

# Federal grants: Information, opportunities and helpful hints

*for Nebraska's Third District*



Congressman Adrian Smith

## Message from Adrian Smith

Dear Fellow Nebraskan:

Thanks for taking an interest in the grant process as well as grant funding opportunities. Finding and applying for grants can oftentimes be challenging. That's why I've compiled this booklet to make this process simpler and more successful for you and your organization.

Inside you'll find helpful information on how to write a successful grant application as well as information on key funding sources. I have also included various ways my office can assist you throughout this process.

It is my privilege to serve you in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I hope you will find this informational booklet useful. My staff and I are committed to helping you, so please do not hesitate to contact my office if ever I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress

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*Congressman Smith meets with constituents in a town hall forum at Chadron State College.*

## What are Grants?

Grants are defined as the giving of funds for a specific purpose.

Grant money is generally awarded to state and local government entities, private and public education institutions and other for profit and non-profit organizations. Organizations seeking non-profit tax-exempt status must apply for this status with the Internal Revenue Service. Please visit the link below to obtain additional information on tax-exempt status or to print an exemption application.

<http://www.irs.gov/charities>

### Sources of Grant Money

- Federal program funds
- State program funds
- Corporate funds
- Private foundations
- Individual contributions



## Key Funding Sources

### Where do I look for grant opportunities?

#### 1. Grants.gov

All federal funding sources are announced at <http://Grants.gov>

The Grants.gov program is a federal initiative spanning 900 grant programs from all 26 grant-making agencies with more than \$350 billion in annual awards.

It is a simple, unified, one-stop shop for all those seeking federal grants. Grants.gov announcements reflect opportunities with actual current funding and requests for applications.

### Services provided include:

- Email notifications of updates and new opportunities
- An online tutorial
- Frequently asked questions
- A user guide
- A quick reference guide

### Submitting grant applications to federal agencies

Individual grant solicitations will have particular instructions on the application process. Some grant programs, however, require an electronic submission. In order to perform an electronic submission you will need to register with grants.gov.

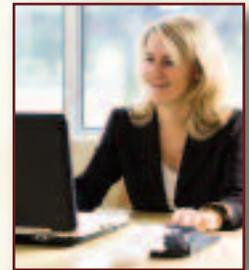
Please allow yourself ample time to complete this process, as the registration process is lengthy.

Grants.gov offers personalized support via email at [Support@Grants.gov](mailto:Support@Grants.gov) or by phone at (800) 518-4726

#### 2. The Catalog of Federal and Domestic Assistance (CFDA) <http://www.cfda.gov>

The Catalog of Federal and Domestic Assistance is a searchable listing of federal grant programs and can be found in both written and web form. CFDA program funding depends upon annual Congressional appropriations. Announcements on Grants.gov reflect opportunities with actual current funding.

- Describes more than 1,500 federal programs and grants
- Provides program information including eligibility requirements and any federal, state and regional program office contacts



- Provides links to both Grants.gov and Fedbizopps.gov

Fedbizopps.gov is a portal for commercial vendors seeking federal markets for their products and services to search, monitor and retrieve opportunities solicited by the entire federal contracting community.

### 3. Nebraska Department of Economic Development

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development's website contains information on Community Block Grants, grants for housing, community facilities and tourism. Visit [www.neded.org](http://www.neded.org) or call (800) 426-6505.

### 4. Grant funds are also available through private foundations and corporate foundations

For more information on these opportunities, please visit my website at <http://adriansmith.house.gov> or call my Grand Island office at (308) 384-3900 and ask to speak to the grants coordinator.

### 5. Federal agency websites

Each federal agency with grant programs has a webpage containing specific information about its grant programs, including eligibility requirements and information about the program's grant application. Please refer to the listing of federal agency links on page 15 of this booklet.

## Tips for a Successful Grant Application

### 1. Know your organization

Understanding your organization's goals and leadership structure is critical to clearly expressing the organization's needs, strengths and abilities to manage any awarded grant funds.

The pursuit of grants is not just about writing; it requires the contributions of many people within your organization. Knowing your organization and those who work in it will simplify the process and help the grant writer know the best individuals to approach for needed information and how to best present a clear, compelling case. Grants strengthen an organization when they fit its mission, priorities and capacity to deliver the promised services. Listed below are some suggested documents and other information to gather.

- Organization's mission statement
- List of staff and any staff or volunteer job descriptions
- A complete list of Board of Directors and their résumés
- A detailed organization budget (include all financial activities)
- Well-planned projects/goals within the organization



### 2. Read the grant application in its entirety

- Confirm grant requirements including eligibility and deadlines
- Check to see if any matching funds are required and what funds are allowable for matching purposes
- Many grants will require your organization to contribute a portion of the resources required. This is known as the "matching requirement." Each grant will have specific rules

about matching. Be sure to read and understand this part of the application: if you cannot meet the matching requirement, your organization will not be able to receive an award. Federal grants cannot be matched with other federal resources.

