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Grants Work in a Congressional Office

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Summary

Members of Congress frequently receive requests from grantseekers needing funds for projects in districts and states. In considering a response, a congressional office might first determine its policies and procedures regarding appropriate assistance to give constituents, such as when to provide information on grants programs or active advocacy of projects. Each office handles grants requests in its own way, depending upon the Member's legislative agenda and overall organization and workload of office staff.

As for staffing, there may be a full-time grants specialist or several staff members under the supervision of a grants coordinator working solely in the area of grants and projects. In some offices, all grants requests are handled in the district or state office; in others, they are answered by Capitol Hill staff. Offices may encourage congressional grants staff to learn about the grants process themselves and identify practices, in accordance with office policies, that may assist grantseekers at each step in the process.

To learn about grants work, congressional staff can use CRS reports to identify potential sources of information for government and private funding and for details on selected grants programs. In addition to the current report, reports on grants work include CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*; and CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*. CRS also offers reports on block grants and the appropriations process; federal assistance for homeland security and terrorism preparedness; and federal programs on specific subjects and for specific groups, such as state and local governments, police and fire departments, libraries and museums, nonprofit organizations, small business, and other topics.

To educate constituents, a congressional office may provide selected grantseekers information on funding programs or may sometimes sponsor workshops on federal and private assistance. Because most funding resources are on the internet, Member home pages can also link to grants sources, such as Assistance Listings at beta.SAM.gov and Grants.gov, so that constituents can search for grants programs and funding opportunities. The CRS web page, *Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance* (see sample Member Grants Page), can be added to a Member's home page upon request and is updated automatically on House and Senate servers. Another CRS resource, *Grants and Federal Assistance*, covers key CRS products.

To help communicate office policies and procedures, respond to frequent grants questions, and train new congressional staff, a congressional office may consider developing an internal grants manual. In addition to a single place to locate grants-related office policies and procedures, a grants manual may include templates for letters of support, instructional tools for new staff, and lists of local contacts. With reductions in federal programs, and with most government grants requiring matching funds, local contacts could include private or corporate foundations that may serve as alternatives or supplements to federal grants.

This report will be updated at the beginning of each Congress and as needed.

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Brief Introduction to Grants Work

Members of Congress receive numerous requests from grantseekers for information and help in obtaining funds for projects. These grantseekers may include state and local governments, nonprofit social service and community action organizations, small businesses, and individuals. Congressional staff may be encouraged to better understand the federal grants landscape, process, and practices, in accordance with office policies, so that they may assist grantseekers at each step in the process.

The following are four important items to keep in mind about grants work:

- Federal grants are not guaranteed benefits or entitlements to individuals.
- Most federal grant funds go to state and local governments, which in turn may sub-award funds to local entities such as nonprofit organizations.
- Contacting federal departments and agencies, state grants administering agencies (SAAs), or both to discuss grant opportunities is likely to be an important step for many grantseekers.
- Available federal grants often are intended to meet goals authorized by Congress to target community needs.

For example, government assistance may be available for nonprofit organizations (including faith-based groups) to achieve purposes such as establishing food kitchens or after-school programs benefitting entire communities and for local governments seeking funds for community services, infrastructure, and economic revitalization.

Given the limited purposes of and competition for federal grant funds, the success rate in obtaining federal grants may be limited. Congressional offices may need to direct constituents seeking government aid to funding options other than grants. For example, community fundraising may be used effectively for school enrichment activities, such as field trips or for band or sports uniforms, and local business or private foundation funding may be used to support projects such as construction of local memorials or commemorative programs. For other needs, such as starting or expanding a small business (or for students), the following sources may serve as alternative sources for grantseekers:

- Individuals looking for government benefits may use the website Benefits.gov at https://www.benefits.gov.
- Students seeking financial aid might search the Department of Education website at http://studentaid.ed.gov.
- To start or expand a small business, the federal government provides assistance in the form of loans, advisory, or technical assistance through the Small Business Administration at http://www.sba.gov.

