseeking."

Dr. Beverly A. Browning, author Grant Writing for Dummies



CAPACITY: Does your Department have the staff to effectively administer the funding? *(Be mindful of becoming over-extended with respect to previously awarded funding. Dropping the ball can put the County at risk and result in decreased chances of future grant funding.)*



TEAM BUILDING: Who on your team is organized and detail-oriented who is positioned to serve as project manager? *(Ideally, that person should be knowledgeable of the County's procurement protocols related to grant administration, and is willing to be trained in grant-writing.)*



COUNTY IMPACT: Will grant funding be used for establishing a new position? Does the funding source require a cash match? *(Make sure your department has the means to satisfy any matching or other program requirements and sustain new positions.)*



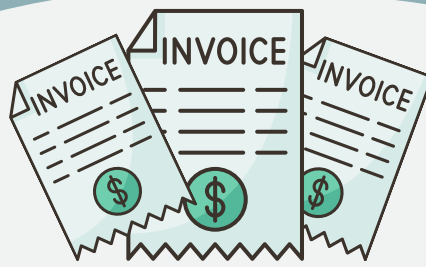
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: Do the costs associated with administering the funding exceed the anticipated award amount? Can you meet deadlines? *(Weigh the award amount against the time and resources required to apply and administer the grant, if awarded.)*



EFFICIENT PLANNING: Does your proposal align with the funding source's interests? *(Make sure your proposal is based on facts, have data in hand to justify need, make sure you've obtained cost estimates properly to develop a realistic budget, and make sure Request for Proposal (RFP) directions were followed.)*



ALIGNMENT WITH COUNTY GOALS: Is the funding proposal focused on the benefit of residents and businesses of the County, or is it connected to one of the many developed County plans? *(Pet projects may be tempting, but grant administration demands application of resources which should be utilized efficiently.)*



PURCHASING IS YOUR FRIEND: GETTING A HANDLE ON PROCUREMENT

Grants have specific requirements associated with procurement of goods and services, including how cost estimates are obtained, vendor requirements, and payment protocols. The Purchasing Department is an important stakeholder in the grants process, and should be considered a valuable resource.

- ✓ **COUNTY PROCUREMENT POLICY:** A Department that has secured grant funding for the purchase of goods and/or services, must adhere to the *County Procurement Policy** (authorized by Resolution #333-09 under the Government Services/County Legislative Committee.)
- ✓ **FUNDING SOURCE PROCUREMENT REQUIREMENTS:** The Department must also adhere to the specific procurement regulations required by the funding source and contained within the respective award agreement/contract. The specific procurement regulations and requirements are identified at the time of the *regulatory review*, which is conducted by the Department that secured the funding, with support from Purchasing/Central Services, Grants Administration, and County Attorney Office as appropriate.
- ✓ **REQUIRED INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION:** The County Purchasing Department can only authorize procurement aligned with County and regulatory requirements, and therefore certain information must be provided by the Department securing the funding:
 - All requisitions, requests for bids, RFP's and quotes utilizing grant funds or federal monies must clearly state the grant and respective State or Federal agency that will be funding the product/service.
 - All specific procurement information, including any special requirements, must be submitted with each request. (i.e. MWBE, SDOV, financial requirements, etc.)
 - Each Department should provide a complete copy of the grant funding award agreement/contract, Project Account Codes, authorizing resolution number, and any unique or special requirements to Purchasing upon submission of any request described above.

***The County *Procurement Policy* may be found on the Sullivan County Portal.**

**Questions? Contact Purchasing and
Central Services at 845-807-0515**



THE COUNTY MANAGER, THE GCAF, AND OBTAINING PROPER AUTHORIZATIONS

It is imperative that when County Government staff has identified a financial need for a project, Division and Department Heads engage in discussion with the County Manager.

GCAF (Grant Concept Approval Form) – the first step in the County's grant process. Whenever you are interested in pursuing or accepting funding from a specific source requiring an application and / or an award agreement be executed by the County Manager or Legislative Chairman, your first step is to complete the DGA Grant Concept Approval Form (GCAF), submit it to DGA for initial review, and finally, obtain approval by the County Manager. DGA staff will provide the fully executed version of the GCAF via PDF scan.

Legislative Resolutions – should be presented at the respective legislative committee. Resolution must be fully executed in order to submit the application, accept an award (should one be granted), and authorize entering into the award agreement. Refer to *Resolutions Best Practices*.



WORD OF CAUTION: Thinking about contacting our local New York State representatives to request funding for a County project or need? Before contacting a Congressman, Senator, or Assemblywoman, your FIRST STEP is to consult with the County Manager, as the only persons authorized to seek funding from representatives are the County Manager and/or County Legislative Chairman.

Said request will only be made once all of the various components of the project have been vetted and deemed acceptable by the County Manager and / or County Legislative Chairman (County Government). Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the DGA at Ext: 0468 or County Manager's Office.

WHO SIGNS WHAT???

