

GRANT WRITING SCAVENGER HUNT!

Let's search, discover, and uncover funding opportunities to fuel our mission!

SEARCH

DISCOVER

FUND

1 FIND A LOCAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

Task:

Search for a local community foundation that offers grants in your area. Provide the name of the foundation and one grant opportunity they currently have available.



Your Find: _____

2 IDENTIFY A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT GRANT:

Task:

Find a government grant program at the national level that supports nonprofits. Provide the name of the program, eligibility criteria, and funding amount available.



Your Find: _____

3 EXPLORE A CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM:

Task:

Locate a corporate philanthropy program that provides grants to nonprofits. Identify the corporation, describe their funding priorities, and list one example of a recent grant recipient.



Your Find: _____

4 SEARCH FOR A GRANT DATABASE:

Task:

Explore a grant database or directory (e.g., Foundation Directory Online, Grants.gov). Provide the name of the database, a brief description of its features, and one grant opportunity listed.



Your Find: _____

5 FIND A GRANT WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS AREA:

Task:

Search for a grant that aligns with your nonprofit's mission or focus area (e.g., education, health, environment). Provide the name of the grant, funding organization, and a brief summary of the grant's objectives.



Your Find: _____

6 DISCOVER A GRANT FOR CAPACITY BUILDING:

Task:

Locate a grant specifically aimed at supporting capacity-building activities for nonprofits. Describe the grant program, eligibility requirements, and how it could benefit your organization.



Your Find: _____

7 LOCATE AN EMERGENCY GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

Task:

Find a grant opportunity that supports nonprofits during emergencies or disaster relief efforts. Provide details about the grant program, funding priorities, and application deadlines.



Your Find: _____

8 IDENTIFY A GRANT FOR INNOVATION OR TECHNOLOGY:

Task:

Search for a grant that funds innovative projects or technology upgrades for nonprofits. Name the grant program, funding amount available, and explain how it could enhance your organization's operations.



Your Find: _____

9 FIND A SMALL GRANT FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES:

Task:

Identify a small grant opportunity tailored for local nonprofit initiatives or community projects. Specify the grant's focus area, eligibility criteria, and the maximum funding amount available.



Your Find: _____

10 EXPLORE A GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR STARTUPS OR NEW PROJECTS:

Task:

Locate a grant designed to support startups or new projects within nonprofits. Provide details about the grant program, application requirements, and any support offered for project development.



Your Find: _____

**GREAT FUNDING STARTS
WITH A GREAT SEARCH!**

MISSION COMPLETE!

Share your discoveries. The best opportunities are found by those who know where to look!

YOU DID IT!

Are You Grant Ready?

A quick readiness questionnaire for nonprofits, businesses, and community-based organizations

How to Score: For each question, mark YES if the answer is true right now. Each YES = 1 point. Add your total at the end to see where your organization stands today.

Trainer Note: This is not a pass/fail test. It is a readiness check to help you identify what needs to be strengthened before pursuing grant funding.

Why This Matters

Grant writing starts before the application. Funders want to see that your organization has the structure, systems, documentation, and capacity to responsibly receive and manage funding.

Use this tool honestly. The goal is to identify where you are today and what needs to be strengthened next.

Grant Readiness Questionnaire

#	Readiness Area	Question	YES	NO
1	Legal Foundation A grant-ready organization is legally formed and able to prove its status. Funders want to know the organization is real, active, and eligible to receive funds.	Is your business or nonprofit legally established and active?	☐	☐
2	Mission & Purpose Your mission explains why your organization exists and who it serves. A clear purpose helps funders quickly see how your work aligns with their priorities.	Do you have a clear mission and purpose?	☐	☐
3	Board or Governing Body A board, advisory group, or governing body provides accountability, leadership, and oversight. Funders often look for shared decision-making, not just one person carrying everything alone.	Do you have an active board, advisory group, or governing body?	☐	☐

#	Readiness Area	Question	YES	NO
4	Leadership & Structure Strong organizations have clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Funders need confidence that someone can lead the work and manage the moving parts.	Do you have organizational leadership and structure?	☐	☐
5	Financial Systems Financial systems help you track money coming in, money going out, and how funds are used. This may include accounting software, bank records, receipts, invoices, payroll records, and financial oversight.	Do you have appropriate financial systems in place?	☐	☐
6	Budget Readiness A budget shows funders that you understand the true cost of your work. It should connect directly to your program, staffing, supplies, activities, and expected outcomes.	Do you have an organizational budget or program budget?	☐	☐

Quick Reflection

Which readiness area is strongest right now?

