

GRANT FUNDING 101: TIPS AND CHECKLISTS

There are many sources of grant funding available to advance walking and biking in your community. Consider the full range of funding opportunities and identify the key factors in preparing a successful funding application. These checklists will help you get organized.

Determine a Source

Some grants may be oriented towards transportation, health, the environment, or safety. Others may be specifically for infrastructure or programming. Working with partners from different fields and addressing multiple objectives is an effective way to secure funding from multiple sources.

Example Sources of Grant Funding

Transportation

- Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP)
- Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Program
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations Call for Projects
- US DOT Smart Cities Challenge
- US DOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)

Safety

- Caltrans Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)
- Caltrans System Safety Analysis Report Program (SSARP)
- California Office of Traffic Safety Grants
- USDOT National Highway Traffic Safety Grants Pedestrian Campaign

Health

- Center for Disease Control Partnerships to Improve Community Health (PICH)
- Local or County Health Department
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grants

Environment

- California Climate Investments Program (CCIP)
- USDOE Clean Cities Program
- US EPA Grants
- AQMD Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction (MSRC)

Getting Started on a Successful Funding Application

Purpose and Goals

Understand the purpose and goals for your project. The project should include a combination of elements, safety and disadvantaged communities. Use the SMART (<http://bit.ly/2abGPNy>) framework as a guide. Some example goals include:

- Increase walking and biking
- Improve overall transportation safety
- Enhance economic development opportunities
- Create community engagement through events
- Improve public health
- Benefit disadvantaged communities
- Demonstrate local and regional consistency and/or significance

Timeline

It is estimated that some grant applications take between 6 and 12

months to prepare. Plan your timeline backwards from the due date and create internal deadlines.

- Monitor grant websites for application release dates
- Determine Council or Commission approval dates and schedule lead-in time
- Create internal deadlines with ample review time
- Plan for any match requirements and develop in-kind resources where possible

Active Transportation in Existing Plans

Cross reference existing plans to identify a precedent and highlight common themes. Existing plans to reference might include:

- General Plan
- Bicycle Plan
- Pedestrian Plan
- Active Transportation or Mobility Plan

- Safe Routes to School Plan
- Sustainable Community Plan Health Element

Partnerships

A strong grant application will include partners from various disciplines and audiences. Multi-disciplinary projects score well on applications and include:

- Participation from elected officials, the City Manager, inter-departmental partners, community groups, business groups, advocacy leaders, and other well-known and respected community members
- Support letters from other partners
- Technical Advisory Committee to prepare and review the application
- Applying as a joint or multi-jurisdictional application to connect a gap
- Pairing up with a college or university to assist with research

Key Inputs for a Successful Funding Application

Political Will and Leadership

Political will is essential in building consensus around the project before the application. Important considerations include:

- Ensure the project has support from elected officials, staff level decision-makers, and community or business groups
- Align the program/project with policies and priorities from internal partners like elected officials and department heads as well as external partners
- Develop a story for how the project will make a difference in the community

Public Outreach

Gaining community support is an important project objective and should be conducted before the grant, during the project, and after project completion.

- Implement a Public Outreach Plan before the project, to be included in the application
- Develop workshops and charrettes

- Collect qualitative and quantitative data (questionnaires, meeting notes, sign in sheets etc.) accessible to everyone
- Use new technologies or creative ways for outreach (crowd sourcing, online comments, photo contest, school assembly visits, etc.)
- Take photos of the outreach for the grant application
- Target outreach to disadvantaged communities
- Include meetings with elected officials, directors, and internal staff or form a
- Technical Advisory Committee as part of the outreach

Data Collection

Statistics add validity to your application. Qualitative and quantitative data should be used to support your application and may include information such as:

- Data trends (national, county or city data)
- Specific local data where relevant (e.g. crash statistics, baseline bike and walk mode share)
- Public outreach questionnaire and comments

- Random sample data at project site (e.g. field counts, observations, walk and bike audits)

Supporting Documentation

Applications require supporting documents, which may take time to collect. Grow support from:

- Support letters (e.g. bicycle coalitions, chambers of commerce)
- City Council or Board Resolutions
- Project Commitment letters

Finishing Touches for a Successful Funding Application

Application Style

The application should tell a story about your community and the project's benefits.

- Provide technical descriptions and anecdotes by telling a story
- Include maps, renderings and illustrations
- Use project site and field photos
- Support statements with local data collected by advocacy groups, youth groups, etc.

Online Applications

Verify your agency is able to complete an online application. It may require coordination for firewalls and IT and the need to:

- Obtain internal approvals to access to online applications
- Set up online user names and passwords
- Plan to submit early in case the application site is overwhelmed on the day submissions are due