CRS Report for Congress

Grants Information for Constituents

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Merete F. Gerli
Information Research Specialist
Knowledge Services Group

Grants Information for Constituents

Summary

This report describes key sources of information on government and private grants for state and community projects. For federal grants, loans, or nonfinancial help, constituents, who often know their projects best, can search the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) [http://www.cfda.gov] by keyword and by browsable indexes such as subject, department or agency, program title, beneficiary, and applicant eligibility. The website Grants.gov [http://www.grants.gov] enables grant seekers to search for federal funding opportunities, to sign up for e-mail notification, to apply electronically for grants through a uniform process for all agencies, and to track submitted applications. Federal department and agency websites provide additional information and guidance, as well as agency contacts. Websites such as the Foundation Center [http://foundationcenter.org] identify possible sources of private, corporate, and community foundations, and offer guides to writing grant proposals.

This report will be updated as needed.

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Introduction

Many state and local governments, nonprofit groups, community action organizations, small businesses, and individuals approach congressional offices for help in identifying grants. Though many hope for federal funding, such assistance is often limited.

Federal grants are not benefits or entitlements to individuals. Most federal funding goes to state and local governments, which in turn make sub-awards to local entities such as nonprofit organizations. Grants may be available for projects serving communities and local needs. For others, such as for starting or expanding a small business or for students, loans may be available.

- Individuals looking for government benefits may find useful the website GovBenefits.gov [http://www.govbenefits.gov].

- Students seeking financial aid should 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, and technical assistance. See the Small Business Administration website at [http://www.sba.gov].

Constituents seeking funding for projects need first to determine the most appropriate sources of funds. Community fund-raising may be most suitable for school enrichment activities such as band or sports uniforms or field trips. Local business or foundation funding might be more appropriate for supporting local memorials or programs. Government assistance may be available for nonprofit organizations, including faith-based groups, for initiatives such as establishing soup kitchens or after-school programs benefitting entire communities. Local governments seeking funds for community services, infrastructure, and economic revitalization may be most eligible to tap into state or federal funds.

Because government funds may be limited, sources of private funding should also be considered. State and community foundations may be particularly interested in funding local projects; many projects may require a combination of government and private funding.

For eligible state and local governments and nonprofit organizations, identifying appropriate programs, and then contacting federal and state agencies early in the

process, before submitting formal applications, is recommended. State-located federal offices often handle federal grant applications and disbursement of funds. State government departments and agencies also fund projects and administer federal block grants.

Although most funding information is available on the Internet, 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*, *federal grants, foundation grants*, *research grants*, *block grants*, and *proposal writing for grants*.

Key Federal Sources

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (General Services Administration) [http://www.cfda.gov]

The *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA), searchable full-text on the Web, is the primary source of information on federal grants and nonfinancial assistance programs, although actual funding depends upon annual budget appropriations. For example, some authorized federal programs may be described in the Catalog but Congress may choose not to fund them in a certain budget year. For current notices of funding availability, see Grants.gov (below). Highlights of CFDA include

- available free to the public and updated continuously on the Web;

- describes some 1,600 federal domestic assistance programs, financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by the departments and agencies of the federal government. Approximately 1000 of these are grants programs, primarily grants-in-aid to state and local governments, who in turn make sub-awards to state and local grant seekers;

- allows grant seekers to identify federal programs that might provide support for their projects, a few directly or more likely through formula grants to states and local governments;

- enables searching by keyword; or by other useful browsable listings, such as by subject, by department or agency, by applicant eligibility, by beneficiary, or by other category;

- for each program, describes 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 CFDA programs, and information contacts, including regional or local offices of federal agencies if applicable;

- links to department and agency websites and to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars affecting program management and record-keeping requirements;

- includes information on *Developing and Writing Grant Proposals* [http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT_PROPOS AL_DYN.show]. 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.

Although more easily searchable and continuously updated on the Internet, the printed *Catalog* is available to the public in local government 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; enter name of publication at [http://bookstore.gpo.gov/].

Grants.gov (via U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 [http://www.grants.gov]

After identifying possible federal grant programs in CFDA, this website allows grant seekers to find and apply for current competitive funding opportunities from all 26 federal grants-making agencies. Grant seekers themselves can check on notices of funding availability, sign up to receive e-mail notification of grant opportunities, and apply for federal grants online through a unified process.