Which area needs the most attention before applying for funding?

**STRONG
FOUNDATION.
STRONGER FUTURE.
GREATER IMPACT.**

Grant Readiness Questionnaire Continued

#	Readiness Area	Question	YES	NO
7	Policies & Procedures Policies and procedures create consistency, safety, and accountability. They also help funders know your organization has rules for how work is done and how decisions are made.	Do you have basic policies and procedures?	☐	☐
8	Program Proof Funders want to understand what your organization actually does, not just what you hope to do. You should be able to describe your services, activities, participants, and results in a simple way.	Can you demonstrate what your organization actually does?	☐	☐
9	Data, Outcomes & CQI Grant-ready organizations track services, outcomes, and impact through a simple data reporting system. This may include spreadsheets, dashboards, client counts, surveys, progress reports, or a CQI process to review and improve results.	Do you track services, outcomes, impact, and improvement data?	☐	☐
10	Grant Management Capacity Receiving a grant is not just about spending money; it is about managing money well. You need the people, time, systems, and discipline to follow rules, track expenses, and complete reports.	Do you have the capacity to manage grant funds responsibly?	☐	☐
11	Required Documents Many funders request documents before they ever review your full proposal. Having these ready saves time and helps you avoid missing deadlines.	Do you have the documentation funders may request?	☐	☐
12	Submission Discipline A strong application follows every instruction, deadline, attachment rule, and formatting requirement. Grant writing is part storytelling and part compliance.	Are you prepared to read, follow, review, and submit grant applications correctly?	☐	☐

Add Up Your Score

Total YES Points	_____ / 12
0-3 Not Grant Ready Yet	Build the foundation first. Focus on legal status, leadership, budgets, policies, and documentation before spending major time on applications.
4-6 Developing Readiness	You have some pieces in place, but your systems need strengthening. Choose 2-3 priority areas to improve before pursuing larger grants.
7-9 Almost Grant Ready	You are moving in the right direction. Tighten your data, financial tracking, required documents, and proposal review process.
10-12 Grant Ready	You have a strong foundation. Begin pursuing grants that clearly align with your mission, capacity, program model, and funding needs.

My Top 3 Grant Readiness Priorities	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____

"Before you ask for the money, make sure you are ready to manage the money."

GRANT SEARCH RESOURCE GUIDE

Where to Look for Local, Federal, Foundation, Corporate & Business Funding

START WITH FIT — NOT JUST MONEY.

Use these sites to search, compare eligibility, study funder priorities, and build a grant pipeline that actually fits your mission or business.

1

FEDERAL & NATIONAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS

The official starting point for federal opportunities.

Grants.gov

The primary federal portal for finding and applying for competitive grant opportunities from U.S. government agencies.

Best for: Nonprofits, governments, schools, universities, tribes, and eligible organizations.

www.grants.gov • Free official source

SAM.gov Assistance Listings

Search the federal government's authoritative catalog of assistance programs, including grants, loans, scholarships, and other forms of federal assistance.

Best for: Organizations researching which federal programs may fit before a specific NOFO is released.

sam.gov/content/assistance-listings

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Use SBA to identify specialized grant programs, research/innovation opportunities, export support, manufacturing programs, and entrepreneurship resources.

Best for: Small businesses, nonprofits supporting entrepreneurs, researchers, manufacturers, and exporters.

www.sba.gov/loans/additional-funding-opportunities/grants

- Most ordinary startups will not qualify for a general SBA startup grant

USDA Rural Development

A strong source for programs supporting rural economic development, community facilities, utilities, housing, and rural business development.

Best for: Rural nonprofits, public entities, cooperatives, communities, and certain specialized business projects.

www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services

SEARCH SMART: Federal Grants

- Search by mission keywords, population served, location, and program type — not only by your organization name.
- Read eligibility before writing. A great idea cannot overcome being an ineligible applicant.

