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Funding Technology Upgrades: A Guide to Grants for Washington Towns

Many small towns delay technology upgrades over cost. Grants can cover much of it. Here is how to think about funding the work.

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Most small towns know their technology needs work. A dated website, an aging network, no real backups, security that would not pass an insurance review.

What stops them is usually the same thing: the budget is not there.

But the cost does not always have to come out of the town's pocket. Grants and other funding can cover a meaningful share of technology upgrades, if you know where to look and how to ask.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The money exists**, especially for cybersecurity, connectivity, and resident services.
- **Strong applications start with a clear need**, not a wish for "new technology."
- **A concrete plan and budget** is what turns a need into something fundable.
- **Start with a plan, then match it to a program**, not the other way around.

Why Funding Exists for This

State and federal programs increasingly recognize that small governments need help modernizing, especially around cybersecurity, internet access, and resident services. The money is there because outdated public systems are a real risk, and because rural communities are a priority for many of these programs. Your town being small is often an advantage here, not a disadvantage.

Where to Look

You do not need to track every program yourself. A few categories are worth knowing:

- **Cybersecurity and resilience funding**, aimed at helping local governments protect their systems and data.
- **Broadband and connectivity programs**, which can support better internet for town facilities.
- **Rural and community development funds**, which sometimes cover technology as part of broader improvements.
- **Your county and regional development council**, which often know about opportunities specific to your area.

What Makes an Application Succeed

Grant applications reward clarity. A strong one usually shows:

- A specific, concrete need, not simply "we want new technology."
- A clear plan for what the money will buy and why.
- The benefit to residents, spelled out plainly.
- A realistic budget and timeline.

TIP

This is where a partner who has done the work earns their keep. Being able to describe exactly what will be built, and what it costs, is the difference between a vague wish and a fundable plan. Reviewers fund specifics, not intentions.

Start With a Plan, Not a Form

The towns that win funding usually start by getting clear on what they actually need, then match that to the right program, rather than the other way around. Chasing a grant first and inventing a project to fit it rarely works. A simple, honest assessment of where your town stands is the best first step. It often doubles as the backbone of the application itself.

This pairs naturally with the security baseline insurers now expect, which is itself a fundable need. (See [what your insurer now expects.](#))

We helped the Town of Creston find and apply for funding to pay for a complete technology overhaul, so the cost did not fall on local taxpayers. We are glad to help your town do the same.

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Wondering what your town could fund? Get in touch and we will help you map the need and the opportunities to pay for it.

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