

U.S. SENATOR ELISSA SLOTKIN



Following the completion of the FY26 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) cycle, Senator Slotkin's office conducted a comprehensive internal review of the process and outcomes. Based on that review, the office has identified several key lessons to inform future applicants and strengthen submissions in the upcoming cycle.

Overview of the CDS Process

Constituents submit funding requests to Senator Slotkin's office for consideration. From that applicant pool, the office evaluates proposals and selects projects to advance to the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Appropriations Committee then reviews submissions from Senate offices nationwide and determines which projects will receive funding. Each Senate office competes against hundreds of other submitted projects, with the House acting independently from the Senate until the two sides come together to identify the final list of funded projects to pass both chambers and be signed into law. As a result, the process is highly competitive as the House and Senate Committees select which projects to fund among thousands of submissions. The Appropriations Committees do not provide explanations regarding the selection or non-selection of individual projects.

Lessons from the FY26 Cycle

After reviewing the projects submitted by Senator Slotkin's office and comparing them with those ultimately selected for funding, the office identified three key lessons that prospective applicants should consider when preparing future proposals:

1) Apply for funding through multiple offices.

Senator Slotkin's office found projects that were submitted to both Senate offices and a House office have higher success rates than those who only submitted through our office. In short, the Appropriations committee liked to see multiple members of Congress requesting the same project. Our office's advice is to submit your application to Senator Slotkin, Senator Peters, and your House Members offices. Make sure you are submitting to all offices under the same project name and description.

It is important to note that while Senator Slotkin will accept applications from nonprofits that have been operating for at least three years, this may not apply for other members of the

Michigan delegation. As such, nonprofit applicants should be prepared to identify a local government partner that can be a recipient of the funds to then flow to the nonprofit's project when applying through multiple offices in the event the project is selected and credited to an office that will only award to public entities.

2) Smaller dollar projects were preferred.

On average, the committee preferred projects in the \$500,000 to \$2 million range. Additionally, projects that identified a minimum level of funding required in order to proceed, even if it was under the preferred amount, did well. Our office's advice is to ensure you add in your application the lowest amount of funding you would need to move forward with your project, though Senator Slotkin will still submit the full request for selected projects to the Committee and push for highest funding possible. Keep in mind that projects totaling over \$2 million – particularly for popular, flexible CDS programs such as HUD Economic Development Initiatives or those under the Labor, HHS, Education subcommittee – are unlikely to be funded at their full amount. Flexibility in a project's total award is advantageous for an applicant seeking CDS funds.

3) Projects with specificity in their budget did well.

The committee requires project applicants to include a detailed, itemized budget in their application that identifies how the CDS funding will be spent, as well as all other funds for the project and the funding sources. Successful applicants provided a full budget breakdown of which line items would be covered by CDS, and the other line items covered by other sources of capital (such as public dollars, other federal funds, philanthropic financing, etc). This shows our office and the Committee that the applicant is prepared to deploy CDS funding into the project upon receipt and assists with identifying the specific project activities the CDS will fund, ensuring eligibility.