



THE FEDERAL GRANTS PROCESS

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Answers to
Your Questions
on Researching and Applying
for
Federal
Grants

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Summary Overview of the Federal Grants Process.....	3
- How to research Federal grant programs	
- How to research State grant programs	
- How to research private grant programs	
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	4
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance on the Web	
- Single State Points of Contact	
- Regional and Local Office Addresses	
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance in Print	
Enlisting Congressional Assistance with Grants.....	5
- Information necessary to request a letter of interest from Congressman Forbes	
- What to do next if your grant application is approved and funded	
Key Federal Funding Research Sources.....	6
Related Federal Resources.....	7

OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL GRANTS PROCESS

The first step for constituents seeking funding for projects is to gather information about what types of grants are available to them. Many state and local governments, nonprofit social service groups, community action organizations, small businesses, and individuals approach my congressional offices for help in identifying grants. Though many hope for federal funding, this type of assistance is limited and usually very competitive. Gathering federal program information and contacting federal agencies early in the process, before submitting formal applications, is recommended so you better understand the detailed aspects of grant programs. You should also investigate private or corporate foundation funding—community foundations are often especially interested in providing money for local projects.

How to research Federal grant programs

To find out what money is currently available under a federal program, search Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov> by keyword, various categories, or by a Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number. The site also allows you as a grant seeker to browse grant opportunities posted in the past seven days, receive e-mail notification of federal grant opportunities, and apply for federal grants through a uniform application process. Because programs and their annual budgets may change from year to year, it is recommended that you contact your local or state offices early in the process before applying for federal funds.

How to research State grant programs

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 Internet. The printed and web catalogs include a “State Single Points of Contact,” which can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html> if you are seeking general guidance on government grants activity in a particular state. Also, various Internet sites access state government web pages. You may wish to search agency-by-agency to contact appropriate offices for information, including:

- National Association of State Development Agencies; <http://www.nasda.com/agencies.html>
- National Association of State Information (NASCIO); <https://www.nascio.org/aboutNascio/profiles/>
- Library of Congress, State and Local Government resource page; <http://www.loc.gov/global/state/stategov.html>
- State and Local Government on the Net; <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>

Other websites may be found via search engines under keywords or phrases such as “state governments AND grants.”

How to research private grant programs

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

Those seeking to view the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, Foundation Center directories, and other printed grants publications can find them in their local library. Useful search terms to identify relevant books include *grants*, *grants-in-aid*, *foundation grants*, *research grants*, *block grants*, and *proposal writing for grants*.

To view a Grants Information for Constituents slideshow explaining this information in more detail, visit the Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance link on my Congressional Website at <http://forbes.house.gov/ConstituentServices/grants.html>.

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA)

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, <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 indices, including keyword searching and browsable listings by subject, department, agency, program title, beneficiary, and applicant eligibility. The web version, CRS-2, also links to department and agency websites and to the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) circulars that affect program management. The printed Catalog is also widely available in libraries.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance on the Web

<http://www.cfda.gov/>

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 (again, actual funding depends upon annual budget appropriations). For each program, the Catalog defines its objectives, 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 appendices of the printed Catalog are searchable at no charge on the web. From the CFDA website, you can search for assistance programs by "Find a Grant," by keyword, or by other useful browsable listings such as agency, sub-agency, applicant eligibility, or beneficiary, among other categories.

State Single Points of Contact (Office of Management and Budget)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>

Some states require you to submit a copy of your federal grant application for state government level review and comment. These offices coordinate government (both federal and state) grants development and provide guidance to you as a grant seeker.

Regional and Local Office Addresses

http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.BROWSE_CATALOG_DYN.show

Much of the federal grant budget moves to the states through formula and block grants. State, regional, and local federal offices listed at this link often handle grants applications and funds disbursement. Each federal agency has its own procedures; you should call the department or agency in question before applying for funding in order to obtain the most up-to-date information.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance in Print

The printed Catalog is available to the public in local depository libraries in every state <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/libraries.html>. The annual print Catalog (with no supplements or updates) is also for sale from the Government Printing Office at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov/>. You may find, however, that the Internet Catalog is easier to search and is continually updated.

