

ADVANCED GRANT FUNDING

GRANT STRATEGY AND
STEWARDSHIP: SUCCESS
BEYOND THE BASICS

JUNE 17, 2025



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○ Introduction



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○ Webinar Agenda

- Developing a Grant Strategy and Pipeline
 - Creating a Project Readiness Framework
- Prioritizing Projects for Grant Applications
- Budget Development and Match Strategy
 - Understanding Indirect Costs
- Supporting Documentation and Attachments
- Partnerships to Strengthen Applications





Grant Pipeline Development

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○ What Is a Grant Pipeline?

- A structured and proactive system for identifying and tracking potential grant sources.
- A curated list of projects that an organization prepares in advance to align with anticipated or recurring funding opportunities.
- It helps organizations move from reactive, last-minute applications to a more **strategic and planned approach** to pursuing funding.





○ Grants – Moving Target

- New Grant Opportunities
- Grant Changes
 - Timing of application
 - Available funding
 - Funding priorities
 - Eligibility requirements
- Project Changes
 - Priorities change
 - Needs change





Tracking Tools for Grants

- Tracking tools help you monitor deadlines, align projects with funding cycles, and stay ahead of grant opportunities.
- People have a tendency to overestimate future available time.
- Calendars
 - Application openings and deadlines
 - Internal milestones (draft reviews, approvals)
 - Award announcements
 - Reporting or renewal deadlines





○ Tracking Tools for Grants

- Alerts & Subscriptions – Most granting agencies let you sign up for alerts or have mailing lists.
 - New opportunities and updates
 - Technical assistance webinars
 - Changes to guidelines or deadlines
- Funding Databases
 - Review Grant Clearing Houses periodically
 - Grants.gov
 - Justgrants.gov





○ Tracking Tools for Grants

- Grant/Project Tracker. Spreadsheet or other database for grants and projects.
 - Grants
 - Grant title and agency
 - Deadline and match requirement
 - Eligible uses and funding range
 - Projects
 - Project name and description
 - Estimated cost and funding need
 - Readiness status (e.g., feasibility, environmental clearances, preliminary design)



○ Grants – Dealing with Uncertainty

- Grant Application is not a “one and done” situation.
 - Not all grant applications are successful. You need to be prepared for what to do if a grant application is rejected.
- Apply to multiple grant funding sources.
 - Alter the Project Scope
- Re-apply to the same grant the following cycle.
- Use multi-phase or planning grants to prepare complex projects for future applications.





○ Typical Grant Timeline Example

- Dates from 2019 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Example



- The timeframe from application to award is 15 months.





Be Prepared for Grant Funds

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○ Identify Staff Resources

- Grant Manager
 - Who is looking for grants to apply for?
 - Grant windows open and close quickly.
 - Who will draft the grant applications?
- Fiscal Manager
 - Who will process pay requests and submit for reimbursement?
- Project Manager
 - Who will oversee the completion of the project?





○ Other Personnel Resources

- Contract Services
 - On-Call Engineering Consultants
 - Legal Counsel/Accountant
- Public Entities
 - Local County or Adjacent City
 - Metropolitan or Rural Planning Organizations
 - Council of Governments (COG)
 - Southwest Environmental Finance Center
 - Water, Wastewater & Stormwater





○ Community Preparedness

- Is your community registered on Sam.gov?
 - System for Award Management (SAM)
 - Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code
 - Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
 - ****Needed for any federal funds application****
- Common documents needed
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Department of Treasury IRS letter assigning your EIN
 - Town charter, documentation from state governments for town existence





○ Identify Community Limitations

- Outstanding Violations.
 - Unless the Project addresses them.
- Poor or missing Financial Audits.
 - Address findings
- Project Maintenance wasn't completed.
- Conflict with prior federally funded infrastructure.
- Incomplete 'Prior Award' grant funds.
 - May prevent award of new funds
 - Water Trust Board two-year window for project completion.



