Federal Grants
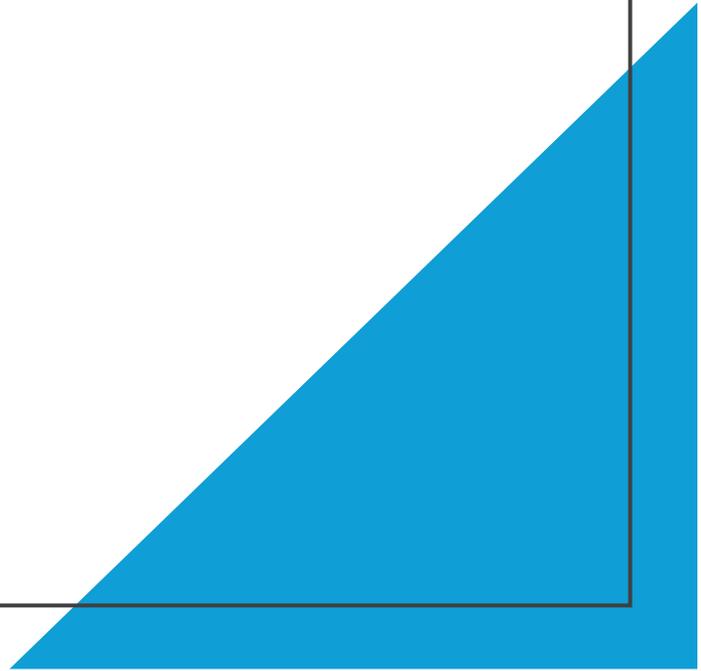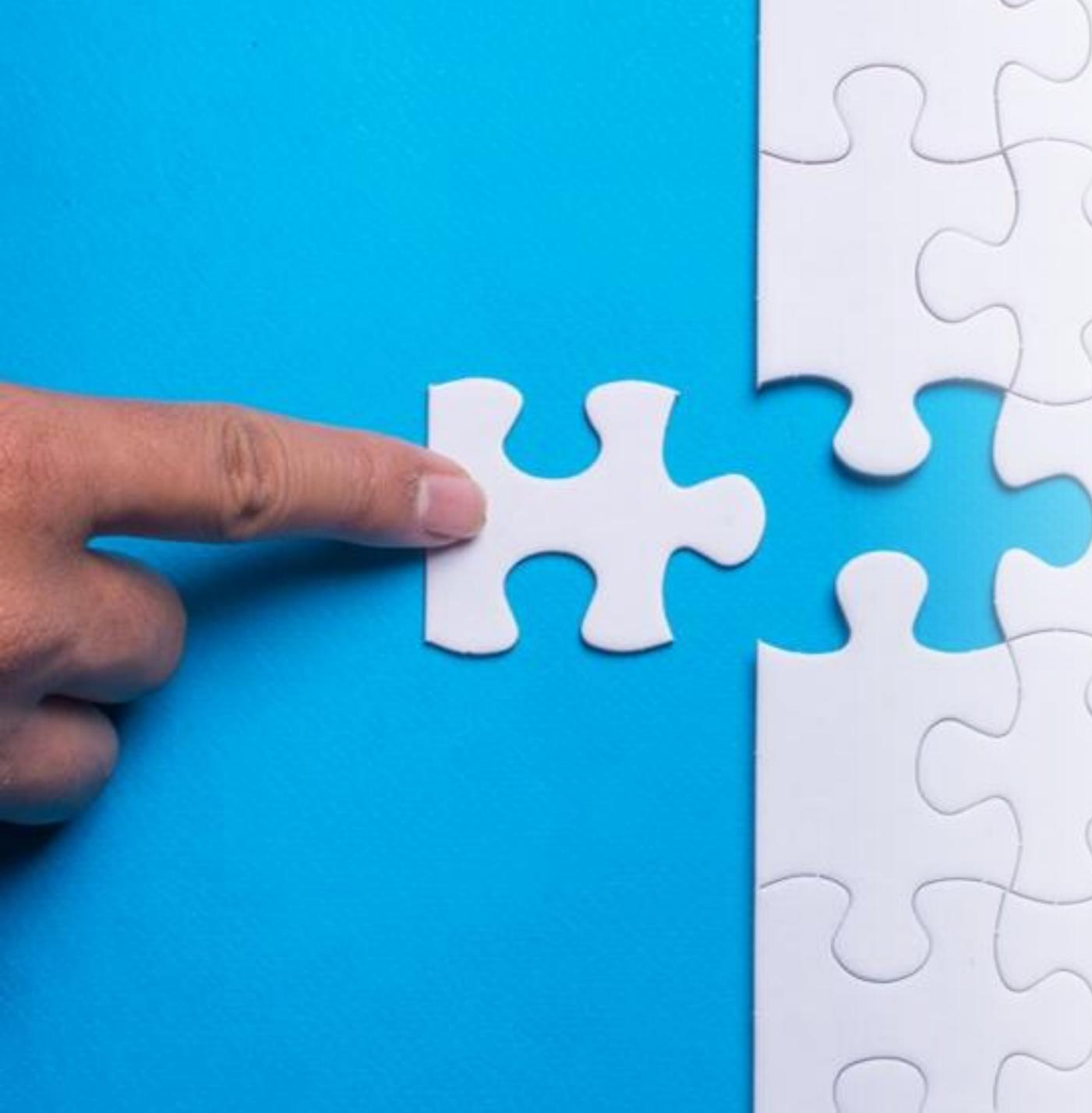
- Gretchen Belk
- Federal Discretionary Grants Manager
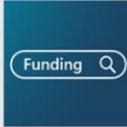- (919) 707- 4740
- gvbelk@ncdot.gov

