Steps to a Successful Grant Application

Source: Community Energy Association funding guide for community energy and climate change initiatives

Preparing an Application

1. Review the Funding Guide to determine if programs are available to support your project.

2. Ensure a good fit. Check your project's goals and objectives against those of the funding program. Review evaluation criteria and ensure that your proposal responds directly to each or as many as possible.

3. Contact funding agency. Describe your project and ask:

    • Does this project meet the funding program's goals and objectives?

    • What are key elements of past successful applications?

    • What are evaluation criteria (if not listed on form)?

    • Can supporting material (such as letters of support) be submitted after the closing date?

    • Are previous applications available for review?

    • Is Council or Board endorsement of the application required?

4. Create a timeline for application preparation and an application package checklist, including:

    • Obtaining executive committee, Council or Board endorsement, if required

    • Identifying and/or obtaining supporting funding

    • Identifying possible partners and reaching agreements

    • Writing the proposal and ensuring senior management review and final edits

    • Securing letters of support

    • Developing a budget

    • Copying and filing

    • Submission deadline, format, and method of delivery (postmarked document, email, etc.)

5. Review application package checklist and ensure that all requirements have been met.

6. Submit the proposal on time in the required format.

Application Content

1. Follow the recommended format of the proposal.

2. Focus on key elements and ensure that you clearly address evaluation criteria. Include everything you think is important but be succinct – longer is not better.

3. List resources your agency has committed or will commit, to ensure the success of the project.

4. Identify partners and note how you will work with them to ensure success.

5. Describe any planned community engagement processes, if required. Consider using innovative approaches.

6. Facts and figures are helpful. If possible, calculate or estimate the magnitude of benefits of the project.

7. A budget can be either calculated or estimated, but it should not necessarily reflect the maximum amount of funding available unless you can justify it. Provide a reasonable level of detail for costs, itemize matching funds, and mention in-kind contributions, if any.