

1. So, Are We Gonna Do This or What?



Before you even decide to apply for grant funds.... evaluate. Assemble a small team to discuss the advantages and challenges of taking on a grant's responsibility, and then validate that your project is ready to start should a grant be awarded. Confirm that staffing is also in place to manage that grant, as you now have a responsibility to any funders to keep them updated on progress.

If those two basic conditions aren't locked down.... don't apply! No funder wants to invest in something that's delayed or disorganized, so be "ready-to-go" before you submit any requests.

2. Don't change your spots!

A common mistake by anyone who's needed project funding. You look at every grant opportunity posted and try to repackage yourself to meet the eligibility requirements, even if it's not a good fit.



No one wins here... you waste time writing an application that won't pass the first review, and the reviewer loses patience with an ineligible request, which doesn't help your odds for future applications! Recognize the funder's purpose for making grants available, and truthfully assess whether your initiative matches their intent. If it doesn't, keep looking for opportunities that do.

3. Good housekeeping



Read the application fully before starting. Collect all the data and details you'll need for each section, and then.....
ANSWER THE QUESTIONS!!

It annoys reviewers to read through lots of descriptive filler or non-relevant information when they simply want a clear response. Remember to complete all sections (including required attachments, signatures, etc.) and submit **at least one-day before the application deadline**.

Why? If it's an on-line grant submission and technology is down from either end on deadline day, your hard work will be wasted by the sheer technicality of missing it. Remember to print out the confirmation notice with your grant application number when it's been assigned you'll need that number for funder communication.

4. Sizzle is fine, but you need the meat too....



Applications need substance. A common mistake is to include too much emotional filler (i.e. stories, testimonials), especially in the "Need for Project" section. Balance those compelling elements with good data, and quote the source when possible. Keep data integrated throughout the text at a reasonable rate, and if charts or graphs are available, add them to the Attachments.

5. Bumps in the road

Reviewers want to know about your challenges. They understand that's why you've applied for help.... so, be honest about them in your application even if they seem overwhelming.

Just as important is showcasing your response plan with the resources (including new grant funds) you've assembled to overcome them.



6. Budget basics

Padding your budget is a no-no. Yes, everyone puts in a small buffer for line items, but seeking excessive grant funds to cover other activities not related to the grant intent isn't allowed. Also, be aware that funders aren't bailout options for previous project activities losses ... they don't provide debt funding, and are only interested in supporting the financial needs of what you're doing now.

Project costs are what they are....so, be accurate and truthful when documenting them.



7. Partners, partners, partners...

One of the best tools for successful grant awards! Funders want to see an exponential return on their investment, and understand that resources go much further when several organizations work together for a project's success.



Choose your partners carefully, even if it's only one or two, and with those who can genuinely contribute to the project's purpose.

8. Show me the money!



No one wants to be the only one with skin in the game. Funders want to see who else is taking on the project risk, especially you. Having a diverse group of project supporters (other foundation grants, federal or state funding, major gifts from wealthy individuals) increases the funder's comfort level that the risk is more evenly distributed.

That's why matching funds (\$1: \$1 or a certain %) are now generally required for most grant applications.

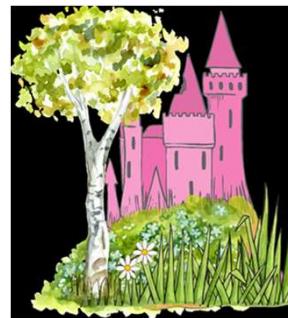
9. Site visits are a GOOD thing

Congratulate yourself if a site visit is scheduled! That indicates the funder has found your request compelling enough to consider approving it, so it's not a penalty review for a concern they have. They want to see the conditions under which you're operating, and whether you have the capacity to carry out the grant. So, show them the whole range.... the good stuff that's working and areas where you need help...especially those related to the grant application.



Have a few general take-away materials about your organization for the funder when they leave so it can be added to your grant file.

10. Reaching Emerald City



You got the grant... well done! Rejoice in this hard-won victory by sharing the news with your partners and the community.