Titles and Grant Signatories

When preparing grant-related documents that require execution, read the fine print and pay careful attention to language related to signatories.

Not sure? Contact the DGA.

"County Executive" is *elected* and would NOT be the County Manager.

"County Manager" is *appointed* and is referred to as **County Manager** or as **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

"County Executive" or "Chairman of Board of Supervisors" would be the County Legislative Chairman

"Chief Fiscal Officer" (CFO) is the elected County Treasurer/Deputy

"Payee Certification" is the elected County Treasurer/Deputy

Resolutions Best Practices



Legislative Resolutions are to be submitted by Division/Department Head/authorized staff via the current Legislative resolutions platform, available for desktop by contacting ITS. (*Resolutions related to grants or allocations requiring execution should be submitted through the Grants Sequence of the resolution platform.*)

Should you have any questions, please contact the Legislative Clerk at 845-807-0435.

FILING DEADLINES

- Resolutions must be filed with the Sullivan County Manager's Office at least nine (9) days prior to the appropriate legislative committee meeting.
- Resolutions for legislative Executive Committee must be filed with the Sullivan County legislative clerk at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

WHEN ARE LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS REQUIRED FOR GRANTS/ALLOCATIONS?

- Legislative Resolutions are required prior to applying for and/or accepting discretionary funding;
- Legislative Resolutions are required for Allocations requiring an application and/or executed award agreement;
- Legislative Resolutions are NOT required on Allocation applications that *do not* contain or require any signatory paperwork or that do not require a resolution as part of the submission; and
- Legislative Resolutions are NOT required on Allocations that do not have an award agreement and *only* have an award notification.

WHAT ABOUT CONTRACTS?

Additional information is required for resolutions seeking approval for execution of a contract.

All Award Agreements/Contracts must also be approved by the following Departments prior to submission of a resolution:

- Director of Purchasing;
- Office of Management & Budget;
- County Attorney Office; and
- County Manager



IS THERE ANYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MULTI-YEAR AWARDS/CONTRACTS?

YES! If County is awarded a multi-term grant or allocation, it is **STRONGLY** recommended by the County Attorney's Office that a resolution must be prepared on an annual basis for every year of the award, prior to the start of the new term.

NOTE: In the BE IT RESOLVED section, the resolution should contain specific information about the contract (i.e. period, award amount, matching specifications).

HOW DO I PROPERLY DRAFT A RESOLUTION?

The resolution has three primary components:

1. TITLE
2. WHEREAS STATEMENTS
3. BE IT RESOLVED STATEMENTS

NOTE: **Text Formatting Guidelines**: 1-inch margins all around, Times New Roman in 12-point font

WHEREAS and BE IT RESOLVED phrases must be in bold and all caps, and phrases must be followed by a colon. Refer to samples in appendix for guidance.

THE TITLE:

The title of the resolution must appropriately reflect the intent. Refer to samples for guidance.

WHEREAS STATEMENTS:

- “Whereas” statements provide the basic facts and reasons for the resolution, and provide the rationale for the “resolved” course of action.
- The whereas statement(s) should lead the reader to your conclusion (resolved). In writing whereas statements begin by introducing the topic of the resolution. Be factual rather than speculative and provide or reference statistics whenever possible. The statements should briefly identify the issue and the effect of the issue.

WHEREAS, The ... (text of the first preamble clause);

WHEREAS, ... (text of the next to the last preamble clause); and

WHEREAS, ... (text of the last preamble clause);

RESOLVED STATEMENTS

- “BE IT RESOLVED” statements are the only parts of a resolution that the Legislature acts upon.
- Each Resolved clause must contain an actionable request and makes sense when read alone, since the Resolved clause represents the policy that will be adopted.
- Thus, Resolved clauses should each be a single sentence in length.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That ... (stating specific action to be taken

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That ... (stating further action to be taken)

IS THERE CRITICAL RESOLUTION LANGUAGE SPECIFIC TO GRANTS?

YES! Sullivan County utilizes specific language for the closing BE IT RESOLVED section of resolution. Please refer to the Grant Resolution and Allocation Templates in appendix.

REMINDER: The resolution should contain *specific* information about the contract (i.e. period, award amount, matching specifications, indication of collaborating partnerships, etc.).

For additional guidance about writing grant resolutions, contact DGA to access the “Writing Grant Resolutions” webinar.

The Grant Cycle and You...

A GENERAL CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

___ First, meet with stakeholders (County leadership, colleagues, etc.) to identify priority needs aligned with County goals. (See *Needs Assessment Worksheet* in Appendix.)

___ Then, consider capacity and identify potential project manager and support team.

PREPARING A FUNDING APPLICATION

___ First, develop a plan for a project. (See *Preparing a Winning Grant Proposal* in Appendix.)

___ Secondly, collaborate with DGA to locate the funding source/NOFA that would be the best fit for your project.

___ Submit a GCAF, and if approved by County Manager, prepare authorizing resolution. (See *Resolutions Best Practices*.)

