



Risk Matters

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Risk management is for decision makers.

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Forward to a colleague!

Another year is almost over. As we approach the end 2011, I want to pause and thank everyone for reading this and for passing copies along to everyone you think will benefit from it.

Your comments and suggestions are all gratefully received. I simply ask that you pass *Risk Matters* (remember it's free) along to more friends and co-workers to spread the risk management 'culture' to even more people.

May 2012 be a terrific year for you and yours!

Joy

Program Grants: Points to Consider

Government grants provide financial assistance to municipalities for a wide range of services including environmental protection, solid waste management, transportation, culture, recreation, tourism, and municipal capacity building. Typically, program and project grants involve cost-sharing between your municipality and one or two upper levels.

One thing you can be sure of upon receiving a grant is that it *comes with numerous obligations and reporting criteria*. You must spend all the granted funds on the subject of the grant application. Project expenditures must be rigorously detailed; an audit may be conducted at the discretion of the granting agency. Any money not spent is owed back to the granting authority – unless you get specific, written permission to use the funds in another capacity. Finally, you are expected to deliver a successful result.

Failure to satisfy the terms of the grant can result in consequences that range from financial penalties and loss of future funding opportunities to, where there is evidence of improper use or theft of the granted funds, prison.

The fact is that obtaining government grants is not without costs in terms of time and effort beginning with the application

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*"Mistakes are a fact of life.
It is the response to the
error that counts. "*

~ Nikki Giovanni, Poet ~

stage, through project fulfillment and finally, with reporting and retaining grant-related records.

The Independent Blue Ribbon Panel on Grant and Contributions put forward several recommendations in their December 2006 report "From Red Tape to Clear Results". A few of the recommendations for grant management included:

- structuring your policies and procedures to reflect the amount of money involved and the complexity of the project scope;
- considering the degree of management credibility and track record from previous grant awards;
- the sensitivity (i.e. significance and public interest) of the project; and
- your ability to manage the project to a successful conclusion.

As you can see, there are similarities to steps in managing risk of other types of contracts. This is not a coincidence. Grants from upper level governments are simply one form of contract. The practices you use for contract management

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