

Local Government Efficiency  
Local Government Efficiency Grant Program  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

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Please note that this is for the **Local Government Efficiency Grant** Program only.  
Questions for the Local Government Citizens Re-Organization Empowerment Grant program are available  
on the Department of State's website: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/communityprojects/funding.html>

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## **COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

### **Application Process**

- Q: Is it a problem if we miss a grant application deadline?  
A: Yes. Applications received after a deadline will be disqualified. It does not matter when the application was shipped or postmarked, it must arrive on time at the address listed in the application. No fax or e-mail transmissions will be accepted.
- Q: When were grant applications released?  
A: Applications were posted on the Internet and mailed December 15, 2011.
- Q: How much money may be applied for?  
A: Grants shall not exceed \$200,000 per municipality involved in the application up to a maximum of \$1,000,000.
- Q: How long should the applications be?  
A: Provide enough information to adequately address the Sections G, H, I and J of the Part 2 application form.
- Q: Are letters of support helpful?  
A: While not required, letters of support from elected officials (federal, state and local), involved departments heads, community leaders and businesses on organization letterhead, document support for your application.
- Q: To whom should a letter of support be addressed?  
A: Address correspondence to the Secretary of State. Correspondence should clearly identify the project.
- Q: Will the Department of State answer my grant application questions prior to application submission?  
A: The Department of State will accept written questions from potential applicants by mail and electronically. To the extent possible, each inquiry should cite the RFA section and paragraph to which it refers. Written questions will be accepted until the dates posted on the cover of this RFA. Responses will be posted as noted on the cover of the RFA.
- Q: If my application is awarded a grant, what's the next step?  
A: Developing a contract with the Department of State.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

- Q: May a municipality receive two grant awards?  
A: The grant program does not prohibit the awarding of multiple grants to the same applicant.

- Q: If an application is from a village and the town which contains it, is that two municipalities?  
A: Yes. The town and the village are separate municipalities.
- Q: Is a BOCES considered a municipality?  
A: Yes. A BOCES is an eligible applicant, in certain instances, pursuant to the program legislation. Please refer to the application guidance for eligibility limitations.
- Q: Are water and wastewater districts eligible?  
A: Yes, special improvement districts are eligible.
- Q: May a Sewer Authority be a co-applicant in LGE?  
A: Yes.
- Q: May a community college be an applicant?  
A: No.
- Q: Are private sector businesses eligible as applicants?  
A: No.
- Q: Is a county Agricultural Association an eligible entity to participate in an application with another municipality?  
A: No.
- Q: Would a County Water and Sewer Authority and/or County Soil and Water Conservation District be considered DIFFERENT from a County Highway Department for the purpose of applicant eligibility? In other words, would either of those entities qualify as a separate applicant in a joint application with a County (highway dept)?  
A: A water or sewer authority is an eligible applicant; however a Soil and Water Conservation District or a Highway Department is not.
- Q: May a town and village apply to purchase a new piece of equipment?  
A: Yes, only when such joint equipment purchases are vital to the project efficiency and cost savings are to be achieved.
- Q: May funds be used to purchase software to be shared among three towns and the county that will allow for improved deployment of highway equipment without regard to jurisdictional boundaries?  
A: Yes, only where such expenses are vital to the project efficiency and cost savings are to be achieved.
- Q: Could the grant be used to fund a feasibility study and site analysis for a multi-use building?  
A: Yes, when a jointly used building will be used to house a functionally consolidated service.
- Q: Is a feasibility study and a financial analysis for consolidation of the town and village police forces an eligible project?  
A: Yes.
- Q: May two school districts apply for a grant to study consolidation?  
A: Yes.
- Q: What are the differences between a consolidation and dissolution?  
A: In a consolidation two municipalities combine to form a new entity. For example, two towns may consolidate to form one new town. Dissolutions refer to a situation where a town or village is dissolved into an adjoining town or village.

- Q: Is the upgrading or replacement of an existing E911 & EMS telecommunications system an eligible project?  
A: Yes, but only if multiple, independent communications systems are going to be consolidated into a single system operated by a single municipality.
- Q: Are Libraries an eligible applicant?  
A: Association Libraries and Public Libraries are eligible applicants. For additional information please see: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/libs/pltypes.htm>.
- Q: Can two cities study a joint police department under a Local Government Efficiency Grant?  
A: Yes. A joint police department, or other similar municipal departments, would be a functional consolidation, eligible under the Local Government Efficiency Grant.
- Q: Can a municipality apply for a Local Government Efficiency grant to have a new police service by contracting with the county for additional service rather than forming their own police department?  
A: No. Since the municipality is not currently providing police service this would be considered as a 'new' service and it would not be an eligible activity for the grant program.