___ Finally, the assigned grant project manager should collaborate with respective Division Head and DGA to prepare and submit the application.

WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE AWARD: IMPORTANT "NEXT STEPS"

___ First, copy DGA on the award notice.

___ Secondly, carefully review the NOFA, guidelines, and funding award contract prior to execution, and copy DGA on fully executed contract.

___ Third, determine if any additional authorizing resolutions may be required.

___ Then, set up a task calendar for your work plan and to meet reporting requirements.

___ Also, set up an organized system to maintain records for proper administration of grant funding.

___ Stay on track with reporting and claim submissions. (Note, it's not always advisable to hold claims. It's best practice to submit claims as expenses are paid, especially for large expenses.) Always notify Treasurer after submitting claims.

___ Finally, notify DGA of any amendments to the award amount or term.

REMINDER:

- *The Department managing the grant/allocation is responsible for maintaining all documentation related to expenses against secured funding (i.e. postage, equipment, office supplies, etc.) This includes all necessary time and effort records as required by the award agreement.*
- *DGA provides technical assistance when needed and will collaborate with Departments to prevent deficient audit findings pertaining to funding reimbursements and to avoid the return of funds due to delinquent reporting, insufficient program administration or other reasons deemed appropriate by the funding source.*

EVALUATION

There are lessons to be learned from both successful and unsuccessful funding applications and the funded programs/projects. Feedback from the funding source regarding strengths and weaknesses of the submitted application and of the results of the funded program helps shape successful future applications and programs.

GRANT MANAGEMENT PRO-TIPS

(OR, HOW TO KEEP THE MONEY)

1. KNOW YOUR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting requirements vary by funding source and the type of funding secured. Those Departments who have secured funding through Federal, State or Private Foundation sources are responsible for reporting accurate program data and information in adherence to the reporting requirements as required by the specific funding source. Be mindful of reporting deadlines (whether monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, annual or progress) and submit on a timely basis to the specific funding source, as stated in the executed award agreement/contract. Adhering to these reporting requirements is an important part of the overall effort to ensure that the County continues to realize a successful audit of its financial statements.

All Federally-funded grants are required to report ALL EXPENSES on the Federal Single Audit. These programs are audited annually by the County's external auditors.

2. STAY ORGANIZED

- Maintain all documents related to a particular grant organized in one location, labeled appropriately with the grant title, term, and award amount. (It may be advisable to maintain both digital and hard copy records. For a sample grant folder organization template, see page15.)
- Review the guidelines associated with the funding award, setup a workplan, make notations to help you stay on task.
- Use your calendar and set up internal reminders to meeting important deadlines.
- Copy the DGA on any official documentation and any amendments to terms/amounts.
- If the grant project manager leaves the department and a new person is assigned, update your records and DGA.
- Document, document, document! Maintain careful notations related to grant work, communications, and progress on work plans; keep and organize copies of expenses/receipts and time and effort records, as required by the funding agency.

3. SUBMIT CLAIMS PROPERLY

- Follow the grant requirements and make sure you're in alignment with State and Federal regulations and County procurement protocols.
- Make sure you have copies of all appropriate financial documentation necessary to accompany the submission and check them for accuracy.
- Be timely, as it's not advisable to hold claims. It's best practice to submit claims as expenses are paid, especially for large expenses.
- Follow the submission guidelines carefully, check and double check your paperwork, and be sure to save digital and hard copies of all items submitted, with notations related to when you can anticipate reimbursement.
- **Don't forget to copy the County Treasurer's Office!**

The DGA offers support and technical assistance.
Contact us at 845-807-0468.

KEEPING THOSE FILES IN CHECK

It may seem obvious, but when schedules become overwhelmed, having a tried and true organizational system saves time and effort in the long run. Here are some practical "pro tips" shared by Departments who have successfully managed to wrangle the complexities of grant management.

LABELING YOUR GRANT FILE

Labeling the grant file will help you maintain organization, access information easily, and assist others in locating information in your absence.

Your format should include:

- Funding Year (based on NOFA)
- Grant Title and Granting Agency/Organization
- Project/Program Title

Examples:

2019 NFWF Highland River Access

2023 GTSC Child Passenger Seat Safety Program

2023 OPRHP Snowmobile Grant-in-Aid Program

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE GRANT FILE

- Copy of fully executed GCAF
- Copy of Official Authorizing Resolution(s)
- NOFA and Funding Agency Guidelines
- Submitted Application/Supporting Documents
- Fully Executed Memorandums of Understanding
- Official Notification of Award/Declination
- *Fully Executed* Award Agreement/Contract(s)
- Project Account Code Information
- *Fully Executed* Amended Award Agreements/Contracts
- Additional Resolution(s)
- Monitoring and Compliance Documents
- Claims/Disbursement Requests

