



Tips for Hiring a Consultant

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INTRODUCTION



This resource was designed to help you hire the right consultant to meet your municipality's needs.

Writing grants requires many areas of expertise. [The Grant Assistance Program](#) at the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration understands that in addition to our free grant writing and support, supplemental assistance may be needed.

You may seek firms with expertise in infrastructure planning, analyses, feasibility studies, and project design to serve as an additional resource. Consultants could help you understand state and federal requirements or help with project designs, cost estimates, and engineering assessments.

When seeking consultant support, it is important to provide the firm with as much information as possible regarding your project. ***Be prepared with a project brief that includes your budget, timeline, and deliverables.***

WHERE TO FIND A CONSULTANT

If you decide to seek the services of a consultant, where do you find one?



Network with other governments like yours. Find out who has used a consultant. Ask for the consultant's contact information. Did the consultant do a good job?



Use the [Grant Assistance Program's Vendor Portal](#) to find a firm that aligns with your needs.



Invest the time needed to look for a reputable consultant. Contact several consultants and request a project proposal including qualifications, references, scope of services, and fees to complete the project.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CONSULTANT

While the cost of a consultant is an important concern, the least expensive consultant may not always offer the best value or be right for your needs. Consultants may not have direct experience or specific training in the area your municipality needs. Consider the following issues when choosing a consultant.

Compatibility

- Has the consultant worked with your type of organization before?
- Does the consultant have experience with the regulations and deadlines specific to your county?
- Does the consultant have experience with your project types or area of concern.
- Is the consultant responsive and easy to communicate with?

Credibility

- What is the consultant's reputation with organizations like yours?
- Does the consultant have solid references?
- Does the consultant have experience with Delaware's regulatory agencies?
- How many years has the consultant been in business?
- Does the consultant belong to relevant professional associations?

QUESTIONS TO ASK A CONSULTANT

- What is the firm's strongest area of expertise?
- Has the consultant worked with other local governments?
- What credentials, licenses, or certifications do staff have?
- Can they provide a list of references from previous projects?
- How are fees negotiated and what is the estimated project cost?
- Will they be able to adhere to any grant-related timelines or deadlines?
- Can they accommodate Buy America Build America requirements?
- If funding is secured, are they able to complete all phases of a project, including planning, design, and implementation?

For more resources from the Grant Assistance Program visit:
www.bidenschool.udel.edu/ipa/serving-delaware/grant-assistance

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Grant Assistance Program is a partnership between the University of Delaware's [Institute for Public Administration](#) (IPA) and the State of Delaware. IPA addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow's leaders.

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