Top Grant Resources for Local Governments

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Georgia's Regional Commissions

- Aging Services
- Technology Services/GIS
- Local Government Assistance
- Workforce Development
- Planning
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Business Loans

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Outline for Session

- Grant Myths
- Beyond Writing, it’s Grant Preparation
- Tips for Successful Grant Writing
- Top Grant Resources for Local Governments

Grant Myths

- **Myth #1: We can get a grant for that!**
  - Yes, **but** not everything
    - Operating Expenses and Programming
    - Basic Local Government Operations

- **Myth #2: Grants are free money!**
  - Staff time to research, prepare, administer
  - Match is required (99.9% of the time)
  - Regulatory requirements that you might not otherwise have to do

- **Myth #3: How hard could this be - anyone can write and administer a grant**
  - It's not rocket science or brain surgery but if done incorrectly, could require repayment/ineligible activities.

Free Money = Money With Strings

- Grants often increase the administration or operating cost that is not funded by the grant
- May require increased citizen participation/data collection (multiple years)
- Increased requirements for:
  - Procurement
  - Land Acquisition
  - Labor rates for contractors (Davis Bacon)
  - Accounting

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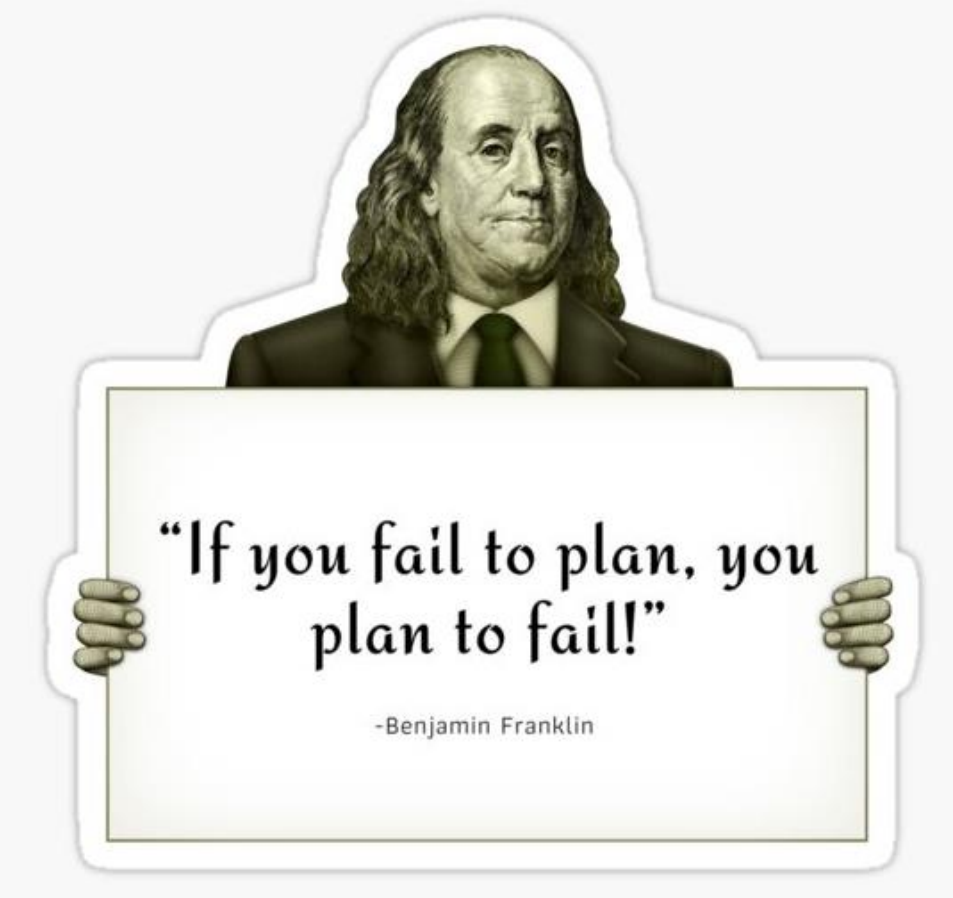
Other “Costs” of Grants

- Continuation/Sustainability Requirements
  - Keep employees for a period of time.
- Increase compliance review by External Auditor and others (OIG)
- Grants impact cash flow–most grants are reimbursable grants
  - Do you have to borrow the funds and wait for reimbursement?
- Subcontractors receiving federal grant funds have to be monitored.
  - How are you doing this?

Beyond Writing

Grant preparation involves planning, compliance, analysis/assessments, and public engagement.