SAMPLE DIGITAL GRANT FOLDER TEMPLATE

Name	Date modified	Type
Application	7/3/2023 10:42 AM	File folder
Award Notifications	7/3/2023 10:42 AM	File folder
Blank Forms	7/3/2023 10:39 AM	File folder
Closeout	7/3/2023 10:40 AM	File folder
Correspondence	7/3/2023 10:41 AM	File folder
Disbursement Requests	7/3/2023 10:40 AM	File folder
Environmental Review	7/3/2023 10:45 AM	File folder
Executed Contracts	7/3/2023 10:41 AM	File folder
GCAF and Resolutions	7/3/2023 10:42 AM	File folder
Monitoring and Compliance	7/3/2023 10:40 AM	File folder
NOFA	7/3/2023 10:40 AM	File folder
Program Guidelines	7/3/2023 10:41 AM	File folder
Reporting	7/3/2023 10:41 AM	File folder

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Appendix

Available in the Portal or upon request from the Dept. of Grants Administration

County of Sullivan Grant Concept Approval Form

The County Manager must approve discretionary grants and allocations requiring execution prior to application submission. After Division Head signs the form, submit it to the Department of Grants Administration. DGA staff will review and submit it to the County Manager.

Date Form Submitted: _____ Grant Deadline: _____ Type of Funding: ☒ Discretionary (Competitive) ☐ Allocation Requiring Execution

Type of Grant Submission: ☐ Hard Copy ☐ e-File ☐ Grants.gov ☐ Other: _____

CFDA # (if applicable): _____ ARPA, CARES Act, COVID-19 Funding ☐ UEI # for Sullivan County: GDF2HNKKJBZ4

Commissioner: _____ Division: _____

Grant Project Manager (Include Name, Title, and Department): _____

Granting Agency Organization (Federal, State, Private Charitable): _____

Grant Program Title (Name of Grant): _____

Total Project Cost: _____ Grant Amount Requested: _____ Term of the Grant: Start _____ End _____

How will this grant benefit the Division/Department?

Matching Funds:

1. Will a CASH Match be required for the grant? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, specify amount and how the match will be met.

2. Explain other match requirements and County obligations of the grant (staff time, space, technology, equipment, etc.)

3. Does the grant involve the acquisition of technology? (software, hardware, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Does the grant involve the utilization of DPW staff/resources? (design/engineering, cost estimates, construction, etc.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

Personnel:

4. Does this grant create new County government positions? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, justify the hiring of a new staff vs. sub-contracting a service or explain if existing staff can be utilized:

5. Will the proposed project involve a collaborative partnership with a third-party entity? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

County Obligations:

6. Is the County required to initially use County funds in order to be reimbursed by the grant? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain the timeframe for advance funding and reimbursement:

7. What is the plan for after the grant expires?

A. The program/project will be discontinued and all grant funded positions terminated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

B. If no, please describe alternatives: _____

8. Will there be any ongoing impact on County budgets after the grant expires? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

9. What will happen with the equipment and/or assets purchased with grant funds after the grant expires?

☐ Owned by and available to the County ☐ County-owned and used by the department ☐ Other: _____

Grant Assistance: (Requests are reviewed and will receive assistance, if available, in order of priority set by the County Manager.)

10. What assistance will you need to submit this application?

☐ None – review and approval only

☐ Coordinate application (track progress and internal deadlines, obtain signatures, support letters, etc.)

☐ Facilitate collaboration between departments, towns, villages, agencies, organization, etc

☐ Grant Review and Final Edit

☐ Grant Packaging

☐ Grant narrative, documentation and financial analysis

Approval by Division Head: _____ Date: _____ Approval by County Manager: _____ Date: _____

Rev. Feb. 2023

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE FOR DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

RESOLUTION _____ INTRODUCED BY THE _____ COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE _____

WHEREAS, _____; and

WHEREAS, _____; and

WHEREAS, _____.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, Chairman of the County Legislature, and / or their authorized representative (as required by the funding source) to execute any and all necessary documents to submit the _____ application for funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, and / or Chairman of the County Legislature (as required by the funding source) to accept the award, and enter into an award agreement or contract to administer the funding secured, in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the _____ funding be terminated, the County shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.

Moved by,

Seconded by,

and adopted on motion, 2023

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE FOR ALLOCATIONS REQUIRING EXECUTION

RESOLUTION _____ INTRODUCED BY THE _____ COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE _____

WHEREAS, _____; and

WHEREAS, _____; and

WHEREAS, _____ .

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, and / or Chairman of the County Legislature (as required by the funding source) to accept the award, and enter into an award agreement or contract to administer the funding secured, in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the _____ funding be terminated, the County shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.

Moved by,

Seconded by,

and adopted on motion, 2022

GRANT RESOLUTION PREP CHECKLIST

A grant-related resolution should be detailed and “cover all the bases” to the extent possible by providing information about the what, why, who when and how much.

___ Provide accurate information for introduction.

This may include: Division and/or Department, the appropriate Legislative Committee, name of funding agency, grant/program title, and purpose or resolution.

___ If your project involves third-party collaboration, inquire with County Attorney to ascertain if authorization to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding is necessary.

