

Are you Grant Ready?

TIP SHEET



BASIC LEVEL – Minimum Requirements to Apply for Grants

These are the foundational elements you **must** have in place before pursuing grant funding.

Tracking Grant Opportunities

- ☐ Subscribe to funder email lists and share relevant opportunities internally.

Project Development

- ☐ Maintain a list of project needs with realistic cost estimates and timelines.

Financial Systems

- ☐ Maintain accounting and reporting systems that meet state and federal audit standards.
- ☐ Understand common state and federal grant reporting requirements and confirm staff capacity to meet them.
- ☐ Have a documented process for tracking match funds including in-kind contributions.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

- ☐ Define clear roles and accountability for grant management, budget tracking, and funder reporting.

ADVANCED LEVEL – Fully Grant Ready

If you have the Basic Level elements **and** the following, your agency is well-positioned to compete for and manage multiple grants.

Tracking Grant Opportunities

- ☐ Assign someone to actively monitor state and federal funding opportunities.
- ☐ Maintain a shared calendar of upcoming grants and known funding cycles.
- ☐ Align grant cycles with Capital Improvement Project (CIP) schedules.

Project Development

- ☐ Maintain current strategic, infrastructure, and capital plans that clearly identify priority projects.
- ☐ Ensure project cost estimates and timelines are accurate and updated, with flexibility to respond to new funding opportunities.
- ☐ Require early coordination between Project/Program Managers and Finance.

Centralized Grant Management

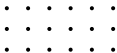
- ☐ Use a centralized grant management system to coordinate grant applications and award management across departments.
- ☐ Track all grant awards, deadlines, reporting requirements, and expenditures in one shared system.
- ☐ Store grant agreements and required documentation within the system.
- ☐ Assign clear cross-department roles and maintain ongoing coordination.

Financial Systems

- ☐ Use unique project or grant codes to separate costs by funding source.
- ☐ For advance-funded grants, have protocols in place to prevent commingling of funds (e.g., special funds separate from the General Fund).

Partnerships and Collaboration

- ☐ Build and maintain relationships with local and regional partners.
- ☐ Engage partners early to strengthen applications and demonstrate broad community support.





MASTER LEVEL — Highly Competitive and Scalable

If you have all Advanced Level elements **and** the following, your agency is positioned to efficiently pursue grants.

Project Development

- ☐ Keep priority projects “shelf ready” with concise summaries outlining goals, partners, estimated costs, timelines, and community benefits.

Standard Grant Materials

- ☐ Maintain ready-to-use templates for letters of support, project maps, staff bios, and required attachments.
- ☐ Keep organized records of community engagement, including summaries of surveys and public meetings.

Application Review and Approval

- ☐ Use a streamlined internal review process that ensures timely input from Finance, key staff, and governing bodies before submission deadlines.

