Top Takeaways from Our "Before the Grant" Webinar

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Setting priorities and selecting the right projects are cornerstones for winning grants. Successful projects are built on the pillars of strong leadership, communication, organization, coordination, and partnership. Set your municipality's grant application up for success by following these top takeaways from our April 1, 2025, webinar, *Grant Basics: Before the Grant.*

1. **Picking the "right" project is critical.** Funders look for projects that meet local priorities, are supported by residents, are well thought out, and make for exciting grant announcements.
2. **Clarify whether your project is a *municipal* project or a *community* project.** Know who is accountable and legally obligated in the long-term. Develop written agreements (lease, maintenance, finance, etc.) to memorialize those obligations so these things are clear.
3. **Understand (and respect) roles, responsibilities, and accountability.** Advancing local projects and priorities is a team activity. Build a strong team and value each person on it. Accountability ultimately rests with whoever has legal authority.
4. **Make the Legislative body a partner in the project.** If the municipality is the eligible grant applicant or has long-term accountability, it is crucial to inform and engage the legislative body (City Council/Selectboard/Trustees) early and often to build grant readiness. If your municipality has one, keep the Municipal Manager/Administrator informed and engaged too.
5. **Policies and procedures help you.** They provide consistency in your municipality's approach and process for grants and continuity across changes in leadership. They set expectations so everyone involved knows what is required of them.
6. **Get your project in relevant documents.** Grantors like to know the project is part of the municipality's long-range plan (municipal plan). Some grants require, or provide bonus points for, a project's placement on specific priority lists.

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7. **Communication and coordination are crucial.** It's about the work, who does it, and the decisions that guide the work. Talk with your residents and your fellow local officials (Treasurer, Clerk, etc.) early and often about the project.
8. **Grants require capacity.** Sometimes your bench is full, and sometimes you need to deepen it. We published ideas for how you can increase your capacity for grants.
9. **Grant readiness equals success.** You need to have the right foundation in place. This includes written policies and procedures, strong communication, and knowledge about grant requirements and how grants work.

If you missed the webinar, you can visit our Grant Basics Recordings and Resources webpage to access the webinar and presentation.

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