___ Include relevant background information via a series of “whereas” statements. “Whereas” statements tell the story and provide context and rationale for the resolution. NOTE: Spell out acronyms the first time they are utilized in the document and reference accompanying abbreviation.

Information in the “whereas” section may include:

- o Background information
- o Name of funding Agency
- o Grant Program Title (include year)
- o Proposed Project and Total Project Cost
- o Reference to third-party collaborator/MOU, if applicable
- o Grant funding amount (asking amount)
- o Reference to cost share/match requirements (Federal, State, Local) in dollar amount and by percentages, if applicable
- o Performance Period dates, if applicable. If program is a multi-year program, include specific information.

___ If the application requires execution by any additional parties (for example, the County Attorney), inquire with the County Attorney’s Office related to whether that should be addressed in the resolution.

___ Include specific actions which must be authorized in the “Be it resolved” statements, as this section actually confers legislative authority. If not already specified in the “whereas section,” the following information should be provided in the “Now therefore be it resolved” statement:

- o Name of Funding Agency
- o Grant Program Title (include year)
- o Proposed Project and Total Project Cost
- o Reference to third-party collaborator/MOU, if applicable
- o Grant funding amount (asking amount)
- o Reference to cost share/match requirements (Federal, State, Local) in dollar amount and by percentages, if applicable
- o Performance Period dates, if applicable. If program is a multi-year program, include specific information.

___ Include required Closure Statements provided in DGA templates.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION # 1

This resolution contains all of the necessary components, but given that the Department had not finalized its project budget at the time of legislative meetings, it used “in an amount not to exceed” language to cover the bases. This program did not have a match requirement.

INTRODUCED BY THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE TO APPLY, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO AN AWARD AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT WITH NYSDOH FOR THE RURAL HEALTH NETWORK DEVELOPMENT GRANT

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Health is offering an open, competitive five (5) year grant for Rural Health Network Development. The multi-year contract period will be from October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2030 in an amount not to exceed \$150,000.00 per year; and

WHEREAS, if funding is awarded, the Sullivan County Department of Public Health wishes to enter into an agreement with the New York State Department of Health and Office of Rural Health on an annual basis, dependent upon continued funding, to support objectives which will improve the health and wellness of Sullivan County residents; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Manager and/or Chairman of the County Legislature (as required by the funding source) are authorized to execute any and all necessary documents to submit the Rural Health Network Grant application for funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County Manager and/or Chairman of the Legislature (as required by the funding source) to accept the award and enter into and an award agreement or contract to administer the funding secured in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the Rural Health Network Grant funding be terminated the County of Sullivan shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION # 2

This resolution contains all of the necessary components, including program details and rationale making application. Note that acronyms are spelled out. Given the Department had not finalized its project budget at the time of legislative meetings, it also utilized language to cover its bases. Ex. “submit an application for a grant of up to \$3,500,000.” This program did not have a match requirement and that detail is specified in the resolution.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE SIXTH ROUND OF WORK INITIATIVE GRANT

WHEREAS, a grant funding opportunity is available to fund projects supporting rural communities in aligning workforce development efforts with economic development plans. The US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC) initiative provides funding to eligible applicants that address the employment and training needs of the local and regional workforce, created in collaboration with community partners, with no match requirement; and

WHEREAS, the Center for Workforce Development (CWD) can demonstrate clear strategies to provide needed career, training, and supportive services to eligible individuals in a customized Healthcare Career Pathway Program which is a high demand occupation for Sullivan County; and

WHEREAS, a strategic pathway can include high school equivalency (HSE)/General Educational Development (GED), Home Health Aid (HHA); Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), basic skill sets for Microsoft Office, and can lead in directions within the health field for knowledge-based, skill-based, entrepreneur-based and more, with supportive services to assist participants with transportation and childcare needs; and

WHEREAS, CWD will provide eligible participants with training and employment opportunities and connect participants to partner employers for a direct linkage for businesses within Sullivan County for hiring needs and provide participants with a secure good job; and

WHEREAS, the County of Sullivan will seek the award in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000 for a period of performance 36 months from an anticipated start date of 9/30/24.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, and or their authorized representative to execute any and all necessary documents to submit the Customized Healthcare Career Pathway Program application for funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager to accept the award, and enter into an award agreement or contract to administer the funding secured, in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the funding be terminated, the County shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION # 3

This resolution contains all of the necessary components, including reference to total project cost and cost sharing requirements broken down in dollar amounts and percentages. In this case, there was a Federal, State, and local share. Some funding programs require certified copies of the authorizing resolution to be included in the application and/or with any associated agreements, which is mentioned in this resolution. This resolution also includes an additional closure, “that this resolution shall take effect immediately.”

