THE VALUE OF FIVE DECADES

What 50 Years in Government Capital Strategy Actually Buys Your Project

By Don Cassano | Government Capital Strategist

Every municipality, developer, and nonprofit chasing public funding eventually runs into the same wall: the money is out there, but the path to it is not obvious. Programs change names. Priorities shift with administrations. Guidelines get rewritten every funding cycle. Knowing which door to knock on — and how to knock on it — is a skill that only comes from having done it, over and over, across five decades of economic cycles.

I've spent 50 years identifying, structuring, and securing government capital for real estate and infrastructure projects — more than $500 million to date. That number isn't the point. What it represents is the point: a track record built one funding award, one relationship, and one hard-won lesson at a time. Here's what five decades of doing this work actually delivers to a client.

1. Deep Historical Knowledge of How Funding Priorities Evolve

Federal and state funding priorities are not static. Brownfields money that flowed freely in one decade tightens in the next. Infrastructure dollars get reprioritized after a change in the White House or a new bond bill. Housing incentives shift with the political winds. Having watched these cycles turn — not read about them, watched them — means I can tell a client not just what's available today, but what's likely to change tomorrow, and how to position a project so it stays fundable regardless of which way the wind blows.

2. Turning Complex Technical Projects into Compelling Narratives

Grant reviewers and funding committees don't approve spreadsheets — they approve stories. A mill conversion, a fleet upgrade, a resiliency project, or a public facility rehab is, on paper, an engineering and financial exercise. But the applications that win funding are the ones that translate that complexity into a clear narrative: why this project, why this community, why now. That's a craft, and it's one that gets sharper with every application written and every rejection learned from.

3. Intuition for Alignment Between Funder Guidelines and Organizational Capacity

The biggest waste of time in government funding isn't a rejected application — it's chasing a program that was never a fit to begin with. Every funder has stated guidelines and unstated expectations about what a successful applicant looks like. Matching a project's real capacity — financial, operational, political — to a program's real appetite is where most first-time applicants stumble, and it's where experience pays for itself before a single form is filled out.

4. A Track Record Spanning Economic Shifts, Policy Changes, and Technological Transitions

I've secured funding through recessions and recoveries, through changes in federal administration, through the rise of tax credit programs like NMTC and LIHTC, and through the digitization of application processes that used to happen entirely on paper. Programs I helped clients win funding through in the 1980s look nothing like today's CDBG, MassWorks, or EDA processes — but the underlying discipline of matching a project to the right capital stack hasn't changed. That continuity is what half a century of doing this looks like.

Why This Matters for Your Project

Whether you're a municipality planning infrastructure upgrades, a developer eyeing a mill conversion, or a public agency modernizing an equipment fleet, the funding landscape rewards applicants who understand not just the current rules, but the patterns underneath them. That's the value five decades of experience brings to the table — and it's the value I bring to every engagement.

Let's invest in our communities, together.

DON CASSANO

Government Capital Strategist • Experience. Connections. Results.

50 Years | $500+ Million Secured to Date

617-888-7028 • doncassanoreports@gmail.com • www.doncassano.com