

What Makes a Successful INFRA Application?

CAGTC Members Share Their Experiences

CAGTC members that received awards under the FASTLANE/INFRA grant program were invited to respond to a CAGTC-produced survey in October 2018.

Survey responses were submitted anonymously.

180-440
hours
spent preparing a
successful application

35-60%
of total hours were
spent developing the
BCA

1/2
of respondents hired a
consultant; those who
did said they received a
return on their investment

The INFRA award typically covered

20-30%
of total project costs

Non-Federal project funds
came from:

- Private companies (i.e., railroads)
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- State Departments of Transportation (DOTs)
- Other local funds

Project application teams
were made up of MPOs, city & state
DOTs, chambers of commerce, and
private entities

Successful projects had
12-40
letters of support

All respondents had support
from their
congressional
delegations

3/4
of respondents had
support from
bordering states

Advice for future applicants?

- Reference the FHWA BCA guidance
- Start the application process early using a collaborative, multi-disciplinary grant team
- Engage a broad group of local stakeholders to encourage buy-in and support
- Consultants are valuable but project sponsors should be prepared to take the lead

CAGTC Member Consultants Weigh In: What Makes an INFRA Application Successful?

CAGTC's membership includes a number of consulting firms and practitioners that prepare competitive grant applications in cooperation with public agencies. Individuals from those firms were invited to respond to a CAGTC-produced survey in October 2018. Survey responses were submitted anonymously. A list of CAGTC members who provide these services is included this newsletter.

Time spent preparing an application:

80-320
hours

Number of hours varied depending on the client's preparedness level, the type of project, and:

- Size of project
- Available data
- Economic analyses
- BCA development
- Graphics
- Coordinated planning with stakeholders
- Feasibility studies

Before applying, projects should consider:

- Project readiness
- Matching funds
- Project definition
- Available data & analytics tools
- Performance goals
- Alignment with grant program goals
- Stakeholder support
- Partnerships
- Innovative procurement methods

All successful applications have _____ in common:

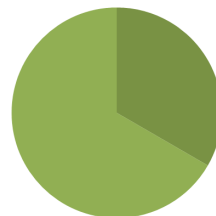
- Support from elected officials (i.e., State Governor, U.S. Senator)
- Clearly identified champions
- Early consultation among the grant writing team
- Innovative elements
- A strong, but concise, sales pitch

Project Complexity

1/2 of respondents said less complex projects are more successful under the current Administration's INFRA grant program, especially due to the increased focus on rural grants

1/2 of respondents said complex projects must concisely communicate project benefits and have a strong BCA; with a good write up, they can be successful

All respondents said there is some level of politicization in the INFRA grant selection process.



2/3 said the politicization is getting worse
1/3 said it is difficult to gauge if it is getting better or worse

4/5

said USDOT debriefs were constructive

1/5

said USDOT debriefs were not constructive