STRONG PROJECT DEVELOPMENT, A WELL ARTICULATED NEED, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT ARE ALL KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION.

☐ Demonstrate a need for your project.

- Show that it addresses an unmet need in your community.
- Is recommended in a comprehensive, strategic, marketing, recreation or other planning document. Show that the plan was adopted if possible (resolution, meeting minutes, etc.)
- Is identified as an area of focus in a county, regional, REDC or state plan.
- Is a national objective (important in determining State's CDBG eligibility):
  - o Benefits low-moderate income persons
  - o Addresses slums or blight, or
  - o Meets a particularly urgent community development need
- Describe in terms of job creation, if possible.
- Show that you've made every effort to raise funds on your own but that the project won't happen without the funder's contribution.

☐ Show that your project is well planned.

- Write a **Scope of Work** (this will change as you gather more information)- a narrative of the work to be done.
- Technical work that you may need to develop your Scope of Work (hire consultant if needed):
  - o Conceptual Designs
  - o Maps/ schematic drawings of proposed work
  - o Construction drawings
- Opinions from contractors on steps, process and cost
- Work with regulatory agencies to determine permitting needs/hearing requirements (pre-construction analysis)
- Begin or discuss SEQRA (State Environmental Quality Review) process
- Develop a **Schedule of Work**- you don't need to use specific dates yet—e.g. Month 1-3: execute contract with funder; issue Request for Proposals (RFP) to subcontractor (with less complicated projects this can be a very simple timeline)

☐ Prove that your project has public support & has been properly vetted.

- Public informational meetings/ open house
- Make public feedback easy- website
- Included as a recommendation in an adopted plan
- Newspaper clippings
- Letters of support
- Legislator support
- REDC
- Supporting resolutions
- Favorable questionnaire or survey results

☐ **Accurately cost your project.**

- Use vendor quotes, if possible (a quote does not commit you!)
- Research the cost of similar projects
- Attach proof and use a known standard of how you calculated in-kind (value of donated materials, borrowed equipment & volunteer time), such as:
    - DOT's equipment rental rate schedule;
    - the potential funder's own standard for valuing volunteer hours;
    - prove actual market rate and explain how you derived it; or
    - document the actual value of professional services (review specific grant guidelines for eligibility).
- You will most likely be required to provide a matching contribution in cash and/or donated time, equipment, supplies, services, etc. Have your fund raising done and make sure your community is ready to fund the project up front and be reimbursed (at least partially) by the grant.

☐ **Provide evidence of good management.**

- Talk about how awesome your group is and how its membership contributes to the project.
- Talk up your project manager, grant administrator, and fiscal folks- some grants ask for resumes.
- Briefly discuss past successful projects and grant administration history.

☐ **Illustrate how the project will make a difference.**

- Provides a unique service or amenity; improve residents' quality of life.
- Spur local economy, capture underserved market demand, create jobs!

☐ **Make your project attractive!** Many applications are strengthened by the ability of the funder to publicize your project. Some questions to ask your group:

- Is our project unique or a twist or improvement of something already being done?
- Have we solicited unique partnerships and resources?
- Are we sharing a service with a neighbor or streamlining a municipal function?
- Could this be a demonstration project or model for other communities?
- How can we leverage funding through smaller sources, such as local foundations?

☐ **Keep your positive attitude!** If you do not get funded, get the application score and/or comments, if available. Is it possible to improve for the next round? Some applications will take multiple submissions before they are funded.