Rural Infrastructure Grant Applications and the Committee Review Process

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## RIG Program Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Rural Infrastructure Grant Program

RIG Status April 2023 - OK House Districts

RIG Application Status
- Approved RIG Applications

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Applications that didn’t make it through Committee Review

- 6 were ineligible for the RIG due to population limit of the community served
- Some were ineligible due to their status as a private water system
- 14 voluntarily withdrew and submitted new applications
- About 6 applications were put on hold pending necessary documents, and were never reviewed by the committee
- Out of the 197 applications received, 25 were either tabled or scored too low in committee review
Tabled Applications - Tabled applications are those that the committee doesn’t feel they have enough information to score

- This usually happened when the committee had too many questions about the projects proposals in the application - The RIG Committee will take time with each application, but generally if the group couldn’t narrow down answers to these questions within 5 minutes, they’d table the application and move on.

  - What is the need for this project?
  - Does this/How does this project address their NOVs and COs?
  - Where are the supporting documents? (quotes, bids, engineering reports, NOVs, COs)
  - What is the timeline for this project? Has it already started?
  - Where is the other funding coming from for this applicant’s projects?
  - How much does this project cost?
Tabled Applications

- If trusting one of your vendors/contractors to place your grant application, know that it makes it very difficult for the committee to follow up with you, the applicant, and could result in a conflict of interest that does not benefit you.

- Some projects, such as standpipe rehabs, repair projects, and the purchase/installation of meters or valves, do not require an engineer to complete.
  - The RIG Committee often tabled these applications or pass on them entirely because the engineering fees associated with the projects were viewed as an unnecessary expenditure.
Tabled Applications

- Some projects or applications didn’t have cost estimates that aligned with what industry professionals on the committee were familiar with.

- Some projects proposed seemed inappropriate for the water system, such as an oversized water tower or a reverse-osmosis treatment system.

- Red flags to the committee with cost estimates don’t line up.
  - No matter how many items are added or removed from the cost estimate, the estimate comes in at the same number every time.
  - Cost estimates that come in at exactly the number needed to max out on the 80/20 grant.
Low-Scoring Applications

- Applications for utilities with Notices of Violation or Consent Orders (regulatory actions by DEQ) scored higher where the NOV or CO was related to the proposed projects.
- Projects requiring engineering reports were docked points if the engineering report was not complete or had not yet been approved by DEQ.
- On the RIG application, multiple projects could be selected and funded on a single application.
  - In scoring, each project is worth a certain number of points, so applications with multiple projects scored higher.
Low-Scoring Applications

Do you feel that our committee’s scoring system is stupid? Unfair? Leaving out critical infrastructure projects?

I actually really appreciate this kind of feedback – especially if provided in writing to the email address I use to administer the RIG Program!

- Providing feedback in writing gives me a record I can show the committee, including the number of a certain type of complaint
- I’ve been successful at getting the committee to change the scores assigned to project types – ensuring applicants with worthy and popular projects aren’t overlooked by the program
- I’ve successfully advocated that other scoring policies be changed when they resulted in unfairness among applicants
- Each of these changes resulted from well-documented complaints and made it possible for more applications to be approved – we also re-evaluated previously rejected applications so that updated scoring policies worked to their benefit
Successful Applications

- Double-check the eligibility requirements for your utility ahead of applying
- Get applications in as soon as you can
- Make sure the math is right on your project cost totals
- All referenced documents attached to application
  - If an engineering report is necessary for your project and you say it’s complete? Attach it.
  - NOVs or COs referenced in your application? Include with application
  - Cost estimates? The committee needs some supporting documents for your project costs – attach bids, quotes, project proposals, even bid tabs from similar recent projects or an email from your contractor will work
Questions???

Scan this QR code to save my contact information!!!

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