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Grant Resource Guide

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What is a Federal Grant?

This **Grant Resource Guide** provides information about identifying and applying for federal grants. In addition to the federal government, other entities offer grants, including state governments, local governments, and private organizations. Although the application processes are similar, this guide focuses specifically on federal government grants.

Each year, federal government grants support community initiatives, research, infrastructure programs, and public interest projects. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis or distributed under a formula. The majority of federal grant recipients are state and local government agencies who then distribute funds to smaller entities.

Direct grants are provided by the federal government directly to state or local government agencies. State and local agencies will then offer **subgrants** to smaller entities and individuals. While direct grants are administered by the federal government, subgrants are administered by recipients of direct grants. They announce the availability of funds through Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs). You can visit <http://www.usaspending.gov/> to track direct grants received by state and local governments and watch for subgrant announcements.

*Note: Often, state and local governments will utilize the word “grant” in place of “subgrant.”

Those searching for more information regarding federal benefits, small business loans, or financial aid should visit the following sources:

- Federal Benefits: <https://www.usa.gov/benefits-grants-loans>
- Small Business Loans: <https://www.sba.gov/>
- Financial Aid: <https://studentaid.gov>

Finding Grant Opportunities

There are two federal government websites that can aid you in finding grant opportunities:

Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) catalogs all federal grant opportunities, including both ongoing and past grants. The search tool allows you to filter grants by keyword, category, eligibility, and issuing agency. Individuals and organizations can also utilize the website's "Grants Learning Center," download important forms, and track their grant applications.

**Grants.gov is the primary place to apply for federal grants.*

Beta.SAM (<https://beta.sam.gov/>) has replaced the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). It lists all federal grant opportunities and breaks them down by agency and identifier numbers. Similar to grants.gov, you can view both ongoing and past grants. You cannot apply for federal grants via beta.SAM. The only place to apply for federal grants is grants.gov.

There are 26 federal agencies and departments that offer different grants each year. Below is a list of these agencies in alphabetical order, their websites, and their primary topic areas for funding. Additionally, you can utilize the "Grants Forecast" tool on each agency's website to view upcoming grant opportunities.

Name of Agency or Department	Website	Topic Area(s)
Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)	https://americorps.gov/	Community Development
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	https://www.epa.gov/grants	Environment and Natural Resources
Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)	https://www.imls.gov/grants	Humanities and the Arts
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	https://www.nasa.gov/centers/nssc/grants	Education and Research
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)	https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/announcement	Humanities and the Arts

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)	https://www.arts.gov/grants	Humanities and the Arts
National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)	https://www.neh.gov/grants	Humanities and the Arts
National Science Foundation (NSF)	https://www.nsf.gov/funding/	Education and Research
Small Business Administration (SBA)	https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/grants	Economic Development and Employment
Social Security Administration (SSA)	https://www.ssa.gov/oag/grants/	Consumer Protection
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)	https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/find-a-funding-opportunity	Foreign Affairs
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/grants-and-loans	Agriculture, Food and Nutrition; Community Development
U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)	https://www.commerce.gov/work-with-us/grants-and-contract-opportunities	Economic Development and Employment
U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)	https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-making-agencies/department-of-defense.html	Economic Development and Employment
U.S. Department of Education (ED)	https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grants-apply.html	Education and Research
U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)	https://www.energy.gov/energy-economy/funding-financing	Environment and Natural Resources
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	https://www.hhs.gov/grants/grants/index.html	Housing; Healthcare Programs and Research

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	https://www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/find-and-apply-grants	Disaster Prevention and Recovery
U.S. Department of House and Urban Development (HUD)	https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/spm/gmomgmt/grantsinfo	Housing
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)	https://www.doi.gov/grants	Environment and Natural Resources
U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)	https://www.justice.gov/grants	Consumer Protection
U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)	https://www.dol.gov/general/grants/howto	Economic Development and Employment
U.S. Department of State (DOS)	https://www.state.gov/funding-opportunities/funding-opportunity-announcements/	Foreign Affairs
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)	https://www.transportation.gov/grants	Infrastructure and Transportation
U.S. Department of the Treasury (TREAS)	https://www.treasury.gov/services/Pages/Grants-Loans-and-Financial-Assistance.aspx	Consumer Protection
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)	https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/#get-veterans-housing-assistance-grants	Housing