ENLISTING CONGRESSIONAL ASSISTANCE WITH A GRANT APPLICATION

As your representative in Congress, I can provide a letter of interest on the behalf of your organization or local government to the federal agency for which the application is intended. This letter will encourage the federal agency to give attention and all due consideration to the application. This letter should be included either with the application materials or sent to the granting agency after the application has been submitted.

In the letter of interest, I request that the federal agency keep me informed of their decisions regarding the application. My Grants Coordinator will pass on any relevant information to you that our office receives.

I encourage you to obtain letters of support from other local officials as well in order to maximize the effect of your application.

Information necessary to request a letter of interest from Congressman Forbes

If you would like to request that a letter of interest be written on you behalf, please provide the following material to the Grants Coordinator in my office:

- Full contact information of the applicant organization or individual.
- A copy of the grant application, or a summary of the proposed application.
- The name of the grant program and the CFDA# (if available).
- The name of the Grants Officer within the granting agency (as the letter will be sent directly to the Grants Officer).
- The deadline for the application.

A copy of the letter of interest will be sent to you as the applicant and to the Grants Officer at the applying agency.

What to do after your grant application is approved and funded

In many cases, my office is advised of awarded grants by the granting agency before applicants are notified. In this situation, the Grants Coordinator will call you to share the news of the award.

Depending on the scope of the project and those affected by the grant, information from the application may be collected by the Grants Coordinator for a press release. The individual granting agency will have specifics on the distribution and details of the grant.

KEY FEDERAL FUNDING RESEARCH SOURCES

Grants.gov

<http://www.grants.gov/>

Essential grants website that serves as the single access point for current funding notices from over 900 federal grant programs. Grant seekers may search current notices (including by CFDA program number), sign up for e-mail notification of future grant opportunities, download grants application packages and instructions, and submit applications electronically through a uniform process for all federal grant-making agencies.

FirstGov for Nonprofits

<http://www.firstgov.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml#grants>

Portal for nonprofit organizations to information about federal grants, loans, and other assistance.

Government to Government: Grants and Financial Management

http://www.firstgov.gov/Government/State_Local/Grants.shtml

Website giving state and local governments easy access to federal government grants and budget information.

Homeland Security Grants and Training

http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/editorial/editorial_0355.xml

Provides information on homeland security and public safety grant opportunities offered by agencies across the federal government and is intended to simplify access to these grants by placing information in a single, easily accessible site. Critical state and local missions supported through these grants include the preparedness of first responders and citizens, public health, infrastructure security, and other public safety activities.

Federal Government Websites

<http://www.loc.gov/global/executive/fed.html>

To better develop a grant proposal, search a department or agency's website to learn more about its programs and objectives. See also FirstGov.gov's A-Z index of U.S. government departments and agencies, which can be found on the Web at http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml. There is also a Spanish language counterpart (en Español).

Federal Register

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

Search current year for updates and notices affecting federal assistance programs. Enter in Search Terms box "Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance," CFDA, specific *Catalog* program number, or subject/keyword AND CFDA.

Federal Funding Report

http://www.house.gov/ffr/federal_funding_reports.html

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.

Grants Management Website

<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, and others just give *OMB Circular* numbers, which may then be printed from this website.

RELATED FEDERAL RESOURCES

A-Z Index of U.S. Departments and Agencies (General Services Administration)
http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/All_Agencies/index.shtml

Homeland Security Grants (Dept. of Homeland Security)
<http://www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/>

Disaster Assistance (Federal Emergency Management Agency)
http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/recover/dec_guide.shtm

FirstGov Government-to-Government (General Services Administration)
http://www.firstgov.gov/Government/Government_Gateway.shtml

FirstGov for Business (GSA)
http://www.firstgov.gov/Business/Business_Gateway.shtml

FirstGov for Nonprofits (General Services Administration)
<http://www.firstgov.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml>

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives)
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/centers.html>

GovBenefits.gov (GSA)
http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits_en.portal

FTC Consumer Alert (Federal Trade Commission)
<http://www.ftc.gov>

Federal Register (National Archives)
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

Federal Funding Report (House Information Resources)
http://www.house.gov/ffr/federal_funding_reports.shtml

OMB Grants Management Web Site (Office of Management and Budget)
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html>