CRS Report for Congress
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Grants Information for Constituents

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Summary

This report describes key sources of information on government and private grants for state and community projects. Constituents, who know their projects best, may search for grants information on the Internet and in printed reference sources. For federal grants, loans, or nonfinancial help, all programs in the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* can be searched by keyword and a number of browsable indexes such as subject, department or agency, program title, beneficiary, and applicant eligibility. Federal Web sites provide information and guidance, and give rules, regulations, and updates. Web sites of organizations such as the Foundation Center describe sources on private, corporate, and community foundations. They also offer guides to writing grants proposals. This report will be updated yearly.

Introduction

Constituents seeking funding for projects need first to gather information about what grants assistance is available. Many state and local governments, nonprofit social service groups and community action organizations, small businesses, and individuals approach congressional offices for help in identifying grants. Though many hope for federal funding, such assistance is limited. Gathering federal program information and contacting federal agencies early in the process, before submitting formal applications, is recommended. Grant seekers should also investigate private or corporate foundation funding: community foundations, for example, are often especially interested in providing money for local projects.

The *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, searchable full-text on the Web at [http://www.cfda.gov], is the primary source of information on federal grants and nonfinancial assistance programs, although actual funding depends upon annual budget appropriations. For example, some programs may exist in the *Catalog*, but receive no funding in a certain budget year. The *Catalog* in print and on the Web can be searched using various indexes, including keyword searching, and browsable listings by subject, department, agency, program title, beneficiary, and applicant eligibility. The Web version also links to department and agency Web sites and to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars affecting program management.

The printed *Catalog* is widely available in libraries in all states. Both the printed and Web versions of the *Catalog* include "Appendix IV: Agency Regional and Local Offices" [http://www.cfda.gov/public/cat-app4-index.htm], which often handle federal grant applications and disbursement of funds. Since legislation in every Congress may significantly change programs and their annual budgets, constituents should contact these offices early in the process before applying for federal funds.

State government departments and agencies also fund projects and administer federal block grants, but information on state programs is not as easily accessible as federal resources on the Web. The printed and Web *Catalogs* include a "State Single Points of Contact" [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html] (not available for all states) for grant seekers wanting general guidance on government grants activity in a particular state. Also, various Internet sites access state government Web pages, and constituents may wish to search agency by agency to contact appropriate offices for information. Three examples are as follows:

> National Association of State Information (NASCIO)
> [https://www.nascio.org/aboutNascio/profiles/]
>
> Library of Congress, State and Local Governments resource page
> [http://www.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html]
>
> State and Local Government on the Net
> [http://www.statelocalgov.net/]

Other sites may be found via search engines under keywords or phrases such as *state governments AND grants*.

Because federal funding is very limited, sources of private funding should also be considered. For example, the Foundation Center publications and its Web site [http://www.fdncenter.org] can help grant seekers identify state and community foundations that may be particularly interested in funding local projects.

For those seeking printed sources, the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, Foundation Center directories, and other grants publications are available in local libraries. Terms to identify relevant books include *grants*, *grants-in-aid*, *foundation grants*, *research grants*, *block grants*, and *proposal writing for grants*.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Washington, Government Printing Office. Annual, updated regularly on the Internet [http://www.cfda.gov/] by the General Services Administration.

The *Catalog* (CFDA) describes some 1,500 federal domestic assistance programs, financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by the departments and agencies of the federal government. It is the primary source of information about federal grants programs, although actual funding depends upon annual budget appropriations. For each program, the *Catalog* defines objectives of the program, eligibility requirements,

the application and award process, post assistance requirements, past fiscal year obligations and future estimates, program accomplishments and examples of funded projects, related programs, and information contacts, including regional or local offices of federal agencies if applicable. All of the program descriptions, indexes, and appendixes of the printed *Catalog* are searchable for free on the Web.

Catalog Indexes
- ! Keyword   [http://www.cfda.gov/query/query.htm]
- ! Functional (subject)   [http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_by_fa.asp]
- ! Beneficiary group   [http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_by_beneficiary.asp]
- ! Eligible applicants   [http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_by_applicant.asp]
- ! Program title   [http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_by_alpha.asp]
- ! Department or agency   [http://www.cfda.gov/public/browse_by_agy.asp]

Developing and Writing Grant Proposals
[http://www.cfda.gov/public/cat-writing.htm]
 This site (*Catalog* Appendix VI) provides guidance in formulating federal grant applications, including initial proposal development, basic components of a proposal, review recommendations, and referral to federal guidelines and literature.