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Project Readiness Framework

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Project Readiness Assessment



- Is the project clearly defined with a specific scope, timeline, and location?
- Are preliminary engineering, design, or planning documents completed?
- Have necessary environmental, cultural, or permitting reviews been initiated or completed?
- Is there a realistic cost estimate with itemized line items prepared by a qualified professional?
- Has the governing body passed a resolution or provided written support to apply for the grant?
- Have you identified and secured any required matching funds or partnerships?
- Does the project align with adopted community plans (CIP, hazard mitigation, master plan)?





○ Develop Project Portfolios

- Title?
- What is the Problem?
- What is the Project?
- What will the Project improve?
- What will the Project cost?
- Who will benefit from the Project?
- Who supports the Project?





○ Project Site Preparedness

- Do you have all the property and easements?
 - ROW/Easements for access and construction.
 - ****Lack of site access is biggest funding roadblock****
- Has the project site been evaluated?
 - Biological Evaluation (Federal)
 - Cultural Survey (Federal & State)
 - TIP: Expand survey area to include multiple project sites – good for 3-5 years.
- Do you know the project site history?
 - Prior uses (e.g. potential for contamination)



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○ What Is a Funding Resolution?

- A funding resolution is an official action taken by a governing body to authorize a grant application or commit to project implementation.
 - Identification of the applicant
 - Identification of the funding program
 - Description of the project and funding request
 - Commitment to provide matching funds if applicable
 - Authorization for a representative to submit the application





○ Aligning Project to Funding

- Match up your project to the funding source
 - Time Comparison
 - When do you need it completed?
 - When do the funds expire?
 - Compare Project to Funding Source
 - Purpose of Funding Agency.
 - Identify Project Ranking Criteria.
 - Benefit Cost Analysis
 - Compare Request to Available Funds
 - Identify Min/Max Funding limits.
 - Don't be greedy.





○ Aligning Project to Funding

- Match up your project to the funding source
 - Identify Project Scope Components for funding.
 - Identify Scale/Modularity of Project.
 - Can be set based on the available funding.
 - Identify Unit Process of Project for Funding
 - ROW? Planning? Engineering? Construction?
 - Limiting the Unit Processes can be beneficial.
 - Can any work be completed in advance?
 - Survey or Environmental





Budget Development

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○ Typical Budget Categories

- Personnel
 - Salaries and wages for staff working directly on the project
 - May include project managers, technical specialists, admin support
- Fringe Benefits
 - Health insurance, retirement contributions, payroll taxes
 - Often shown as a percentage of personnel costs
- Contractual / Professional Services
 - Consultants, engineers, architects, legal services, evaluators
 - Third-party vendors not employed by the applicant



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○ Typical Budget Categories

- Equipment
 - Tangible items with a useful life of more than one year
 - Typically over a set threshold (e.g., \$5,000 per item)
- Supplies / Materials
 - Items that are consumed or used up during the project.
- Construction
 - Direct costs associated with new construction, renovation, or infrastructure improvements
- Travel
 - Transportation, lodging, and per diem for project-related travel.



○ Typical Budget Categories

- Other Direct Costs
 - Utilities, printing, outreach, training, permit fees
 - Costs that don't fit other specific categories
- Indirect Costs
 - Administrative overhead (e.g., accounting, HR, office space)
- Match or Cost Share
 - Applicant contributions, either cash or in-kind
 - Must be documented and allowable under the grant rules



○ Indirect Costs

- Expenses that are necessary for the general operation of an organization but cannot be directly attributed to a specific project or activity.
- They support multiple activities and are incurred regardless of whether a specific grant is awarded.
 - Fiscal; Administrative; Managerial Staff Costs (Salary & Benefits)
 - *Maintain Time Records!
 - Building/Vehicle Operating Expenses (Utilities)
 - Software (Subscription)
 - Insurance and legal services



○ Indirect Costs

- Funding Agencies allow indirect costs to be charged as part of the grant application because they want to be assured the funds will be managed and executed properly.
- Evaluate your Operating Budget
 - Do you need assistance?
 - Is your budget fully funded?
- Evaluate the potential grant of award vs. cost of project.
 - Do you need every penny for the project?