To download and submit an application from Grants.gov, registration is required. The site provides a narrated tutorial on how to complete a grant application package and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page. Once an application is submitted, grants applicants themselves can then track progress of their application using their unique ID and password. Applications can be identified by CFDA number, funding opportunity number, competition ID, or Grants.gov tracking number.

State Administering Agencies and Contacts

Many federal grants such as formula and block grants are awarded directly to state governments, which then set priorities and allocate funds within that state. For more information on how a state intends to distribute federal formula funds, grant seekers can contact the state administering agency (SAA). State government agencies are familiar with federal program requirements, can assist local governments and nonprofit organizations with proposals, and can provide other guidance.

- **State 'Single Points of Contact'** (U.S. Office of Management and Budget) [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html]. Many states require federal grants applicants to submit a copy of their application for state government review and comment, and have

designated a 'Single Point of Contact' under Executive Order 12372, listed by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) . The State offices listed here coordinate government (both federal and state) grants development and may provide guidance to grant seekers.

- **Federal Agency Regional and Local Office Addresses** (CFDA Appendix IV; listings by agency and by state) [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 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.

- **State and Local Agencies by Topic** (USA.gov) [http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/State_and_Territories/Agencies_by _Topic.shtml]. Can help in identifying SAAs. Many federal executive department and agency websites include state contacts or SAAs to which grants seekers can be referred: a selection of such SAAs are given below.

Selected State Administering Agencies and Contacts[1]

Many federal department and agency websites provide state contacts. Often the site will have an interactive U.S. map, grant seekers can click on their state and obtain program and contact information.

Agriculture Rural Development State Contacts
[http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/recd_map.html

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Partners
[http://www.arts.gov/partner/state/SAA_RAO_list.html]

Commerce Offices and Services
[http://www.commerce.gov/statemap2.html]

Education (ED) State Contacts
[http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html]

Energy (DOE) State Contacts
[http://www.eere.energy.gov/state_energy_program/seo_contacts.cfm]

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant Regional Office
[http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/regional.htm]

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[1] This list was compiled by CRS from executive department and agency websites.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) State Offices and Agencies
[http://www.fema.gov/about/contact/statedr.shtm]

Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration on Children and Families:
State Contacts
[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/acf_contact_us.html#state]

Homeland Security (DHS) State Contacts and Grant Award Information
[http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm]

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) State/Local Offices
[http://www.hud.gov/localoffices.cfm]

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEA) State Councils
[http://www.neh.gov/whoweare/statecouncils.html]

Office of Justice Programs (OJP) State Administering Agencies
[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/]

Labor (DOL)Education and Training Administration, State and Regional Contacts
[http://www.doleta.gov/regions/statecontacts/]

Small Business Administration
[http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html]

Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Regional Offices
[http://www.fta.dot.gov/regional_offices.html]

Veterans Affairs State/Territory Offices
[http://www.va.gov/statedva.htm]

Related Federal Sources

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

To better develop a grant proposal, search a department or agency's homepage to learn more about its programs and objectives. The site **USA.gov** [http://www.usa.gov] also includes

- **Government Benefits, Grants and Financial Aid** for citizens [http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Benefits.shtml];

- **Government-to-Government** for state and local governments [http://www.usa.gov/Government/State_Local/Grants.shtml]. Covers grants management, federal assistance programs, resources

about acquisition and procurement, financial management, and taxes;

- **Grants, Loans, and Other Assistance** for nonprofit organizations [http://www.usa.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml]. Links to federal department and agency information and services, fundraising and outreach, grants, loans and other assistance, laws and regulations, management and operations, registration and licensing, and taxes;

- **Information by Topic** for business financial assistance [http://www.usa.gov/Business/Business_Gateway.shtml]. Useful sites for small business, government contractors, and foreign business in the United States.

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Office of the President)
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/centers.html]

The Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor have programs to serve Americans in need for which faith-based and community organizations may apply. Two publications can be of help:

- *Guidance to Faith-Based and Community Organizations on Partnering with the Federal Government* [http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance_document_01-06.pdf]; and

- *Federal Funds for Organizations That Help Those in Need* [http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/grants-catalog-05-2006.pdf]. Describes some 170 federal programs, many of which can be applied for directly. Some, however, are "formula grants" made available to states and local governments, which in turn award funds to grassroots and local organizations. For those, grant seekers must contact local and state agencies responsible for managing the programs.

Homeland Security State Contacts & Grants Award Information
 (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)
[http://www.dhs.gov/xgovt/grants/index.shtm]

Information on federal homeland security and public safety grants. Includes Urban Area Security Initiative Grant Program (UASI), Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), and Assistance to Firefighters [http://www.firegrantsupport.com/].