## Smart Growth

- Q: What is Smart Growth?  
A: Smart Growth encourages community planning and development in priority economic growth areas where water and sewer infrastructure is available; encourages redevelopment of existing community centers; and protects important natural and historic resources, including water quality.
- Q: Why is Smart Growth considered in government efficiency?  
A: The State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act has designated the Department of State as an "infrastructure agency" and a state infrastructure agency shall not approve, undertake, support or finance a public infrastructure project, including providing grants, awards, loans or assistance programs, unless it is consistent with the smart growth principles.

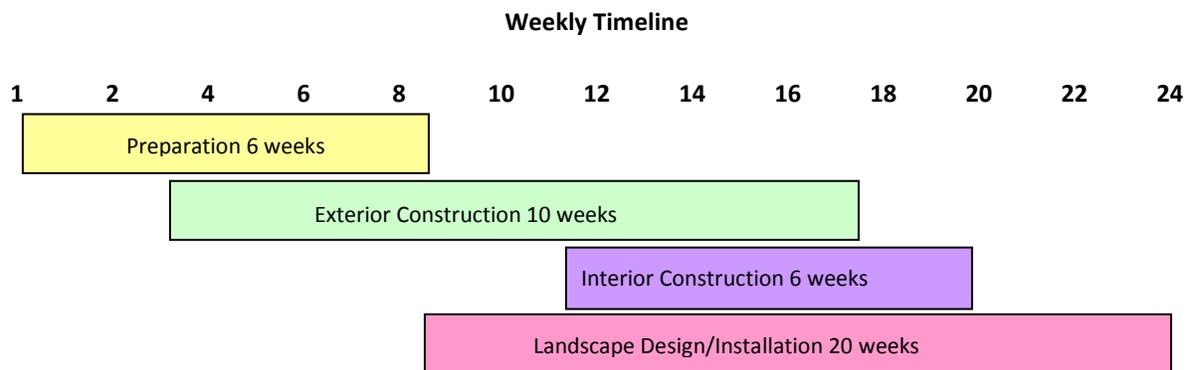
## Intermunicipal Agreements (IMAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

- Q: What is an intermunicipal agreement (IMA)?  
A: An IMA is a cooperative or joint municipal venture authorized by General Municipal Law Article 5-G.
- Q: Why do I need an IMA?  
A: An IMA is important because it formally outlines the responsibilities of each municipality in providing the service.
- Q: What IMAs must be submitted with the application?  
A: IMAs relevant to the application, such as an existing agreement to share services.
- Q: What is the difference between a Memorandum of Understanding and an Intermunicipal Agreement?  
A: Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) are most commonly used between two state agencies, which cannot "contract" with one another. At least two parties are needed to form a contract and state agencies are considered to be one entity - the State. For this purpose, MOUs essentially take the place of contracts in order for state agencies to memorialize agreements with one another. State agencies may, however, contract with municipalities or decide to use an MOU with a municipality when appropriate. IMAs are written agreements among two or more units of local government which may also contract with one another. Both are written agreements between municipalities to jointly undertake an activity that each participating municipality has the power to undertake on its own.

- Q: How is an IMA different from a Resolution?
- A: A Resolution sets forth the intent of the elected officials, and the vote is filed by the Clerk. In contrast, an IMA provides the tasks and details and assigns responsibility to various municipal departments to carry out the intent in the Resolution.

## Work Plans

- Q: When will proposed projects need to be completed?
- A: The tasks should be completed within 36 months from the project start date. Under certain circumstances contracts may be extended.
- Q: What are the differences between a work plan and a time line?
- A: A work plan documents major milestones to be achieved, the tasks between milestones and who is responsible for the work. A timeline is a graphic representation of tasks over time or a chart that shows the sequencing, coordination and overlap of tasks over time. A successful applicant will illustrate the ability to effectively manage the project tasks with a reasonable timeline.



## Estimated Cost Savings

- Q: In developing the costs savings portion of the project, may we consider any funds received from the state into the savings?
- A: No. Cost savings should be estimated as future savings that will be realized due to consolidation, shared services or cooperative agreements.
- Q: What is the Return on Investment?
- A: Return on Investment is the amount of Cost Savings projected over 10 years expressed as a percentage of the LGE grant. It is calculated by multiplying Cost Savings by 10 and dividing the result by the amount of the expected LGE grant.
- Q: What is tax impact and why is it measured?
- A: When cost savings are divided into the full market value of assessed property (Full Value) and multiplied by 1,000, the result is an estimate of the annual savings per \$1,000 of assessed value that will be realized by taxpayers as a result of the project.
- Q: How do we account for cost savings incurred by our municipal partners?
- A: Each partner should identify cost savings associated with the project in the same way as the applicant. Individual tax impacts and aggregate return on investment will automatically be calculated within the worksheet.

