



FUNDING STORMWATER PROJECTS

Lessons Learned and Practical Strategies for Local Governments

May 5, 2026 / 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. (Eastern)

www.florida-stormwater.org

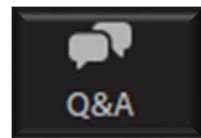


- **Technical Issues**

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- **Questions**

Type questions in the Q&A Box in the webinar toolbar



- **Presentation and Recording**

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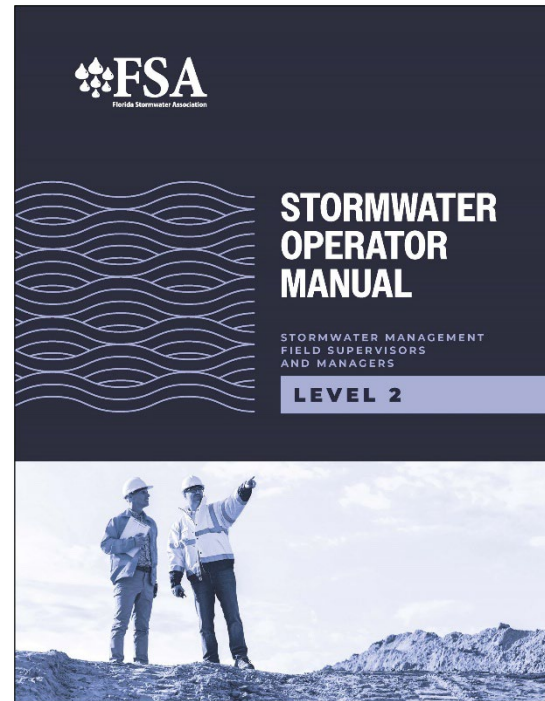
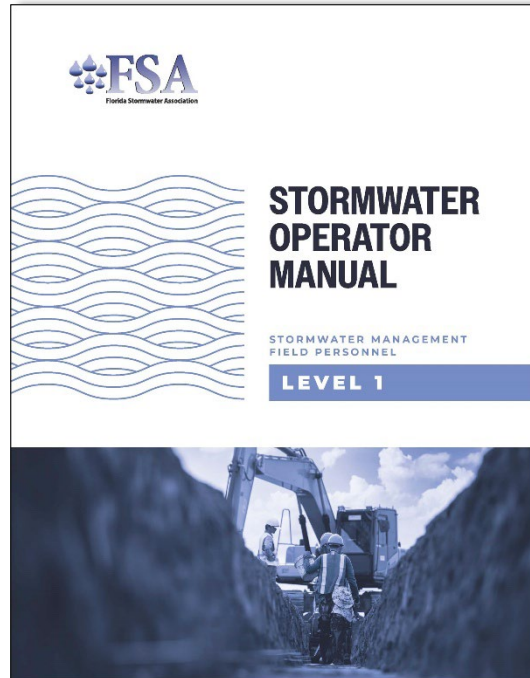
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Grant Funding Strategies

Lessons Learned from Grant Writing

Lee Hale, DBIA, PE | May 5, 2026



Definitions

Grant Planning – What should be completed before the application window opens

Grant Writing – Submitting the grant application and all that entails

Grant Administration – All post award activities

Grant Stacking – Utilizing more than one grant on a single project

Project Phasing – How to phase a project to support grant stacking

Grant Percentage – The percentage of the total budget the grant will fund


Agency – A government department (FDEP, FDEM, Florida Commerce, EPA, HUD, etc.)