○ Indirect Cost Rates: De Minimis vs. NICRA



- Federal agencies allow a 15% De Minimis rate
 - Not justification required.
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
 - A formal agreement between an entity and a federal agency that establishes the allowable indirect cost rate that the entity can use when applying for and administering federal grants.
 - **More accurate** reflection of true overhead costs, often higher than 15%.
 - Can be based on **actual historical costs** or **provisional estimates**.





Matching Funds

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○ Identify Available Match for Grants

- Match is the “local” share of costs that you are required to contribute.
- Stop complaining. Every project requires matching funds.
- Types of Match
 - Hard Match – Also called ‘Cash Match’, includes your own funds (general revenue), cash donations from non-federal third parties, or other eligible grants.
 - Soft Match – Also called ‘In-Kind Match’ includes the value of personnel, goods, and services that contribute to, or support, the project.





○ Hard & Soft Match Examples

- Hard Match
 - Community Funds (Your budget)
 - Other Public Funds
 - Capital Outlay
 - Private contributions
- Soft Match
 - Staff Time/Equipment Use
 - Property or Easements
 - Do you have a recent appraisal of your property?
 - Partnership Contributions



○ Where to Find Match

- Internal Sources – Hard Match
 - Capital budget
 - Are funds budgeted for the project?
 - Are un-assigned funds available?
 - Are funds budgeted for other future capital improvements?
 - Personnel
 - Will Staff be providing Project oversight or Administration?
 - Time commitment by Fiscal and Managerial staff.
 - Operating Budget
 - Can funds be diverted from line items?
 - Personnel vacancy savings; deferred purchases; maintenance budget.



○ Where to Find Match

- External Sources – Hard Match
 - Other State Grants
 - River Stewardship Grant
 - Water Trust Board
 - NMFA Local Govt. Planning Fund
 - State Loan Programs
 - NMED Rural Infrastructure Program
 - NMFA Public Project Revolving Fund





○ Where to Find Match

- External Sources – Hard Match
 - Certain Federal Funds
 - Clean Water Revolving Fund
 - Drinking Water Revolving Fund
 - HUD Grants
 - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG/HUD)
 - Non-Governmental Entities
 - Grants
 - Capital Funds
 - Private Businesses
 - Donations





○ Where to Find Match

- Existing Eligible Assets
 - Real Property or Easements
 - May require a re-valuation by a certified appraiser.
 - Typically not eligible for replacement/improvement projects.
 - Completed Supporting Documents
 - Completed Engineering Plans
 - Other Physical Assets
 - Re-purposing Water Tank
- Need documentation of payments or value.
- Cannot have been used with another federal grant project.



