

# **Bloomberg Federal Assistance e311 Content Workshop:**

## **Navigating Federal Grants: Building Community Capacity**

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# Navigating Federal Grants Workshop Experts



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Government

# Workshop Goals

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- ✓ Review timely IIJA funding opportunities
- ✓ Review internal grants management models and how they impact community capacity
- ✓ Introduce strategies for building community capacity
- ✓ Discuss strategies for building key community partnerships
- ✓ Understand the barriers to building community capacity and mitigation strategies
- ✓ Present case study illustrating examples of successful community capacity building strategies and outcomes

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# Agenda

## Overview of Funding Opportunities

Grant Management Models

Assessing Statutes, Regulations, &

Policies

Forging Strategic Partnerships

Funding Opportunities to Build Community

Capacity

The Importance of Building Community

Capacity

Identifying Community Barriers

Approaches to Building Community

Capacity

Case Study

Q&A

# Overview of Funding Opportunities

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The **Infrastructure Investment and Job Act (IIJA)** includes new programs, altered programs, reauthorized programs, and regulatory changes designed to rebuild the nation's infrastructure

- Funding available over the next five years, or until expended by the federal government
- Numerous bureaus across 17 federal agencies will administer funding
- Most funding will pass through federal agencies to state and local governments
- Funding mechanisms vary and include formula-based allocations, competitive grants, and block grants
- Federal rulemaking is at the early stages for many programs, including those that are altered or new

# Overview of Funding Opportunities

## Funding Available through the Infrastructure Investment and Job Act

**\$700+ B**

available to state governments

**\$460+ B**

available to state governments for new or modified programs

**210+**

unique programs accessible to state governments

**90+**

unique new or modified programs accessible to state governments

**\$220+ B**

available to local governments

**\$100+ B**

available to local governments for new or modified programs

**140+**

unique programs accessible to local governments

**60+**

unique new or modified programs accessible to local governments

# Overview of Funding Opportunities

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- DHS - State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program
  - \$1 billion in pass-through funding to local entities to address cybersecurity risks and threats
- DOT - SMART Grant Program
  - \$100 million/yr to implement advanced technologies to improve transportation efficiency and safety – *deadline Nov. 18*
- EPA - Investment Reduction Act
  - \$5 billion in competitive grants to states, tribal governments, and municipalities to develop and implement greenhouse gas reduction plans
  - \$3 billion in competitive grants to address clean air and climate pollution in disadvantaged communities
  - \$476 million in funding for grants to update air pollution monitoring networks
- Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program
  - \$573 million to improve safety and mobility – *deadline Oct. 11*

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The Importance of Building Community

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## Grant Management Models

Identifying Community Barriers

Assessing Statutes, Regulations, & Policies

Approaches to Building Community

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Q&A



# Overview of Grant Management Models

## Decentralized

- Departments go their own route with minimal to no coordination
- Least desirable model, given lack of overall coordination



## Hybrid

- Centralized function provides some coordination across various aspects of grants management lifecycle
- Responsibility and accountability is ultimately placed on department



## Centralized

- Grants management office; oversees / manages grants citywide
- Responsible for partnering with departments on grants management lifecycle



## Considerations:

- Centralized and Hybrid models create greater coordination across departments, leading to greater success
- Decentralized model inhibits cities' ability to approach the grants management lifecycle holistically

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Q&A

# Assessing Statutes, Regulations, and Policies

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- Engage your legal department
  - Discuss local, state, and federal requirements that impact operations
    - Usage of beneficiary relationships
    - CSLFRF "Revenue Replacement" and Uniform Guidance
  - Share funding opportunities and their regulatory requirements
- Determine flexibilities to
  - Address current needs
  - Reduce barriers
  - Increase impact

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Q&A

# Forging Strategic Partnerships

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- Who?
  - Nonprofits or coalitions/alliances
    - National Council of Nonprofits (e.g., Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits)
  - Foundations/funders
    - Council on Foundations (e.g., Arizona Community Foundation (ACF))
  - Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
    - Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (IUPUI) (e.g., ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation)
  - Other municipalities
  - National and state associations/coalitions (e.g., NACo and NLC)
  - Professional associations (e.g., NGMA and GPA)
- When?
  - Start now building these relationships and partnerships
  - Let them inform decisions to collaborate on applications or request letters of support
- Why?
  - Reach targeted communities
  - Cast wider net

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Q&A

# Funding to Build Community Capacity

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- Understand that many capacity-building grants will support planning processes, to include
  - Engaging with stakeholders
  - Assessing and prioritizing community needs
  - Determining resources needed and timeline
  - Facilitating conversations among partners and with potential grantors
- Utilize e-grants systems like [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to identify funding opportunities
  - Grants 101 training
  - Subscribe to receive alerts when relevant Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) are posted or updated
    - For grantors, establish single site for holistic opportunity listings
- Obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through General Services Administration (GSA) using [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)
- Reference funding opportunities available through the [Local Infrastructure Hub](#)

# Funding to Build Community Capacity

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- Update your grant programs/subrecipient management
  - Pre-award barriers
    - Risk assessment
      - Automated systems
    - Peer review criteria
    - Formalized grant procurement
      - Competitive
      - Posting/timeline
      - Outreach/centralized site
  - Post-award barriers
    - Payment processing
    - De minimis rate application
    - Single audit requirements



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## **The Importance of Building Community Capacity**

