

APPLICATION TIPS

GRANTS MADE EASY IN NINE SIMPLE STEPS

01. Think about the project you need done and match your needs with the available funds. It is sometimes helpful to review all grants that can help you complete the project and that align with your needs. Make sure to account for the timelines (when it is due and other necessary dates) as well as other vital information including the match (the contribution you/organization will need to make to “match” the grant funds to create the entire project cost) needed, documents needed, letters of support, etc.

02. Once you have a list of all funding sources and supplemental information, prioritize the funding sources based on the timeline, eligibility, needs, length of time a grant will take to complete, etc. It is helpful to weed out grants that are more strenuous for fewer funds. What will align with your needs the best?

03. It can be helpful to hire a grant writer or to find someone in the organization who has experience or is a good writer that can team up with the person who knows the most about the project. There needs to be a healthy blend of facts and project information and storytelling about who you are, what you need, and why. Telling a story will really help your grant stand out and will allow you to move further in the selection process. Though you do need to tell a story, don't get lost in the story. Be concise while illustrating your needs.

APPLICATION TIPS

04. Ensure you have all the necessary information. A cost estimate by a board member will not go as far as a direct quote from a contractor. It is a good idea to receive multiple quotes from a variety of companies to cover all bases and project options. Exact numbers can really help the grantor know that you have done your research and know exactly what you need to complete your project. Some grants also require additional studies, reports, letters of support, etc. to receive funding, so make sure you have all information in advance.

05. A budget is required for all grants that show how much money you need and where it will be spent. There can be specific rules for each grant so be sure to read carefully to create the best proposal possible. In addition to creating a budget and following the given guidelines, consider inflation of costs that may occur while you complete a project. If a grant will take several years to complete, the cost of materials may go up. For example, a particular project was bid at \$78/sq ft for liner and then by the end of the three years, the price was \$123/sq ft

06. Talk to the grantor and attend pre-grant meetings if possible. These provide additional and helpful information to you as the applicant.

APPLICATION TIPS

07. Matching dollars (see number one for definition) cannot all come from in-kind (you doing the work, donation of equipment, etc.). Some matching will need to be cash, and can also come from other grants and donations. You cannot match a state grant to another state grant unless explicitly stated and confirmed. You can however match other types of grants and donations together to enable the project to move forward with less cash upfront.

08. When thinking about match, or expertise needed to make a project happen from start to finish, it can be helpful to think of partners that align with your vision and goal to help with the project. Sometimes firms (engineering and otherwise) can help with your grant writing as well as design, cost analysis, maintenance plans, etc. and can be a great benefit to the project. If you are unsure of where to go or would like a more robust approach, consider checking out partners. A partner can also walk you through permitting, environmental impact studies, etc. which can be a major piece to a project and funding ask. DARCA has a list of sponsors that can be helpful in this process with you. Reach out to the ones that make the most sense for your project and see if partnering can benefit you.

APPLICATION TIPS

09. When putting together your project and funding ask, think about a maintenance plan to keep the project running longer. Also, consider other pieces that can be added to your project to include greater benefit and large-scale support. For example, instead of a simple dam repair, other components can be added for fish passage, trash racks to keep the dam clean and protect habitats, bank stabilization, water quality benefits, or hydropower so that your benefits touch more people, habitats, and animals that will improve quality of delivery but also life along a stretch of river or ditch.