Candid / Foundation Directory

A major nonprofit and foundation research platform for identifying funders, researching grant history, and finding requests for proposals.

Best for: Nonprofits seeking private foundation, family foundation, corporate foundation, and philanthropic funding.

candid.org • Some advanced features require paid access; many libraries provide access

North Carolina Community Foundation (NCCF)

Statewide community foundation with local affiliate foundations, giving circles, and application-based grant programs across North Carolina.

Best for: North Carolina nonprofits, local governments, schools, and eligible community organizations.

www.nccommunityfoundation.org/nonprofits/community-grantmaking • Search by county

Triangle Community Foundation

A regional foundation serving the Triangle, with competitive grant opportunities for nonprofits and community impact initiatives.

Best for: Organizations serving Wake, Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties and other eligible Triangle-area programs.

trianglecf.org/apply/grants-for-nonprofits

Walmart Spark Good Local Grants

Local Walmart, Sam's Club, and distribution facilities offer community grants to eligible local organizations through Spark Good.

Best for: Local nonprofits, schools, governments, and eligible faith-based community programs.

www.walmart.org/how-we-give/open-applications • Local grants currently range from \$250–\$5,000

Bank of America Charitable Foundation

Competitive charitable grant cycles focused on areas such as basic needs, income creation, stable housing, and empowered communities.

Best for: Eligible 501(c)(3) organizations serving Bank of America markets.

about.bankofamerica.com/en/making-an-impact/grant-funding-for-nonprofits-sponsorship-programs

Truist Foundation

Supports nonprofit work tied to economic mobility, career pathways, small business support, and community needs across Truist markets.

Best for: Eligible nonprofits in communities served by Truist.

www.truist.com/Purpose/truist-foundation/grant-application

QUICK TIP: Search local banks, hospitals, utilities, grocery chains, insurers, manufacturers, and major employers for Community Impact, Foundation, Giving, Sponsorship, or Grants pages.

Your Local Community Foundation

Search “[your city/county] community foundation grants.” Community foundations often manage donor funds, giving circles, scholarships, and local competitive grant cycles.

City & County Government

Check local government websites for human services, housing, youth, arts, public safety, health, neighborhood improvement, and community development funding.

Local United Way

Many United Way affiliates offer community investment, capacity-building, or special initiative funding. Search the affiliate serving your county or region.

Local Hospitals & Health Systems

Hospitals and health systems may offer community benefit grants tied to health needs assessments, prevention, access to care, behavioral health, food insecurity, and social drivers of health.

Local Banks & Credit Unions

Community banks and credit unions often have charitable giving, sponsorship, or small-grant programs that may not appear on national grant databases.

Chambers & Economic Development Organizations

Business competitions, pitch grants, facade improvement funds, entrepreneurship programs, and local economic-development incentives may be available through chambers, municipalities, and development authorities.

Start with SBA

Use SBA to identify specialized federal programs, research and development opportunities, exporting support, manufacturing initiatives, and local Small Business Development Center resources.

Look for State & Local Competitions

Search state commerce departments, city/county economic development offices, chambers, downtown development groups, accelerators, and pitch competitions.

Search Corporate Small-Business Programs

Major corporations periodically offer grant competitions for small businesses, especially around technology, entrepreneurship, disaster recovery, underserved communities, and local economic development.

Watch Rural Development Programs

Rural-focused programs may support eligible public bodies, nonprofits, cooperatives, intermediaries, or projects that benefit small and emerging rural businesses — even when the individual business is not the direct grantee.

BUILD YOUR SEARCH ROUTINE: Choose 5–10 priority keywords, keep a simple grant tracker, check your top sites monthly, and always verify opportunities on the funder’s official website.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY WORKSHEET

From Opportunity to Action

Use this worksheet every time you find a grant. Slow down, test the fit, organize the requirements, and decide your next move before you begin writing.

1. CAPTURE THE OPPORTUNITY

Grant / Funder Name:

Website / Source:

Deadline:

Amount Available:

Who is eligible?

Geographic restrictions:

Letter of Intent required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Matching funds required? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. RUN THE FIT TEST

Check YES only when you can support the answer with facts, documents, or a clear organizational decision.

