

# Navigating Federal Grant Applications

A Guide for Small and Medium Utilities

## Identify Funding Opportunities



### Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership (GRIP) Grant

- ❖ Topic Area 1: Grid Resilience and Utility Industry Grant
- ❖ Matched existing grid modernization projects

### Project Details

- ❖ Line capacity upgrades
- ❖ Replace aging underground cables
- ❖ Enhance protection settings
- ❖ Modernize construction standards



### Small Project Option: Congressional Direct Spending (CDS)

- ❖ EPA State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STA)
- ❖ Earmarked funding from Congressional Representatives

## Application Process

### GRIP Requirements



Once submitted...

**Don't expect a quick response**

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## Application Results

### Declined

- Clear and logical project tasks
- Strong project management team
- Letters of support from community stakeholders
- Plans for DEIA engagement, training, and maintaining union support for labor needs
- Clear commitment to hiring best-practices and local engagement

### Strengths



- Didn't describe innovative qualities
- Didn't adequately address the risks or mitigation plans
- Didn't justify how federal funds benefited or accelerated planned activities
- Didn't explain how the goals align with the state
- Community Benefits Plan goals too generic

### Weaknesses



## Lessons Learned



### Involve stakeholders early

- Build relationships in your community now

### Ask questions

- Grant administrators are responsive



### Set SMART Goals

- Set clear and realistic expectations
- Can you really do the work?

### Use AI, but know its limitations

- Helps stay concise with multiple writers
- Don't rely on it to do everything



### Pay attention to details

- Read the fine print in the application
- Watch for FOA updates

### Be flexible and patient

- It takes a long time to get an answer once submitted



### Find the Right People

- Grant writers are helpful, but not required
- Check in and meet frequently

### Make sure funds on hand

- Be prepared to pay up front
- Some grants require cost match



## Don't Forget to Celebrate Your Wins!