- Answer the questions asked. It is important in your proofing process you ensure all requested information is provided.

### 3. Plan, then Write

Writing a grant can be a very time consuming process. Many grant applications, however, ask for similar information. Following the format below will help you maximize your planning time.

**Introduction:** The introduction should include two types of information: 1) descriptive information; and 2) information to demonstrate your organization's effectiveness. In other words, tell who your organization is and how it is effective, stable and respected.

**Need Statement:** The need statement explains what concerns your organization and its causes and effects. For example: "8,000 citizens in our county are not connected to the regional sewer system" or "25% of sixth graders are not reading at grade level in our school."

**Objectives:** The objectives section should outline and summarize how the grant award will further the organization's mission service.

**Methods:** The methods section should detail specifically how your organization will use the grant award to achieve the desired results.

**Evaluation Plan:** The evaluation plan should describe how your organization will demonstrate it has used the grant's funds to effectively achieve the desired results.

**Future and other necessary funding:** The section will describe how the organization plans to continue its efforts after the grant ends or how it will cover expenses not covered by the grant.

**Budget:** This section will outline what the costs of this particular initiative are, details about how the award will be spent, and list any other contributions.

**Summary:** The summary is a brief overview of the entire grant proposal. It is generally what the reader sees first in a typical grant proposal, but is best if written last. It is important your answers in each section build off of and complement each other. In other words, your "objectives" section should describe how the grant award will help you address the need you described in your "need statement." This key step can be the difference between a good application and a great one.

### 4. Be concise and always stay within page limits

### 5. Avoid using jargon and acronyms

### 6. Be specific and use examples

### 7. Find someone to read a draft

A fresh set of eyes is always good for pointing out spelling, grammatical and typographical errors. In addition, this process can be useful in ensuring each section is clearly and concisely written.

### 8. Submit your proposal before the deadline

Grant applications and proposals are not accepted late, and agencies make no exceptions.



# Glossary of Common Grant Terms

## BASIC TERMS

**Allowable costs:** Expenditures under a grant project which are specifically permitted (or not specifically prohibited) by law, regulation, or guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, federal accounting standards, or other authoritative sources.

**Application notice:** A notice published in the Federal Register and posted on the agency's website inviting applications for one or more discretionary grant or cooperative agreement competitions, providing basic program and fiscal information on each competition, informing potential applicants when and where they can obtain application packages, and citing the deadline date for a particular competition.

**Assurances:** A listing of a variety of requirements found in different federal laws, regulations, and executive orders, which applicants agree, in writing, to observe as a condition of receiving federal assistance.

**Beneficiary:** In philanthropic terms, the donee or grantee receiving funds from a foundation or corporate giving program is the beneficiary, although society may benefit as well.

**Budget period:** The interval of time your organization will have to use the resources provided by the grant award.

**Certification:** A statement signed by an applicant or grantee as a prerequisite for receiving federal funds, stating the applicant 1) meets or will adhere to certain conditions; and 2) will undertake or not undertake certain actions.

**Deadline date:** The date by which an applicant must submit a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement application to be considered for funding. Under many competitions, applicants must mail their paper applications by midnight on the deadline date. Under other competitions, the agency must receive the application by the deadline date. Application packages and notices published in the Federal Register for a particular competition indicate the deadline date and time for the submission of paper and electronic applications.

**Direct costs:** Direct costs are those items in a grant project which can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective. Examples of direct costs are: compensation of employees for the time devoted to the performance of grant activities; cost of materials acquired, consumed, or expended specifically for the purpose of the grant; equipment and other approved capital expenditures; and travel expenses incurred specifically to carry out the activities of a grant project.

**Donee:** The recipient of a grant, also known as "the grantee" or "the beneficiary."

**Donor:** An individual or organization making a grant or contribution to a donee, also known as "the grantor."

**General / operating support:** A grant made to further the general purpose or work of an organization, rather than for a specific purpose or project; also called an "unrestricted grant" or "basic support."

**Grant award:** The result of a successful grant application, the funds or other resources allocated to a successful applicant.

**Indirect costs:** Costs of an organization incurred for common or joint objectives which cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular grant project or other institutional activity (i.e., electricity, janitorial services).

**In-kind contribution:** A contribution of equipment, supplies, or other tangible resource, as distinguished from money. Some corporate contributors may also donate the use of space or staff time as an in-kind contribution.