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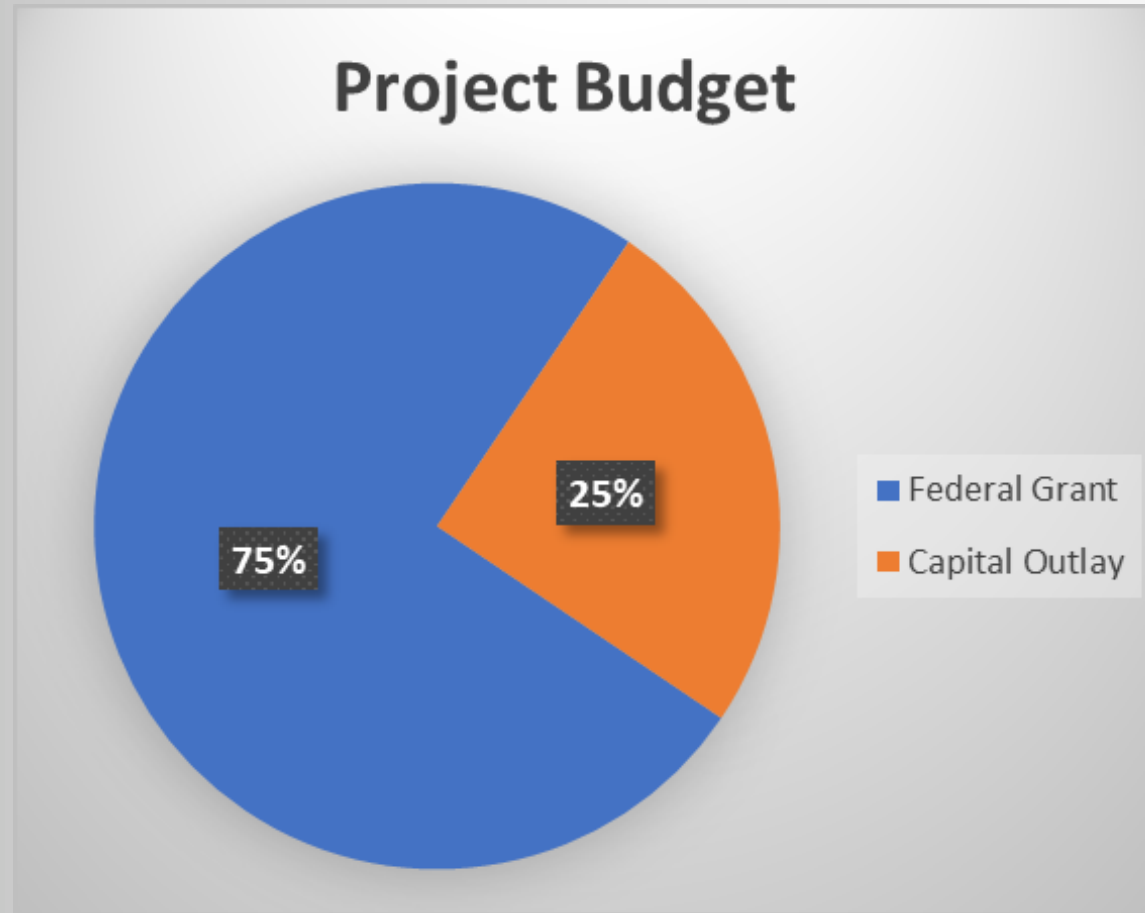


○ Where to Find Match

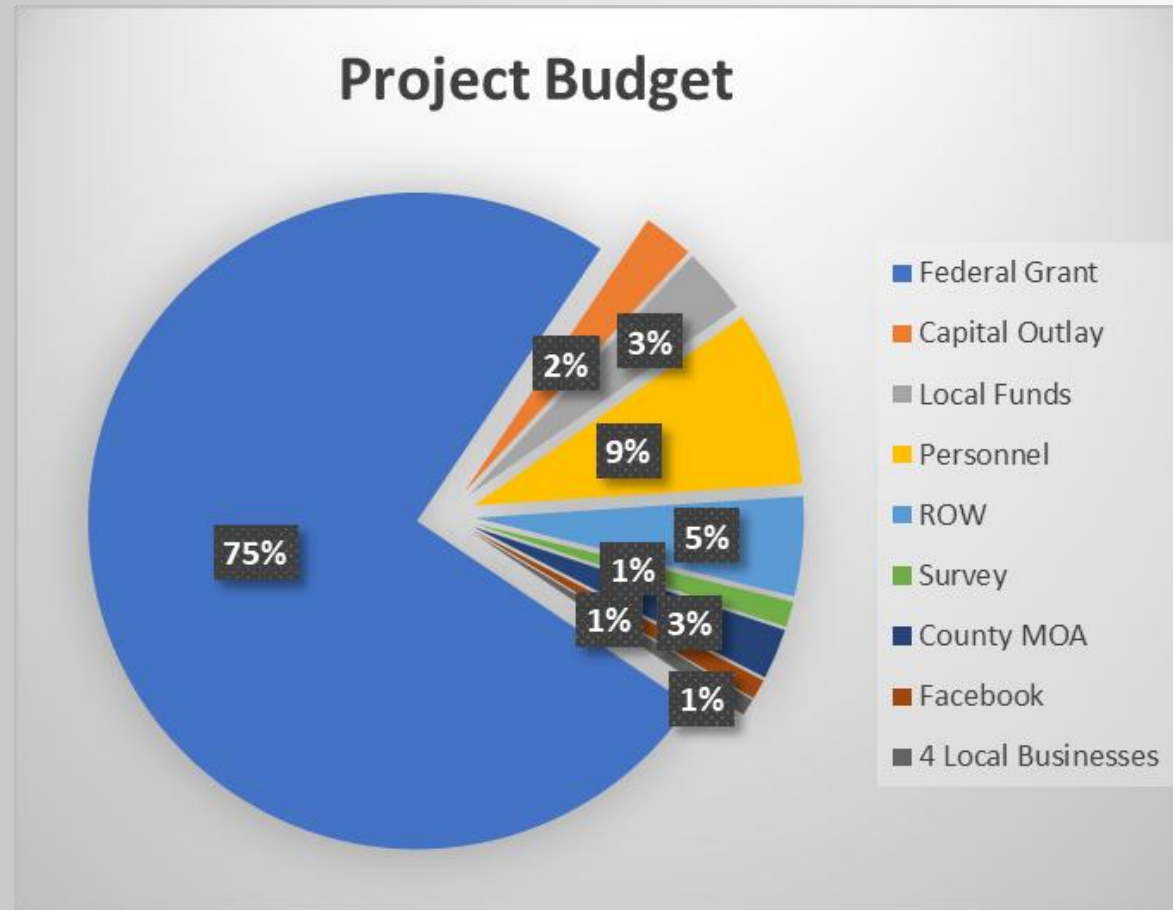
- External Sources – Soft Match
 - Free or Discounted Services or Goods
 - Exchange of Services or Goods
 - Leveraging of Existing Resources
 - Advertising/Sponsorship
 - Volunteer Organizations
 - Scouts/Schools
 - Youth Conservation Corps
 - Prison Services