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

Search current year for updates and notices affecting federal assistance programs: enter specific CFDA program number, or subject/keyword AND CFDA.

A weekly compilation of notices affecting CFDA programs, *Federal Funding Report*, is compiled at [http://www.house.gov/ffr/federal_funding_reports.shtml] by the U.S. House of Representatives. The summary consists of three parts: (1) *Federal Register* Summary, (2) Early Warning Grants Report, and (3) Disaster Loan Applications.

Grants Management Website (U.S. Office of Management and Budget)
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html]

OMB establishes government-wide grants management policies and guidelines through circulars and common rules. OMB Circulars are cited in CFDA program descriptions.

Private, Corporate, and Additional Funding Sources

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

Information gateway to the grant seeking process, private funding sources (including national, state, community, and corporate foundations), guidelines on writing a grants proposal, addresses of libraries in every state with grants reference collections, and links to other useful Internet websites. 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. Free information on the website includes:

- Guide to Funding Research
  [http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/gfr/index.html]

- Foundation Finder
  [http://lnp.foundationcenter.org/finder.html] Search for information about more than 70,000 private and community foundations.

- Proposal Writing Short Course
  [http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html] Free tutorial on developing a good grant proposal; also in Spanish, French, and other languages.

- Foundation Center Cooperating Collections
  [http://foundationcenter.org/collections/]   Libraries in every state providing free funding information for grant seekers.

Community Foundations Locator (Council on Foundations)
[http://www.cof.org/Locator/index.cfm?crumb=2]

Community foundations are often particularly interested in local projects and maintain diverse grants programs.

Funding Sources (Grantsmanship Center)
[http://tgci.com/funding.shtml]

The website provides listings by state of top grantmaking, community, and corporate foundations that grant seekers might consider in identifying likely sources of private foundation funding.

Grants and Related Resources (Michigan State University Libraries)
[http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/index.htm]

Government and private grants resources, primarily Web, by subject or group categories, updated frequently. Includes listings for nonprofits, individuals, and businesses:

- Grants for Nonprofits
  [http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/2sgalpha.htm]

- Grants for Individuals
  [http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3subject.htm]

- Funding for Business and Economic Development
  [http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/2biz.htm]

Grant Proposal Writing Websites

A number of Internet websites provide guidance, tips, and sample proposals. Discussed in the sections above are the Foundation Center's Proposal Writing Short Course [http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html]; and, for federal grants application, the CFDA website Developing and Writing Grant Proposals [http://12.46.245.173/pls/portal30/CATALOG.GRANT_PROPOSAL_DYN.show]. Constituents may also request from congressional offices CRS Report RL32159, *How to Develop and Write a Grant Proposal*, by Merete F. Gerli, which discusses standard content and formats. Additional websites that may be useful include the following:

All About Grants Tutorials (National Institutes of Health; English and Spanish)
    [http://www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/default.htm]
    Grant Writing Tips Sheet [http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant_tips.htm]

Common Grant Application (National Network of Grantmakers)
    [http://www.nng.org/cga.html]

EPA Purdue University Grant-Writing Tutorial (Environmental Protection Agency)
    [http://www.purdue.edu/envirosoft/grants/src/msieopen.htm]

Grant-writing Tools for Non-Profit Organizations (Non-Profit Guides)
    [http://www.npguides.org/]
    Sample proposals: [http://www.npguides.org/guide/sample_proposals.htm]

Grants and Grant Proposal Writing (St. Louis University)
   [http://eweb.slu.edu/papers2/grant01v32e.pdf]

Proposal Writing Short Course (Foundation Center; English and Spanish)
   [http://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html]
   Where can I find examples of grant proposals?
   [http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/faqs/html/propsample.html]

Proposal Writing Web Sites (University of Wisconsin)
   [http://grants.library.wisc.edu/organizations/proposalwebsites.html]

Sample Proposals (SchoolGrants.org)
   [http://www.k12grants.org/samples/]

Selected Proposal Writing Websites (University of Pittsburgh)
   [http://www.pitt.edu/~offres/proposal/propwriting/websites.html]

Tips on Writing a Grant Proposal (Environmental Protection Agency)
   [http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm]

What Reviewers Look For (College of William and Mary)
   [http://www.wm.edu/grants/PROP/reviewers.htm]

Writing a Successful Grant Proposal (Minnesota Council on Foundations)
   [http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm]