



GRANTS & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey

Federal, state, and municipal governments provide support to local entrepreneurs, non-profits, and small businesses. This may include grants, loans, contracts, training, and business development programs. This document summarizes the main resources available to those who live or work in Marin and Sonoma Counties.

Please note: If you are encountering a problem with a specific federal agency, you should request casework assistance. View my advice on [Help with a Federal Agency](#), or phone my office for assistance, in Marin at (415) 507-9554, or in Sonoma County at (707) 542-7182.

FEDERAL GRANTS

Accessing Grants Information

Your primary resource when viewing or applying for federal grants is [Grants.gov](#). As part of the federal government's e-grants initiative, federal agencies are required to post all grants opportunities on [Grants.gov](#). Funding notices from more than 1000 grant programs are available, and the site provides a uniform application process. All individuals or organizations wishing to apply for federal grants must use [Grants.gov](#).

For more detailed information on the financial and nonfinancial assistance programs of various federal agencies, consult the [Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance \(CFDA\)](#). The *Catalog* is produced by the General Services Administration (GSA) and describes some 2000 authorized federal programs. Identifying a number of programs in your area of interest will allow you to target your grant searches at [Grants.gov](#), and to sign up for email notifications when new opportunities arise. The *Catalog* is also available in all [Federal Depository Libraries](#). You will find Federal Depository Libraries in [Santa Rosa](#) and at multiple locations in [San Francisco](#).

Updated information on federal programs also appears in the daily [Federal Register](#). Federal agencies will typically provide additional information and grant application guidelines in their *Federal Register* notices. Links to this information will be provided in the original grant announcement on [Grants.gov](#).

Registering and Applying

The individual or entity making a grant application must register at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). The website provides thorough instructions on the registration process, which includes registering for both a [Dun & Bradstreet \(DUNS\) number](#) and a [Central Contractor Registration \(CCR\) number](#). Because it may take two to three weeks for both of these numbers to be issued, you should register well in advance of any upcoming grant deadlines.

For grant seekers who have identified appropriate federal funding programs (through CFDA or department and agency websites), *Grants.gov* enables you to:

- search for current funding opportunity notices (including by CFDA program number);
- sign up for e-mail notification of future grant opportunities;
- download grants application packages, or visit grants application websites, if provided;
- submit applications electronically through a uniform process; and
- track the progress of your applications using a unique ID and password.

If you have difficulties registering with *Grants.gov* or applying for grants, contact one of my local offices for assistance.

Writing Grant Proposals

For information about writing a grant proposal, follow [CFDA's Developing and Writing Grant Proposals](#), or take a free online [Proposal Writing Short Course](#) from the Foundation Center.

To better develop a federal grant proposal, you should also review the relevant federal agency websites to learn more about agencies' programs and objectives. Find a complete list of agency websites [here](#).

STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES

Grants, training, and other resources are also provided by the State of California. Visit [CA.gov](https://www.ca.gov) for links to grant opportunities from the State, organized by category. For more information about California grants, or for assistance with a State agency, contact one of your representatives in the [California Legislature](#).

Cities and towns may allow small businesses to bid on contracts for some of their needs. Contact individual municipalities for information about their contracting policies.

Some local organizations in Marin and Sonoma Counties provide assistance to local nonprofit organizations. In Marin County, contact the [Marin Community Foundation](#) at (415) 464-2500 and the [Center for Volunteer and Non-Profit Leadership](#) at (415) 479-5710. In Sonoma County, contact the [Community Foundation Sonoma County](#) at (707) 579-4073 and the [Volunteer Center of Sonoma County](#) at (707) 573-3399.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)

Special funding may be available to consumers, businesses, organizations, and inventors with an interest in pursuing EERE improvements. This funding is available from both the federal [Department of Energy](#) and from [State and local sources](#).

FEDERAL CONTRACTS

Government Contracting

As the world's largest buyer of goods and services, the federal government encourages small businesses to bid on contracts for many of its needs. For a brief introduction to government contracting, review the information provided by the [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#).

The primary resource for locating and applying for federal contracting opportunities is [FedBizOpps](#). This website lists all current opportunities over \$25,000, including both civilian and military contracts.

However, in some cases, a federal contract may be so large that a single company might have difficulty in providing the products or services required to meet the terms of the contract. A prime contractor may need to use subcontractors to complete contractual obligations. For a list of prime contractors in California, visit the [SBA's California subcontracting directory](#).

There are preferential opportunities for [minority](#) and [women](#) owned businesses.

Registration Requirements

As with federal grants, the individual or entity competing for federal government contracts must register before submitting an application. [FedBizOpps](#) provides a thorough explanation of the registration process, which includes applying for both a [Dun & Bradstreet \(DUNS\) number](#) and a [Central Contractor Registration \(CCR\)](#) number. Because the registration process may require several weeks or months, you should register well in advance of any upcoming contract application deadlines.

If you have difficulties registering, please contact my local office for further assistance.

BUSINESS LOANS & DEVELOPMENT

The one-stop federal website for business-related tools is [BusinessUSA](#). North Bay businesses and entrepreneurs are also served by several federal agencies with a local presence, which may offer financial assistance, facilitate international trade, or provide business training and development resources:

- [Small Business Administration \(San Francisco\)](#) – SBA is the primary local resource for financial assistance and business development. SBA staff are available to explore the

options that suit your needs and circumstances, and to refer you to business opportunities with the federal government. Contact an SBA representative directly at (415) 744-6820.

- [Small Business Development Center \(Santa Rosa Junior College\)](#) – The SBDC at SRJC provides business counseling and a wide variety of training for entrepreneurs in the North Bay. Contact the SBDC at (707) 524-1770 for more information.
- [North Bay U.S. Export Assistance Center \(San Rafael\)](#) — An office of the Department of Commerce, the North Bay Export Assistance Center provides comprehensive trade expertise to local businesses and entrepreneurs, including trade counseling, market intelligence, business matchmaking, and commercial diplomacy. Contact the office directly at (415) 485-6200.
- [Minority Business Development Agency \(San Francisco\)](#) – An agency of the Department of Commerce, MBDA assists minority-owned businesses in accessing development resources and identifying contracts that may suit their profiles. Contact MBDA directly at (415) 744-3001.
- [Export-Import Bank \(San Francisco\)](#) – The Export-Import Bank assists US businesses, both large and small, with export financing, including loan guarantees, direct loans, export credit insurance, and other products. Contact the Export-Import Bank directly at (415) 705-2285.