



**1. Does the EMS and Fire include Volunteer Departments?**

Yes. For additional information – see the guide for [Determining Fair Market Compensation](#) attributable to volunteer firefighters and EMS practitioners.

**2. Does public works include road maintenance?**

Yes, public works includes road maintenance, but not mass transportation. We would encourage you to submit applications for all projects you think may be eligible.

**3. Do you have to apply for the Innovation Planning Grant prior to applying for the Innovation Grant?**

No. The Innovation Planning Grant is available to assist in developing an innovation plan, but it is not required to later apply for an Innovation Grant.

**4. If we applied for the Innovation Planning Grant, will we be informed if we didn't get the funding, and if so, can we resubmit our application?**

Yes, you will be informed whether your application for funding was approved or denied. If the project was ineligible per state law, you can amend your proposal and resubmit it before the February 28, 2025 application deadline. **(Note: The deadline has been extended to April 30, 2025)**

**5. We need to convert the combined clerk/treasurer role into a full-time position. There are many tasks that have been pushed back to the municipality. However, there are a number of admin projects needed to get things running efficiently enough to support it as a full-time position. Would this potentially qualify under the Innovation Planning Grant?**

Based on the description, converting a position into a full-time position doesn't appear to qualify. The Innovation Planning Grant application must involve planning for the transfer of a service or duty to another entity. If the proposal is adjusted, the planning effort may include researching or discussing how to perform the transfer and work with other entities.

**6. Our area of need is for housing. Is this something that is under the Innovation Grant?**

Yes. Housing, planning, and zoning – is an eligible service type category for the Innovation Grant. If you represent a municipality or tribe with a population not exceeding 5,000, you may apply for the Innovation Planning Grant to help fund your staffing and/or consultant expenses to plan such a transfer.

**7. Applying for an Innovation Planning Grant seems to imply that discussions have already occurred with a willing partner (i.e., county or neighboring community) that would receive the service. Is that true?**

Not necessarily. You may be just starting discussions and have an innovative idea when applying for the Innovation Planning Grant.

**8. Can a service improvement be considered a cost savings?**

No. Per state law, cost savings are based on the costs incurred in the calendar year prior to the signature date of the contract for the transfer of the service/duty (sec. 79.038(1)(b)1., Wis. Stats.).

**9. As a county, we want to work with municipalities that would qualify. Can we apply on their behalf, or is the application required to come from the actual municipality?**

No, a county cannot apply for the Innovation Planning Grant on behalf of a municipality. For the Innovation Planning Grant, a municipality or tribe with a population not exceeding 5,000 must directly apply. For the Innovation Grant, any participating county, municipality, or tribe may apply.

**10. Is "public works" under the statute broad enough to encompass water or wastewater service?**

Yes, it is possible. Review [Innovation Grant – Project Examples](#).

**11. Instead of using the word innovation, can I explain this as a transfer of services planning grant?**

"Transfer of service" or "consolidation" would be alternative words to use. The focus is on increased efficiency and cost savings.

**12. We moved our volunteer fire department to a joint fire district as of 2022. Would we be able to utilize this as a transfer entity?**

Innovation Planning Grant requires an agreement or contract to transfer services/duties with the signature date on or after the November 13, 2024, which is the Administrative Rule notice date for Innovation Grants. Therefore, your transfer in 2022 would not be eligible.

**13. If we would consider working with a neighboring municipality regarding joining police services, would this qualify as a transfer?**

Yes. To be eligible for the Innovation Planning Grant, an application must involve the planning for transferring a service/duty entirely from a municipality or tribe to another entity. A joint/merged service between municipalities is allowable. One option would be to have a joint merger that created a new entity or district. Another option would be to have a joint merger with an existing entity or district.

**14. Not sure if we are unique but our town has multiple fire, EMS and police districts and each district has multiple municipal partners. Therefore, the logistics of doing these transfers seems unfeasible.**

If one of the participating municipalities has a population not exceeding 5,000, that municipality could apply for the Innovation Planning Grant to conduct the research and development required to plan for these potential transfers.

**15. What if one town wants to hire a different town's clerk because no one wants the job. Is this considered a change of service?**

Yes, this could potentially be considered a transfer of service if Town A contracts with the Town B to have the clerk duties performed.

**16. We had a city police officer, paid only by the city, who will now be contracting with the county. Does this apply?**

This could potentially be considered a transfer of service if the City is now contracting with the County for police services or duties performed by specific positions.

**17. If you are seeking to consolidate EMS services with other municipalities, how do you set a value on volunteers to determine overall cost savings?**

Refer to the guide for [Determining Fair Market Compensation](#) and the [Fair Market Compensation Examples](#) under "Resources" in the Innovation Grant section on the [Innovation Grants](#) web page.

**18. Is there a list of consulting firms that provide the service for a municipality?**

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities website has a [Products and Services guide](#), which identifies potential consulting firms to contact.

**19. What if I am not satisfied with the current contract and want to pursue a planning grant to study a different contractual arrangement with other towns. Would that be eligible?**

It would be eligible if (1) it is an allowable service duty, and (2) the service is potentially being transferred to another county, municipality, tribe, non-profit or private entity, and (3) the service was provided by the

district in the prior year. You can apply for the Innovation Planning Grant to fund the staffing and/or consultant expenses to plan the potential transfer.

- 20. If we are applying for a grant related to EMS that would "professionalize" it and cost more money to all partners but would improve statutorily mandated services that are not being met (meaning that currently, ambulance providers are not able to provide 24/7/365 service), how does this factor into the grant review? Costs will go up, but we'll actually be able to meet our state mandates, which we are unable to currently do with our all-volunteer models.**

Per state law, a requirement for the Innovation Grant is to attain a cost savings of at least 10%, within 36 months after the first grant payment distribution (sec. 79.038(1)(b)1., Wis. Stats.). A municipality with a population not exceeding 5,000 can apply for the Innovation Planning Grant to conduct the research and development for a service transfer plan. In this situation, the Innovation Planning Grant could be used to review EMS and potentially combining/transferring services; however, the goal must include cost savings.

- 21. Is it one grant per municipality or entity?**

No. For both the Innovation Planning Grant and Innovation Grant, it is one grant per project plan. A municipality or tribe can submit a separate application for a different project plan.

- 22. If a transfer of services to a third party (law enforcement) doesn't necessarily save money but results in expanded services, would this qualify?**

No. Cost savings is a requirement per state law (sec. 79.038(1)(b)1., Wis. Stats.). This would not qualify.

- 23. Would we need two plans/two grants if we're thinking about combining services for both fire and road maintenance?**

This could be two separate project plans. However, if combining both fire and road maintenance is incorporated into one project plan (i.e., transferring both services to the same entity), one application may be sufficient for the Innovation Grant.

- 24. When is the 5,000-population threshold measured?**

For Wisconsin municipality's, the final 2024 population data issued by the Wisconsin Department of Administration under sec. 79.005, Wis. Stats., was used. For Wisconsin's federally recognized tribes, the most recent population data from the United Census Bureau was used.

- 25. Can a county transfer a service to a municipality below 5,000 or does it have to go from small to big?**

A transfer of service has no restrictions; it can be from a small to big entity or vice versa. A county can transfer a service to a municipality with a population below 5,000.