How can Grants Help your Organization?

- Grants can...
  - Fund projects without existing adequate funding
  - Enhance scope of existing project
  - Cover cost overruns
  - Support planning initiatives and early project development

Matching Projects with Funding Opportunities

- Transportation Grants Typically Follow Annual Cycle
- Programs have Specific Requirements
  o Eligibility
  o Min/Max Award Amounts
  o Deadlines
  o Merit Criteria
- Resources Available
  o Federal Agencies
  o NCDOT
  o Grants.Gov

USDOT Grant Navigator

Understanding the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

NOFO: Formal solicitation for grant program

READ CAREFULLY:

- Due Date
- Eligibility
- Statutory Requirements
- Merit Criteria
- Match Requirements
- Application Format Requirements
- Evaluation Process
- Priority Considerations
- Reporting Requirements

Source: City of Opelousas

USDOT Grant Key Requirements

Most competitive grants require:

Selection through competitive process

Project to meet schedule deadlines

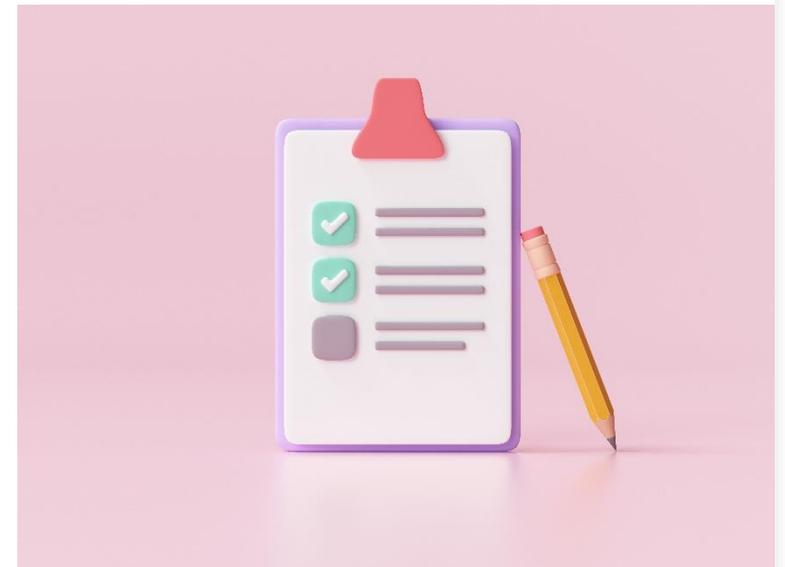Cost-effectiveness

Matching funds

Adherence to other federal requirements

Merit Criteria

USDOT establishes Merit Criteria to rank projects

USDOT Primary Merit Criteria:

- Safety

- Climate Change, Resiliency, Sustainability

- Equity, Community Engagement, Justice40

- Workforce Development, Job Quality, Wealth Creation
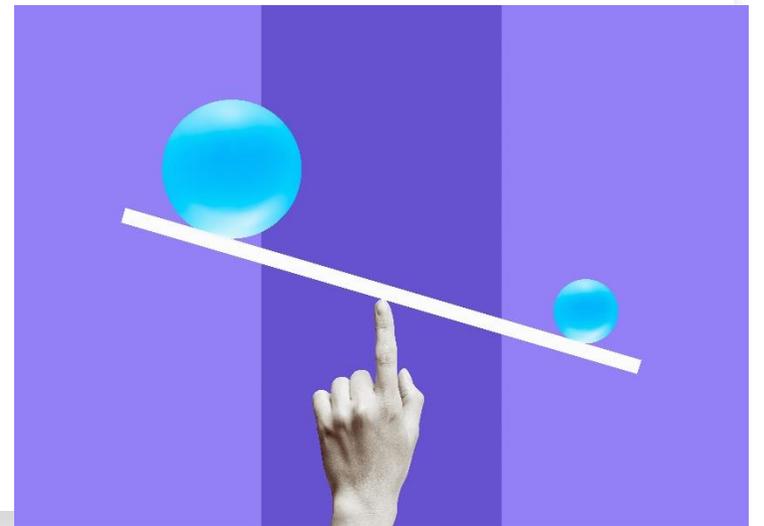
- State of Good Repair

- Innovation

Cost Effectiveness

- <u>Most</u> projects are required to show that they are "cost-effective"

- Established through Benefit-Cost Analysis (completed by applicant, verified by USDOT)

- Benefit-Cost Ratio must be greater than 1.0 to be eligible for competition

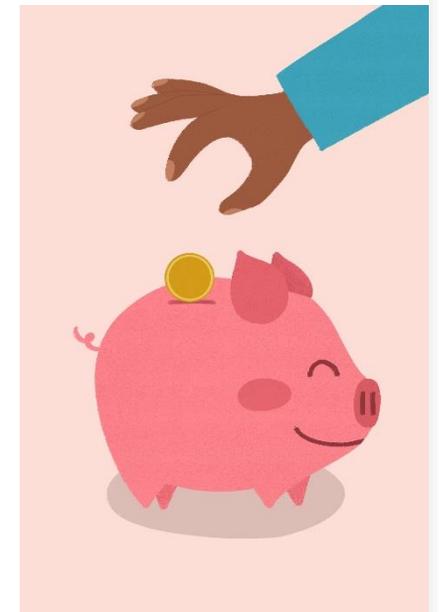- Ideally applicant can develop BCR greater than 1.25 to provide buffer for USDOT review

Factors Included:

- Travel time savings

- Safety

- Freight movement

- Maintenance cost savings

Matching Funds

- Most grant programs require matching funds (20% or more)
- Grant program may offer less than what you request
- Cost overages cannot be covered by grant
- Letter of Financial Commitment required at time of submittal
- Projects evaluated on "Financial Completeness"

Federal Requirements

- Must follow all traditional requirements for federally-funded projects

- Legislated obligation and expenditure deadlines

- No opportunities to get additional grant funding if over budget

- Grant agreement can take 12-18 months. Work not reimbursable until agreement signed

Key Takeaways

- Grant are a WONDERFUL opportunity to fund projects with BIG strings attached
  - Matching Funds
  - Federal Requirements
  - Strict Deadlines
- NCDOT is here to help. The sooner we can be involved, the more we can assist!
  - Contact Divisions
  - Contact Grants Office
  - Contact PMO