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICATION FOR AND ACCEPTANCE IF OFFERED OF AN FAA BIL GRANT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION DESIGN OF A WATER TOWER FOR THE SULLIVAN COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (SCIA)

WHEREAS, the Sullivan County International Airport currently lacks adequate available water storage for fire suppression for further development on airport property; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to apply for grant assistances from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) for the construction design of a water tower to rectify the storage deficiency; and

WHEREAS, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Airport Infrastructure Grants (BIL AIG) for this purpose are available from the FAA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature authorizes the County Manager and/or the Chairman of the County Legislature to apply for and accept if offered, an FAA BIL AIG grant in the amount of \$300,634.00 of which \$270,570.60 shall be the 90% Federal share, \$15,031.70 shall be the 5% State share and \$15,031.70 shall be the 5% County share; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature authorizes the County Manager and/or the Chairman of the County Legislature to execute any and all necessary documents to apply for and accept the ACIP Grant award, should one be offered, and enter into an award agreement or contract in order to administer the funding secured, in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be attached to any necessary agreements in connection with this project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the funding be terminated, the County shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION # 4

This resolution contains all of the necessary components, including detailed background, detailed allocation amounts, reference to a third-party contractor, and reference to local cost share. Acronyms are spelled out. Given that the project budget was not yet finalized at the time of resolution, only cost share percentages were provided. This funding agency required very specific language to be written into the resolution, and the application required execution by County Attorney, also addressed in the resolution.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO AUTHORIZE THE SUBMISSION AND EXECUTION OF A FEDERAL SECTION 5311 FORMULA GRANT FOR RUTAL AREA PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

WHEREAS, the County of Sullivan-Department of Transportation is submitting a request for a grant of funds offered through the New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT), pursuant to Section 5311, Title 49 United States Code, for a project(s) to provide public mass transportation services for the County of Sullivan via the Sullivan County Department of Transportation for the 2024-2025 fiscal years and has committed the local share; and

WHEREAS, the County of Sullivan -Department of Transportation and the State of New York have entered into continuing agreements, or will enter into successor agreements, which authorize the undertaking of the project(s) and reimbursement of the Federal and applicable State Shares; and

WHEREAS, the County of Sullivan -Department of Transportation is eligible for funding through such grant; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to pursue funding via the NYS DOT for transportation needs in the County, and has available to it \$951,169.00 of formula allocation funding in the amounts of:

- 5311 COVID Programs (remaining funds) -Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSSA) = \$15,000.00 and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) = \$145,641.00;
- 5311 2021-23 (remaining funds) - Core Operating + Supportive Employment Services = \$293,000.00;
- 5311 2024 -Core Operating \$248,764.00; and
- 5311 2025 (estimated) - Core Operating \$248,764.00; and

WHEREAS, the County under the Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Area Program is subject to matching requirements of 20% on operating costs and 10% on capital costs, dependent on the County transportation needs;

WHEREAS, the County of Sullivan is contracting with Rolling V Bus Corp for implementation of part of the project(s) described above;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Attorney, or their designated Assistant County Attorney to sign the Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Area Program Application - Affirmation of Applicant's Attorney, as required by the grant application, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, as their designated official and authorized representative to act on behalf of the County of Sullivan to sign the Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Area Program application and advance and complete the above-named project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Sullivan County Legislature hereby authorizes the County Manager, as their designated official and authorized representative to accept the award, and enter into an award agreement or contract to administer the funding secured, in such form as the County Attorney shall approve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that should the Federal Section 5311 Formula Grant for Rural Area Program funding be terminated, the County shall not be obligated to continue any action undertaken by the use of this funding.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Think of this template as a very basic tool to help you brainstorm, identify key ideas, and to form a basis for fleshing out a more detailed plan. It is your first step toward developing a highly detailed grant proposal.

1. What is the problem? Who is affected, where, what is the issue, and why is it an issue?
2. What is the solution? You can frame your answer by describing your proposed project.
3. Do you have the data? Can you justify need, or is additional research required?
4. What is in the way? What are the obstacles preventing you from implementing the solution? (*Obstacles can be related to capacity, financial resources, sustainability, lack of technical knowledge, etc.*)
5. What information is lacking? What information do you need in order to fully flesh out a plan? What are your “unanswered questions” related to your project that might require the input of experts/model agencies, etc.?

Preparing a Winning Grant Proposal



Department of Grants
Administration
100 North Street
Monticello, NY 12701

<https://sullivanny.us/Departments/grants>



PREPARING A WINNING GRANT PROPOSAL

A standard grant proposal should include these sections:

- Summary
- Introduction to the Applicant Organization
- Problem or Needs Statement
- Objective
- Method
- Evaluation Plan
- Future Funding
- Budget

Summary

- Keep it short. If proposal is single spaced, make it a ½ page; if double spaced, make it a full page;
- Include all elements of the proposal;
- Keep it interesting and deal with most compelling issue first; and
- Include what you're asking for within the summary.

Introduction to the Applicant Organization

- Address the organization's credibility and history.
- Rise above the competition.