Determining Eligibility

Different types of entities are eligible to apply for different federal grant opportunities. Each grant opportunity will list eligible entities in its “Eligibility” section. Eligibility is broken down into seven categories; within each category are subsections. Before applying for a federal grant, determine which subsection is applicable to you. More information can be found here:

<https://www.grants.gov/learn-grants/grant-eligibility.html>.

Units of Government

- State, county, and city or township governments
- Special District governments
- Native American tribal governments (federally recognized and other than federally recognized)

Education Organizations

- Independent school districts
- Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education

Public Housing Organizations

- Public housing authorities
- Indian housing authorities

Nonprofit Organizations

- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education

For-Profit Organizations

- Organizations other than small businesses

Small Businesses

- Small businesses (according to size standards established by the SBA)

Individuals

- Individuals applying for a funding opportunity on their own behalf (i.e., not on behalf of a company, organization, institution, or government).
- Most grants are for organizations, not individuals

Applying for Grants

After finding a grant opportunity for which you/your organization is eligible, you can begin the application process. The first step is to **register yourself/your organization** with three important federal government websites. Any entity that does not register with all three websites will be automatically disqualified from the grant selection process.

STEP 1. Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number: Duns & Bradstreet's DUNS provides you/your organization with a unique 9-digit identifier number that you need to use throughout the application process. Before you apply for a DUNS number, check whether your organization already has one (if your organization is a registered nonprofit, it likely does). It is free to obtain a DUNS number, and the process takes about 1-2 business days. Visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/> to begin the process.

STEP 2. Register with System Award Management (SAM): After obtaining a DUNS number, you must register yourself/your organization with the SAM which is the U.S. government's official website for managing grants and federal contracts. You must first create an account, then register yourself/your organization (no fees). To officially register with SAM, you must also provide a notarized letter within 60 days of registration activation from the authorizing official of your organization.

Send the notarized letter to:

**FEDERAL SERVICE DESK
ATTN: SAM.GOV REGISTRATION PROCESSING
460 INDUSTRIAL BLVD
LONDON, KY 40741-7285
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Altogether, the SAM process can take 2-5 weeks. Begin the process here: <http://sam.gov>.

STEP 3. Register with Grants.gov

Grants.gov is the primary website through which you can apply for a federal grant. After obtaining a DUNS number and registering with SAM, please register on Grants.gov using this link: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>. There is no registration fee, and the process can be completed in one day.

Duns & Bradstreet, SAM, and Grants.gov will each provide you/your organization with a unique identifier number which you will utilize throughout the application process to submit and track your application. Once registered with all three, you are ready to complete and submit your application. Federal agencies' grant applications all require the same material:

Required Application Material

- Cover Letter
- Proposal Summary or Abstract
- Introduction Describing the Grant Seeker
- Problem Statement/Needs Assessment
- Project Objectives
- Project Methodology/Design
- Project Evaluation Methodology
- Future Funding Goals
- Project Budget

To track your application, utilize its tracking number (given to you upon submission of your application) to check its status via grants.gov:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html>.

Awarding Grants: The Process

After the period for submitting applications has closed, applications are reviewed by the awarding agency. Generally, there are three phases of review: the initial review, the programmatic review, and the financial review.

Initial Review

The initial review is a basic screening to ensure that an application meets the minimum requirements for the grant. It answers questions such as:

- Is the applying entity eligible?
- Is the application complete? Are there any errors?
- Is the project budget within the grant's requirements?
- Is the proposed project aligned with the grant's mission/purpose?

If an application does not meet the minimum requirements, it will not continue to the programmatic review.

