



Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP)

County Shared Services Coordinator Grant

Challenge Grant

Implementation Grant

Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2026

**State of New Jersey
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Department of Community Affairs
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is dedicated to helping local governments improve the quality of life in every one of the State's 564 municipalities. Through a variety of programs, DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) works with counties and municipalities to streamline government operations and reduce costs and property taxes.

In 2018, Governor Phil Murphy launched the Shared Services Program with the appointment of two "Czars," former mayors Nicolas Platt and Jordan Glatt, to promote shared services throughout the State.

In 2019, DLGS established the Local Assistance Bureau (LAB) to provide direct support to local government entities in a variety of ways. This includes a key collaboration with the Czars and local governments to identify and implement shared services opportunities across the state.

The Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) is a natural extension of this mission.

Sharing services offers numerous benefits for participating communities. It reduces costs, delivers municipal services in a more efficient manner, generates increased value for each dollar spent while ensuring local government entities remain responsible stewards of the public trust.

LEAP affords an unprecedented opportunity to incentivize shared services implementation across New Jersey's local government entities, advancing the mission of the Shared Services Program. LEAP facilitates exploring and establishing shared services by providing counties, municipalities, school districts, commissions, authorities, county colleges, and fire districts assistance for the study or implementation of promising shared services projects undertaken pursuant to the Uniform Shared Service and Consolidation Act. The program is available to all New Jersey local government entities.

LEAP is comprised of three primary components: County Shared Services Coordinator Grants, Challenge Grants, and Implementation Grants.

DLGS is responsible for administering LEAP. Eligible local government entities are invited to apply for grant funds under each of the LEAP Grants. All information needed to apply is contained in these guidelines and the application package.

GRANT MANAGEMENT

Managing your LEAP Grant will be an important part of the grant process. The Department of Community Affairs utilizes "The System for Administering Grants Electronically (SAGE)," a web-based application system to accept and approve grant applications and manage executed grants. SAGE can be located at: <https://dcasage.intelligrants.com/portal.asp>.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The following source documents are located at:
https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/Leap_grants.shtml.

- LEAP Grant Guidelines
- LEAP Grant Management Guidelines
- The SAGE User Manual
- Sample Resolutions
- LEAP – Challenge Application Supplemental Forms
- LEAP – Implementation Application Supplemental Forms

The LEAP Grants are administered by the DLGS. All communications and actions between the grantee and DLGS will occur through SAGE.

FY 2026 FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding for the LEAP Grant originates from \$2 million appropriated through the state budget, P.L. 2025 c. 74, for Shared Services and School District Consolidation Study and Implementation from the Property Tax Relief Fund.

LEAP GRANT DESCRIPTIONS

LEAP COUNTY SHARED SERVICES COORDINATOR GRANTS

Allocates up to \$75,000 to each county for the purpose of hiring a new full-time employee or designating an existing employee (in good standing) to act as a County Shared Services Coordinator.

The coordinator will work with the county and each local government entity within the county or any entity with whom they may be able to share services to identify and advance shared service opportunities. For those counties already employing or engaging coordinators, this grant is still available to supplement the coordinator function.

Each county is invited to apply for a LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Grant up to \$75,000 to offset the direct salary costs related to the appointment of a shared services coordinator who is dedicated to shared service initiatives. The shared services coordinator shall be a full-time employee whose employment may be dedicated to full-time or part-time shared service initiatives. A county with an employee dedicated solely to shared service initiatives shall receive up to \$75,000 in grant funding. A county with an employee dedicated to part-time shared service initiatives for at least 20 hours per week, on average, shall receive up to \$37,500 in grant funding. Renewal of the LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Grant in future budget years is subject to available appropriations.

FUNDING PERIOD

The funding period for the County Shared Services Coordinator is July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

New Jersey counties are eligible to receive LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Grant funding.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to provide project management and oversight for all coordinator activities and fiscal operations.
2. Designate a senior county officer as supervisor to direct the coordinator's activities.
3. Commit to the coordinator's attendance at DLGS training and to providing bi-annual progress reports that summarize ongoing coordinator activities.
4. Commit to the coordinator's completion of a final report documenting program activities and accomplishments during the coordinator grant period.
5. Commit to providing employee fringe benefits.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Grant funding is available exclusively to offset the direct salary costs related to the appointment of a shared services coordinator.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Professional consulting contracts
- Temporary/contract employee

APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete applications must be submitted by the county through SAGE requesting the funds.