In other cases, grantseekers who have seen ads promising federal grants for personal expenses may be referred to the Federal Trade Commission Consumer Alert *Government Grant Scams*. Other grantseekers may need to be educated on the limitations of congressional office involvement in the grants process—such as the fact that Members of Congress cannot dictate the outcome of a federal grant competition.

The remainder of this report provides sample approaches and techniques used by congressional offices to organize their grants operations and work with grantseekers.

Organizing Office Grants Operations

Each congressional office handles grants requests in its own way, depending upon factors that might include the Member's philosophy on federal support for local projects, representational or legislative priorities, or interest in specific locations or types of projects.

- Some congressional offices may have a dedicated grants specialist working solely in the area of grants and projects.
- In some offices, all grants requests are handled in the district or state office; in others, they are answered by the Washington, DC, staff; still others divide grants and projects activity between the district or state office and the Washington, DC, office. Regardless of how this responsibility is assigned, it may be helpful to have at least one person in the district or state office and one person in the Washington, DC, office familiar with the whole process. District or state staff may be more readily able to communicate with federal agencies' state and regional offices, or state administering agencies, which are often the preferred contact office for federal programs.
- State delegation cooperation: since some constituents request the aid of the entire state congressional delegation for a grant or project, cooperation among Members of the delegation can minimize duplication of effort and permit more effective use of staff time. At least one state's congressional delegation has established a State Projects Office to help its constituents learn about the grants process and follow through on all applications until awards are made.

Potential forms of staff assistance could include the following:

- providing facts about financial and nonfinancial assistance available through federal programs;
- clarifying aspects of proposal development, application, and follow-up procedures;
- writing letters of interest or support from the Member to the granting agency once a grant proposal is ready for submission; and
- suggesting other sources for grant assistance in both the private and public sectors.

A congressional office might establish internal policies to address grant requests based on whatever priorities it establishes. Determinations for pursuing these priorities could be made based on an assessment of the following:

- volume of incoming grants requests;
- number of people who could benefit from a potential grant award; and
- availability and experience of congressional staff.

A general understanding of the entire grants process may be useful in responding to grantseekers, including how to complete the following steps in the process:

- defining the project;
- searching for likely funding sources, including federal grants administered and sub-awarded by states;

- obtaining a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registering on SAM.gov and Grants.gov or FedConnect (where required);
- developing and writing proposals;
- completing any other requirements of the grant program (such as environmental reviews);
- applying for grants;
- understanding review and award procedures; and
- knowing post-award reporting and audit requirements.

Managing Grants Requests

To help assure continuity, consistency, and to monitor the progress of the grants projects, several resources may be developed.

Office Grants Manual

An internal grants manual might outline office policies and procedures and ensure continuity when working with constituents. Items that could be included in such a manual are the following:

- statement of the Member's policy on letters of endorsement and press announcements, along with samples;
- checklist of procedures to facilitate explaining the process to constituents or training new staff;
- office guidelines for writing letters of support on behalf of grantseekers;
- sample project worksheets, allowing space for contacts, status reports, and follow-up timetables; and
- updated telephone and email lists of contacts in federal, state, and local agencies and of private funders.

Organizing Informational Resources and Tracking Ongoing Work

Whether electronic or paper, a system for organizing information and tracking ongoing work with grantseekers may be helpful and could include grouping by categories, such as agencies, constituent files by county, and grant projects.

Agencies

- Agency information may be arranged using subcategories, such as grant topic, program names, or project.
- Program information may include details on the most frequently used programs in communities in the state or district, with a fact sheet describing each program, plus agency brochures and contact numbers.
- Project information may contain lists of applicants for each project. Some offices keep records tracking the steps taken in support of all grant applications.

Constituents

- Correspondence with grantseekers;

- Correspondence with outside organizations on specific projects; and
- Press coverage of awards.

Grant Projects

- Status information on grant applications as they move through an agency's review process;
- Calendars or logs tracking contacts with grantseekers; and
- Grant awards in the district or state—potentially including even those your office did not work on. For sources that track federal funds by state, by county, and by congressional district, see the CRS web page, *Tracking Federal Funds*. Contact CRS for search strategies and best sources.