State Single Points of Contact
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html]
 Some states require that federal grant applicants submit a copy of their application for state government level review and comment. The offices in this *Catalog* Appendix I coordinate government (both federal and state) grants development and provide guidance to grant seekers.

Federal Agency Regional and Local Offices (*Catalog* Appendix IV)
[http://www.cfda.gov/public/cat-app4-index.htm]
 Much of the federal grant budget moves to the states through formula and block grants — state, regional, and local federal offices often handle grants applications and funds disbursement. Each federal agency has its own procedures — applicants should call the department or agency in question before applying for funding to obtain the most up-to-date information.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance in Print
 Although more easily searchable for free on the Internet [http://www.cfda.gov], the printed *Catalog* is available to the public in local depository libraries in every state, which may be identified at [http://www.gpoaccess.gov/libraries.html]. The *Catalog* is also for sale from the Government Printing Office at [http://bookstore.gpo.gov/].

Related Federal Sources

Federal Government Web Sites
[http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/executive/fed.html]
 To better develop a grant proposal, search a department or agency's Web site to learn more about its programs and objectives. Some government departments or agencies have Web pages specifically designed for nonprofit organizations or for seekers of state and local government grants (see below).

Los Sitios Web Federales en Español
[http://www.odl.state.ok.us/usinfo/topiclists/us-spanish.htm]
Federal Web sites in Spanish describing programs of key U.S. government departments and agencies, including Commerce, Small Business Administration, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Treasury, Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Communications Commission, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (now part of the Department of Homeland Security).

Grants.gov
[http://grants.gov/]
Part of a federal Web site with one-stop access to all online U.S. government resources. This section groups grants programs by broad subject categories.

Government to Government: Grants and Financial Management
[http://www.firstgov.gov/Government/State_Local/Grants.shtml]
A Web site developed to give state and local governments easy access to federal government information.

FirstGov for Nonprofits
[http://www.firstgov.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml]
A network of links to federal government information and services devised to assist nonprofit organizations.

Federal Register
[http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html]
Search for updates and notices affecting federal assistance programs. Scroll down to check current year; scroll down farther to enter *Catalog* program number, or subject/keyword *AND CFDA* in Search Terms box.

Federal Funding Report
[http://www.house.gov/ffr]
Weekly compilation of items published in the *Federal Register* which affect federal domestic assistance programs. The summary consists of three parts: (1) *Federal Register* Summary, (2) Early Warning Grants Report, and (3) Disaster Loan Applications.

Notices of Funding Availability
[http://ocd1.usda.gov/nofa.htm]
Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) are announcements that appear in the *Federal Register* inviting applications for federal grant programs. This page allows one to generate a customized listing of NOFAs by date, by broad subject terms, or by department or agency.

Grants Management Web Site
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html]
The 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. On the Internet version of the *Catalog,* sections sometimes hotlink directly to OMB Circulars, others just give *OMB Circular* numbers, which may then be printed from this Web site.

Private and Corporate Funding Sources

Foundation Center
[http://www.foundationcenter.org/]

This gateway presents information about the grant seeking process, private funding sources (including national, state, community, and corporate foundations), guidelines on writing a grants proposal, addresses of state libraries with grants reference collections, and links to other useful Internet Web sites. The Center maintains a comprehensive database on foundation grantsmanship, publishes print and CD-ROM directories and guides, conducts research and publishes studies in the field, and offers a variety of training and educational seminars. The database includes the following:

- Online Orientation: the Grantseeking Process
  [http://fdncenter.org/learn/orient/intro1.html]
- User-friendly Guide to Funding Research and Resources
  [http://fdncenter.org/learn/ufg/index.html]
- Proposal Writing ("Short Course" on developing a good grant proposal)
  [http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html]
- Web sites of community foundations (bystate)
  [http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/gws_comm/comm.html]
- Foundation books collections [http://www.foundationcenter.org/index.html]Foundation Center Cooperating Collections in every state provide free funding information for grant seekers in libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers.

Grantsmanship Center (TGCI)
[http://www.tgci.com/]

In addition to useful links to government resources, this site includes information on community foundations and international funding. Community foundations (by state) [http://www.tgci.com/funding/community.asp] are often particularly interested in local projects and maintain diverse grants programs. They may also serve as a resource for grant information and may provide training and technical assistance for local nonprofit organizations. TGCI also offers publications, training and workshops in proposal writing, grantsmanship, and fundraising to nonprofit organizations and government.