NOFO – Notice of Funding Opportunity, or the rules that you follow to apply



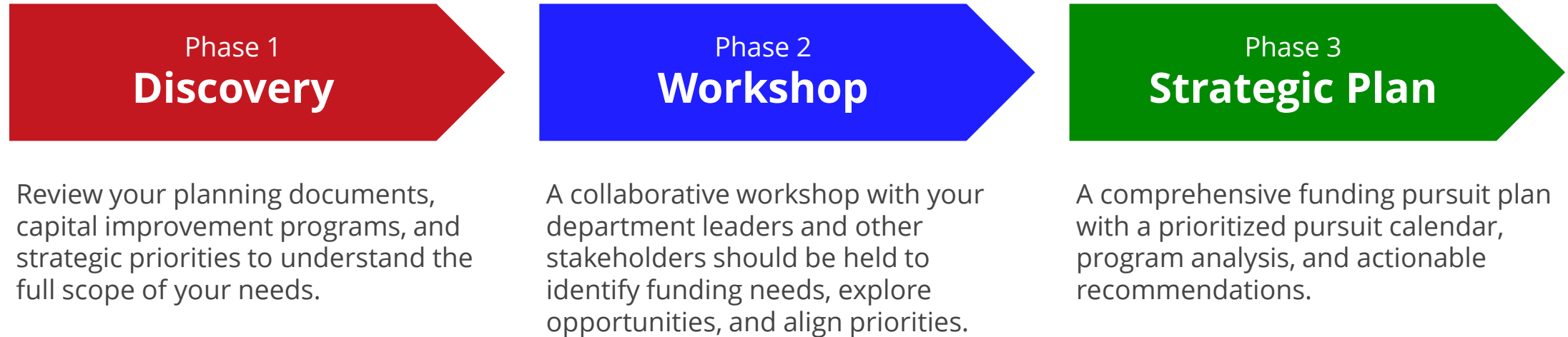
Grant Planning

The biggest lesson I want you to take away today is that a grant can't be won prior to the application, but it can be lost



Our Planning Process

A structured, three-phase approach can help maximize your funding potential.



Built around your goals. Drive with strategy. Deliver with clarity.

A decorative horizontal bar at the bottom of the slide, divided into five colored segments: red, blue, green, purple, and yellow.

Strategic Advantages



Targeted Funding Alignment

Projects should be matched to the most competitive and relevant funding programs, maximizing award potential.



Proactive Cycle Planning

A 12-month pursuit calendar ensures you're prepared when application windows open — not scrambling at deadlines.



Cross-Departmental Coordination

A single, unified process should capture needs across all departments, eliminating siloed planning and duplicated or adversarial effort.



Stronger Competitive Position

Strategic project framing, phasing, and grant stacking techniques increase the likelihood and size of awards.



Outcomes

Prioritized Pursuit Calendar

A 12-month roadmap of recommended funding opportunities, organized by application timeline and strategic fit.

Program Analysis

Concise reference summaries for each funding program — purpose, eligibility, funding levels, and key deadlines.

Project-to-Program Matching

Clear recommendations on which projects align with which programs, including creative approaches like phasing and grant stacking.

Preparatory Action Items

Specific steps to complete before application windows open — from planning documents to certifications to documentation protocols.