NOTE: The reviewer will expect to see the following information about your organization:

- Mission Statement or Goal
- Length of operation
- Performance history/track record
- Other funding sources utilized for project
- The number of clients served
- The number of clients that will benefit from this project
- Accreditations
- Uniqueness

Problem, Objective & Method

Problem:

- State why the organization is concerned about the problem identified;
- Address the – who, how many, where and what issues;
- Use research-based data to make the case for what is causing the problem;
- Discuss what will happen if your organization does not act to address the problem;
- Support the existence of the problem with statistics, quotes and analysis.

Objective:

- Include information about what changes you want to see;
- The objectives should state who or what will be changed, in what direction, by how much and in what time frame;
- The objectives should be measurable, specific, achievable, time specific and relevant;
There are three types of objectives:
 1. **Proven Process** – already works- want to do more of it.
 2. **Outcome** – measuring the change in the incidence of problem.
 3. **Indicator**- measuring signs that the incidence of the problem is likely to decline (research-based).
- You may have more than one objective for a single problem;
- Conduct a trial run of your objective to see what your results would be.

Method:

- Address the processes you will be using to meet the objectives;
- Clearly state *who* will do *what* and *when*;
- Address other options considered and ensure your methods for meeting the objective are research based;
- Chart out your methods. Chart format could consist of the activity, timeframe, person/party responsible for carrying out the method, identification of the partners, where the method will be carried out and the costs involved;
- Organize your methods – chronologically, by target group, thematically, geographically and/or by objective; and
- Be specific about why the work will be done in a specific way, what challenges you expect and your strategy for dealing with those challenges.



Evaluation Plan

- Having an evaluation plan will help to ensure you are meeting the proposed program objectives; and
- It should be developed using research-based, proven plans of evaluation. Increasingly, funders want to see that you are making good use of the funds provided and that you are paying attention to future program development needs.

Future Funding

- What funds will you use to continue the program after the grant ends? (Funders are interested in funding programs that show longevity.)
- Who else is contributing to the project or program?
- Is the funding secured? (Do you have a resolution and/or supporting documentation to prove funding is “in the bag”?)

Budget

- The total budget for the project is made up of the amount of money requested and the amount being used from other sources;
- Include all line items and budget realistically;
-
- Involve fiscal staff in the budget process;
- Do *not* include a budget line item for "Miscellaneous"; and
- When drafting the budget justification, explain in brief how the calculations were arrived at. You can use bullet style in the budget justification.
- Refrain from rounding off to the nearest \$10 thousand and do not include cents in your figures. (*For example if the amount is \$8,750.98, write \$8,750, not \$9,000.*)

Questions?

**Contact the Department of Grants
Administration at 845-807-0468.**

Additional Points About How to Develop a Problem / Need Statement

The "Problem/Need Statement" delineates the problem within the community to be addressed. Data is provided to substantiate the need and a human interest story can be included to make the issue more personal.

- The statement is used to educate the funder about the community problem or need the organization seeks to address. This statement will enable reviewers to learn more about the issues through presentation of facts and evidence that supports the need for the project. This section of the grant proposal establishes that the applicant understands the problem/need and therefore will be able to appropriately address it. The information used to support the case can come from authorities in the field, as well as from your own experience.
- The statement of need should be succinct, yet persuasive.

The Function & Importance of the Problem / Need Statement

The function of the statement is to discuss the problem/need in a way that makes the funder want to help solve the issue.

- Problem: a community or external constituency need;
- Action: what your organization proposes to do to address the problem; and
- Solution: the positive outcome that results from the action effecting change on the problem;

PROBLEM + ACTION = SOLUTION

The statement demonstrates to the funder that there is an important and urgent problem /need. This statement must relate both to your organization's mission statement and to the funder's priorities.





Problem / Need Statement Should Include the Following Information:

- **Description of the problem/need:** What is the problem/need? Who? What? Where? When? Why?
- **Recognition of the problem/need:** Why is it a problem/need? Who else sees it as a problem/need? What are the views of community stakeholders about this problem/need?
- **Need for resolution of the problem/need:** What will happen to the population/community served if the problem/need is not resolved? Is there a cost to society?
- **Hurdles to overcome before the problem/need is solved:** Clearly identify the challenges involved in addressing the problem/need. Describe the gap between what exists now and what ought to be. What has prevented resolution of the problem/need?
- **Urgency required to address problem / need:** Why does it need to be addressed now? What is currently being done about the problem /need?
- **Human interest story:** Provide a real example of how the problem is affecting someone's life and how the proposed program will promote positive change. Make it real and tangible.

Pitfalls to Avoid in Developing a Problem Statement:

- Leaving out information asked for in the Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Proposing a project that is outside the scope of the RFP
- Using outdated or unsubstantiated information
- Providing insufficient data or too much statistical information
- Including unfamiliar concepts or terms
- Long, convoluted sentences

General Tips for Writing a Grant Application

Use strong words for a lively proposal that stands out from others.

A good source for examples of creative wording is the book *Spunk & Bite: A Writer's Guide to Bold, Contemporary Style* by Arthur Plotnik.



