

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FIRST STEPS SERVICE GRANTS

First Steps Projects focus on the needs of local governments beginning to consider inter-jurisdictional cooperation in land use planning. These service grants may be provided to communities that need facilitation, information and research, training and education, and/or expert assistance to open the discussion and address the basic barriers to cooperation.

Description

The purpose of a *First Steps* project is to help adjacent municipalities build a basis for inter-jurisdictional cooperation. Whether one of the example projects meets your needs (see sidebar) or you have something else in mind, *First Steps* will help adjacent municipalities complete a successful collaborative project.

To obtain a *First Steps Service Grant*, participating local governments are required to make a joint application. Applications will be accepted at any time to help ensure that the *timing is right* for the community. Local governments are required to contribute at least 20% of the project cost. *First Steps* projects are expected to take 4 to 6 months and cost no more than \$7,000.

Application Procedures

To apply for a *First Steps Service Grant*, participating local governments are required to submit a joint application which would include formal resolutions of support. LIAA is accepting applications in the form of clear and concise proposals of no more than 5 pages (not including attachments).

Examples of possible *First Steps* projects include:

1. *Overcoming Past Disputes* – Put old grievances aside and find common ground. LIAA can facilitate a series of conversations that help reveal mutual interests and set the stage for ongoing inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
2. *Finding a Sense of Place* – Perhaps community leaders are already communicating with each other, but need to focus their discussions. LIAA can guide the community through an *asset mapping* exercise that helps clarify shared values and prepares for collective planning initiatives.
3. *Education and Support* – Is your community considering a 425 Agreement? What about the possibility of forming an Authority or even a joint planning commission? LIAA can provide information and education sessions to help determine which inter-jurisdictional planning tool is right for you.
4. *Multi-jurisdictional Technology* – Does your community need to coordinate mapping efforts? Would you like to collaborate on a *community website* to serve your community? LIAA can provide the organizational and technical support needed for information technology sharing.

Proposals must contain all of the following:

1. **Purpose Statement.** In a sentence or two describe the purpose of the project.
2. **Background.** Please provide a brief history of cooperation or lack of cooperation between municipalities involved. What has led you to apply for this service grant? What has been accomplished?
3. **Project Goals.** In a brief statement, please identify the project goals. What do you hope to achieve?
4. **Service Expectations.** Please clearly describe the services or assistance you seek for this project. What would you like LIAA to do? Please provide a general project timeline.
5. **Participant Information.** Who are the partners and how will they participate in the project? How will the participating municipalities contribute? For example, the participants could take responsibility for all meeting notifications, provide meeting rooms, handle mailings, or other support. Also, please include a list of key project contacts.
6. **Project Area.** Please provide a brief description and/or map.
7. **Project Commitment.** The proposal must include a commitment to provide the required cash match within one month of project start-up. Resolutions and/or meeting minutes that document the participants' commitments to meet project obligations **must** be attached in the proposal.

Submit proposals to:

Partnerships for Change Sustainable Communities

First Steps

Land Information Access Association

324 Munson Avenue

Traverse City, MI 49686.

You may also submit applications as Adobe Acrobat .pdf documents, to partnerships@liaa.org.

Areas of Special Interest: We are particularly interested in assisting with the development of policies and/or programs that help address the emerging concerns for the sustainability of Michigan communities, including: (1) preservation of critical natural resources; (2) energy conservation and renewable energy production; (3) community asset inventories and development; and (4) improved economic viability of communities.

Selection Criteria: An application review committee will evaluate all applications received. The success of an application will be determined by its completeness and clarity of purpose, the likelihood of project success, and the level of commitment offered by participants.

Proposals for a *First Steps Service Grant* **may be submitted at any time.** We will respond to all proposals within one month of receipt. LIAA will contact selected communities to discuss and develop an agreement, including a scope of services needed to complete the project.