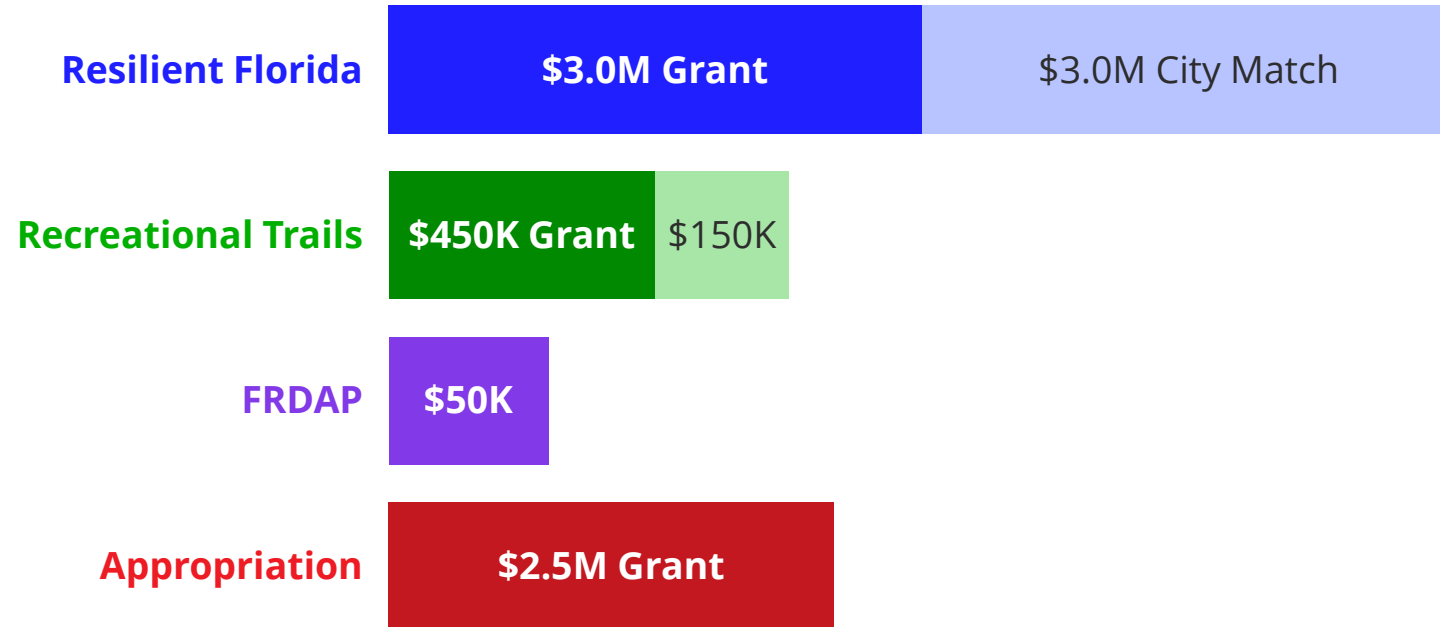
Annual Framework for Continued Success

A living strategy document that can be reviewed and updated each year as priorities evolve and new programs emerge.



Grant Stacking in Action

Example: City of Madeup — Cypress Creek Stormwater & Recreation Project



Project Totals
Total Project
\$9.15M
Grant Funding
\$6.0M
City Investment
\$3.15M

One project. Four funding sources. 66% offset.

By designing a stormwater project with trail, recreation, and legislative components, the City of Madeup layers eligible programs to reduce its out-of-pocket cost by two-thirds.

Grant Writing

Common pitfalls in grant applications and how to avoid them



Common Pitfalls in Grant Writing

Not Tracking Opportunities

The Problem

Without consistent monitoring, municipalities miss funding windows and limit their award potential throughout the year.

The Fix

Allocate resources to regularly search agency websites, NOFOs, and public interest groups. Review each program's scoring criteria before deciding to apply.

Weak Capacity Demonstration

The Problem

Applications that fail to prove organizational readiness signal risk to funders and receive lower scores.

The Fix

Use data, past successes, and measurable outcomes to demonstrate your ability to deliver. Self-score against the rubric before submitting.

Bonus

Include grant administration services in your grant request.

Funding Amount Alignment

The Problem

The application funding request amount doesn't align with the amount the program can bear (either too large or too small).

The Fix

Research past award amounts and target something within a typical range, unless you have special information that changes the past amounts, such as a large increase in funding pot amount.

How to Strengthen Your Applications

Total Benefit

The Problem

Sometimes a grant request has a minor, or small, amount of positively impacted beneficiaries.

The Fix

Select projects that, in the case of stormwater, have downstream impacts in addition to localized impacts.

No Post-Application Review

The Problem

Failing to evaluate strengths and weaknesses after each submission means repeating the same mistakes cycle after cycle.

The Fix

Conduct an honest internal debrief after every application. Document what worked, what didn't, and what to improve next time.


Ignoring the Scoring Rubric

The Problem

Submitting without self-scoring against the funder's criteria results in uncompetitive applications that miss key evaluation points.

The Fix

Use the published rubric to score your own draft. Refer to past awards and abstracts to benchmark your approach before submitting.



Grant Administration

READ THE CONDITIONS!



Typical Items to Understand

Understand Cross-cutting Policy Requirements

Davis Bacon, American Iron & Steel, Section 3 Requirements, and more. Each of these add costs and workload to the reporting. A typical way to handle this is by including these in the RFQ, otherwise, it's change order city.

Proactive Reporting

Ask questions and openly communicate with the grant agencies early to set up templates for future submittals.

Cash Flow Analysis

Understand if the grant is a reimbursement grant and how much money you'll likely need to have on-hand to pay for the project as you go and get reimbursements later.

Procurement

One of the most common items are procurement issues. Ask for a review of any procurement docs from the agency. Sometimes they won't help and will just send not useful guidance documents, but sometimes they'll give you a green light.

Positional Consistency

If administering in-house, do not assign to a short-term employee or to a high turnover position. It happens but try to assign the task to a project manager or higher. They can utilize others to help, but you need consistency throughout the project.

