

# NACo Technology Guides **FOR COUNTY LEADERS**

**BUDGETING** ○ ————— ○



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NACo CTAC (County Technology Advisory Council) is developing layman's guides for county elected officials, as well as other county executive leadership to help raise awareness and understanding of the technology that is needed to support county essential functions. The guides will further provide education in the innovative uses of technology to take the county beyond the essentials and improve the delivery of citizen services and programs.

Each guide will include an executive summary and then will focus on a series of questions to ask that will include the risk or missed opportunity if not implemented. Guides identified include the following, with this guide focusing on Budgeting.

## CYBER

*Detection*

*Prevention*

*Response*



## GEOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGIES

*Use Cases and Investment*

*Strategy*

*Policies and Data Sharing*



## WORKFORCE TALENT

*Flextime*

*Benefits*

*Career Growth*



## BUDGETING & GRANTS

*Procurement*

*Contracts*

*Grants*



## TECHNOLOGY PLANNING, INNOVATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

*Projects*

*Priorities*

*Innovation*



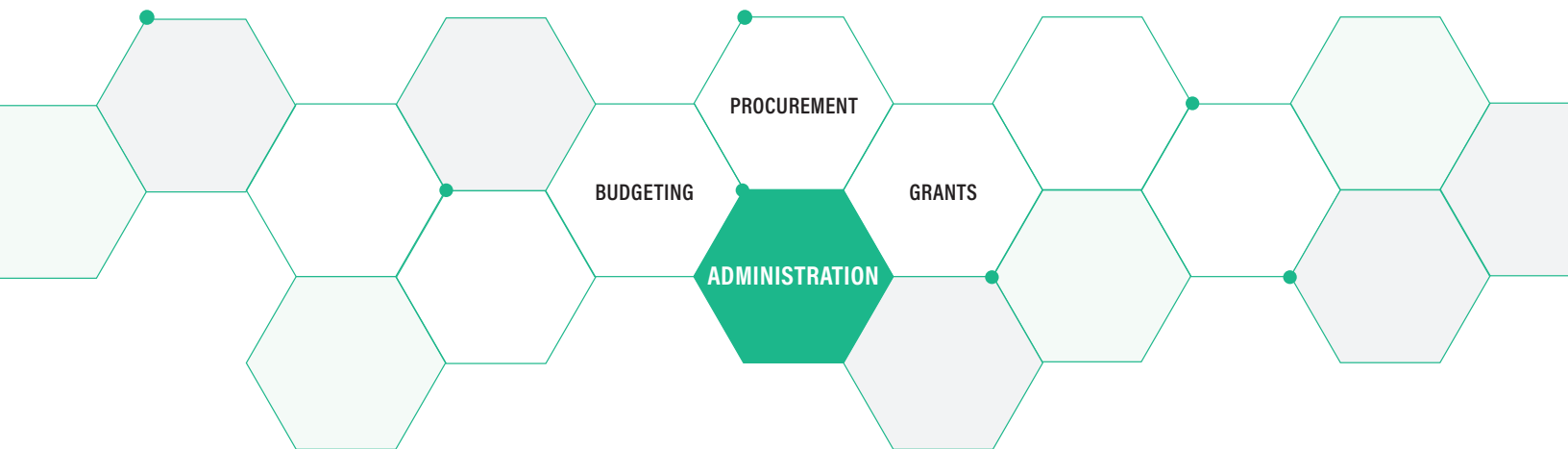
# TECHNOLOGY BUDGET AND PROCUREMENT

## Purpose:

**As an Elected Official** – Budgeting is a vital component of effective county government practices. The areas of procurement, contracts and grants are integral to supporting the budgeting process throughout its lifecycle. These three areas are key to:

- Promoting fiscal responsibility
  - Identifying priorities
  - Helping to allocate or assign technology resources appropriately and more efficiently
  - Ensuring that the expenditures of the county are reasonable
  - Helping the county to plan for the coming year
  - Identifying where there might be risks or gaps between revenue and expenditures
  - Compelling departments to determine what is desirable versus what is essential
- Identifying if there is project duplication across departments
  - Promoting transparency of the use of county funds, and
  - Enabling a county to analyze spending from year to year and make more informed decisions

The following sections are divided into the benefits of streamlining and coordinating these three areas of procurement, budgeting, and grants, as well as the questions that county leaders should be asking.



# Top Benefits For Procurement and Centralized Purchasing

## 1 SECURITY

Creates an environment of focused attention on security for new purchases that identifies where and how security should be applied.

