

OBSERVATIONS – LEARNING FROM OUTCOMES

Knowledge, experience and feedback gained through the grants work accomplished over the reporting period can guide the continuous improvement of future grants work. Table 6 summarizes key attributes observed in a sample of 9 grant projects that resulted in a combination of positive and negative outcomes. Essentially, it is a practical guide to grants work do's and don'ts.

TABLE 6: KEY ATTRIBUTES OF GRANT FUNDING PURSUITS

ATTRIBUTES OF GRANT FUNDING PURSUITS: ✓ = Leads to a positive outcome ¹ ✗ = Leads to a negative outcome	BUILDING CANADA - 2015	BUILDING CANADA - 2016	CANADA 150 2015	CANADA 150 2016	STRATEGIC PRIORITY FUND 2015	BIKE BC 2016	EMERGENCY MGMT BC	CLEAN WATER WASTEWATER FUND 2016	STRATEGIC PRIORITY FUND 2017
Collaborate across CRD Departments to identify, analyze and identify a 'best-bet' project.						✓			
Demonstrate region-wide unity / commitment to a project.						✓			✓
Prepare ahead in alignment with the grant forecast and CRD mandate, priorities, and asset management best practice.			✓			✓			✓
Seek alignment of grant goals with CRD goals (strategic, service, capital, asset management).			✓			✓			✓
Follow the funding agency's advice based on long-term collaboration toward achieving common goals.						✓			
Collaborate with a funder on a project that achieves common goals, absent a formal grant call.							✓		
Ignore Agency advice on applications and/or feedback on unsuccessful applications.	✗	✗							
Ignore grant award history by asking too often for a similar project in a similar area; and/or doing so while still collecting on a similar previous grant.	✗	✗							
Submit multiple unranked proposals and with too broad a range of asks (awards, if any in this circumstance, default to the lowest ask).					✗			✗	
Submit a project that does not align with a Service.	✗	✗							
Submit a project that does not align with the CRD Regional Growth Strategy.								✗	
Fail to have grant program mandated plans in place (e.g.: water conservation plan).								✗	
Fail to recognize the impact of potential risk factors from the funder's perspective (e.g.: a pending referendum re: governance or funding).	✗	✗						✗	
Poor expectation management by submitting far more applications or bigger asks than may be 'reasonable' to win given total funding available.			✗	✗	✗			✗	

¹ GRANT PROPOSALS WITH ATTRIBUTES RESULTING IN POSITIVE OUTCOMES:

- **Canada 150 – 2015:** Panorama Recreation Arena Upgrade
- **Bike BC – 2016:** E&N Rail Trail Maplebank to Hallowell
- **Emergency Preparedness BC 2016** – Port Renfrew Tsunami Warning System Renewal
- **Strategic Priorities Fund 2017** – SEAPARC Recreation Centre Expansion

GRANT AWARD:

\$ 500,000
\$ 1,000,000
\$ 500,000
\$ 1,240,000

MOVING FORWARD – FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

While grants work across the organization contributes significantly toward attainment of organizational goals, it also has an impact on organizational capacity, both human and financial. At the application and award stage of a grant—notoriously unpredictable as to timing—CRD staff has to be nimble in juggling emergent grant work requirements alongside competing priorities. This can create workload and project critical path challenges; therefore, it is important that the CRD discern the grant opportunities with the highest probability of success.

Grants are not ‘free money’; they cost time and resources to secure and administer. Return on grant application effort through a grant award is never guaranteed, regardless of how eligible and worthy an application may be. In the highly competitive grant-seeking market, grants work is most productive under the following conditions:

1. Collaboration between the CRD and a funding agency to achieve sustainable outcomes and well-aligned goals that serve the public interest;
2. Adherence to grant proposal attributes associated with positive outcomes (Table 6);
3. Commitment to sustainable outcomes congruent with priorities identified in the suite of CRD planning processes (strategic, service, capital, and asset management).
4. Grant-preparedness through ongoing scan of the CRD Grants Dashboard Forecast to anticipate grant program alignment with CRD priorities well in advance of grant deadlines;
5. An organization-wide ‘*Think like a Funder*’ discipline (see Appendix B).

CONCLUSION

Grants are a helpful source of unpredictable funding that becomes available under circumstances beyond the CRD’s control. Grants should neither be expected as a given nor taken for granted. With a solid focus on its priorities, the CRD strives for perpetual grant-preparedness so that it competes efficiently and successfully for strategically-aligned grant opportunities as they emerge.

A fierce contender for the region’s rightful share of grant funding, the CRD manages expectations and risk, recognizing that grants are a gamble and that the demand for grant funds will always exceed a grant program’s capacity to support all worthy projects province and/or nation-wide. Rooted in its financial sustainability strategy, the CRD aims skillfully for its grant funding bonuses.

APPENDIX B: Think like a Funder

Think like a Funder is a recommended organization-wide discipline to help the Capital Regional District (CRD) aim skillfully for the region's rightful share of well-aligned grant funding in service to the public interest. The upcoming suite of Federal-Provincial **Investing in Canada Programs** (anticipated in Spring/Summer 2018) provides an example of what thinking like a funder entails.

Based on preliminary information from the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing, the CRD can prepare by thinking, planning and acting in accordance with the principles outlined below.

1. AIM FOR ALIGNMENT:

- Local Needs that align with Provincial Priorities that align with Federal Outcomes

2. COMMIT TO ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES THAT DEMONSTRATE:

- Sustainable infrastructure management;
- Proactive management of resources;
- Integrated, holistic approaches to resolve issues.

3. IDENTIFY CRD PRIORITY PROJECTS THAT:

- Are based on sound asset management;
- Meet a demonstrated need;
- Lead towards self-sufficiency;
- Support and advance infrastructure best practices;
- Enable efficiency and conservation;
- Incorporate integrated resource recovery;
- Include transferrable innovation;
- Result in sustainable service delivery
- Meet regulatory requirements.

4. FILTER FOR OUTCOME-ALIGNED CRD PRIORITY PROJECTS:

Environmental Quality Outcomes:

- Increased capacity to treat and/or manage wastewater and stormwater;
- Increased access to potable water;
- Increased capacity to reduce and/or remediate soil and/or air pollutants.

Community, Culture and Recreation:

- Improved access to and/or increased quality of cultural, recreational and/or community infrastructure for Canadians, including indigenous peoples and vulnerable populations;
- Health and education facilities that benefit indigenous populations by advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Rural and Northern Communities Stream:

- Improved food security;
- Improved and/or more reliable road, air and/or marine infrastructure;
- Improved broadband connectivity;
- More efficient and/or reliable energy;
- Improved education and/or health facilities (specific to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action);
- Inclusive of all CCR & Green outcomes.

5. CULTIVATE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO GRANT FUNDING:

The CRD can embrace the practice of aiming for fair-share access to grant opportunities across the region;

- Staff can work with the Board to ensure balance of effort to advance large urban grants for the benefit of the region and rural grants for the benefit of local communities.
- Staff will continue to seek opportunities to see how grants can be shared more equitably across the region over time.