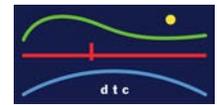


Authorize, Allocate, Allot



By: Robert Hammersley, PMP, DTC Program Manager, Government Relations

When it comes to large capital construction projects funded by the state of Connecticut, these three words and the processes associated with them are among the most important towards getting any project off the ground.

Often, critics of the funding and financing system decry a process which is actually quite civilized and open to inspection. While there may be private dialogues and discussions on funding priorities, the process itself is quite transparent and deliberative.

When stakeholders join together and identify a need and an efficient solution solved by capital funding, the public benefits.

Each word in the title of this article represents a step towards the eventual release of state bonded funds.



The First Step: Authorization

In general, the authorization of state bonds/funds refers to the state General Assembly and the Governors' approving the funds and, presumably, the project(s) associated with them. Such a step is accomplished through legislative action and the Governor's signature—typically as part of the “Bond Package” of the state's budget.

These authorizations can result from specific requests by state agencies, municipalities, state universities, and non-profits. Typically, they are initiated by the stakeholder(s) and promulgated by a legislative action. This typically occurs before or during the legislative session.

It has been our experience that professionally developed requests, replete with clear cost and benefit implications, are often the beneficiaries of funding and higher prioritization. Poorly formed requests are often diminished.

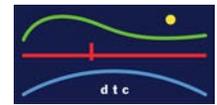
While the authorization of funding is an important first step, it doesn't necessarily always result in a project moving forward anytime soon. In fact, there are millions of dollars in authorized projects on the state's books, referred to as “unallocated funding.” Unallocated funded projects succumb to a state of perpetual limbo for many reasons.

These reasons include: lack of local support, competing priorities, changes in situational dynamics, logistics, change of stakeholder leadership, change in state government leadership, changes in law, and, of course, politics. The last of which is a factor throughout each of these processes. After all, each of these processes occur within a governmental setting, which is influenced by 2, 4, and 6 year election cycles.

Allocation: Almost There!

Authorized projects that do move forward are then placed on the agenda of the State Bond Commission (SBC) for allocation. Allocation occurs upon the approval by the SBC. To have a general understanding of this process it helps to know that the SBC agenda is exclusively and entirely controlled by the Governor's Office. Simply put, failure to get the Governor to place a project on the SBC agenda (i.e. support a project) will relegate that project

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to some degree as an unallocated funded project. Also important to know is that the Governor's agenda is always approved by the SBC. This check and balance is one of the cornerstones in the process conceptualized by our Founding Fathers and still in use today.

Allotment: The Final Hurdle

Of the three A's processes, the allotment of funds is the least political. It is a mechanical process. This involves allocated projects being reviewed by the administrating state agency and the execution of an assistance agreement with the state. This is the process that creates the standard administrative (i.e. bureaucratic) paperwork that all projects have associated with them. This is necessary in order to protect the state's interests, preserve transparency, and preserve taxpayer value.

One final consideration, or perhaps it's a re-emphasis of the earlier point, politics weaves throughout these processes all be it to varying degrees. In that light, having the ability to navigate the obstacles associated with the state political process is of tantamount importance and should not be ignored or underestimated. To do so will lead to either a project's delay or (worse) failure.

Key Aspects of a Successful Capital Request

While we cannot elaborate of every possible element of a successful request, we often see the following hallmarks of a successful campaign:

1. **There is a clear public benefit** – job creation, tax generation, support to people, preservation of the environment, etc.
2. **There is strong stakeholder support** – there is no chance of success without strong advocacy from all levels of the stakeholder network.
3. **The request is reasonable** – no government official wants to support 'pie-in-the-sky' requests that are fundamentally offensive.
4. **The platform and supporting documents are bullet-proof** - the stakeholder has a team of trusted, experienced, and sophisticated technical support ensuring that the request is fully tried, tested, and not found wanting.
5. **The request is consistent with the ideologies of The Office of the Governor.** At the very least, it should not unravel any gubernatorial priorities.

At each stage of the 3A process, and for each element of the 5 key aspects, your technical professional should be advising you on properly assembling the request. Do not wait until the last minute to identify critical paths and opportunities. All initiatives where DTC has been involved from the start have experienced a 100% allocation on projects that go through this process.



Biography Bob Hammersley has over 20 years of governmental experience, having served in various positions in the Legislative and Executive branches of the United States and State of Connecticut governments. As manager of DTC's government relations program, Mr. Hammersley assists clients to understand, interpret and successfully navigate the governmental process.