Assisting Grantseekers

Congressional staff may wish to consider the following questions early in an interaction with a grantseeker:

- Are there other projects currently underway that address the problem?
- Is there already an appropriate federal or state program that is designed for such a project?
- Is the issue better addressed through local, state, or private organizations, or through legislation?

Congressional staff may also assist grantseekers by encouraging them to give thought to how they would present themselves in any future grant application or other interactions with grantors. For example, grantseekers should be prepared to provide documentation of any specialized education, training, and professional credentials. Grantseekers should also be prepared to provide the history, goals, activities, budget, and primary accomplishments of any organization connected to the grant project. Finally, the grantseeker may be encouraged to seek support from local governmental or nongovernmental organizations that may benefit from their grant proposal.

Information on Grants Processes

Limits to and competition for federal funding may mean grantseekers should think broadly about possible federal and state government grants as well as private or corporate foundation grants. Also, most federal funding goes to states in the form of formula or block grants, and for many programs, application for federal funds must be made through state-level administering agencies (SAAs). These SAAs might include state-level executive agencies responsible for housing, public health, and emergency management. Congressional staff might assist grantseekers with identifying contacts for these SAAs.

The site beta.SAM.gov offers keyword searching, searching by assistance type (grant, loan, etc.), and listings by department, agency, and program title. The assistance listing descriptions also link to related websites, such as federal department and agency home pages and Office of Management and Budget grants management circulars. Grantseekers themselves can then track notices of federal funding opportunities at websites such as Grants.gov at http://www.grants.gov or FedConnect at https://www.fedconnect.net.

CRS Resources

To help congressional offices respond to grants questions, CRS has developed two grants-focused web pages:

- For congressional staff, the *Grants and Federal Assistance* web page focuses on key CRS products, available at http://www.crs.gov/resources/GRANTS. It includes CRS publications on grants and programs that congressional offices can forward to their constituents and a separate web page of key sources (see next bullet) that Members may add to their home page for constituents.
- To provide useful information directly to constituents, Members may add to their website the CRS *Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance* web page (see sample at http://www.crs.gov/resources/MEMBER-GRANTS-PAGE). It provides guidance and links to key internet sources covering information readily available to the public. CRS periodically updates the web page for Members on the House and Senate servers.

CRS also has a number of written products to help both congressional staff and grantseekers. Two of these CRS reports covering key sources and publications about federal and private funding include the following:

- CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*; and
- CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*.

Grants Newsletters

Some offices choose to either send out a special grants and projects newsletter or include a section on grants and projects in their regular newsletter. Subjects could include programs of interest and descriptions of recently awarded grants.

Grants Seminars and Workshops

Another way to get information to interested constituents is for a congressional office to coordinate seminars on federal, private assistance at state and district locations, or both. An office can sponsor programs bringing together federal, state, and local officials, as well as foundation, academic, and corporate specialists, experienced volunteers, and constituents who share common concerns. Agencies, foundations, and corporations may be willing to provide speakers for district seminars arranged by congressional offices and to provide materials such as brochures, sample proposals, and lists of contacts.

For information on contacting speakers from federal departments and agencies, congressional offices could use the CRS *Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies*, http://www.crs.gov/resources/LiaisonOffices, or internal lists of state-level contacts. For constituent orientation and group seminars, offices also may consider use of CRS products as handouts and presentation materials, such as CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*; CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*; and any other CRS reports on specific grant programs that may be useful for attendees.

Proposal Writing Assistance and Sources

Although congressional staff do not write grant proposals, they may be approached by inexperienced grantseekers seeking guidance on what makes a good proposal. For those grantseekers, CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*, discusses preliminary information gathering and preparation, developing ideas for the proposal, gathering community support, identifying funding resources, and seeking preliminary review of the proposal and support of relevant administrative officials. It also covers outlining project goals, stating the purpose and objectives of the proposal, explaining the program methods to solve the stated problem, evaluating project results, long-term project planning, and developing a proposal budget. The last section of the report lists free grants writing websites.

