

Grant Readiness: Ready, Set, Go for Grants

Ann Kayman, CEO of New York Grant Company

Is your municipality or township ready for a grant? No doubt, your need for grant funding is abundant and your cause is deserving; but you must also consider your “grant readiness”. What is your municipality’s position in the competitive “marketplace” of funding to win a grant proposal? If you are not “ready” for a grant, then you will not win a grant proposal. This article aims to help you get ready!

In addition to showing a compelling case and a need for grants, a grant seeker must show clearly:

1. All of the technical requirements, necessary approvals and supporting documentation for the grant being sought,
2. A program or capital need that meets the grant giver’s goals, funding criteria, dollar limits, track record and “zone” of interest,
3. Strong means for managing grant funds with utmost accountability,
4. Means to gather, track and report the results of any grant funding.

A seeker of grants should evaluate each of these elements carefully before applying for any grant. The point is not to discourage you from applying for a grant, or to defeat your efforts before they have even started, but to enhance your chances for success in winning a grant. After all, why waste your time chasing down a source of funding if your organization is just not ready for it yet? You would not try to run a marathon before training to run. The same principle applies to grants.

By evaluating your “readiness” from the outset of the research and application process for a grant, you can work with your administration to shore up any element that is missing or weak before applying for a grant (the better practice). At the very least, you should have a concrete plan for fulfilling any element, be able to execute that plan and demonstrate this to your prospective grant giver.

An overall checklist or “matrix” for grant readiness is extremely helpful and can be used and adapted many times for many grants. Below is a sample matrix that we have prepared to help get you started for each of your projects. It is by no means exhaustive, and you should feel free to adapt it to your needs and organization, but the sample matrix provides some basic guidance on matters relating to your grant readiness for a given project. It can apply to capital needs, programming needs and otherwise. It is also designed on a rating scale, so that you can informally “score” your municipality’s readiness informally against a variety of readiness criteria. This can allow you to identify areas that need the most attention, and therefore allow you to prioritize and plan.

Best of luck and success! We hope that this is helpful to you in preparing for and **winning** your next grant award.

Ann Kayman is the Chief Executive Officer of New York Grant Company; www.nygrants.com. Ann, along with her team, navigate through government grants and incentive programs as a private consulting firm.