

Exploring NY's Consolidated Funding Agencies

On June 11th, I attended a workshop at Binghamton University that offered deep insight into New York's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) and the Consolidated Funding Application. The sessions I attended focused on local government efficiency, NYS department of labor grants, environmental protection fund and water revitalization, and parks, recreation, and historical properties.

Back in 2012/2013, the State of New York decided to streamline funding applications by establishing the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Through a single portal, municipalities, non-profits, businesses, and school districts can apply for a piece of the \$750 million (2018 total) in State funding. Here's how the State website explains it:

"As part of Governor Cuomo's efforts to improve the state's economic development model, a NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was created to streamline and expedite the grant application process. The CFA process marks a fundamental shift in the way state resources are allocated, ensuring less bureaucracy and greater efficiency to fulfill local economic development needs. The CFA serves as the single entry point for access to economic development funding, ensuring applicants no longer have to slowly navigate multiple agencies and sources without any mechanism for coordination. Now, economic development projects use the CFA as a support mechanism to access multiple state funding sources through one application, making the process quicker, easier, and more productive."

Here are some quick highlights about the program:

- 1) CFA offers streamlined approach for funding requests**
 - a. A single portal allowing access to over \$750M
 - b. Over 30 programs from 11 state agencies

- 2) Round VIII Timeline**
 - a. Opened May 1st, closes July 27th, 4pm SHARP
 - b. October 1, 2018 Regional Council Updates and Scores Due
 - c. Late fall – Round VIII awards ceremony

- 3) 2018 Competition breakdown**
 - a. \$150M in capital grants
 - b. \$75M in tax credits
 - c. \$10M to each region for downtown revitalization initiative
 - d. Total available, \$750M from over 30 programs across 11 state agencies

- 4) NYS priorities:**
 - a. Invest in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry
 - i. Transportation sector
 - ii. High levels of R and D
 - iii. Multi-national anchor companies

- b. Transform Food and Agriculture Industry
 - i. Southern Tier will be a leader in agriculture and technology
 - ii. Be a key supplier of food to east coast

- c. Promote the Southern Tier's Innovative Culture
 - i. Be recognizable as a highly desirable place to learn, visit, and grow a business
 - ii. Nurture innovation and entrepreneurs

While the CFA empowers organizations to apply for funding in a more efficient matter, it is highly recommended that those seeking funding collaborate with their regional economic development council along with local development agencies and/or Chamber of Commerce. Those of us in Tompkins County fall under the "Southern Tier" economic development council, and our local development organization is Tompkins County Area Development (TCAD).

There is also some "fine print" to be aware of with these grants, which is one of the reasons why it's highly encouraged to collaborate with local agencies. **Some of these items include:**

- 1) Most grants will only go as high as 20% of the total cost of your project
- 2) These are reimbursement grants, which means you're responsible for paying for the project first, then the state provides your grant upon meeting the stated criteria.
- 3) Depending on the project, reimbursement may come in phases (completion of project, review of criteria, expected new jobs are filled, etc.)
- 4) Some projects require a local gov't resolution before an application can be submitted
- 5) When applying, make sure to connect your project(s) directly to State priorities and mention those priorities by name. This will help you stand out and improve credibility with the review committees.

These are great opportunities for the community, but also require much thought and collaboration. While it may be hard to turn something around before the July 27th deadline, it would be worthwhile to start thinking about emerging or potential projects that would be good candidates for the 2019 round.

For Trumansburg, I think potential exists to find funding for downtown/Main St. revitalization, new recreational spaces (most likely in conjunction with Trumansburg Community Recreation), tourism marketing (in conjunction with Trumansburg Area Chamber of Commerce) and historical building renovations, with the Trumansburg Conservatory being one potential candidate.

If you have ideas for potential candidates for this funding, or ideas for potential projects that could benefit from this funding, please email me at Hannon@Trumansburg-ny.gov .

Here are a few links with more information:

CFA application homepage: <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>

Council of the Arts application info: <https://www.arts.ny.gov/>
REDC of the Southern Tier: <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/southern-tier>
Tompkins County Area Development: <http://tcad.org/>
Trumansburg Area Chamber of Commerce: <http://trumansburgchamber.com/>
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.tompkinschamber.org/>

- Keith Hannon