The following forms must be submitted to complete a LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Grant application:

- a) Grant application.
- b) County Board of Commissioners Resolution (see resolution sample in application).
- c) Resume of a new or existing employee appointed to the shared services coordinator position. If the county anticipates appointing a new employee but that person is not hired prior to the application submittal, the employee's resume is to be submitted upon hiring.
- d) Brief description of existing shared services coordination activities, if any.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

This is a rolling application process. However, applications must be submitted through SAGE no later than April 15, 2026. The grant term for each fiscal year is from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026, and the grant award will be pro-rated dependent on the County Shared Services Coordinator's start date to grant term expiration. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible due to the LEAP program's popularity and funding availability of the FY 2026 LEAP appropriation. Future programs are dependent upon state funding allocations.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

LEAP CHALLENGE GRANTS

Allocates funds to the most compelling projects in potentially each of New Jersey's twenty-one counties, affording municipalities, authorities, and counties the opportunity to compete for grant funding to support efficiency-generating shared services. This grant program is designed to promote innovation among peer communities and counties across New Jersey, and challenge municipalities and counties to collaborate on more extensive partnerships that produce shared services of greater significance than is customary.

LEAP Challenge Grants provide reimbursement for qualifying expenses incurred in the study or development of approved programs and services authorized under the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq.). Shared service programs and activities authorized by other statutes are not eligible for LEAP assistance.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding in the amount of \$150,000 is available within each New Jersey county. Up to three (3) grants per county may be awarded.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

New Jersey counties, municipalities, school districts, county colleges, authorities, and fire districts are eligible to receive LEAP Challenge Grant funding. Local units entering into a shared services agreement and contracting with a volunteer fire or volunteer ambulance/EMS company may be eligible for a LEAP grant provided that the approving resolution and executed contract between the local unit and the volunteer fire or volunteer ambulance/EMS company is submitted together with a LEAP grant application.

A 501(c)(3) EMS organization shall not serve as the lead agency in an application for a LEAP grant and may not directly administer, distribute, or account for State public funds. All State funds must be received and managed by the lead agency, which will retain responsibility for financial reporting, reimbursement requests, and accounting records. Any costs incurred by the 501(c)(3) organization must be reimbursed through the lead agency in accordance with LEAP's eligible expenditures guidelines.

Local units entering into a shared services agreement and pursuing an arrangement with a third-party consultant for grant writing and/or grant administration purposes may be eligible for a LEAP Challenge Grant. To be considered for a grant award, such applications must include the contract for services, including billing structure, and expenses for which reimbursement is being sought. In lieu of a resulting feasibility study, such Challenge Grant projects must include the goals and objectives of utilizing the consultant or contracted service, and a final report at the end of the grant term must describe the progress made towards meeting those objectives. Such arrangements are also subject to the provisions in the “Use of Consultant Services – Challenge and Implementation Grants” section of these guidelines.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

Each project must meet the following criteria:

1. Advance efficiency in the provision of services.
2. Improve operational effectiveness.
3. Involve at least two (2) local government entities.
4. Strive to develop or be the first to use or apply a new method, area of knowledge or activity.
5. Present a proposal that has the potential to scale or to be replicated if the concept bears out upon study and implementation.
6. Reflect a documented commitment in the form of a certified governing body resolution (see resolution samples in application) from all participating local government entities to pursue the identified project or activity.
7. Involve a shared service agreement that will include a **minimum five (5) year term**, with a requirement to remain in place for the **full term of the agreement**. Should a shared service agreement be terminated prior to the five (5) year term expiration, the DLGS reserves the right to **recall** the grant in whole or in part at their discretion.