**Letter of inquiry / Letter of intent:** A brief letter outlining an organization's activities and its request for funding sent to a prospective donor in order to determine whether to submit a full grant proposal. Many grantmakers prefer to be contacted in this manner before receiving a full proposal.

**Program regulations:** Regulations which implement legislation passed by Congress to authorize a specific grant program; generally include applicant and participant eligibility criteria, nature of activities funded, allowability of certain costs, selection criteria under which applications will be selected for funding, and other relevant information.

**Proposal:** A written application, often accompanied by supporting documents, submitted to a foundation or corporate giving program in requesting a grant. Most foundations and corporations do not use printed application forms but instead require written proposals; others prefer preliminary letters of inquiry prior to a formal proposal. Consult published guidelines.

**RFP:** An acronym for "Request for Proposal." When the government issues a new contract or grant program, it sends RFPs to agencies which might be qualified to participate. The RFP lists project specifications and application procedures. While an increasing number of foundations use RFPs in specific fields, most still prefer to consider proposals initiated by applicants.

**Tax-exempt:** Refers to organizations which do not have to pay taxes, such as federal or state corporate tax or state sales tax. Individuals who make donations to such organizations may be able to deduct these contributions from their income tax.

**501(c)(3):** The section of the tax code defining non-profit, charitable, tax-exempt organizations; 501(c)(3) organizations are further defined as public charities, private operating foundations, and private non-operating foundations.

## OTHER TERMS

**Administrative action:** A post-award administrative request to modify the conditions of the original grant. An administrative action may be monetary or non-monetary and may require prior approval.

**Administrative regulations:** Regulations which implement  
1) guidance from OMB contained in circulars which apply to the administration of all federal grants and cooperative agreements;  
2) Presidential executive orders (where regulation is necessary);  
and 3) legislation which affects all applicants for or recipients of federal grants and cooperative agreements.

**Appropriations legislation:** A law passed by Congress to provide a certain level of funding for a grant program in a given year.

**Assets:** The amount of capital (money, stocks, bonds, real estate, or other resources) controlled by a foundation or corporate giving program. Generally, assets are invested and the resulting income is used to make grants.

**Authorizing legislation:** A law passed by Congress establishing or continuing a grant program.

**Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):** Compilation of all final regulations issued by federal agencies and published annually by the National Archives and Records Administration. The CFR is divided into numbered titles.

**Community foundation:** A 501(c)(3) organization which makes grants for charitable purposes in a specific community or region. The funds available to a community foundation are usually derived from many donors and held in an endowment independently administered; income earned by the endowment is then used to make grants. Although a community foundation may be classified by the IRS as a private foundation, most are public charities and are thus eligible for maximum tax-deductible contributions from the general public.

**Company-sponsored foundation:** A private foundation, also referred to as a corporate foundation, whose assets are derived primarily from the contributions of a for-profit business. While a company-sponsored foundation may maintain close ties with its parent company, it is an independent organization with its own endowment and as such is subject to the same rules and regulations as other private foundations.

**Continuation award:** Additional funding awarded to the same grant for a budget period following the initial budget period of a multi-year discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

**Cooperative venture:** A joint effort between or among two or more grantmakers. Cooperative venture partners may share funding responsibilities or contribute information and technical resources.

**Discretionary grant:** An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, by the federal government to an eligible grantee, usually made on the basis of a competitive review process.

**Expenditure responsibility:** In general, when a private foundation makes a grant to an organization not classified by the IRS as a “public charity,” the foundation is required by law to provide assurances the funds will be used for the intended charitable purposes. Special reports on such grants must be filed with the IRS. Most grantee organizations are public charities and many foundations do not make “expenditure responsibility” grants.

**Federal Register:** A daily compilation of federal proposed and final regulations, legal notices, presidential proclamations and executive orders; federal agency documents having general applicability and legal effect; documents required to be published by acts of Congress; and other federal agency documents of public interest.

**Fiscal sponsorship:** Affiliation with an existing non-profit organization for the purpose of receiving grants. Grantseekers may either apply for federal tax-exempt status or affiliate with a non-profit sponsor.

**Form 990-PF:** The public record information return which all private foundations are required by law to submit annually with the IRS.

**Form 990:** The information return which public charities file with the IRS.

**Independent foundation:** A grantmaking organization usually classified by the IRS as a private foundation. Independent foundations may also be known as family foundations, general purpose foundations, special purpose foundations, or private non-operating foundations.

**Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM):** An announcement published in the Federal Register of proposed new regulations or modifications to existing regulations; the first stage in the process of creating or modifying regulations.

