

Application Tips

Here are some general tips on how your application can score well in the review process including some examples of strong and weak answers to the grant criteria subsections. Reviewers look for projects that will have a positive and measurable effect on your community. Be concise, provide concrete information and back up answers with documentation.

General Tips

- Complete all parts of the application. Remember there is a Part 1, Part 2, Part 3 and a Part 4 and each must be submitted with the application. Keep the application in order.
- Label all attachments clearly.
- Attach any additional pages at the end of the application.
- Ensure your budget is accurate.
- Answer all questions thoroughly. Answers that are vague, incomplete or just do not answer the question will score poorly.

Grant Criteria

G. Cost Savings, Tax Impact and Return on Investment

1. **Cost Savings:** Discuss how projected cost savings are to be achieved for each applicant. The projected cost savings shall not include unexpended fund balances, other grant funding or State incentives.

A strong response will demonstrate the anticipated savings that can be realized within a three year period and maintained on an ongoing basis as a result of the project. Remember savings are exclusive of the cost of the grant and savings need to be as realistic as possible. How the project will save time and money through staff reductions or result in measurable staff efficiencies are good examples of cost savings.

2. **Tax Impact:** Quantify the potential property tax impact of the cost savings and describe how the tax impact is both meaningful and sustainable.

A strong response explains the actual existing tax rate and shows the projected changes resulting from the project. Information on assessed values and average household property taxes should be included

3. **Return on Investment:** Quantify the long term return on investment of the project and describe why the project is a good investment of state and local resources.

A strong response will clearly illustrate a positive return from the investment of state resources. This will be shown by dividing total long term anticipated savings by the initial state investment.

H. Project Need and Municipal Benefits

1. **Project Need:** Explain the existing conditions that created the need for the project, including increases in local expenditures, increases in property taxes, the need for better service, and the

impact of state or federal mandates on the delivery of the service(s). Explain the consequences if this project is not undertaken.

A strong response will detail the long-term costs related to the specific service delivery and explain how the project will mitigate any unsustainable increases. This should include an historical analysis of municipal expenses and revenue for the service. The specific impacts and benefits to be achieved through this project, while explaining the expected measurable improvements in service delivery should be explained. The analysis should also include an analysis of “no-action”.

2. **Municipal Benefits:** Excluding cost savings, please explain the benefits of the project. Explain how the outcomes of the project will be an improvement over existing conditions. This may include changes to the administration or management structure of the organization, changes in the delivery of services or improvements to the public access to services.

A strong response will describe the specific improvements and benefits to be achieved through this project and explain the anticipated measurable improvements in the qualifications and/or efficiencies of staff. Benefits might also include, increased hours of operation, new online availability, more accessible locations for services or a reduction in opportunities capital facilities to monitor and maintain.

I. **Work Plan, Budget and Linkages**

1. **Work Plan & Budget:** Provide a detailed and realistic project budget and work plan which includes a project timeline, specific phases and tasks, and cost for each task and deliverable. List the qualifications of people assigned to manage this project (local staff and/or consultants.)

A strong response will provide a detailed Schedule and Work Plan that lists all tasks and who will perform each task and when milestones will be completed. The costs are detailed by task and the legal procedures which might be necessary at each stage are addressed. A strong response will also provide detailed budgeted tasks costs which can be documented by estimates, pricing sheets from suppliers, detailed expenditures or bid documents. Detailed consultant costs for services will be provided and the local share amount will be listed in the resolution. Details on how the entire project will be funded should be included along with budget comparison to other grants or projects

2. **Local Linkages:** Document how the proposed project fits into, or is a recommendation of a local government’s or regional entity’s long term plans to realize cost efficiencies and savings. Examples might include local or regional comprehensive land use plans, regional economic development plans or capital improvement and asset management plans.

A strong response will explain the each municipality’s long term plans for cost efficiencies and savings and shows how the project fits with these goals. This could be documented by referencing a local or regional capital investment plan or asset management plan.

3. **State Linkages:** Explain how the proposed project links to other State community development programs, such as the Brownfield Opportunities Areas (BOA) program, the Local Waterfront Revitalization (LWRP) program, Energy Efficiency activities or other Local Government Efficiency studies.

A strong response will include detailed information explaining the opportunities for Smart Growth, Regional Development or Energy Efficiency. The analysis might include how the project utilizes existing infrastructure,

conserves green space, is served by mass transit, reduces vehicle miles traveled to conserve energy, provides mixed uses, encourages diversity of housing choices and prices, establishes connections to recreational and health benefits (encouraging walking), or reduces costs to encourage development. If the project is for the development of a new facility to consolidate activities, the applicant needs to address the disposition of the other facilities. Information on how the project will encourage future opportunities should also be explored.

J. Management Capability and Local Support

1. **Management Capability:** Demonstrate that the lead applicant has the financial and administrative ability to sustain and complete the project by describing past experience with planning, community development or infrastructure projects.

A strong response will detail non-grant related projects successfully completed on time by lead applicant and co-applicants. It also describes staff's expertise for managing the project. The Lead Applicant should demonstrate that it has the funds available to complete the project prior to reimbursement.

2. **Local Support:** Demonstrate local support for the project. This can include citizen petitions and other support materials, including letters of support from community organizations or collective bargaining units and media coverage.

A strong response will include resolutions from participating municipalities that clearly state the intent to apply jointly for a LGE Grant and clearly identify the source of the local share money. If Intermunicipal Agreements are attached, they will show support from co-applicant's municipal leadership. Letters of support from elected officials, appointed boards, department heads, NYS Senators and Assembly members, members of Congress and public organizations that support application should be included.