Please note: Applicants must be current, in good standing, and compliant with all DCA DLGS and other State of New Jersey funded projects and grant agreement terms.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Programs or projects authorized under any statute other than the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act, including joint insurance programs and cooperative purchasing programs, are ineligible.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

LEAP Challenge Grant funds can be used to support a variety of costs related to investigating,

developing, and pioneering a new shared service project initiative. Eligible activities may include but are not limited to:

- Enhancing existing regionalization of services.
- Identifying and eliminating duplication and other redundancy of services through greater technical and capital alignment.
- Facilitating integration of resource deployment.
- Building community engagement and consensus around the joint provision of services.
- Sharing best practices and innovations with other communities.
- Investigative study of the potential benefits for a local government shared services or a consolidation.
- Information technology plan development for shared services initiative.
- Cybersecurity plan development for shared services initiative.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Salaries, wages, and ongoing operating costs are not generally eligible. This includes fringe benefits, rent, utilities, telephone maintenance or general administrative costs.
- Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) programs.
- Any expenses not fully justified that DLGS may deem ineligible.
- Expenses related to alcohol, out-of-state or out-of-country travel, prizes and awards, honoraria, lobbying expenses, fundraising events/expenses, fines and penalties, taxes, deficit funding, and refreshments for meetings.

GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

DLGS will evaluate all applications. Grant applications will be ranked by scope of impact, breadth of collaboration, and efficiencies generated. DLGS will review grant applications and notify applicants of grant awards on or about June 15, 2026.

Grant application decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

SCORING CRITERIA

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria, on a scale of 100 points:

- 1. Degree of Innovation (25)**

- a) Incremental - Degree to which the proposal makes small improvements or upgrades to a service or services - 0 to 5 points.
- b) Breakthrough - Degree to which the proposal represents a break from a traditional method or approach to providing a service or services in favor of a better approach - 6 to 15 points.
- c) Transformational - Degree to which the proposal fundamentally alters the way a service or services are delivered - 16 to 25 points.

2. Scale/Replication Potential (15)

- a) Applicable between different local unit types - Degree to which proposal could be implemented in different units of government (i.e. municipalities, counties, school districts, special districts, authorities, etc.).
- b) Applicability between regions - Degree to which proposal could be implemented in any region of the state (i.e. North, Central, South).
- c) Can expand to other participants - Degree to which proposal could be expanded to other participants (i.e. other local government units).

3. Direct Financial and Administrative Advantages (20)

- a) Need for project - Degree to which the proposal meets a specific need or solves a problem.
- b) Projected cost savings.
- c) Efficiencies to be generated - Quantity and quality of efficiencies created by the proposal.

4. Quality and Feasibility of Work Plan (20)

- a) Quality - Quality of submitted work plan: comprehensiveness, completeness, sufficient level of detail, contingency planning.
- b) Feasibility - Degree to which the work plan could realistically be implemented and sustained given available staffing, budget, and timeline.
- c) Expense Eligibility - Degree to which the proposal only includes eligible expenses, as defined in the Guidelines.

5. Full Participation and Support of Participants (20)

- a) Documented commitment by all participants - valid supporting documentation received from all cited participants.
- b) In-kind staff resources - Degree to which proposal includes the provision of in-kind staff resources.
- c) Matching local government entity funding - Existence and significance of match funding from the applicant local unit.
- d) Participant readiness - Degree to which all participants demonstrate readiness to complete the project.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Each application submitted to DLGS shall: include a description of the intended use of grant funding for the approved shared services project; demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project and provide project management and oversight for all activities and fiscal operations; and list key personnel and/or outside consultants that will be managing the grant funds and/or proposed project. Applications must be submitted jointly by all participating local government entities. Each partner to a proposal must submit a conforming resolution that memorializes the local government entity's commitment to completion of the proposed project. The resolutions and application must designate one entity the project lead.

The following forms must be submitted to complete a LEAP Challenge Grant application:

- a. Grant application.
- b. Certified governing body resolutions (see resolution samples in application) from all participating local government entities.
- c. Shared service project narrative, including statement of need.
- d. Detailed explanation of use for funds, including efficiency estimate and cost savings summary.
- e. Detailed work plan for the project, including staffing commitments and timelines.

