

GRANTS 101: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FINDING FUNDING AND GOING AFTER IT

**MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

**Jennifer M. Raitt, Executive Director
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**

jraitt@nmcog.org | 978-454-8021 x 120

www.nmcog.org

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Many sources: Federal, State, Regional, Public/Private
- Current funding sources emerged in part from the pandemic and in answer to the question ‘*What is infrastructure?*’ CARES/ ARPA and now the IRA and BIL are providing significant funding for a range of municipal functions, programs, services
- How do you position your community to access, secure, administer these funding opportunities?
- Who pursues these opportunities?
- Why secure additional resources for your community?
- What are the administrative requirements?

IS YOUR COMMUNITY ELIGIBLE?

- Having a strong planning foundation
- Demonstrating need – data resources
- Understanding impact and outcomes
- Demonstrating ability to administer/ spend funds
- Showing ability to provide match (in-kind or direct)
- Showing local leadership/ talent or consultant who can manage project details, reporting, invoicing, and other requirements
- Meeting prerequisites
- Fulfilling other goals of the Commonwealth

BUILD A STRONG PLANNING FOUNDATION

- Comprehensive Plan/ Master Plan
- Community/ Select Board or Council Strategic Priorities
- Studies/ Analyses/ Reports
- Community input/ engagement
- Community buy-in/ agreement

DEMONSTRATE NEED

- Planning reports/ studies
- Metrics that align with the project/ program
- Demographics/ trends
- Categories of potential need for funding:
 - Capacity building (technical support/ expertise/ studies/ analyses)
 - Program development/ program support
 - Supplies/ materials/ equipment
 - Personnel to deliver programs/ services
 - Design/ engineering
 - Capital/ construction
 - Match/ leverage

TRACK IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

Outcomes demonstrate what change/ benefits that will happen as a result of the funding received.

| Project | Input | Output | Outcome |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Art Sculpture | Material for sculpture/ hours creating/ installing art | Number of sculptures created/ installed | Increased park use |
| Senior Day Care services | Volunteer hours/ materials used/ provided | Number of older adults contacted, engaged, current in program | Improved health outcomes/ participation in COA activities |
| Park restoration | Resources expended for designs, permitting, materials | Number of acres restored | Increased open space/ passive or active recreation use/ activities, “Friends” group |

RECEIVE, SPEND, PERFORM

- Past performance/ track record
- Management – fiscal oversight, leadership
- Experts on team or in community
- Capacity to procure services/ materials
- Realistic timeline, integration with other funding sources, activities (phases)
- Permits in queue or in hand to proceed
- Community engagement/ input plan

MATCH FUNDS (IN-KIND OR DIRECT)

- Municipal funding sources (operating, department budget, special revenue, other grant source)
- In-kind hours (tracking time) – staff and volunteer

MANAGE AND TRACK THE DETAILS

- Project management
 - Organizing/ tracking details
 - Regular communications
 - Monthly, quarterly, annual reports
 - Invoice generation or drawdowns/ requests for funding
 - Tracking metrics
 - Coordinate with funding source/ request changes/ extensions

MEET FUNDING PRE-REQUISITES

- Grant program eligibility and criteria varies
 - Specific grant area goals or program areas
 - Plans or studies that must be in place prior to accessing funding source
 - Permits, designations, votes, other funding in place
 - Compliance with state laws and executive orders
 - Fiscal good standing
 - For discretionary grants, community's grant may be scored based on other municipal actions

FULFILL OTHER GOALS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

- Big themes: climate resiliency/ carbon reduction; housing/ economy; equity/ engagement; environmental justice communities; action oriented; local/ regional collaboration/ partnerships
 - Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030
 - State Historic Preservation Plan 2023-2031
 - Destination 2040 (Long Range Transportation Plan, Metro Boston)

GRANTS AND SUPPORT

Commonwealth Community Grant Finder:

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/community-grant-finder>

- Community Compact Cabinet (IT, Efficiency and Regionalization programs)
- Transportation – Complete Streets FY 2024 Round 2 Tier 3
- MassTrails (likely opening November 2023 with a deadline in February 2024)
- (DESE) Elementary and Secondary Education Grants (All FY24 opportunities here: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/current.html>)
- MA Cultural Council – (Local Cultural Councils, Cultural Facilities, Gaming Mitigation)
- Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant

GRANTS AND SUPPORT

Planning ahead for FY24 spring rounds and FY25:

- Community One Stop for Growth – multiple grants
- Fish and Wildlife - Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations (PARC)
- Energy and Environmental Affairs – Community Planning Assistance; Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning; Green Communities
- Office of Coastal Zone Management - Coastal Resilience
- MA Historical Commission – MA Preservation Projects Fund
- Environmental Protection - Sustainable Materials Recovery Program
- Transportation – Safe Routes to School (Signs/ Line, Infrastructure); Community Transit Grant Program (vehicles, FY24, operating and mobility management FY25); Complete Streets; Massachusetts Rural Transit Assistance Program - Helping Hand Mini Grants

GRANTS AND SUPPORT

Sample of Upcoming Federal Opportunities

- DOE - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant
- DOT - Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program
- USDA - Powering Affordable Clean Energy
- Institute of Museum and Library Services- Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program
- HUD - Green and Resilient Retrofit Program

DOT Navigator: <https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator>

Dashboard of Investment: <https://www.nlc.org/resource/rebuilding-america-tracking-federal-investment-in-local-infrastructure-projects/>

GRANTS AND SUPPORT

- National League of Cities offering bootcamps over the next two years for one or more municipalities (if pursuing together)
 - Broadband, Water, Roads, Bridges, Rail, Resilience, Safety, Electric Vehicles, Buses, Ferries, Environmental Remediation, Public Transportation, Clean Energy, Power, and more.
- Philanthropy Massachusetts <https://philanthropyma.org/>
- Regional Planning Agencies <https://massmarpa.org/>
 - Metropolitan Area Planning Council
 - <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/federal-funding-center/>
 - Berkshire Funding Focus
 - <https://berkshirerefundingfocus.org/>

THANK YOU!

**Jennifer M. Raitt, Executive Director
Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**

jraitt@nmcog.org | 978-454-8021 x 120

www.nmcog.org