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# The Importance of Building Community Capacity



## What do we mean by Community Capacity?

- The ability of the community to
  - Identify agreed-upon goals, and;
  - Carry out those goals



## A community that “has” capacity, is able to

- Identify stable, consistent, long-term priorities for funding
- Secure competitive funding
- Deliver grant-funded services in compliance with grant requirements



## A community lacking capacity

- Misses out on opportunities
- Carries elevated compliance risk
- Fails to compete and thrive

# The Importance of Building Community Capacity

## What does collaboration look like?

Engage in community-wide strategic planning

Prime to be a co-applicant

Provide evidence of community support

Share funding opportunities

Align strategic priorities with community plans

Serve as grant recipient, subrecipient/contractor, or recipient to deliver funded goods or services



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## Identifying Community Barriers

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Case Study

Q&A

# Identifying Community Barriers



## Lack of Continuity

- Inconsistency and instability in shared priorities
- Political cycles tend to reset established priorities



## Lack of Investment in Core Organizational Competencies

- Shared or under-trained finance staff
- Organizations doing more with less



## Chasing the Funding

- Nonprofit organizations struggle to maintain operating resources
- Year-to-year swings in funding can cause chaos
- Pursuing available grants can mean an organization strays from its core mission and capabilities



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Case Study

Q&A

# Approaches to Building Community Capacity



## Build Continuity

- Identify consensus community priorities
- Conduct continuous engagement
- Take advantage of planning grants to support this work



## Leverage Your Status as a Funder

- Align funding with what your partners already do best
- Build consistent funding programs - one-offs tend to exacerbate capacity issues
- Invest in operating support for organizations that do work aligned with priorities
- Be open to partners that may not have the current capacity to deliver outcomes or administer the grant



# Approaches to Building Community Capacity



## Invest in Organizational Capacity in the Community

- Cultivate relationships with collaborative outside resources
- Develop capacity-building practices as core grant deployment strategy
- Require or incentivize participation in grant administration or organizational development TA programs as a condition of a grant
- Consider capacity-building grant program to close equity gaps in organizational capacity
- Set clear expectations with subrecipients around grant compliance, reporting, and documentation
- Provide technical assistance by sending expert advisory personnel, conduct training, hold conferences, or prepare/disseminate technical publications





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**Case Study**

Q&A

# Case Study: Nueces County, Texas

## Nueces County, Texas

- Located on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico
- Population over 360,000
- Rural communities surround urban cities, including Corpus Christi
- Received a \$70.3 million CSLFRF allocation
- Allocated over \$44 million to projects designed to promote a strong, equitable recovery from the pandemic and address **community needs** caused and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Community Needs Identified During Engagement Sessions:

- Mental health
- Drainage and stormwater infrastructure
- Public safety and emergency response
- Small business and nonprofit support
- Food and housing insecurity
- COVID-19 response
- Access to government services
- Parks and community centers

# Case Study: Nueces County, Texas

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The County committed to using CSLFRF funds in a **transformative way**, motivating them to

- Engage diverse group of community partners and residents
- Explore unmet needs and identify shared goals and priority areas
- Develop joint planning process with partners

The County developed a **Strategic Fiscal Recovery Plan** to align funding decisions with community needs and opportunity areas. This plan helped

- Maximize the impact and reach of CSLFRF funding
- Build local capacity to use this funding
- Deliver on the overarching goals of the ARPA CSLFRF program



# Case Study: Nueces County, Texas

## How Nueces County Built Community Capacity

- Leveraged existing partnership with the Nueces County Development Commission to research immediate and long-term economic and community impact of proposed CSLFRF projects
- Hosted roundtable meetings to discuss shared goals and funding for regional projects
- Awarded over \$1.5 million in CSLFRF to nonprofit organizations to boost their capacity to effect positive change
- Pursued projects previously considered infeasible due to lack of available funding or regional coordination

*CSLFRF Project  
Spotlight:*

### **Mental Health Restoration Center and Transitional Housing**

Nueces County awarded \$5 million in CSLFRF funding to projects that transform mental health crisis services in the County by investing in a new mental health restoration and diversion center and a transitional housing program.

# Case Study: Nueces County, Texas

## CSLFRF Project Spotlight: Agape Ranch Project

- **Mission:** Create foster care community in south Texas – 24-home neighborhood with homes, recreational areas, and respite care providers
- **Challenge:** Efforts to obtain land and build this neighborhood started in 2016; largely halted during COVID-19 pandemic
- **Solution:** \$269,000 CSLFRF allocation to address impact of pandemic and fill funding gap





# Case Study: Nueces County, Texas

## Agape Ranch Project: Strategic Approach to Program Design

- **Project and Eligibility Scoping Meeting:** Met with Agape Ranch leadership to learn about proposed project
- **Entity Designation:** Scope of project and pandemic impact allowed nonprofit to classify as beneficiary, for simplified compliance and to put funds to use faster
- **Document Compliance:** Developed program administration tools to facilitate compliance with CSLFRF and Uniform Guidance regulations
- **Award Funds:** Draft beneficiary agreement in compliance with CSLFRF and applicable regulations



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Capacity

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Capacity

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Approaches to Building Community

Capacity

Case Study

**Q&A**

# Q&A

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**For more information, visit:**

<https://bloombergcities.jhu.edu/program/e311>

**Connect with us online to learn more.**

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