

Grant Award Phases

Understanding the Pre and Post Award Phases



Pre-Award Phase

Before applying for funding, applicants should identify key projects within their community and consider how the funding could benefit those projects. Once a project has been identified, applicants can search for available grants to determine which grant program aligns with their project.

To effectively apply for and manage grants, applicants must register their organizations on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to obtain an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) to submit their applications. Registering early will help the application team avoid submission delays.

After completing the registration process, applicants can begin engaging with a NC Highway Division representative and other division or modal staff, which is essential during application preparation. Following guidance from the Grants Steering Committee, the committee will determine the level of involvement from the Grants Management Office in developing the grant application. The Grants Management Office specializes in federal competitive grant programs and assists local agencies in developing proposals that address specific transportation needs during the pre-award phase.

While completing the application, applicants are required to create a workspace on [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) to provide all necessary information related to their project. On [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov), applicants have the option to download the grant application and pre-fill in details such as organizational information, costs, and project descriptions before submission. Applicants can save their progress and check for errors before finalizing the submission. For more information on how to create a workspace, visit the [Workspace Overview](#) page.

After submitting, the applicant will receive an email confirmation noting that the grant program has received it. From this point, they can track the status of the application to stay informed throughout the processing stage.

Award Phase

After reviewing, the grant program will notify the applicant if they are selected for funding. The recipient will receive a Notice of Award; however, work on the project cannot begin immediately. Funds are not available, and costs should not be incurred until the grant agreement is executed and the recipient receives written notice to proceed. The federal awarding agency will work with the recipient to finalize the grant agreement following the Notice of Award. This agreement outlines all legal responsibilities related to the funding, and the recipient must follow the terms and conditions. Federal grant funds are disbursed through reimbursable payments.

Post Award Phase – Direct Recipient

If the local government is successful in receiving a grant award and requests to be a direct recipient of the federal agency, then the local government will be responsible for coordinating with NCDOT and the Local Planning Organization (LPO) to have the project programmed in the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Post Award Phase – Local Entity as Sub-Recipient

If the local government would like NCDOT to serve as a pass-through for their grant project, a request to the department must be submitted and approved prior to applying for funding. Once approved, the Local Programs Management Office (LPMO) will provide ongoing support throughout the process. This includes approving and negotiating grant agreements, preparing TIP agreements, managing federally funded projects, handling pre-construction activities, and overseeing reporting and sub-recipient requirements for locally administered projects. After the grant is awarded, an additional agreement will be executed between the local government and NCDOT (in addition to the Grant Agreement) to obtain any required matching funds and outline the responsibilities of the Local Government Agency (LGA).