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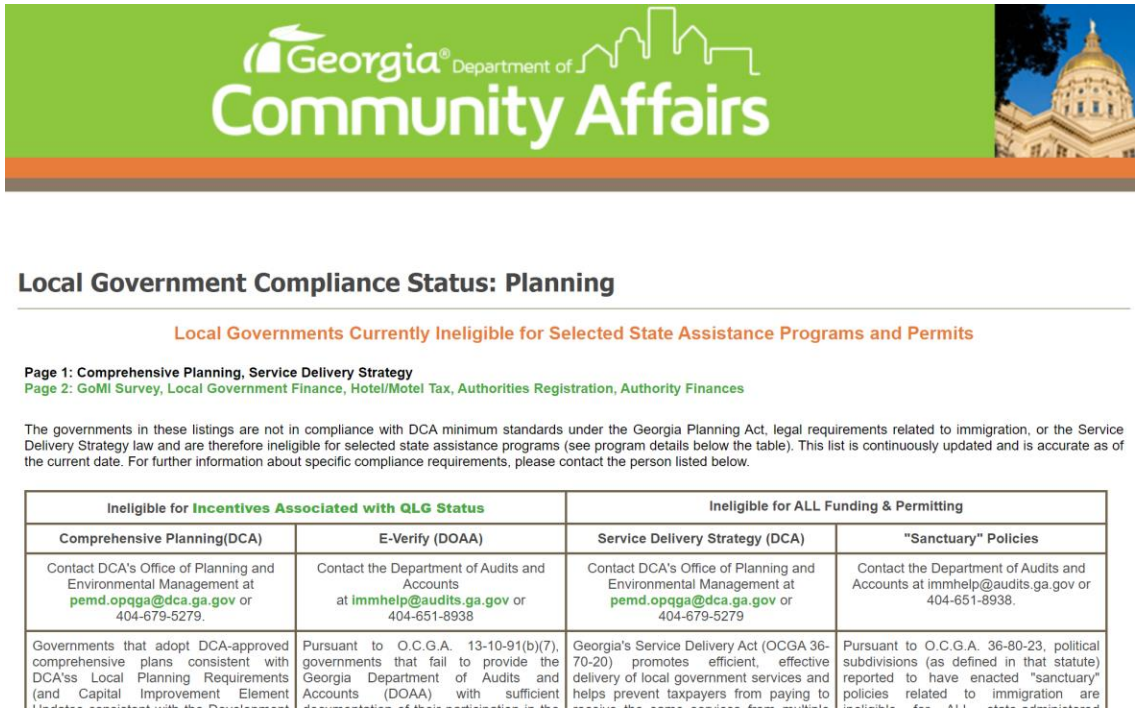
Before you apply: Are you a qualified local government?

- ✓Current, DCA-approved Comprehensive Plan
- ✓Service Delivery Strategy verified by DCA
- ✓E-Verify Compliance (federal immigration reporting) – report by 12/31 each year
- ✓Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Compliance – report by 12/31 each year
- ✓Preparation of annual financial audit and submission to DOAA, DCA and TED
- ✓Report of Local Government Finances (RLGF)-within 6 months of FYE
- ✓Report of Government Management Indicators Survey (GOMI) by 6/30

How do you know your status?

- Check with City Clerk / City Manager / Finance Director

- Comp Plan/ SDS / E verify/ Sanctuary Policies
  -



Local Government Reporting Compliance (GOMI/RLGF)

- Check with City Clerk / City Manager / Finance Director
- Updated regularly

Local governments – cities, counties, and consolidated governments – listed on this document are not in compliance with state reporting requirements and are barred from receiving state-appropriated funds from the Department of Community Affairs until the specified reports are received. Local governments are required to have the three most recently years' Government Management Indicators Survey (GOMI) and Report of Local Government Finance (RLGF) submitted to the Department of Community Affairs.

Jurisdictions on the following list have not submitted one or more of these six requirements. This list is sorted alphabetically by jurisdiction and lists each missing report with its corresponding fiscal year or year. The RLGF is due 6-months after the end of each jurisdiction's fiscal year, and the GOMI is due June 30th for all jurisdictions.

This PDF document is updated on a weekly basis. If you have any immediate questions regarding a jurisdiction's status or respective compliance requirements please e-mail Research@dca.ga.gov.

List Prepared and Accurate as of May 29, 2023

GOVERNMENT	REGION	FYE	DELINQUENT REPORTS

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Department of Audits and Accounts

- Check with City Clerk / City Manager / Finance Director
-

You’re Not Ready

If something is incomplete on the list; do not proceed with applying for grants.