Candid (formerly the Foundation Center and Guidestar) and other organizations also publish guides to writing proposals. Candid offers an "Introduction to Proposal Writing" on its website and includes a version in Spanish. Constituents may also be advised that examples or templates for proposals can be found by searching the internet under terms such as *grant proposal AND template* or *sample*.

Congressional offices may consider offering grantseekers the following suggestions:

- Allow sufficient time to prepare a thoroughly documented proposal by starting work on the proposal well before the application deadline.
- Follow the instructions given in the application form or in other material provided by the agency or foundation and directly answer questions as asked.
- Try to be clear, brief, and avoid jargon. Whenever possible, fit the style of the proposal to the style of the agency or foundation being approached.
- When no form or instructions for submitting grant proposals are provided, the proposal might include the following:
    1. a cover letter providing a brief description of the purpose and amount of the grant proposal, conveying the applicant's willingness to discuss the proposal in further detail;
    2. a half-page summary that includes information on the applicant, reasons for the grant request, proposed objectives and means to accomplish them, projections of the total cost of the project, indications of funds already obtained, and an amount being requested for the grant;
    3. an introduction in which the history, credentials, and accomplishments of the applicant are presented briefly (supporting documents could be included in an appendix);
    4. a description of current conditions demonstrating the need for the proposed project;
    5. a statement of the project's objectives in specific, measurable terms;
    6. a description of the methods to be used to accomplish these objectives;
    7. a description of the means by which the project will be monitored and evaluated;
    8. a discussion of plans for continuing the project beyond the period covered by the grant; and
    9. a detailed budget.

Writing Letters of Support

Grantseekers may request that congressional offices write letters to federal departments and agencies on their behalf. Some grants, such as funding for homeland security, are determined by formula to states and jurisdictions, and letters may not be needed.

For most of these requests, Member offices might write a letter only when the grantseeker is ready to submit the grant proposal to the department or agency. Check with the department or agency congressional liaison to determine where letters should be sent.

Letters might include the following information:

- name of applicant or contact person for the project if different;
- grant program name and number;
- agency contact address and grants officer's name if available;
- deadline for proposal submission;
- project name and summary;
- what the project/program does;
- how many people will benefit;
- why this program is important to the community;
- unique features of the project such as needs not already being met;
- other support for the project such as from a state or local government; and
- specifically how the grant money will be used.

The letter could close by asking the department or agency to let the Member know when a decision will be made and asking that the office be informed about the progress of the proposal.

For guidance on ethical issues surrounding requests for letters of support, congressional staff may consult the House Committee on Ethics or the Senate Select Committee on Ethics.

Tracking Grants Awards

Congressional offices may consider developing files or databases of grants awarded in order to track funding to their districts and states. While tracking this information precisely may be challenging, P.L. 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, led to the development of a database, which became USAspending.gov. For a summary of sources, limitations of currently available data, and the law's requirements, see

- CRS In Focus IF10231, *Tracking Federal Awards in States and Congressional Districts Using USAspending.gov*; and
- CRS Report R44027, *Tracking Federal Awards: USAspending.gov and Other Data Sources*.

Announcements of grants awarded may be posted on Member websites, at the discretion of the office.

Federal Assistance and Sources

Hundreds of grants or loans for various purposes are available from federal departments and agencies. Most federal funding (more than 70%) goes to state and local governments that determine state and local needs, and they themselves may offer competitive sub-grants and funding opportunities.

Federal grant program and contact information for each program is provided at beta.SAM.gov. Current notices of competitive *project grant* opportunities for grantseekers themselves may appear on the websites Grants.gov and FedConnect. See sections below for more information about these key sources.

Currently, programs in beta.SAM.gov, the key source to federal program information (see "Assistance Listings at beta.SAM.gov," below), are classified into several types of financial and nonfinancial assistance.

Grants

Grants are generally considered desirable by applicants because they are an outright award of funds.