Question	YES
Does this grant clearly align with our mission and purpose?	☐
Does it fund work we already do or genuinely plan to do?	☐
Are we eligible based on the published requirements?	☐
Do we have the staff, systems, leadership, and financial capacity to deliver?	☐
Can we complete a competitive application before the deadline?	☐

5 YES — GO!

Strong fit. Move into a deeper review.

3–4 YES — SLOW DOWN

Investigate the gaps before committing.

0–2 YES — LET IT GO

Do not chase money that does not fit.

“Don’t chase the money. Chase the fit.”

3. BREAK DOWN THE GRANT

Know exactly what the funder is asking for before you write.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Organizational overview | ☐ Outcomes / impact |
| ☐ Statement of need / problem | ☐ Evaluation plan |
| ☐ Target population | ☐ Sustainability |
| ☐ Program / project description | ☐ Organizational capacity |
| ☐ Goals & objectives | ☐ Budget & budget narrative |
| ☐ Activities / implementation | ☐ Partnerships / letters of support |

4. GATHER THE DOCUMENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ IRS determination letter / legal status | ☐ Financial statements / audit |
| ☐ W-9 / tax information | ☐ Annual report / program data |
| ☐ Board or governing body list | ☐ Policies & procedures |
| ☐ Organizational budget | ☐ Letters of support / MOUs |
| ☐ Project budget | ☐ Other required attachments |

5. BUILD YOUR GRANT STORY

THE NEED

What problem are we trying to solve?

THE PEOPLE

Who is affected and who will benefit?

THE PLAN

What exactly are we going to do?

THE RESULTS

What will change because of the work?

THE MONEY

What will it cost, and why is the budget reasonable?

MY 30-DAY GRANT ACTION PLAN

Turn today’s training into your next move.

Before you leave, identify what you will do next — and when you will do it.

6. MY NEXT 5 ACTIONS

1	Action:	By:
2	Action:	By:
3	Action:	By:
4	Action:	By:
5	Action:	By:

MY FIRST SEARCH DATE

Date: _____

MY FIRST TARGET GRANT

Funder/Opportunity: _____

READY is not a feeling. READY is having the systems, the story, and the strategy to pursue the right opportunity.

YOUR 10 TO CARRY THE MESSAGE

Build Your Fundraising Circle. Expand Your Impact.



Great fundraising happens when the right people believe in your mission and are willing to help share it, champion it, and invest in it. Your board and advisory team provide leadership. Your 10 Outside Champions expand your reach and open doors.

THE 10 OUTSIDE CHAMPIONS

People Outside of Our Board Who Believe in Our Mission and Help Carry Our Message



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Provides Governance
Sets Direction
Supports & Leads Fundraising Efforts
Makes Major Connections

HOW THEY HELP:

- ✓ Give
- ✓ Invite
- ✓ Introduce
- ✓ Advocate
- ✓ Open Doors



ADVISORY TEAM (AS APPLICABLE)

Provides Expertise
Offers Guidance
Expands Networks
Shares Influence
Strengthens Strategy

HOW THEY HELP:

- ✓ Give
- ✓ Advise
- ✓ Connect
- ✓ Promote
- ✓ Champion



THE POWER OF 10: These 10 people are your messengers, connectors, and door openers. They share your mission with their circles, invite others to get involved, and help create opportunities for support, partnerships, and funding.



5 ACTION STEPS TO BUILD YOUR FUNDRAISING CIRCLE



1 WHO BELIEVES IN OUR MISSION?

List 10 people outside of your board who care about your mission and the work you do.



2 HOW WILL WE ENGAGE THEM?

Schedule a call, coffee, or meeting to share your mission, vision, and impact.



3 HOW CAN THEY HELP?

Ask how they are willing to support—connect, share, give, host, sponsor, or advocate.



4 GIVE THEM THE TOOLS.

Provide key messages, materials, and ways to take action.



5 CELEBRATE & KEEP THEM INFORMED.

Thank them, share impact, and invite them to stay involved.

Content developed by Dr. Jason T. Mahoney.

Generative AI was utilized to support organization, formatting, and presentation.