

# THE GRANT MATCHING FUND PILOT PROGRAM

A Report Required by Assembly Bill 489



**Department of Administration  
Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination, and Management**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Grant Match Fund (GMF) pilot program was recommended by the Nevada Advisory Council on Federal Assistance (Grants Council) in its annual reports to the Legislature in 2016 and 2018. The GMF was seen as a solution to reduce organizations from passing on grant opportunities due to a lack of available match funds and to increase grant funding coming into Nevada. As required by Assembly Bill (AB) 489 from the 2019 Legislature, the Grant Office created and administered the GMF pilot program that allowed state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations to request match grants from the GMF for the purpose of satisfying the matching requirement for a federal or nongovernmental organization grant to the extent money was available.

Since its creation in 2015, the Grants Council heard that many organizations were unable to make applications to grant opportunities. Federal grants often require applicants to share in the cost of delivering a program or project by contributing cash and/or in-kind contributions. So-called match funding is typically a small share of the total grant award, which means the state receives a high return on investment for its match. Nevada organizations, including nonprofit organizations and state, local, and tribal governments, unfortunately, are sometimes unable to meet these match requirements due to limited, tight budgets, which means they must pass up valuable federal grant opportunities. To avoid this, the Grants Council recommended a pilot program to provide state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations with grant funding to be used to meet explicit grant match requirements and secure bona fide high-value federal and nongovernmental organization grants.

Pursuant to AB 489, which established certain criteria for prioritizing match applications and created standards of eligibility for receiving a match grant through the program, the Grant Office established eligibility criteria and program criteria for stakeholder engagement, marketing, and outreach; developed a streamlined and timely review process as well as program application review, scoring, awarding, and notification processes; and developed post-award procedures, program outcomes, and performance measures. The GMF pilot program was approved by the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) in December 2019 and began accepting applications in January 2020. The program generated immense interest and in three months, the pilot program committed \$970,178 of the \$1 million allocation in matching fund grants with the potential to bring in \$3,226,440 in federal/nongovernmental grant funding to Nevada.

## CURRENT PILOT PROGRAM STATUS

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Because of unforeseen budgetary impacts to the state resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis, the program stopped accepting applications in April 2020 with the expectation to reserve any unawarded funds, rather than recommit these funds throughout the biennium as planned. The matching funds that had not yet been committed as of April 1 (\$29,822 ) and the funds to operate and staff the program (~\$101,000) were reserved for reversion in fiscal year 2020. To date, the program has made one matching grant award to the North Las Vegas Fire Department of \$45,129 to secure a \$451,292 grant from the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security (a \$10 federal return for every \$1 invested). Two IFC-approved commitments totaling \$925,049 are pending notification of award or non-award from the funding organization (there are two grant awards applicants must receive: the GMF's award of matching funds and the funding agency's award that requires the match funds).

Additionally, the COVID-19 health crisis significantly impacted funding organizations' ability to make awards on schedule or as planned. The two approved GMF applicants with pending commitments—

including the first GMF pilot program applicant who applied on January 7, 2020—have not yet been notified of any award due to such delays. It is unknown if these applications will be successful or if the approved GMF applicants can spend the funds as outlined in their GMF pilot program application by the June 30, 2021 deadline established by Senate Bill 528 (the bill which appropriated \$1 million to fund the grants awarded by the pilot program). If awards are not made from the funding agencies requiring match funds, the money will be reverted to the State General Fund, rather than awarded to other applicants as originally planned.

The Grant Office staff have absorbed only the essential grant management duties of the GMF pilot program as required under policy to manage the one awardee and two existing award commitments and will close out the program after this fiscal year's end. Some program activities documented in the business plan, including surveying program participants, will not be completed as planned due to a lack of dedicated program staff and disruption to the program.

With the GMF pilot program's successful launch and three months of operation, the Grant Office believes it has showed that the pilot program could be a successful, permanent program if fully resourced and staffed. As expected by many grant stakeholders throughout Nevada, the GMF pilot program received robust interest.

## REQUIRED REPORTING

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As required by AB 489, the Grant Office is submitting the below information by January 31, 2021 to the director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the Legislature summarizing the eighteen-month pilot program. As noted above, the program accepted applications only between January and April 2020 due to budgetary shortfalls and program data is incomplete due to the pending award status of two approved applicants with GMF commitments.

## GRANT REQUESTS RECEIVED

Grants and applicants had to meet certain [eligibility criteria](#) in order to apply for GMF match assistance. Certain types of grants (e.g., federal pass-through funding and mandatory grants) were ineligible for the program, and all applicants must demonstrate and certify that they exhausted all potential sources of match. An online application of forty-five questions determined applicant eligibility, and the GMF program manager followed up with all applicants to provide guidance and technical assistance.

Regarding the number and purpose of grant requests received from state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and nonprofits, the GMF pilot program received thirty-one total applications: fourteen completed, eleven disqualified, and six incomplete.

## COMPLETED APPLICATIONS

Each completed application was reviewed by an external review team of grant professionals who assessed and scored the application based on the applicant's answers about their organization, the grant opportunity, and the applicant organization's proposed program. Each GMF pilot program application was evaluated on its own merit, and not competitively against other applicants. Only completed applications that received a minimum passing score of 60 (from the average scores of the three assigned review team members) were approved for funding (of the 14 completed applications, three received the minimum passing score of 60).

Fourteen completed applications were received to address the following:

- Six from nonprofits

- To support human and family services including community management, early childhood development, public services, crisis intervention, parenting education, food subsidy programs, abuse prevention, youth development, and outreach programs that promote social justice, civil liberties, and human rights
- For rural transportation
- To determine how best to expand high-quality services to infants and toddlers and their families, beginning prenatally, to get them on track for school success by age three
- To provide financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas
- To support early literacy programs
- To provide environmental education to businesses helping Nevada cut down on waste, reduce valuable resource consumption, and fight climate change in an environmentally safe and cost-effective manner
- Four from local governments
  - To enhance the safety of the public and firefighters
  - To request four reconditioned/refurbished ZOLL X Series AEDs with patient-monitoring capability as well as the ability to monitor vital signs; to purchase all the battery support equipment as well as adult and child defibrillator pads for these defibrillators
  - To replace sixteen aging cardiac monitors to meet current standards and community need
  - To increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies to implement community-policing strategies that strengthen partnerships for safer communities and enhance law enforcement's capacity to prevent, solve, and control crime through funding for additional officers
- Three from state agencies
  - To protect inmates by undertaking efforts to prevent prison rape more effectively, investigating incidents of prison rape, or prosecuting incidents of prison rape
  - To provide technical assistance (e.g., information, training, and tools) to businesses and their facilities to help them develop and adopt source reduction practices to eliminate waste
  - To provide financial assistance to enable and improve distance learning and telemedicine services in rural areas.
- One from tribal governments
  - To bring high-speed internet to farms and rural communities

## DISQUALIFIED APPLICATIONS

Based on how an applicant responded to specific application questions, they could be automatically disqualified based on specific applicant or grant criteria that was provided in a mandatory pre-application video and application guide. In each case, the GMF program manager reached out to answer questions and discuss the reason for disqualification. Disqualified applicants were encouraged to reapply for all corrected applications for the same grant opportunity and for all eligible grant opportunities.

Eleven disqualified applications were received with the following disqualification reasons:

- Eight from nonprofits

- Not applying for a federal or nongovernmental grant with a match requirement (four nonprofits disqualified)
- Not applying for a current and active solicitation (two nonprofits disqualified)
- Applying for a mandatory grant (only competitive/discretionary grants were eligible)
- No D-U-N-S® number
- Two from local governments
  - Applying for a federal pass-through grant
  - Selected local government type of funding instead of federal direct or nongovernmental organization as required
- One from state agencies
  - Selected *other* as entity type
- None from tribal governments

## INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS

If an applicant began but abandoned the application process, the application was considered incomplete. In each case, the GMF program manager reached out to offer technical assistance in completing the application. Some applicants were curious about the process and did not intend to submit a completed application at that time.

Six incomplete applications were received by the following entity types:

- Four from nonprofits
- Two from local governments
- None from tribal governments
- None from state agencies

## GRANT REQUESTS APPROVED

Regarding the number and purpose of grant requests approved and the amount of money awarded from the GMF created by section 1.5 of AB 489 to each approved grant request applicant, there were three grant requests approved for funding by the grant review team with the purpose and committed matching grant award amount as follows:

- One from nonprofits
  - To support human and family services including community management, early childhood development, public services, crisis intervention, parenting education, food subsidy programs, abuse prevention, youth development, and outreach programs that promote social justice, civil liberties, and human rights
  - Committed match of \$70,000, contingent on IFC authorization and successful award of the federal or nongovernmental organization grant of \$210,000
  - Award status: pending award of the federal or nongovernmental organization grant
- One from local governments
  - To replace sixteen aging cardiac monitors to meet current standards and community need

- Committed match of \$45,129, contingent on IFC authorization and successful award of the federal or nongovernmental organization grant of \$451,292
- Award status: awarded
- One from tribal governments
  - To bring high speed internet to farms and rural communities
  - Committed match of \$855,049, contingent on IFC authorization and successful award of the federal or nongovernmental organization grant of \$2,565,148
  - Award status: pending award of the federal or nongovernmental organization grant
- None from state agencies

## GRANT FUNDING RECEIVED

Regarding the amount of federal and nongovernmental organization grant funding received by each grant applicant as a result of receiving money from the GMF, one grant award has been received and two awards are pending:

- None from nonprofits
  - Pending: \$210,000 in nongovernmental organization funding
- One from local governments
  - Received \$451,292 in federal funding
- None from tribal governments
  - Pending: \$2,565,148 in federal funding
- None from state agencies