**Office of Management and Budget (OMB):** A branch of the Executive Office of the President. OMB helps the President formulate spending plans; evaluates the effectiveness of agency programs, policies, and procedures; assesses competing funding demands among agencies; and sets funding priorities. OMB ensures agency reports, rules, testimony, and proposed legislation are consistent with the President's budget and Administration policies.

In addition, OMB oversees and coordinates the Administration's procurement, financial management, information management, and regulatory policies. In each of these areas, OMB's role is to help improve administrative management, to develop better performance measures, and to reduce any unnecessary burdens on the public.

**OMB Circulars:** Administrative policy documents issued by OMB which provide instruction to federal agencies on a variety of topics, including the administration of federal grants and cooperative agreements.

**Program-Related Investment (PRI):** A loan or other investment (as distinguished from a grant) made by a foundation to another organization for a project related to the foundation's philanthropic purposes and interests.

**Public charity:** A non-profit organization which qualifies for tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Public charities are the recipients of most foundation and corporate grants. Some public charities also make grants.

**Set-asides:** Funds set aside by a foundation for a specific purpose or project, qualifying distributions toward the foundation's annual payout requirement. Amounts for the project must be paid within five years of the first set-aside.

## Directory of Federal Agencies

### U.S. Department of Agriculture

14th & Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250  
(202) 720-2000  
[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

### U.S. Department of Commerce

15th & Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20230  
(202) 482-2112  
[www.commerce.gov](http://www.commerce.gov)

### U.S. Department of Defense

1400 Defense Pentagon, Room IE757, Washington, D.C. 20301  
(703) 428-0711  
[www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

### U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-0498  
(800) USA-LEARN  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

### U.S. Department of Energy

1000 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20585  
(800) DIAL-DOE • (202) 586-5000  
[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20201  
(877) 696-6775 • (202) 619-0257  
[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

451 7th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20410  
(202) 708-1112 • (202) 708-1455 - TTY  
[www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

Washington, D.C. 20528  
(202) 282-8000  
[www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov)

### **U.S. Department of the Interior**

1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240  
(202) 208-3100  
[www.interior.gov](http://www.interior.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Justice**

950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001  
(202) 514-2000  
[www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Labor**

200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20210  
(866) 4-USA-DOL • (877) 889-5627 - TTY  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Transportation**

400 7th Street, SW, Washington, D.C. 20590  
(202) 366-4000 • (800) 877-8339 - TTY  
[www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov)

### **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20420  
(800) 827-1000 • (800) 829-4833 - TDD  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

*This is not an exhaustive list. Each of these agencies has several sub-agencies which offer grant opportunities.*

## **Faith-Based Offices in Federal Agencies**

### **White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives**

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20500  
(202) 456-6708 • (202) 456-6213 - TTY  
[www.fbci.gov](http://www.fbci.gov)

### **Health and Human Services, The Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20201  
(202) 619-0257 • (877) 696-6775  
[www.hhs.gov/fbci](http://www.hhs.gov/fbci)

### **Housing and Urban Development Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20410  
(202) 708-1112 • (202) 708-1455 - TTY  
[www.hud.gov/offices/fbci](http://www.hud.gov/offices/fbci)

### **Department of Justice Task Force for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives**

Office of Justice Programs  
Office for Civil Rights  
810 7th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20531  
(202)307-0690 • (202) 307-2027 - TDD/TTY  
[www.usdoj.gov/fbci](http://www.usdoj.gov/fbci)

**Department of Education Center for Faith-Based  
and Community Initiatives**

U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20202  
(800) USA-LEARN  
[www.ed.gov/faithandcommunity](http://www.ed.gov/faithandcommunity)

## How Can Congressman Adrian Smith Help?

**1. Providing staff to assist organizations in the Third District in pursuit of grant funding**

Staff can assist with identifying funding opportunities, understanding grant requirements and other services.

**2. Providing letters of support for organizations applying for grants**

Please write a letter to my Grand Island office summarizing your project or proposal and request a letter of support.

**3. Maintaining a grants section on my website containing information on the grants process**

Please visit <http://adriansmith.house.gov>.

**4. Maintaining an e-newsletter regarding Congressman Smith's work in Washington and the Third District.**

Please visit <http://adriansmith.house.gov> to sign up to receive the e-newsletter.



*Entrepreneur James Marshall, of Arthur, with Congressman Smith.*

## Contact Congressman Adrian Smith

**Washington D.C. Office**  
503 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6435

**Scottsbluff Office**  
416 Valley View Drive, Suite 600  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 633-6333

**Grand Island Office**  
1811 West Second Street, Suite 105  
Grand Island, NE 68803  
(308) 384-3900

<http://adriansmith.house.gov>



*Congressman Smith visits Chappell's Farmers Elevator Company during wheat harvest.*