Thank You

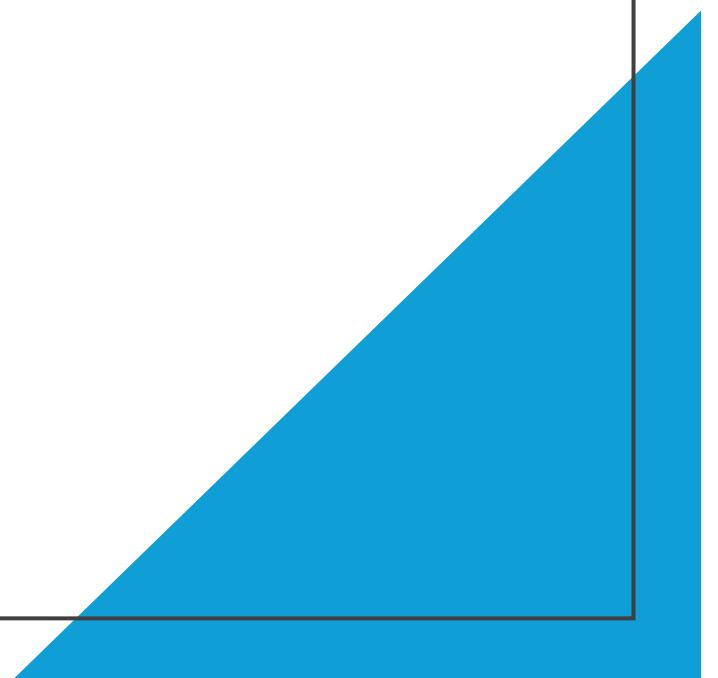
Lee@HaleInnovation.com | www.HaleInnovation.com