- Ineligible – even in an emergency
- Can’t prove a track record of financial management

Realize it could take time to get caught up.

Get help!

- Accountants; Auditors; Regional Commissions; CVIOG; GMA

Before you apply- Registrations

- ✓ **Login.gov account**
  - Sign into multiple federal agency websites using just one account, i.e. one username and one password for you to remember.

- ✓ **Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)**
  - A unique nine-character number used to identify your organization. Used to be DUNS.

- ✓ **System for Award Management (SAM)**
  - A SAM registration is required to work with federal agencies as a contractor and to receive federal grants.
    - ❖ EBIZ Point of Contact (CRITICAL LINK)
- ✓ **Grants.gov**
    - ❖ EBIZ Point of Contact (CRITICAL LINK)
- ✓ **FEMA Grants Outcomes (GO)**
- ✓ **Just Grants (BJA Grants)**
- ✓ **Ecivis (DCA portal)**

Trend Unique Online Submission Portals

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Recommended Best Practices

- Maintain a secure log of all usernames and passwords for various registrations and grant portals
  - Keep a record of documentation submitted so that it is consistent year over year
- Be mindful of the username, password, phone numbers, etc. that are used for the accounts
  - People leave
- Do not use personal email addresses of elected officials or staff; should be city owned.

Before you apply: vision / needs

Know the answers to the following:

- What is your vision for your community?
- What are your needs?
- What problems are you trying to solve?

- Local Comprehensive Plan
- Recreation Master Plan
- Downtown Plan
- Redevelopment Plan
- Needs Assessments
- Engineering Reports
- Budget
- Town Hall/Community Meetings

Before you apply: Analyze!

Protects Against

- Chasing grant dollars that don’t fit
- Wasting time and money
- Unsustainable growth/development

Enables you to

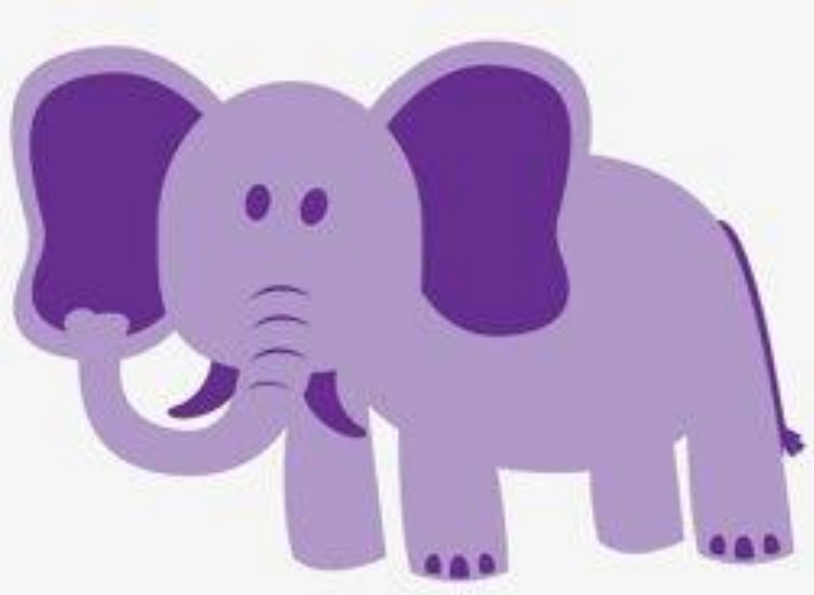
- Be flexible and open to new opportunities, but have a short checklist to review to make sure it fits
- Respond when opportunities arise

Potential Funding Opportunity?
Answer the Yes/No Questions

- Eligible Applicants - is that you?
- Eligible Activities - what you want?
- Ineligible Activities - what you want?
- Match Requirements - do you have?
- Performance Period - can you meet the deadline?

Don’t Invest Your Time – Be Willing to Walk

The Funding Opportunity



Your Project/ Your Need

When you are ready to apply, you must do these two things

#1 READ (the application package in its entirety)

#2 FOLLOW (the instructions)

Project Development and Grant Writing Take Time!

- ***Identify Key Players***
  - Grant Writer
  - Grant Administrator (may also be your Grant Writer)
  - Architect/Engineer/other technical experts as applicable
  - Beneficiaries

- ***Action Plan***
  - Who is doing what by when?
  - Are there pre-application requirements?

Allow sufficient time to develop the project and write the application

- Always keep the reviewer in mind. (It’s not about you.)

- Allow sufficient time to develop your project and write the application

- Signs of a last-minute application
  - The narrative is usually confusing and choppy.
  - The budget doesn't reconcile.
  - Fatal Flaw: Basic items are missing.
  - Pro Tip: Checklists are critical (create your own/modify to your process).