Distribute a press release to local media sources with all the grant details, including credit to the funding organization (**NOTE:** be sure to let the funder review any announcements before they're released as a courtesy to let them edit wording about their organization.) Host a celebration to further publicize the grant and the start of the project's work.

BONUS TIP...now what?

Part of your application should include how you'll share the lessons learned from the grant's life cycle. Funders want to know that the outcome of their investment has sustainable qualities. Find ways beyond your final report to them to keep them connected with the project's (and your organization's) growth and achievements.



If you cultivate an ongoing relationship, there's a good chance that funder will help you again with new projects in the future.

These Grant Application recommendations are drawn from previous experiences with federal agencies, state cabinets, private charitable foundations and individual donors.

We hope they will provide helpful guidance as you navigate through whichever application process you're pursuing to achieve a successful grant award.

For more information.....

GOOD LUCK!

SOLARITY BROADBAND PLANNING APPROACH

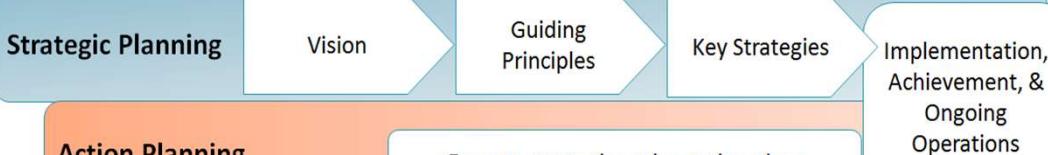
Integrated Broadband Planning

"Start with the end in mind."
- Stephen R. Covey



SOLARITY

Think strategically for the *Long term*



Act practically in the *Short term*

Community-wide Broadband Strategic Thinking

Building Community Consensus & Focus

- Demographics
- Environment
- Culture

Broadband

- Needs
- Priorities
- Oversight



Shared Ownership / Decisions

Broadband – Helping Communities to Thrive

Benefits/Outcomes

- Unified BB vision
- Best fit Richmond solution
- Quality of Life Benefits
- Increased buy-in & adoption
- Community-wide use (all user sectors)
- Economies of scale/Access Affordability
- Sustainability
- Elimination of overlapping user initiatives

Community Broadband Planning Purpose

To develop a shared vision and key strategies to guide decisions for a clear path to realize "quality of life broadband benefits" through:

- Affordable access
- Community awareness
- Community wide adoption/use

IDENTIFY & ORGANIZE



BROADBAND PLANNING STRUCTURE



DEVELOP & DECIDE



Engagement and Education



Community Engagement

Involve residents from all community user sectors to participate in the planning and sustainability of Broadband through their awareness, affordable access, and adoption for meaningful use.



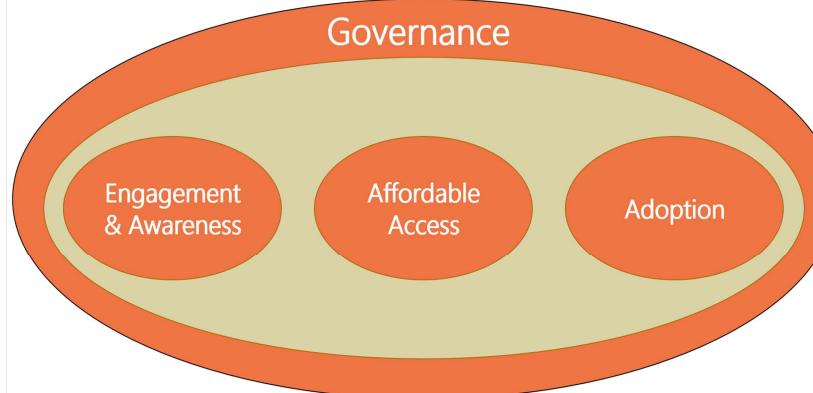
Broadband Education

Educate Richmond residents for a common understanding of Broadband as a community infrastructure with many "quality of life" benefits across all community user sectors.

Broadband Planning: A Roadmap to Success



Strategy Focus Areas



Integrated Broadband Planning