Local Government Project Funding

City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

P.J. Harbert, PMP

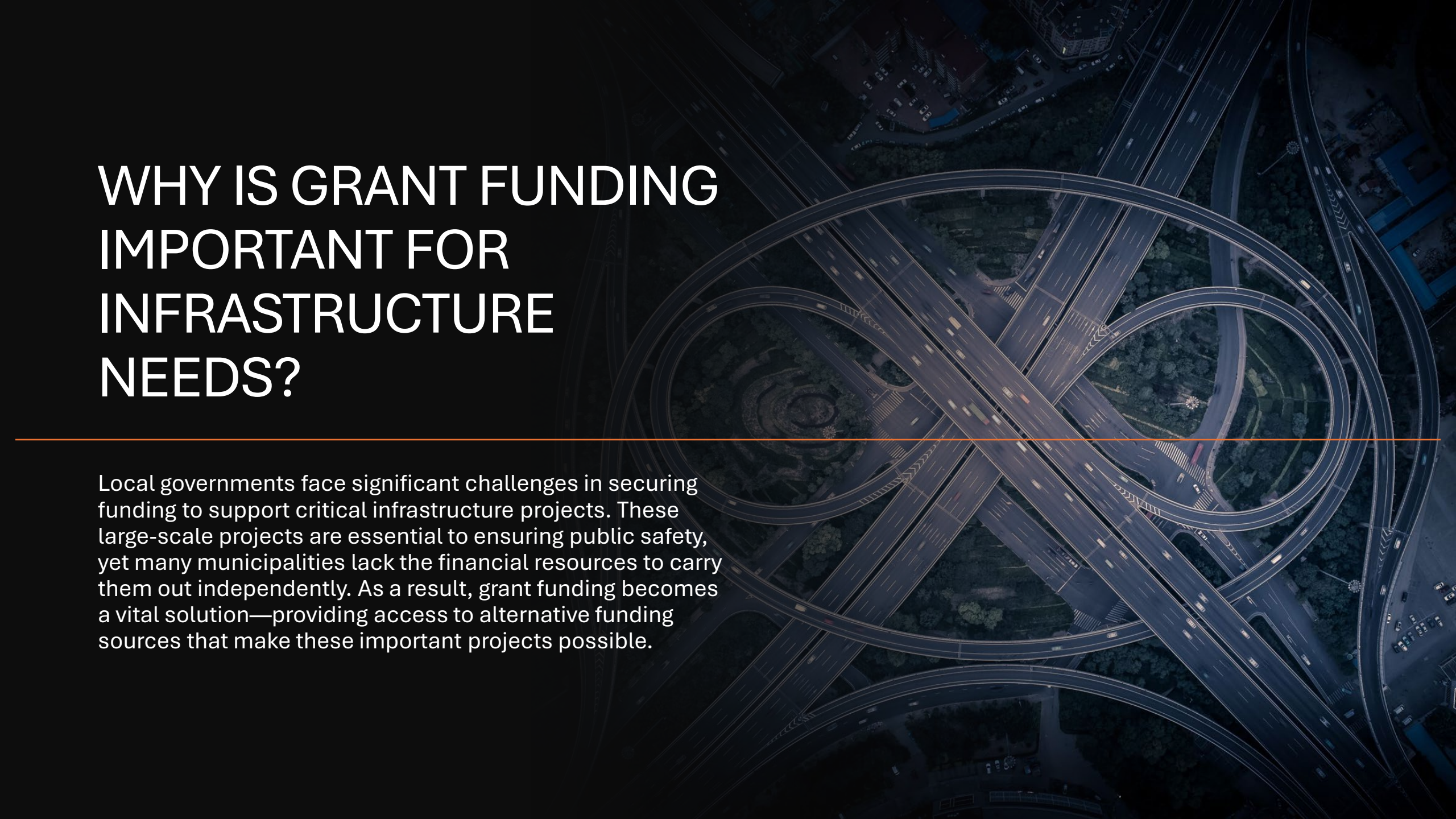
Grant Project Specialist



City of Tarpon Springs

Tarpon Springs is a coastal community lying directly on the Gulf of America at the northernmost point in Pinellas County. The City has a population of approximately 26,000 residents. The City experienced catastrophic flooding and wind damage in 2024 as a result of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. These historic storms demonstrated the critical need for stormwater improvements.





WHY IS GRANT FUNDING IMPORTANT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS?

Local governments face significant challenges in securing funding to support critical infrastructure projects. These large-scale projects are essential to ensuring public safety, yet many municipalities lack the financial resources to carry them out independently. As a result, grant funding becomes a vital solution—providing access to alternative funding sources that make these important projects possible.

Stormwater Funding for Municipalities

3 types of government funding
available:

- Federal
- State
- Local

Tarpon Springs Stormwater Project Example 1:

- **Sponge Docks Flooding Abatement Project**
- Total (Estimated) Project Cost: \$4,881,231
- Federal Funding (FEMA-HMGP): \$3,142,840
- State Funding (State Appropriations): \$1,738,390
- This is a project that demonstrates the use of blending funding to fully fund a large project that may otherwise not be feasible.

Tarpon
Springs
Stormwater
Project
Example 2:

Non-Point Source Management Program:

- Total (Estimated) Project Cost: \$862,000
- State Funding (FDEP): \$750,000
- Local Match: \$112,000

- This project required a local match to fully fund the project through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Tarpon
Springs
Stormwater
Project
Example 3:

- **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
Stormwater Education and Outreach:**

- Total Project Cost: \$2519.52
- Local Funding: \$0





**NO SUCH
THING AS
“FREE
MONEY”**



Grants are great,
but...

- Grants play a vital role in government funding and budgeting, but they often come with important caveats



Challenges: How can I get over the hurdles?

- Request a copy of an application that was previously awarded funding
- Important to coordinate with your CIP and SAP
- Work closely with leadership to identify the most critical infrastructure needs
- Ask yourself if this is a NEED or a WANT-it is much easier to justify a need

Do you have the
manpower to
manage the grant
if you receive the
funding?

Before application, ask yourself:

- How much time is involved to manage the grant
- Do we have the organizational skills to maintain accurate and detailed record-keeping
- Will we meet the Period of Performance requirements
- Do we have the funds up front to pay for this project while we wait for reimbursement
- Do we have a match if required
- Is the “juice worth the squeeze?”



Our leadership wants it done fast, cheap, and good!!

- You can have a project done fast, cheap or good, but choosing two often comes at the expense of the third. This also applies to grants. Grant funding will help pay for your projects, BUT it very likely won't be done quickly.
- Again, there is no such thing as "free money." You are at the mercy of the funding source when it comes to timelines and deliverables.





We were awarded the funding, but now what?