○ Everyone's Idea of Matching



○ What Match May Actually Look Like



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○ Summary of Matching Fund Concepts



- Finding Match can be more time consuming than the grant.
- Match doesn't have to come from one source.
- Match doesn't have to come all at the same time.
- Match doesn't have to be cash, it can be a loan or contributed goods and services.
- You can "over-Match", if it helps with project ranking.
- You can't use the same Match twice.





Supporting Documentation

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○ Reference Materials

- Universities
 - UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research
- US Census Bureau
 - Valuable statistics about your community.
- Council of Governments (COGs)
 - Transportation Mapping & Analysis.
- Previous Grant Applications
 - Agency website will have link to previous successful grants.



○ Supporting Materials



- Planning
 - Masterplans
 - Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP)
- Environmental
 - Biological surveys
 - Archeological surveys
- Engineering
 - Preliminary Engineering/Design Analysis Reports
 - Design Drawings
 - Models/Modelling Results



○ Supporting Materials



- Administrative
 - Governing Body Resolutions or Ordinances
 - Audits/Fiscal Reports
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Operations
 - Monitoring Reports
 - Maintenance/Repair Documentation
- Legal
 - Violations/Administrative Orders
 - Land Deeds & Easements
 - Land topo or boundary surveys



○ Supporting Materials



- Visual

- Pictures
- Maps
- Renderings
- Schematics


- External

- Third-Party Reports & Studies
- Letters of Support
- News Stories



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RECYCLE!



- Don't "throw away" old grant submittals.
 - Improve them and re-apply.
 - Use them as follow up applications.
- Re-use Existing Documentation
 - Planning Documents & Reports
 - Design Plans
- Everything you write should be with the goal of using it twice.
 - Just be careful with "cut & paste"





Partnerships

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○ Partnerships

- Some Grant Funds Require Partnership
- Main Goals of Partnerships
 - Grant requires a specific industry or institution
 - University; Research Facility
 - Support of Additional Goals
 - Resource Conservation
 - Demonstration of Community Support
 - Specific Community Sub-group
 - Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities
 - Acquire Hard or Soft Project Match



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○ Partnerships

- Sometimes a single Partner is enough.
- Simplest Level: a Letter of Support.
- Partnership can be done in steps.
 - You + Partner 1; You + Partner 2, etc.
- Leverage your Partners' Strengths.
 - Can they do the public outreach?
 - Do they have specialized equipment or resources?