- *Formula Grants*: allocations of money to states or their subdivisions for activities of a continuing nature not confined to a specific project. Includes block grants to states and local governments.[1]
- *Project Grants*: funding, for fixed or known periods, of specific projects; for the delivery of specific services or products, including fellowships, scholarships, research grants, training grants, traineeships, experimental and demonstration grants, evaluation grants, planning grants, technical assistance grants, survey grants, construction grants, and unsolicited contractual agreements. May also be referred to as discretionary or categorical grants or funding.
- *Direct Payments for Specified Use*: federal financial assistance provided directly to individuals, private firms, and other private institutions to encourage or subsidize a particular activity.
- *Direct Payments with Unrestricted Use:* federal financial assistance provided directly to beneficiaries who satisfy federal eligibility requirements with no restrictions as to how the money is spent.

Loans

Because loans must be repaid, they may be viewed by applicants as less desirable than grants. However, with limited amounts of federal funds available for grants and high levels of competition for such grants, loans may be the only form of assistance available.

- *Direct Loans*: lending of federal funds for a specific period of time with an expectation of repayment that may or may not require the payment of interest.

[1] For more information on block grants, see https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/2020/01/21/what-is-a-block-grant-updated/.

- *Guaranteed/Insured Loans*: programs in which the federal government makes an arrangement to indemnify a lender against part or all of any defaults by those responsible for repayment of loans.

Goods and Properties

The federal government has programs both for the sale, exchange, or donation of property and for temporary use or loan of goods and property.

- *Sale, Exchange, or Donation of Property and Goods*: programs that provide for the sale, exchange, or donation of federal real property, personal property, commodities, and other goods including land, buildings, equipment, food, and drugs.
- *Use of Property, Facilities, and Equipment*: programs that provide for the loan of, use of, or access to federal facilities or property wherein the federally owned facilities or property do not remain in the possession of the recipient of the assistance.

Assistance Listings at beta.SAM.gov

Official descriptions of more than 2,200 federal assistance programs (including grants, loans, and other financial and nonfinancial assistance described above) can be found on beta.SAM.gov. The website, maintained by the General Services Administration (GSA), is currently in beta, and it houses federal assistance listings previously found in the now-retired Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). Each federal assistance program has a corresponding CFDA program number; these CFDA numbers are still used as numerical program identifiers. Programs are searchable at the "Assistance Listings" domain at beta.SAM.gov. The site will eventually be renamed SAM.gov.

Approximately 1,800 assistance programs are classified as grants. Assistance listing descriptions include the following:

- federal agency administering a program;
- legislation authorizing the program;
- objectives and goals of program;
- types of financial or nonfinancial assistance provided;
- uses and restrictions;
- eligibility requirements;
- application and award process;
- criteria for selecting proposals;
- amount of obligations for some past and current fiscal years;
- range and average of financial assistance;
- regulations, guidelines, and literature relevant to a program;
- information contacts and headquarters, regional, and local offices;
- related programs;
- examples of funded projects;
- formula and matching requirements, where applicable; and

- requirements for post-assistance reports.

Federal departments and agencies may also provide information and guidelines for specific programs on their websites. These websites may also provide a list of grantees from the previous fiscal year and indicate the amount of money still available for the coming year.

Congressional staff may suggest that constituents seeking federal funding search beta.SAM.gov themselves by keyword, beneficiary, agency, and other options for identifying appropriate program information. Some congressional offices may forward a preliminary beta.SAM.gov search of potential federal funding to constituents. Descriptions of programs identified will need to be carefully analyzed by grantseekers themselves to see whether they may be appropriate.

Early in the process, the grantseeker might contact the department or agency indicated in the beta.SAM.gov program description(s) for the latest information on funding availability, program requirements, and deadlines. Often a referral to a local or state office will be given. Many programs may be project or formula (block) grants to states that in turn accept local grants applications and determine award recipients.

Grants.gov and FedConnect

For competitive *project grants* (i.e., those grants that do not undergo a pass-through process), federal departments and agencies are required to post notices on Grants.gov at http://www.grants.gov or FedConnect at https://www.fedconnect.net. These websites post competitive federal funding notices, include guidelines and registration information, and provide a uniform application procedure. At times, both websites may be needed to apply, depending on the grant program's individual notice of funding opportunity.