- Grant funding is highly dependent on compliance, timeliness, and fiscal accountability. No one wants to return money to a funding source so it is **IMPERATIVE** that accurate recordkeeping occurs. This is especially true for those grants which reimburse for overtime or require certified payroll.
- If it's not documented, it never happened. Period.
- You also do not want to de-obligate funds. Before signing a grant agreement for funding, be absolutely certain that you can be successful managing the grant and spending the funds appropriately. De-obligating funds will almost always guarantee that those funds will no longer be available to your agency in the future.



Where can I find funding for my projects?

In Florida, municipalities are fortunate to have several avenues to find available funding. These are just a few of the many government entities that provide not only stormwater funding, but infrastructure funding as a whole:

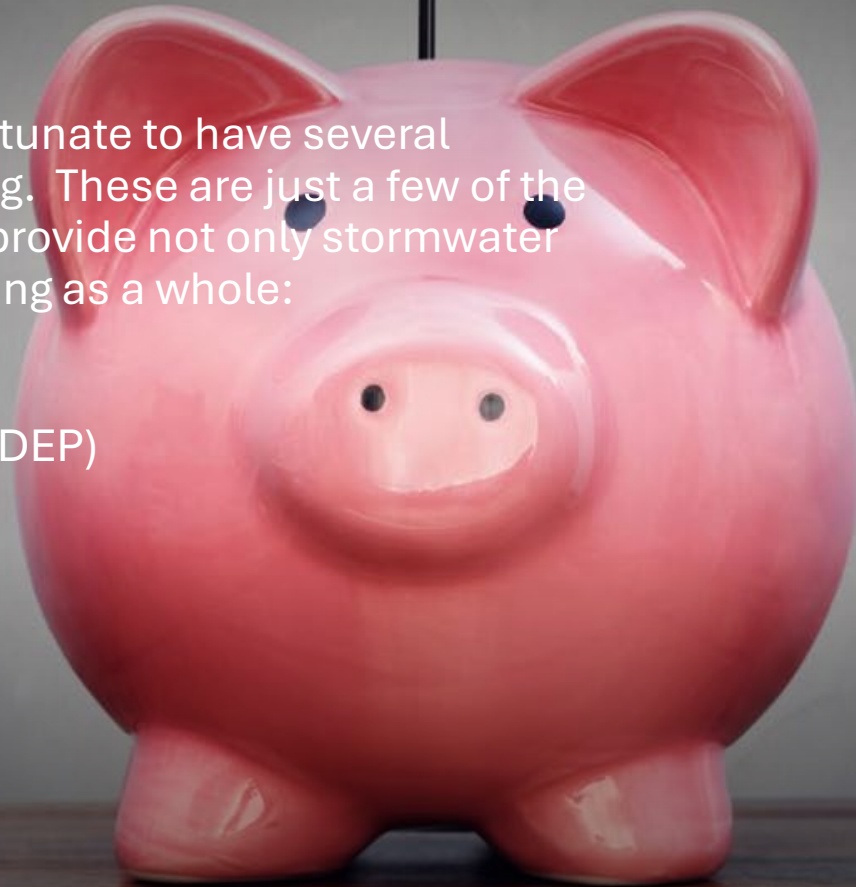
FEMA (HMGP)

State Appropriations Funding (FDEP)

Resilient Florida (FDEP)

HLMP (FDEM)

HUD (CDBG)



What is Grants.gov?

It is the centralized online system used by the federal government to post and manage federal grant opportunities.



Home Search About ▾ Community ▾ Sign in

Simpler.Grants.gov is the new way to [search](#). To access classic search, you must sign in to www.grants.gov.

Search funding opportunities

💡 Tip: Use a minus sign to exclude words or phrases, like "-research"

Search

≡ Filters

📄 [Copy this search query](#) ⓘ

Must include all words (ex. transportation AND safety)

May include any words (ex. transportation OR safety)

Forecasted ✕

Open ✕

What is Euna Grants?

It is a grants management system that allows users to find grant opportunities, including federal, state, local, and private foundations.