## 2 CONSISTENCY

Helps bring consistency to the procurement process, which includes RFP's (Request for Proposals), proposal review, evaluation, minority priority and selection.

## 3 ENTERPRISE

Allows for an enterprise approach to apply standard terms and conditions, contract language, federal and state requirements and other provisions that are needed to ensure the county's responsible oversight.

## 4 FAIRNESS

Improves fairness and diversity across domains that include race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and language.

## 5 DUPLICATION

Identifies duplication of requests and assists in consolidating and streamlining the various department requests or can establish blanket purchase orders.

## 6 PARTNERING

Identifies areas where multiple departments may be able to partner to save on cost.

## 7 EFFICIENCIES

Facilitates an organized approach to the procurement and contracting process, which in turn helps to avoid missed steps and minimizes protests.

## 8 OVERSIGHT

Can serve as an oversight for meeting contract obligations and regulatory compliance.

## 9 DOLLARS

Leads to more efficient use of available funds often referred to as best value procurement.

## 10 ENHANCED VENDOR RELATIONSHIPS

Allows for better management of vendor relationships by fostering strategic partnerships with vendors that include negotiation of long-term agreements, performance evaluation and better service levels.



# Top Benefits For Contracts

## 1 CENTRALIZATION

Contracting in the county benefits greatly from centralization by providing opportunities for efficiency and cost savings.

## 2 BULK PURCHASING

Encourages the combining of similar needs across different departments, wherein one contract can be established to address those common needs.

## 3 CONSISTENCY

Contracts ensure that proper language is included in the final agreement.

## 4 STREAMLINES PROCESSES

With centralized contracting, the procurement process becomes more streamlined and standardized. It establishes clear guidelines, procedures, and controls for purchasing goods and services. This reduces duplication of efforts, minimizes administrative burden, and improves overall process efficiency.

## 5 EXPERTISE AND SPECIALIZATION

Centralized contracting allows the county to consolidate expertise in contracting within a dedicated team or department. These professionals specialize in contract negotiation, piggyback agreement utilization, vendor management, and compliance. As a result, this ensures better outcomes, mitigate risks, increase experience in procurement officers and optimize contract terms.

## 6 INCREASED TRANSPARENCY

Centralized contracting promotes transparency, both to internal stakeholders as well as to the public. This fosters trust in the county's handling of available resources, as well as aids auditors and those monitoring contracts.

## 7 ACCOUNTABILITY

Provides a clear audit trail, standardizes documentation, and improves reporting mechanisms. By having accountability at a centralized level, the risk of fraud or favoritism is greatly reduced.

## 8 STANDARDIZATION

Centralized contracting facilitates the establishment of standardized contracts, templates, and terms and conditions. This consistency ensures that all government departments or agencies follow the same guidelines, resulting in competitive, fair and equitable treatment for vendors.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Centralized contracting provides better oversight and control over procurement activities. It helps identify and mitigate risks associated with contract terms, pricing, quality control, and compliance with laws and regulations, including the use of piggy-back agreements.

## 10 DATA AND ANALYTICS

Centralized contracting allows for better data collection and analysis. Counties can gather valuable data on spending patterns, vendor performance, and contract outcomes. This data-driven approach enables informed decision-making, identification of cost-saving opportunities, and continuous improvement in procurement and contracting practice.

## 11 PROMOTE LOCAL

Centralized contracting can foster a well-rounded strategy that promotes diversity among applications, creating valuable opportunities for local vendors, small businesses, and minority enterprises.



# Top Benefits For Grants

## 1 PROJECT INITIATION

Grant funds help to get a project or program off the ground.

## 2 PROGRAM TESTING

Grants allow for testing of a project or program that the county wants to determine the long-term viability without committing funds to a timeframe beyond the grant period.

## 3 ONE TIME COSTS

Can allow for one-time infrastructure or program improvements. Areas such as cyber enhancements such as Multi-Factor Authentication are a good candidate for grants.

## 4 EXPANSION

Can help expand an already planned or existing program to better serve resident needs. New features in a software application to better address resident needs work well with a grant opportunity.

## 5 ECONOMIC GROWTH

Can help stimulate economic growth.

## 6 INCREASED TRANSPARENCY

Allows you to test a new technology of innovation.

## 7 ENGAGEMENT

Grants provide an excellent opportunity to facilitate resident interaction and engagement through surveys, focus groups, requirements gathering and testing.

## 8 STAFF SUPPORT

Can fund temporary staff that may be determined to be eligible for long-term employment, but the county still wants to see a demonstrated need.