○ Letter of Support



- To show general endorsement for the project or applicant.
- Content Includes:
 - Why the stakeholder supports the project
 - Their relationship to the applicant
 - The project's potential benefits to the community or region
- Use When:
 - A stakeholder agrees with the goals but is not contributing resources.
 - You want to demonstrate broad-based community or political backing.





○ Letter of Commitment

- To confirm a specific contribution or role in the project.
- Content Includes:
 - Specific description of what will be provided (e.g., staff time, materials, funding, facilities)
 - Timeframe, conditions, and value of the commitment
 - Signature by someone authorized to make the commitment
- Use When:
 - The partner is providing match funding, services, or in-kind support.
 - The grant requires evidence of formal collaboration or resource sharing.



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○ Understanding MOUs and JPAs

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - A non-binding agreement that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and intentions of collaborating organizations.
- Key Features:
 - Describes shared goals, responsibilities, and intentions.
 - Useful for clarifying roles without creating legal obligations.
 - Often used to demonstrate partnership in grant applications.
 - Helps set expectations around communication, deliverables, and coordination.



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○ Understanding MOUs and JPAs

- Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) - A legally binding agreement between two or more public agencies (e.g., cities, counties, districts) to jointly exercise shared powers under state law.
- Key Features:
 - Formalizes shared governance, authority, or resources.
 - Often involves cost-sharing, staffing, or program delivery.
 - May establish a new entity (e.g., joint authority or board) to manage the collaborative effort.
 - Subject to legal review and sometimes state approval.



○ Keys to Successful Partnerships



- There must be a real or perceived benefit for the project partner.
 - Economic
 - Strategic
 - Social
- They must believe that the project will be successful.
 - Support from your Governing Body
 - Commitment to complete the Project
 - Commitment to operation & maintenance





○ Public Partnership Examples

- Splitting Project Costs
 - Sandoval County - Guadalajara Rd.
 - Drainage & Roadway Improvements
- Disposal of Excess Dirt for use as Daily Cover
 - Sandoval County Landfill
 - Receive partial payment for delivery.
- Acceptance of Infrastructure
 - City of Rio Rancho - Alberta Rd.
 - Contributed to Project and accepted infrastructure for O&M.



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○ Public Partnership Examples



- ROW Donation
 - City of Rio Rancho
 - Vacate cul-de-sacs for project footprint.
- ROW Exchange
 - City of Rio Rancho
 - Vacate property adjacent to arroyo for property adjacent to roadway.
- Splitting Project Costs
 - City of Rio Rancho – Pecos Loop Rd.
 - Design & Construction completed separately





○ Private Partnership Examples

- Disposal of Excess Dirt – Lomitas Negras Facility
 - Disposal on adjacent property
- Acceptance of Excess Dirt – Ivory Channel
 - Developer used our property to dispose of waste material
- Subdivision Development
 - Provide property site for sanitary sewer lift station in exchange for upsizing storm drain to accept flows.
- Completion of Trail System
 - Work with local developer to complete trail system.



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○ Private Partnership Examples

- Donation of property for project
 - CNM Community College - Upper SLO Dam
 - Education opportunity for CNM
- Walking Trail Support
 - Presbyterian & Lovelace
 - Provided funds for walking trail - promote healthy lifestyles.
- Water Harvesting Shade Structure Support
 - PNM
 - Provided funds for structure - promote energy conservation
 - Advertising



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○ Public-Private Partnership Examples



- SSCAFCA
 - Needed to complete improvements to outlet of Montoyas Arroyo to the Rio Grande.
- City of Rio Rancho
 - Needed to complete maintenance on wastewater treatment plant discharge to the Rio Grande.
- Nature Conservancy
 - Received grant for habitat enhancement.
- Local Developer
 - Needed to offset removal of habitat at a separate location.



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Be Patient & Persistent

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QUESTIONS?

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