Examples of weighty words:

- *Innovative, ground-breaking, pioneering* instead of *new*
- *Impoverished, poverty-stricken, needy* instead of *poor*

Make the language tight—pare down and condense — more is not necessarily better, especially if there are page limits!



NOTE: The bottom line is that in order to develop a program that will be funded; the program must seek to solve the problem or address the need that both your organization and the funder are interested in and the project must generate results that are measurable.

Give the reviewer hope.

Avoid being so grim that the solution appears hopeless. The funder wants to know their investment is worthwhile. Here's an example of a solid statement of need that is hopeful:

"Breast cancer kills. But statistics prove that regular check-ups catch most breast cancer in the early stages, reducing the likelihood of death. Hence, a program to encourage preventive check-ups will reduce the risk of death due to breast cancer."

Decide whether you can demonstrate that your project / program addresses the need differently or better than others that preceded it.

It is often difficult to describe the need for your project / program without being critical of the competition. Being critical of others will not be well received by the funder. It may cause the funder to look more carefully at your own project / program to see why you felt you had to build your case by demeaning others. The funder may have invested in these other projects or may begin to consider them, now that you have brought them to the funder's attention. If possible, you should make it clear that you are cognizant of, and on good terms with, others doing work in your field.



Avoid circular reasoning.

When you use circular reasoning, you would typically present the absence of your solution as the actual problem. Then your solution is offered as the way to solve the problem.

For example, the circular reasoning for building a community swimming pool might go like this: *"The problem is that we have no pool in our community. Building a pool will solve the problem."* A more persuasive case would show what a pool has meant to a neighboring community, permitting it to offer recreation, exercise, and physical therapy programs. The statement might refer to a survey that underscores the target audience's planned usage of the facility and conclude with the connection between the proposed usage and potential benefits to enhance life in the community.

Using Data and Statistics

The role of data and statistics is to back up the issue that you are addressing, by utilizing reliable information sources. The data you use should be as current as possible and it should be unbiased. In order to make sure that you are using unbiased data, you need to be aware of who did the research and who funded it. In addition, use authoritative data that is considered reputable by others. Data functions to describe, compare, trend, predict and explain.

Decide which facts or statistics best support the project.

Be sure the data you present is accurate. There are few things more embarrassing than to have the funder tell you that your information is out of date or incorrect. Information that is too generic or broad will not help you develop a winning argument for your project. Similarly, using information that does not relate to your organization or to the project you are presenting will cause the funder to question the entire proposal.





Data Searches and Useful Web Sites for Accessing Data / Statistics

Demographic information clearinghouses, federal agencies, state agencies, foundations and other nonprofits, databases, scholarly journals and articles, and industry publications are key resources for gathering statistics and data. While this list is not comprehensive, these sources are a good starting point.

US Census Website www.census.gov

Of particular interest is information about Sullivan County and its communities that is available through the US Census web site. A good starting point is to go to *Sullivan County QuickFacts* at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36105.html>. You can also find a Fact Sheet for the city/town name or zip code that you are focusing on. The Fact Sheet will provide information such as population, median household income, number of individuals speaking languages other than English at home, poverty levels, etc. National comparisons are also available on the Fact Sheet. You can print a Fact Sheet out for New York which will allow you to compare your community to the state as a whole.

American Fact Finder <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

This is another handy tool to provide you with statistics. The data is compiled from several censuses and from a number of separate surveys such as the American Community Survey and the American Housing Survey. You can obtain data at the state, county, municipality, town, zip code, census tract, and block group level. Reference maps are available so you can pinpoint the exact locations for which you need data. Information can be downloaded into Excel files.

FedStats & Federal Agency Websites www.fedstats.gov

Search by *keyword or topic* and this site will link you to federal agencies who maintain those statistics. Search by *location* and you will pull up a fact sheet for that location (also available on the Census website). You can also search by agency. Many federal agencies maintain a lot of research information online.

A few examples include:

- *Bureau of Labor Statistics*: www.bls.gov. This is often fastest way to find information at the national, state, or local level is (click on —Local Unemployment Rates on the right and scroll down to find NY information);
- *USDA Economic Research Service*: www.ers.usda.gov (Try —Publications or —Data Sources);
- *Department of Health & Human Services*: www.hhs.gov/reference/;
- *HHS Reference Collection*: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>; and
- *Administration for Children and Families*: www.acf.hhs.gov

NYS Agency Websites <https://www.ny.gov/agencies>

Websites from various agencies in New York State offer a wealth of information. Locate all New York State agencies, including the NYS Department of Health and NYS Office for the Aging.

Demographics Now www.freedemographics.com

This is a free information service. Basic demographic data including income and employment statistics can be found on the website. You can search by the entire US, State, County, Census Tract, Block Group, US Places, ZIP Codes, etc. Information can be downloaded.

United for ALICE <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/new-york>

ALICE stands for *Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed*. The Research Center–New York provides a source for exploring the latest ALICE data on this growing population of individuals in our state.