Applications for LEAP funding must be consistent with the policies and priorities of any relevant State agency which has jurisdiction or supervisory responsibility over the service or function (e.g., Administrative Office of the Courts, 911 Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Education). Applications for LEAP Grants may be reviewed in part by, and are subject to the comments of, such agencies.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

This is a rolling application process, and applications must be submitted through SAGE. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible but no later than April 15, 2026, due

to the LEAP program's popularity and funding availability of the FY 2026 LEAP appropriation. Future programs are dependent upon state funding allocations.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

LEAP IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

Allocates funds to help cover costs associated with new shared service implementation. These include one-time reimbursable costs for project completion or transition support which may include, but is not limited to, new technology costs incurred as part of equipping a new shared services program, rebranding costs, equipment and vehicle outlays, professional services, rent for facilities, payroll system conversion costs, and training. Funding is based on the total transition or implementation cost of a project. Transitional costs incurred by participant(s) are filtered through the application lead(applicant).

LEAP Implementation Grants provide reimbursement for qualifying expenses incurred in the implementation of a local or regional new service agreement, or for the coordination of programs and services authorized under the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 et seq.). LEAP Implementation Grants also provide funding for the study of a proposed school district consolidation pursuant to this Act.

Effective in the FY 2026 LEAP Implementation grant program, school consolidation studies that provide for reimbursement of costs associated with school consolidation studies that support the creation of meaningful and implementable regionalization plans must be submitted through the FY 2026 School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP).

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Local government entity implementation support shall not exceed \$300,000 per project, which may account for up to a maximum of 75% of implementation expenses incurred.

The amount awarded for any school consolidation feasibility study may account for up to 100% of study costs, depending upon application quality, project composition and participation, and value provided.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

New Jersey counties, municipalities, school districts, county colleges, authorities, and fire districts are eligible to receive LEAP Challenge Grant funding. Local units entering into a shared services agreement and contracting with a volunteer fire or volunteer ambulance/EMS company may be eligible for a LEAP grant provided that the approving resolution and executed contract between the local unit and the volunteer fire or volunteer ambulance/EMS company is submitted together with a LEAP grant application.

A 501(c)(3) EMS organization shall not serve as the lead agency in an application for a LEAP grant and may not directly administer, distribute, or account for State public funds. All State funds must be received and managed by the lead agency, which will retain responsibility for financial reporting,

reimbursement requests, and accounting records. Any costs incurred by the 501(c)(3) organization must be reimbursed through the lead agency in accordance with LEAP's eligible expenditures guidelines.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

Each project must meet the local government entity implementation support criteria. If the applicants seek local government entity implementation support, the project must:

1. Advance efficiency in the provision of services.
2. Improve operational effectiveness.
3. Reduce the cost of, or staff time associated with, providing a service.
4. Identify qualifying reimbursable one-time start-up costs associated with implementation of the new shared service agreement that impedes the execution of the shared service.
5. Involve at least two (2) local government entities.
6. Reflect a documented commitment in the form of a certified governing body resolution (see resolution samples in application) from each participating local government entity to proceed to implementation of the new shared service, if funding is awarded.
7. Include a shared service agreement with a minimum five (5) year term, with a requirement to remain in place for the full term of the agreement. Should a shared service agreement be terminated prior to the five (5) year term expiration, the DLGS reserves the right to recall the grant in whole or in part at its discretion.

Please note: To be eligible for LEAP grant funding, applicants must be current, in good standing, and compliant with all DCA, DLGS, and other State of New Jersey funded projects and grant agreement terms.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

LEAP Implementation Grant funds can be used to support a variety of costs related to a new shared service project by offsetting year one hard or soft start-up costs incurred as part of implementation of a new shared service initiative. This may include, but is not limited to:

- New technology or technology conversion costs incurred as part of the equipping of the new shared services program.
- Rebranding costs (e.g.: logo design, painting vehicles, badges).
- Capital improvements and certain equipment purchases that are integral to implementation of a functional consolidation or dissolution of a layer of local government, only for the immediate period preceding the consolidation. (*Vehicle expenses must be specific to the shared service agreement, i.e., jail transport, sanitation trucks, police, EMS and OEM vehicles, vacuum jet trucks, etc., not general usage vehicles*).
- Professional services (e.g.: legal, architectural, consulting or engineering expenses).