Before applying through either Grants.gov or FedConnect, the grantseeker who will be making the application is required to register. Also before applying, grantseekers must obtain a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and register with the System for Awards Management (SAM).

- Grants.gov provides instructions at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html and http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html.
- FedConnect provides instructions at https://www.fedconnect.net/FedConnect/Marketing/Documents/FedConnect_Ready_Set_Go.pdf.

For grantseekers who have identified appropriate federal funding programs (through beta.SAM.gov or department and agency websites), Grants.gov enables them to do the following for competitive project grant opportunities:

- search for current funding opportunity notices (including by CFDA program number);
- sign up for email notification of future grant opportunities;
- download grants application packages and instructions or go to another website to apply;
- submit applications electronically through a uniform process for all federal grant-making agencies; and
- track the progress of their applications using unique IDs and passwords.

Federal and State Grants Contact Information

Each assistance listing at beta.SAM.gov includes information contacts, either providing the name, address, and telephone number of the main program officer, or referring applicants to the regional, state, or local office of the agency. However, many federal agencies have a number of offices: a central office in Washington, DC; a series of regional and state offices; and, in some cases, local or area offices. At times, it may be useful to have other contact information beyond that on beta.SAM.gov.

An alternative source for identifying contact information in federal departments and agencies is a congressional liaison office (see CRS Report 98-446, *Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies*, for emails and phone numbers). The congressional liaison office will respond only to congressional requests, though you may place a request on behalf of a constituent.

Role of State Administering Agencies and Contacts

Many federal programs are administered directly by state agencies or other entities within the state, and many states have programs funded out of their own appropriations that supplement or complement federal programs. State government agencies provide coordination of local efforts to obtain federal funds through grant programs that are already allocated to the state. State government agencies familiar with federal program requirements can assist with proposals and provide other guidance. Less frequently, local councils of government, where they exist, also may have access to federal funds for providing technical assistance, guidance, and counseling in the grants process.

Grantseekers may be encouraged to contact state- or local-level program officers as early as possible in the grant-seeking process. In fact, many states may require that an applicant complete a pre-application screening at the state level before submitting requests.

To help grantseekers, congressional grants staff may identify SAAs, the state counterpart office accepting grants applications and disbursing federal formula and other grants. Also, many federal department and agency websites provide state contacts. Often the site will have an interactive U.S. map where grantseekers can click on their state and obtain program and funding contact information.

Selected Federal Agency Contacts

- Agriculture Rural Development State Contacts
  https://www.rd.usda.gov/page/state-offices
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Partners
  https://www.arts.gov/partners/state-regional
- Commerce Offices and Services
  https://www.commerce.gov/locations#2/40.5/-13.0
- Education (ED) State Contacts
  http://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant Regional Office
  https://www.epa.gov/grants/regional-grants-information
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) State Offices and Agencies
  https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/state-administrative-agency-contacts

- Health and Human Services (HHS), Social Services Block Grants State Officials & Program Contacts
  https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/ssbg-contacts
- Homeland Security (DHS) State Homeland Security Contacts
  https://www.dhs.gov/state-homeland-security-and-emergency-services
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) State/Local Offices
  https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/field_policy_mgt/localoffices
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) State Councils
  http://www.neh.gov/about/state-humanities-councils
- Office of Justice Programs (OJP) State Administering Agencies
  https://www.ojp.gov/funding/state-administering-agencies/overview
- Labor (DOL) Education and Training Administration, State and Local Contacts
  https://www.doleta.gov/regions/
- Small Business Administration
  https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/find?type=SBA%20District%20Office&pageNumber=1
- Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional Offices
  https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/regional-offices
- Veterans Affairs State/Territory Offices
  http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm

Other Sources for Contacts

- CRS Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies at http://www.crs.gov/resources/LiaisonOffices.
- Many states require federal grant applicants to submit a copy of their application for state government-level review and comment and have designated a "Single Point of Contact," available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/SPOC-February-2019.pdf. The state offices listed here coordinate government (both federal and state) grants development and may provide guidance to grantseekers.
- A list of state government agency websites is available at the federal government site USA.gov, "State Government," at https://www.usa.gov/states-and-territories.