The screenshot shows the EUNA Grants interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the EUNA Grants logo (Powered by eCivis) and navigation tabs: Home, Grant Management, Research, Reports, and Administration. Below the header, the breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Grant Details'. The main content area displays the grant title: 'FD21992 American Farm Bureau (AFB) Foundation for Agriculture: White-Reinhardt Fund for Education: White-Reinhardt Agricultural Literacy Project Grant - FY 2026/2027'. Below the title are three buttons: 'Save / Assign', 'Email Grant', and 'Grant Usage'. A 'Summary' tab is active, showing a table of key information:


Type:	Foundation	Match Required:	No	Solicitation Date:	Unknown
Agency:	FD Foundation	Actual Funds:	Unspecified	Next Due:	06/12/2026 (Application)
Office:	American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture	Award:	\$1,000 (Confirmed)	Eligible Applicants:	Local Government State Government
Annual Giving:	\$348,583	Payment Type:	Mixed	Multipart Grant:	No
Total Assets:	\$125,601,852				
Last Tax Filing:	11/30/2024				

Below the table, there is a paragraph describing the program's purpose: 'The purpose of this program is to support projects proposed by county and state farm bureaus that will increase agricultural literacy. Funding will support education projects for grades K-12 that initiate new agricultural literacy programs or expand existing programs.' This is followed by a list of priorities and a 'More Info' button.

- Enhance learner engagement in food, fiber, and fuel systems
- Creatively engage students in a manner that encourages them to learn more about agriculture
- Expand on current agricultural literacy efforts, such as by providing programming to additional grades and audiences or focusing on new subjects
- Align with the pillars of agricultural literacy, which can be found online at www.agfoundation.org

Organizations and individual schools may work with their local farm bureaus to apply.

[More Info](#)



Websites for stormwater and water quality funding opportunities:

- [Community Development Block Grant Program | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)
- [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\) | FEMA.gov](#)
- [DEP Funding Opportunities | Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#)
- [Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program | Florida Disaster](#)
- [Appropriations Projects | Florida House of Representatives](#)
- [Grants | Water Quality Dashboard](#)
- [Cooperative Funding Initiative | WaterMatters.org](#)
- [Community Project Funding - HUD Exchange](#)



Questions/Comments

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Questions?



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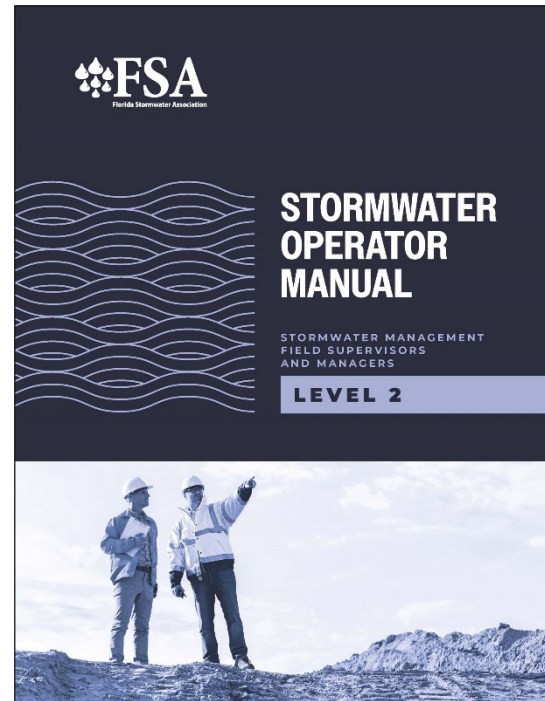
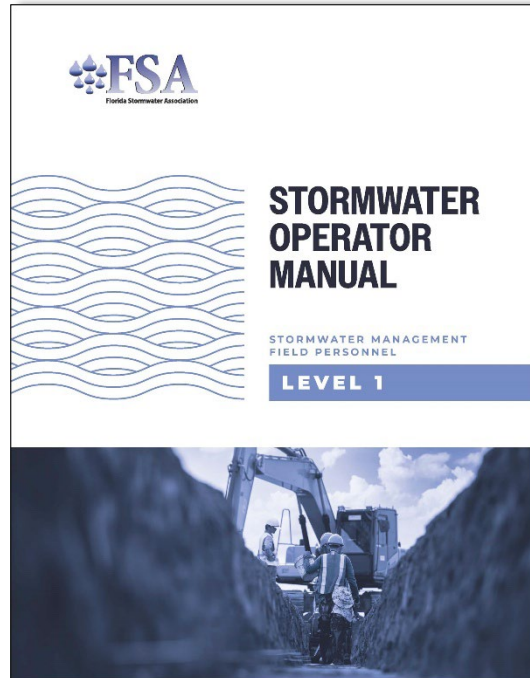
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