Who Can/Should Write Application?

- Good storyteller – Someone who can paint the picture for the "bureaucrat with a checklist"
- Comfortable with technical language
- Experience with the funding source
  - Know the grant or agency lingo/expectations
  - How to give your application the winning edge

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Pay attention to the Rating and Selection Processes

- Find out from the funding agency what they think makes a grant proposal competitive.

- How are they selecting projects (Points are common)?
  - Does your project meet the minimum?
  - Are there bonus points you can claim?

- Core criteria for most review processes are:
  - Feasibility
  - Impact
  - Strategy

Don’t Be Shy: Ask Questions and Pitch Your Project Concept

- After you’ve reviewed the instructions, if something isn't clear;
  - Ask questions
  - Don’t assume
  - Pitch Your Idea
  - Arrange a call with someone from the funding entity or attend the applicant's workshop
  - It will save time for everyone!

Review the Program Track Record

- They can’t fund what hasn't been requested!
  - The list of eligible activities is often much greater than what has historically been requested.
- Each program has specific Goals and Objectives.
  - Your objectives should be clear, specific, and measurable and should match the funding agency
- Ask if the program rewards innovative proposals.
- Get to know your competition.
- ***A take-away:*** Are you applying from a pool of similar applications that is “flooded”? How can your application stand out?

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Budgets: Critical Element

- What do you need funds for?
- What is your source of match? ***Prove it!***
  - Go above and beyond minimums, if you can
- What can you leverage?
- Anything budgeted should be discussed.

Make a Compelling Argument

- ***"Tell the Story – Sell the Story" Another definite "take away"!***
- First paragraph should be the grabber. Make it a good one.
- Tell the 'story' in an interesting way to keep the interest of the reader.
- Use data and language that creates a sense of urgency: "We must do this for the following reasons:"
- Most grant funding is based on review panel consensus.
- You want a champion for your project on the review panel!

General Application Tips

- Answer the questions asked.
- Succinct, clear language. Word limits are becoming more common.
- Simple sentence structure. Read it out loud. If you can't do it in one breath, it's too complex.
- Carefully use font changes to make a ***point.***
- Include pictures if allowed and if relevant.

Make it easy on the reviewer

- Organize your material into a logical coherent presentation.
  - Follow their instructions in the order they give them.
- Use supporting documentation to your advantage.
  - Include it if it's relevant
  - You don’t get points for how much your application weighs
- Present a relevant, realistic, comprehensive solution.
  - Tell them how your project meets the program/agency goals

Congratulations!
Now What? (Post Award)

- Get and stay organized!
- **READ and FOLLOW instructions.**
- Develop a master schedule for the project.
  - Milestones, Deliverables, Quarterly Reporting, Financial Reporting
  - Responsible Parties
  - Include inspection/monitoring visits, close-out process, recordkeeping requirements
- The *other* Golden Rule: He who has the gold rules.
- Grantors want you to be successful – they developed the program and funded you so build relationships that help you help them.
- Maintain eligibility.

Competition is Stiff:
What to do if your grant isn't funded

- Don't be discouraged!
- Most funding agencies will provide critiques or scoring sheets.
  - If you re-apply, don't automatically re-submit the same exact application. (Hint: It wasn't funded the first time)
    - Requirements Change
    - New Data
    - Missing Elements
- Maintain a positive relationship with the funding agency.

Grant Resources- Where to find opportunities

- Regional Commissions, GMA and ACCG newsletters and websites
  - https://www.gacities.com/Resources/Grants-and-Award-Opportunities.aspx
  - https://atlantaregional.org/infrastructure-investment-jobs-act-resource-database/?
- DCA **Economic Development Finance Packet** is a comprehensive listing of state, federal, and local programs that are designed to promote economic development and business enhancement in Georgia
- Specific agency websites (FEMA, DOJ, DCA, DNR, GDOT)
- Grants.gov website (federal grants)
- Leading Funding Sources
  - Infrastructure and Community Development
  - Economic Development
  - Public Safety
  - Recreation

RECAP

- KNOW WHAT YOU WANT/YOUR VISION/YOUR PLAN
- BE PREPARED – QLG, REGISTRATIONS, AUDITS, REPORTING
- **READ AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS**
- MAKE SURE YOU'RE GIVING THEM WHAT THEY WANT
- BE WILLING TO PASS
  - IF IT DOESN'T FIT OR
  - YOU'RE NOT READY
- INVEST IN YOUR OWN PROJECT

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