Programmatic Review

The programmatic review focuses on the content of the proposed project and the applicant's ability to accomplish it. Many programmatic reviews are conducted by a panel of three to five peer experts in the relevant field. Each panelist individually judges the application's merit and quality. This is followed by a meeting in which the panelists discuss their findings. Applications are often assigned a numerical score based upon a rubric established by the grant awarding agency. Applications that pass the programmatic review continue to the final stage of the process: the financial review.

Financial Review

The financial review is the final stage of the review process. The awarding agency will perform a cost-analysis of the proposed project, along with a line-by-line budgetary review, to certify that the proposal meets all required regulations. Then, the awarding agency must consider the total available funds for the grant and calculate how to best allocate the funds among the qualified applicants. Because the grant contains a financial limit, some qualified applicants may not receive funding.

Notice of Award (NOA)

After reviewing all applications, the awarding agency decides which entities will receive the grant funding. It will issue a Notice of Award (NOA) to the selected entities, who then must sign a **grant agreement** that legally obligates them to fulfill the terms of the grant.

Grant award recipients must comply with regulations established by federal law. For further information about these grant-governing policies, please visit:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-policies.html>.

Grant Implementation

With every grant comes required financial and metric reporting to allow the awarding agency to track the grant recipient's progress. An agency official will monitor reports and conduct site visits. If a grant recipient does not fulfill the reporting requirements as dictated by the signed grant agreement (see above paragraph), the awarding agency has the right to stop funding.

Final financial and metric reports must be submitted at the end of the grant timeline. This is known as the closeout. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has established closeout guidelines that can be found here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-policies/omb-uniform-guidance-2014.html>.

Additional Resources

Grants.gov Questions?

Contact the Grants.gov Support Center at 1-800-518-4726 (TTY: 301-240-6310), via [email](#), or visit the [Grants.gov](#) website.

A-Z Index of U.S. Departments and Agencies (General Services Administration)

To better develop a grant proposal, search a department or agency's Home Page to learn more about its programs and objectives. The site [USA.gov](#) also links to [Government Benefits, Grants, and Loans](#).

USA.gov for Businesses and Nonprofits (GSA)

Includes contracting with the U.S. government, international trade and exporting, and small business. See also financial assistance links at the [Small Business Administration](#) website.

Student Aid on the Web (Dept. of Education)

Information on funding education beyond high school, including grants, loans, and work-study assistance to qualified students.

Benefits.gov (via Department of Labor)

Includes information on over 1,000 government assistance programs, and how to apply. Covers direct payment, loan, insurance, training, or other services.

FTC Consumer Alert (Federal Trade Commission)

The FTC warns consumers to beware of paying "processing fees" for information that is available free to the public. Ads claiming federal grants are available for home repairs, home business, unpaid bills, or other personal expenses are often a scam.

OMB Grants Management Web Site (Office of Management and Budget)

OMB establishes government-wide grants management policies and guidelines through circulars and common rules. [OMB Circulars](#) are cited in *Catalog* program descriptions and may be printed out full text.

Letters of Support

If you would like to request a letter of support for your grant proposal from the Office of Congresswoman Spanberger, we will need further background information about your organization, your grant proposal, and how this award will positively affect the Seventh District if you are awarded grant funding.

In a separate document, please copy and paste the below questionnaire into another document and send it back to either our Glen Allen office or to our Grants Coordinator at Shawn.Meredith@mail.house.gov

Applicant Information

Organization:

Contact Name/Title:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

Email:

Grant Information

Name of Grant:

Awarding Agency:

Contact Name/Title:

Application Deadline:

Total Funding Request:

Link to Program:

Purpose of Grant (as stated by Agency):

Please answer the following questions:

1. Please tell us more about your organization (populations served, relevant accolades, previous grant awards, etc.).
2. Why are you/your organization applying for this grant? How does your/your organization's mission align with the purpose of the grant?
3. How would you/your organization utilize the grant money? Please describe in detail: your project, its timeline, the population it would serve, and an estimated budget.
4. Why is this project important to the community?
5. Have you applied for this grant in the past? If yes, please explain.
6. Have you reached out to other elected officials to ask for letters of support? If yes, to whom?
7. Do you have a draft letter of support? If yes, please provide a plain-text version below.