- Q. Will our actual cost savings be measured against expectations?  
A. Yes. At contract close-out, actual savings achieved or anticipated will be measured against projected cost savings to gauge the success of a project. The Department of State may monitor project outcomes after contract close-out to track cost savings projections.
- Q. In our cost savings analysis, should inflation factor into the amount of costs saved in future years?  
A. No. To keep applications consistent, do not inflate projected cost savings.
- Q. Do the cost savings have to be direct savings to the municipality or may they be savings to taxpayers through some other benefit (e.g. Reduced fire insurance costs through reduced risk rating)?  
A. For application purposes, we need to see direct municipal cost savings and/or improvement of services. However, a cost/benefit analysis showing indirect savings may also be used to support your proposal.

### **Budget:**

- Q: When may we begin to incur costs that will be funded under the grant?  
A: Project expenses incurred after April 1, 2011 – if eligible – may be reimbursed.
- Q: May an advance of grant funds be requested?  
A: No. Only requests for reimbursement are permitted.
- Q: What are the restrictions that apply to financing the "local match?"  
A: "Local Match" shall be money from the local municipalities. This money shall be from the local budget and not from other grants.
- Q: May the 'local' share be of in-kind value?  
A: No. The 10% 'local' share must be in the form of cash contributed by the involved municipalities.
- Q: Will the property that is already owned by one of the municipalities be considered usable as a portion of the 10% local share?  
A: No, property does not qualify as part of the local share.
- Q: How is the 10 percent local share accounted for in the vouchers submitted for reimbursement?  
A: For every \$10 that is accounted for in a reimbursement request, the state will provide the municipality \$9, until the project is complete.
- Q: May funds from other sources such as the Office for Community Renewal, the Department of Environmental Conservation, or other state or federal funds be used towards the 10% 'local' cash match?  
A: No. The 'local' cash match must be local funds from the applicant and/or co-applicants. DOS accounts for a grantee's 'local' cash match by withholding 10% of the eligible expenses submitted for reimbursement.
- Q: May grant money be used to purchase software?  
A: Yes. The software must be related to the joint project activities.
- Q: May the grant be used to retire the debt on a fire truck, in anticipation of district consolidation?  
A: No.

- Q: The school district and village are considering the creation of a joint facility. May the grant be used to pay the person who runs the facility?
- A: No part of the grant shall be used by the applicant for recurring expenses such as salaries. Certain transitional personnel expenses essential for the effectuation of the joint activity shall be eligible for a period not to exceed three years. Transitional personnel may include staff hired to train existing employees on new systems or equipment needed for the coordinated or consolidated service delivery. This may also include staff hired to oversee the implementation of the project. The Department of State will not reimburse for existing personnel.
- Q: Could the grant be used to pay the salary of the police chief who oversees a consolidated police force?
- A: No. The Department of State will not reimburse for existing personnel. The police chief's salary would be considered a recurring expense, which is not eligible for funding.
- Q: May the grant money be used to pay the costs of the grant writer or contract management?
- A: No.
- Q: Is new construction allowed under Local Government Efficiency Grant?
- A: Yes, if a facility is being expanded to accommodate additional equipment and personnel in the implementation of a consolidation or shared service. Grants may be used for capital improvements, transitional personnel costs or joint equipment purchases **only** where such expenses are vital to the project efficiency and cost savings are to be achieved.

## Resolutions and Certification

- Q: Must the resolutions in support of the application be submitted by the application deadline also?
- A: No. All resolutions in support of the application must be received by April 18, 2012. Applications without the required resolutions shall be deemed incomplete and will not be reviewed. Resolutions are an important confirmation that the application is supported by the municipal governing boards listed as applicants and co-applicants in the submitted applications.
- Q: Who must pass the authorizing resolutions?
- A: Resolutions must come from a governing board: (county board, city council, village board of trustees, town board, school board, library board or a water or sewer authority board as the case may be). All cities and some counties are governed by their individual charters, in some cases, the chief executive or chief elected officer has the authority to apply for grants. However, the best policy for cities and counties is that a resolution is made by the governing board.
- Q: Is voter approval needed to apply for a grant?
- A: No. Support in the form of resolutions by the Lead Applicant and all co-applicant municipalities is needed prior to application.
- Q: Do I need to wait until the application is complete before my local board passes our resolution in support of the joint application?
- A: No. The applicants and co-applicants do not need to wait until the application is complete. While you should ensure that you are clear of the prospective responsibilities of each applicant, the resolutions required for submission is just a statement of each applicant's support of the proposal and agreement to move forward with the project if you are successful in the application process.