



HARRY REID, U.S. SENATOR FOR NEVADA

GRANT SPOTLIGHT



All across Nevada, businesses, non-profit organizations, and local governments are working to improve our communities. It is important that these projects utilize every funding opportunity available. Federal and private grants are one way to meet those needs. Here are some resources for potential funding for your project.

Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance

Federal grants are intended to support projects that serve the state, community, and local needs and are not benefits or entitlements to individuals; none are available for personal financial assistance. All federal assistance comes with prerequisites and obligations that must be carefully understood and met. As you consider whether to seek federal assistance for your project, keep the following in mind:

- **Research.** The grant process can be extensive and, oftentimes, there is a short window from when grants are announced to when proposals need to be submitted. By doing research ahead of time, you will be better prepared when the time comes to apply. Consider the following questions when doing research:
 - Are there already state programs in place that could fund the project?
 - Who will benefit from the project and how many people are going to be affected?
 - What does the benefit/cost ratio look like?
 - How much can your organization contribute in matching funds?
- **Purpose.** Grant programs are authorized by Congress for very specific purposes and fund organizations whose projects can fulfill those particular needs.
- **Competitive.** Grant programs typically have more applicants than funds available which makes competition between organizations high. As a result, many strong applications fail to receive funding.
- **Provisional.** ALL requirements outlined in the grant program regarding eligibility criteria, grantee obligations, and reporting requirements must be strictly adhered to in order to receive funding.

Prepare to Apply

Before you apply for federal grants, you will first need to register at **Grants.gov**. This website guides grant seekers in obtaining a Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number and registering with Central Contractor Registration (CCR). **Grants.gov** has useful tutorials and checklists to help guide you through this process, which can take several weeks to complete, so be sure to plan your application strategy accordingly.



Quick Tip!

Grants.gov features an email notification service that provides updates to new federal grant opportunities. New grant postings from **Grants.gov** will be sent directly to your email mailbox, eliminating the need to continuously check the website for updates.

To sign up for the service, follow these steps:

- From the homepage on **Grants.gov**, click on Find Grant Opportunities
- At the bottom of the page, click on Subscriptions
- You will be presented with the options to receive:
 - All Grant Notices
 - Notices Based on Advanced Criteria
 - Notices Based on Funding Opportunity Number
- Select the choice that best fits your needs, enter your email address, and follow the on screen instructions to complete your subscription.

You will begin to receive notifications daily. You can add to your email subscriptions or unsubscribe at any time.

How To...

- **Search for programs.** The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), available online at cfda.gov, is a database of all federal financial and nonfinancial assistance programs. After finding a program, visit the administering agency's website for program and application details.
- **Check current federal opportunities.** Federal grants are listed on Grants.gov and applications can be submitted online (links and instructions provided on the website).
- **Search foundations for project funding.** Grantmaking foundations are established with the purpose of providing funds to projects whose areas are aligned with their own. They can offer alternative or supplemental funding possibilities to federal grants and their funding can also be used for federal grants that have matching requirements. However, like federal grants, competition for foundation funds is great and doing thorough research will help your efforts in obtaining funds. Use the Foundation Center website, foundationcenter.org, or Foundation Center Cooperating Collections in libraries to identify national, state, and community foundations whose priorities and goals match your own.
- **Learn how to write grant proposals.** The CFDA's Writing Grant Proposals provides a wealth of information on how to write a strong application and is available online. There is also an online Foundation Center Proposal Writing Short Course available on their website. Some applicants choose to employ professional grant writers; however, federal grant applications may also be properly and successfully prepared directly by the applicant. Keep in mind the following suggestions when preparing a proposal:
 - Allow sufficient time to prepare a thoroughly documented proposal, well before the application deadline. If possible, have someone outside the organization critique the proposal prior to submission.
 - Follow the instructions given in the application form or in other material provided by the grantors, and answer questions as asked.
 - See that the proposal is concise and avoids jargon. Strive to make the proposal interesting; reviewing panels have limited time to devote to any single proposal. Whenever possible, match your proposal style to the grantor's style.

Five Myths About Grants

Myth 1: Anyone can get a grant.

Fact: Not everyone is eligible for grants. Typically, most recipients are state and local government agencies, education and community organizations, non-profits, federally-recognized tribes, and public safety agencies like hospitals, police, and fire departments.

Myth 2: Grants are "Free Money."

Fact: Grants are intended for specific purposes and are accompanied by strict requirements set by the grantor. There is a lot of work that goes into researching and applying for grants and, oftentimes, it is a full-time job.

Myth 3: This grant will save our organization.

Fact: It is important to look for multiple sources of funding. Federal and state government agencies do not provide grants for starting a business, paying off debt, or covering operating expenses. Federal grants rarely cover all the costs of a project and many require non-federal matching funds. An organization should demonstrate its financial sustainability and showcase its ability to be self-sufficient once the granting period ends.

Myth 4: Grants are awarded to those applicants with the greatest needs.

Fact: Grants are awarded to applicants that successfully demonstrate the ability to deliver services and meet the grantor's goals. When preparing your proposal, focus on your strengths and abilities, instead of your needs.

Myth 5: Senator Reid can help me draft my proposal.

Fact: My office is happy to help guide you to appropriate funding sources and to answer any questions you may have, but cannot participate in the drafting of a proposal.

For more information about grants or if you would like to receive my grants e-newsletter, please visit and sign up on my website at reid.senate.gov/services/grants.cfm or contact my grants team in my Reno or Las Vegas offices.

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