- Training.
- Transitional personnel costs, not to exceed two (2) years, and only where such expenses are integral to project implementation (see “Ineligible Activities” below).
- Information technology personnel new hire costs. *Information technology projects must include the following:*
 - A current information technology plan for shared services agreement, or consolidation that supports technology infrastructure, data management, digital communications, training, technical support, and include timetable, and budget.
 - An information technology personnel hire(s) requirement list which must include background, education/training, and certifications specific to and aligned with the information technology plan mission, goals, and objectives.
- Cybersecurity personnel new hire costs. *Cybersecurity projects must include the following:*
 - A current cybersecurity plan for shared services agreement, or consolidation that supports the mitigation and reduction of cyber security or data breaches and cyber extortion threats. The plan should address specific areas of vulnerability, and, at a minimum, include software and hardware updates, staff training and education, i.e., phishing, etc., operating systems, routers, printers, desktop, laptop, mobile equipment and vendor security access and protocols, data backup, anti-virus and malware defense, fire walls, risk management and incident response procedures, multi-factor authentication, data encryption and include a timetable and budget.
 - A cybersecurity personnel hire(s) list which must include background, education/training, and certifications specific to and aligned with the cybersecurity plan mission, goals, and objectives.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Salaries, wages, and ongoing operating costs are not generally eligible. This includes fringe benefits, rent, utilities, telephone maintenance or general administrative costs. Salaries are eligible during a limited transition period when the service is being implemented, but once the transition period is complete (no more than a three-year period) salaries and all other operating costs are local responsibilities.
- Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) programs.
- Any expenses not fully justified that DLGS may deem ineligible.
- Expenses related to alcohol, out-of-state or out-of-country travel, prizes and awards, honoraria, lobbying expenses, fundraising events/expenses, grant-writing costs, fines and penalties, taxes, deficit funding, and refreshments for meetings.
- Temporary/contract personnel.
- Cybersecurity insurance.

- Payment of ransom from cyberattacks.

GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

DLGS will evaluate all applications. Incomplete applications will be rejected and cannot be resubmitted within the grant funding cycle for which they were submitted. Grant applications will be ranked by scope of impact, breadth of collaboration, and efficiencies generated. DLGS will review grant applications and take the following action within thirty (45) days of receipt of the grant application: 1) award a grant; 2) recommend denial of a grant; or 3) notify the applicant that action on the grant will be deferred until a future date.

Grant application decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

Applications for local government implementation support will be scored based on the following criteria, on a scale of 100 points:

1. Need for Project (15)

- Degree to which documented problems solved by the project.
- Scope of impact - Degree to which the project - effectuates local or regional change.

2. Financial and Administrative Advantages (30)

- Impact of cost savings for all parties.
- Projected cost savings.
- Efficiencies to be generated.
- Quality of proposed funding mechanism.

3. Quality and Feasibility of Work Plan (20)

- Quality - Quality of submitted work plan: comprehensiveness, completeness, sufficient level of detail, contingency planning.
- Feasibility - Degree to which the work plan could realistically be implemented given available staffing, budget, and timeline.
- Expense eligibility - Degree to which the proposal only includes eligible expenses, as defined in the Guidelines.

4. Full Participation and Support of Participants (20)

- Documented commitment by all participants - Valid supporting documentation

received from all cited participants.

- b) In-kind staff resources - Degree to which proposal includes the provision of in-kind staff resources.
- c) Matching local government entity funding - Existence and significance of match funding from the applicant local unit.
- d) Participant readiness - Degree to which all participants demonstrate readiness to complete the project.

5. **Other Criteria (15%)**

- a) Consolidation of services or dissolution of a layer of government (elimination of an authority or district).
- b) Unique or Innovative - Meaningfully advances shared service efforts in an affected region or across the state.
- c) Project with needs identified by the DLGS LAB.

Applications for LEAP funding must be consistent with the policies and priorities of any relevant State agency which has jurisdiction or supervisory responsibility over the service or function (e.g., Administrative Office of the Courts, 911 Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Education). Applications for LEAP Grants may be reviewed in part by, and are subject to the comments of, such agencies.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Each application submitted to DLGS shall: include a description of the intended use of grant funding for the approved shared services project; demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project and provide project management and oversight for all activities and fiscal operations; and list key personnel and/or outside consultants that will be managing the grant funds and/or proposed project.

Applications must be submitted jointly by all participating local government entities. Each partner to a proposal must submit a conforming resolution that memorializes the local government entity's commitment to completion of the proposed project. The resolutions and application must designate one entity the project lead.

The following forms must be submitted to complete a LEAP Implementation Grant application:

- a. Grant application.
- b. Certified governing body resolutions (see resolution samples in application) from all participating local government entities.
- c. Shared service project narrative, including statement of need.

- d. Detailed explanation of use for funds, including efficiency estimate and cost savings summary.
- e. Detailed work plan for the project, including staffing commitments and timelines.

Applications for LEAP funding must be consistent with the policies and priorities of any relevant State agency which has jurisdiction or supervisory responsibility over the service or function (e.g., Administrative Office of the Courts, 911 Commission, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Education). Applications for LEAP Grants may be reviewed in part by, and are subject to the comments of, such agencies.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

This is a rolling application process, and applications must be submitted through SAGE. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible but no later than April 15, 2026, due to the LEAP program's popularity and funding availability of the FY 2026 LEAP appropriation. Future programs are dependent upon state funding allocations.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

USE OF CONSULTANT SERVICES – CHALLENGE AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS:

Local government entities intending to use a consultant for a LEAP Challenge or Implementation Grant must adhere to the following conditions to qualify for reimbursement of part or all the associated expenses:

1. All consultant contracts must be awarded based on a formal Competitive Contracting process, Fair and Open Request for Proposal (RFP) process, or the Non-Fair and Open RFP process permitted under the Local Public Contracts Law for certain licensed professionals. The Non-Fair and Open RFP process is specific to the following professional services: architecture, engineering, and legal. Copies of the RFP submitted and selected proposal(s), and the applicant's analysis or other documentation that supports the selection are required for Non-Fair and Open RFPs. Consultant contracts awarded through the Competitive Contracting or Fair and Open RFP process shall include copies of the RFP, proof of public notice of advertisement either in a newspaper, on-line publication, or listed on applicant website, the submitted and selected proposal(s), and the applicant's analysis or other documentation that supports the selection.
2. All consultant proposals are to be on a time and materials basis, not a single, all-inclusive fee, and must show the following:
 - A project timeline inclusive of major component tasks and activities.
 - The anticipated time (hours or days) required to accomplish each component.
 - Any sub-contractors associated with the project.

- Personnel staff assigned to each component, the number of hours/days estimated for that assignment, and the rate to be charged.
- Charges for support staff time must also identify the activity, the staff's hourly rate, and estimate of hours required for task completion.
- Out-of-pocket reimbursement (mailing, delivery charges or other related third- party expenses).
- The total estimated cost of the proposal.
- Consultant work plans must include crucial decision points that will halt the project should it appear that the project is not feasible on a joint or shared basis. The grantee must consult with the LEAP before authorizing any further activity.

3. Travel expenses are not eligible for LEAP reimbursement. This includes all mileage, tolls, parking, meals, or other travel-related charges.
4. Staff "down time" while traveling between the work site and consultant's home or office location is not reimbursable by the LEAP.
5. If a grant is awarded to the local government entity, the selected consultant must prepare a detailed work plan of the tasks and activities for each project component, including the personnel assignments and the estimated time anticipated for completion of each task. This work plan must be submitted to the LEAP. The LEAP reserves the right to request additional documentation, information, or other materials necessary for its evaluation of the proposed work plan.
6. There are specific requirements related to submitted reimbursement requests for consultant services. See below.

Consultant Related Reporting:

LEAP Grant reimbursement of payments for contracts with third-party consultants must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Reimbursement of consultant service contracts shall be on a time and materials basis that details the grant-related activity performed, and time required for the activity, or allowable expenses related to grant purposes. Grant awards shall be considered the maximum amount of LEAP assistance; the value of any time or other costs above the maximum grant amount approved by the LEAP shall not be reimbursable through the LEAP.
2. Invoices from the consultant must include the name and hourly rate of everyone whose time is billed, the date and number of hours worked, the project activity or task associated with the chargeable hours, and the amount due for the services rendered.
3. A separate line item or charge is required for each project activity or task being billed.