## 9 COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

Grants often require partnerships or collaborations with other organizations, fostering cooperation between all levels of government, nonprofits, and community groups, leading to more effective and innovative solutions.

## 10 CENTRALIZATION

Facilitates improved management, proposal writing, compliance, and tracking of grants that have already been applied for. It also provides an opportunity to prevent multiple departments from seeking the same grant, thereby optimizing the use of resources and streamlining the grant application process.





## Top Procurement Questions to ask of your Technology Support

- 1** What technology vehicles does the county make use of?
- 2** How do you monitor county-wide procurements? Do you have a standard process in place that includes when to do an RFSQ, RFI or an RFP?
- 3** Do you have standard templates for departments to follow when gathering information for a new procurement?
- 4** Do you have standard terms and conditions for IT procurements?
- 5** How does this procurement affect the budget (is it operating, is a bond needed, will it be a capital expenditure)?
- 6** What is the approach to ensuring that county departments follow procurement standards and processes?
- 7** Will the procurement be using grant or federal funding?
- 8** Is the county using an online solution to manage procurements? If so, what is the tool?
- 9** How do you evaluate the RFI or RFP responses?
- 10** Are IT and legal included in the procurement process and at what point?
- 11** How do you gather requirements for a procurement?
- 12** How do you ensure diversity, inclusion, and fairness in the process?



## Top Contracts Questions to ask of your Technology Support

- 1** Who prepares the contracts in the county?
- 2** Are you able to piggyback off of other government contracts so that you do not have to go out to bid (this could apply to procurement as well)?
- 3** What is the review process for contracts?
- 4** How do you ensure that the proper terms and conditions related to IT are included in contracts and are special terms and conditions included for vendor cyber security responsibility, data ownership, privacy and the use of GIS.
- 5** Where are the contracts stored (or saved) so that they are easy to find when needed?
- 6** Who and how are contracts monitored for compliance?
- 7** Does the county follow a best value approach for contracts of lowest price/bid?
- 8** If there are state rules, what are they for contracts (when is a contract needed)?
- 9** Have you accounted for all one time and ongoing costs (e.g., maintenance agreements)?
- 10** Does your county allow "evergreen" (auto renewable, or without a specific term end) contracts? If so, how do you manage those contracts for funds reauthorization?
- 11** Do you have standard vendor insurance requirements, including cyber insurance for contracts that involve public data? Is there a mechanism to track policy expiration dates for those coverages, especially if the submitted policy is due to expire before the contract term ends?
- 12** What are the data ownership, usage, access, retention and transfer of data for the county contracts? What type of provision is there for the county retaining its data if/when the contract ends?



## Top Grants Questions to ask of your Technology Support

- 1** What are the objectives of this technology grant request/proposal?
- 2** Does this grant support county (or department) goals and objectives?
- 3** Does this grant include allowable administrative or overhead costs? If so, what areas are included and how is the overhead calculated? And does it include new staffing? If so, what is your plan for continuing after the grant ends OR is your plan to make it clear to those hired that the position is temporary?
- 4** Is this a one-time cost project or will ongoing funds be needed to sustain it?
- 5** Is there a county match and have you identified where that match is coming from (in-kind or actual hard costs)?
- 6** Are you partnering with any other stakeholders (other local governments)? If so, which ones?
- 7** Who is going to be managing this grant? In other words, how will costs be tracked and reported for re-imbursement?
- 8** What grant opportunities are currently available in the field of technology enablement that could benefit our local government?
- 9** Are there any existing IT projects or initiatives that could be enhanced or expanded with grant funding that are not currently included in a grant?
- 10** What strategies can the IT department employ to effectively monitor and evaluate the outcomes and impact of IT projects funded by grants, ensuring accountability and demonstrating the success of these initiatives?
- 11** What will happen when the grant ends? What impacts are there to operational costs?
- 12** Does the county have a compliance office to monitor grant submissions, tracking and compliance?

# DIG DEEPER

Phase two will include the tracks below which will contain additional questions county leaders can use in dialogue with the county IT support.

## **Track 1**

More in-depth questions for elected officials

## **Track 2**

An IT track for county GIOs, CIOs, IT Directors, outsourced GIS support

## **Track 3**

A track for county executives and administrators

## **Track 4**

A track for department directors

**For more information on the guides or on NACo Technology resources, visit**

County Tech Xchange ([naco.org](http://naco.org)), or reach out to Rita Reynolds, NACo CIO at [rreynolds@naco.org](mailto:rreynolds@naco.org)

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