Foundations and Corporate Grants

Congressional offices may suggest other funding possibilities to grantseekers as alternatives or supplements to federal grants. Private foundation or corporate grant funding also might be used for federal grants that have requirements for nonfederal cost share, otherwise known as matching requirements.

Grantseekers might begin by identifying state or local foundations. These may have a greater interest in local projects than larger foundations mainly concerned with programs of national significance. Direct corporate giving also might be explored. Corporations sometimes support local projects in areas where they have their headquarters or plants. In the case of either foundations or corporations, finding a contact and communicating with the potential grantor may be a useful next step.

Candid (formerly the Foundation Center and Guidestar) serves as a clearinghouse of information on private philanthropic giving and may be used to identify private funding sources. Candid's website, https://candid.org/?fcref=lr, includes

- extensive information about private funders;
- requests for proposals (RFPs) for funding opportunities from foundations in all subject fields;
- web and in-person training, many of them free, including an Introduction to Proposal Writing;
- IRS Form 990 filings from nonprofit organizations; and
- a number of directories and guides to private and corporate funding sources.

Candid also maintains a national network of cooperating library collections in each state, with print and electronic resources available free to the public. Addresses of these library collections are provided at https://candid.org/improve-your-nonprofit/funding-information-network. At these libraries, grantseekers may search the *Foundation Directory Online* database by field of interest, by foundation location, and other categories to produce lists of possible funding sources for projects.

Other websites that provide free listings of foundations include the Council on Foundations' "Community Foundation Locator," at http://www.cof.org/community-foundation-locator; and the Grantsmanship Center's Funding Sources, which for each state lists "top," corporate, and community foundations, at http://tgci.com/funding-sources. Congressional offices may send constituents state listings from these websites.

For more information on private, corporate, and additional funding sources, see CRS Report RL34012, *Resources for Grantseekers*.

Useful Sources of Grants Information

CRS Grants Web Pages

Grants and Federal Assistance web page
http://www.crs.gov/resources/GRANTS

Focuses on CRS grants web products and publications. CRS reports provide guidance to congressional staff on federal programs and funding, and may be forwarded to constituents in response to grants requests. Most CRS reports are also available to the public at https://crsreports.congress.gov/.

Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance web page
http://www.crs.gov/resources/MEMBER-GRANTS-PAGE

Provides internet links to free key federal and private grants and funding resources. Members may add this CRS web page to their home page so grantseekers in districts and states can access web information directly using the Member's home page as portal to key grants sources.

Additional Federal Sources

A-Z Index of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies (General Services Administration)
https://www.usa.gov/federal-agencies/a

To better develop a grant proposal, search a department or agency's home page to learn more about its programs and objectives. The site also includes the following:

- Government Benefits, Grants and Loans
  https://www.usa.gov/benefits-grants-loans
- Starting a Nonprofit Organization
  https://www.usa.gov/start-nonprofit
  Links to federal department and agency information on several types of nonprofit organizations and outlines the process of incorporating and applying for tax-exempt status.

Grants Management Circulars (Office of Management and Budget)
https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/circulars/

OMB establishes government-wide grants management policies and guidelines through circulars and common rules. OMB Circulars are cited in beta.SAM.gov program descriptions. Circulars target grants recipients and audit requirements for educational institutions, state and local governments, and nonprofit organizations.

Other Resources

Grants and Related Resources (Michigan State University Libraries)
https://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=96743&p=622547

How do I find grants for my nonprofit? (Candid)
https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/finding-grants/Grants for Individuals (primarily financial aid and scholarships)

Grants to Individuals
https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/grants-to-individuals/
https://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=96743&p=622546

Crowdfunding
https://learning.candid.org/search/?keyword=crowdfunding
https://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=96743&p=867834

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