4. Copies of executed purchase orders, final invoices, and proof of payment checks (front and back) must accompany the LEAP Financial Status Report (FSR). The FSR must bear the signature of the local government entity's Chief Financial Officer and Certification Number.
5. A copy of the consultant's feasibility study final report and recommendations must be submitted as part of the documentation for a final reimbursement payment, as applicable.

GRANT FUNDING PROCESS

All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Upon completion of grant review and selection, DLGS will enter into an agreement with applicants approved for funding. Following execution of the grant agreement, the grantee can seek reimbursement for costs for new shared service initiatives, as appropriate, within the category of grant awarded, provided that all award conditions have been satisfied. In certain circumstances and upon receipt of an executed shared services agreement and grant agreement, shared service initiatives may be eligible for an advance reimbursement of the disbursement of funds up to 50% of the total grant award. These initiatives may include certain start-up costs, including rebranding, professional services, capital equipment, and training.

Grantees shall maintain and retain accounting and other grant-related records and information for the duration of the project funded by the grant, as required by applicable state and local laws and regulations, for no less than two (2) calendar years.

Such records shall be subject to examination, audit, and inspection by DLGS and/or any other federal, state, or local agency that has jurisdictional authority.

DLGS reserves the right to rescind grant awards, reclaim funds, or withhold future grant funding and/or disqualify a grantee from participating in future grant awards if any condition of the grant program is unmet, including if grant funds received by the grantee are not properly accounted for, or if the grantee fails to meet reporting or certification requirements.

Following execution of the agreement, the grantee is permitted to move funds between authorized categories within these guidelines for eligible items without requesting prior approval from DLGS.

GENERAL GRANT INFORMATION

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTING

LEAP grant recipients shall submit to DLGS Project Progress Reports (semi-annually) reporting on the activities and progress of the new shared service project initiative. Progress report periods are identified in SAGE.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

LEAP grants are reimbursement-based except for County Shared Services Coordinator grants which

are funded upon the execution of a grant agreement. In certain circumstances and upon receipt of an executed shared services agreement and grant agreement, shared service initiatives may be eligible for an advance reimbursement of the disbursement of funds up to 50% of the total grant award. These initiatives may include certain start-up costs, including rebranding, professional services, capital equipment, and training.

Eligible costs are reimbursed to the grantee upon submission of evidence of payment by the grantee and for purchase orders issued and expenses incurred **on and/or after July 1, 2025**, and through the grant award period.

Requests for payment shall be made by submitting a Financial Status Report (FSR) through SAGE, along with uploaded files that contain copies of fully executed purchase orders, final invoices, and cancelled checks (front and back) as proof of payment documenting the expenditure of funds for which reimbursement is sought.

Transitional costs incurred by project participant(s) will be filtered through the grantee (Lead Agency).

For additional third-party consultant reimbursement documentation requirements, please refer to the Consultant Related Reporting instructions.

Requests for reimbursement can be submitted at any time but must be not less than once every three (3) months.

Funding for reimbursement requests received more than two (2) months after the close of the fiscal year during which the costs were incurred cannot be guaranteed.

Payment will be made via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified by the grantee.

GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS

A grantee may request the final payment at the conclusion of the approved project period. The conclusion of the project cannot occur before the execution of the new shared service agreement for which implementation funds were provided, except as otherwise provided in writing by DLGS.

Regardless of the date of the conclusion of the approved project period, a grant recipient must submit a final progress report through SAGE documenting that all administrative responsibilities and required activities under the approved shared services project have been satisfactorily completed and provide a copy of the final executed shared service agreement by the date of conclusion of the approved project period. The report must also describe the benefits derived from the grant.

At the conclusion of the grant agreement deadline, any grant program disbursements without submission of an executed shared service agreement or final feasibility study report and recommendations may be subject to recoupment along with non-payment of remaining funds.

ASSISTANCE

Applicants may contact program staff at (609) 930-1969 to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application. Questions may also be submitted via e-mail to dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov.