



# GRANT RESOURCE GUIDE

**Congressman Bill Foster (IL-11)**

This Grant Resource Guide provides an overview of federal grants, tips for the application process, and information on how our office can help you access the funding made available by Congress.

# GRANT RESOURCE GUIDE

## Friends,

Thank you for the work you do to serve our community. The 11th District is filled with passionate, civic-minded individuals and organizations who are committed to improving the lives of their communities, friends, and neighbors. Bringing home federal funding that benefits our communities is one of my highest priorities in Congress, and I am happy to offer this Grant Resource Guide to help you apply for federal funds to support local projects and initiatives.



Federal grants can feel complex and the process of researching and applying can be difficult and overwhelming. This guide provides an overview of available funding opportunities; where to find future opportunities; tips and best practices for the grant application process; and information on how my office can help. I hope this guide provides the information you need to put together a competitive grant application.

I am committed to making sure that my constituents have the resources and support they need from the federal government. Please always think of my office as a resource and partner in the process of applying for funding from the federal government each year. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bill Foster  
11th Congressional District



# GRANT RESOURCE GUIDE

## Summary

Over the past two years, Congress has passed transformative pieces of legislation that have become law, including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. Together with Congressional appropriations, these represent investments and opportunities for our communities and our future.

This handbook is a guide to some of the funding opportunities that these landmark bills have made possible.

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## Other Resources

- [Grants.gov](#): Searchable by a number of different criteria, this is the most complete list of federal grant opportunities and is updated frequently. Grants.gov also has a [Grants Learning Center](#).
- [Department of Transportation Competitive Grant Funding Matrix](#): Look through program descriptions on the chart to identify programs for which you have relevant projects.
- [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Program Guide](#): Search keywords to identify relevant programs that will open throughout the next five years.
- [Inflation Reduction Act Program Guide](#): Search keywords to identify relevant programs and tax credits.
- [Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations Funding Opportunity Exchange](#): OCED has a number of funding opportunities for clean energy projects through the IRA and IIJA. The page is similar to the DOT funding matrix with grant info.
- [Department of Labor Grants](#): DOL has been working to publish its new and upcoming grant programs which aim to connect, protect, train, support, and empower workers and job seekers.

## What is a federal grant?

- Grants are a form of federal financial assistance to fund ideas and projects that provide public services. They are not benefits or entitlements to individuals and are intended for broader projects serving a community's needs.
- Most federal funding goes to state and local governments, as well as eligible nonprofits.
- Members of Congress can advocate for funding for grant programs through the appropriations process and can write letters of support for organizations that wish to apply for funding.
- Grants are **not for individuals** looking to the government for assistance. Those who need assistance should go to [www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov) or contact my office for more information.

## What types of grants are available?

- **Discretionary grants:** Awarded based on merit and eligibility
- **Mandatory grants:** Awarded to eligible applicants based on the conditions defined in the authorizing statute
- **Formula grants:** A mandatory grant that is awarded based on statistical criteria for specific types of work
- **Block grants:** Programs that provide federal assistance for broadly defined functions like community development, typically for U.S. state or territory governments

## Who is eligible for grants?

Grants will often be made available for specific entities and organizations that mostly fall into the following categories:

- **Government Organizations** (e.g. State, Local, and Tribal Governments)
- **Education Organizations** (e.g. School Districts, Public and Private Institutions of Higher Education)
- **Public Housing Organizations** (e.g. Public Housing Authorities, Indian Housing Authorities)
- **Nonprofit Organizations** (e.g. 501(c)(3)s other than institutions of higher education)
- **For-profit Organizations** (e.g. organizations other than small businesses)

For full eligibility requirements, carefully read the application instructions that are attached to every funding opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).

## Where do I go to look for grant opportunities?

- [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) is the centralized location to find and apply for federal funding opportunities.
- There are **over 1000 grants at any one time** on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Each grant will have details including eligibility requirements, applicable uses and restrictions, the federal agency administering the grant, contact information to learn more about the opportunity, and more.

## Register Your Organization

- Before you apply for a grant, you must register on the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).
  - SAM is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners in support of the contract awards, grants, and electronic payment processes.
  - You will need the authorizing official of the organization to send a notarized letter to SAM and an EIN to complete the registration.
  - Generally, after completing the online registration and sending your notarized letter, it takes up to two weeks to register with SAM, and one business day for updates made in SAM to be reflected in Grants.gov. However, your organization must first have an EIN. If your organization does not have an EIN, you should allow an additional 5 weeks to request and obtain an EIN from the IRS.

## Register with Grants.gov

1. **Click the Register link** in the top-right corner of the Grants.gov banner.
2. Click the **Get Registered Now** button on the Register page.
3. Complete the **Contact Information and Account Details** sections. All fields with a red asterisk (\*) are required.
  - (a) When entering an email address, please keep in mind that all correspondence with Grants.gov will be sent to that email address.
4. Select whether to subscribe or unsubscribe from Grants.gov communications. The Alerts are important messages about time-sensitive or major system changes. The Newsletter features training, system enhancement updates, and other resources to help the federal grants community.
5. Click the **Continue** button.
6. Click the **Send Temporary Code** button, then access your email account to access the temporary code.
7. Enter the temporary code you received in the email from Grants.gov into the Temporary Code field and click the Continue button.
8. Decide if you would like to add a profile to your Grants.gov account or click the Continue button to log in. **You need to add a profile to submit an application.** After registering, review the Workspace Overview page to learn how to apply for a grant.

## Submitting a Grant Application

- Completing a grant application can take time and **should be started as soon as possible**.
- For most federal grants, you will complete and submit your application through Grants.gov's workspace.
- Workspace allows a grant team to simultaneously access and edit different forms within an application.

## Tracking a Grant Application

After an application is submitted, a grant seeker can track the status of their application by using the Grants.gov Tracking Number listed on the confirmation screen or email and entering this number in the appropriate field at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/track-my-application>. There are a range of statuses a grant seeker might see. Here are some of their definitions:

- **Received:** Grants.gov has received the application, but the application is awaiting validation.
- **Validated:** Grants.gov validated the application and it is available for the agency to download.
- **Rejected with Errors:** Grants.gov was unable to process your application and cannot accept the application until you correct the error(s) and resubmit the application. You will receive an email with a list of errors, or you can review them on the Check Application Status page by clicking the "Details" link.

## Tracking a Grant Application cont.

- **Received by Agency:** The agency has confirmed receipt of the application.
- **Agency Tracking Number Assigned:** The agency has assigned an internal tracking number to your application. This is the last status that Grants.gov tracks. Updates beyond this must be checked with the agency directly.
  - **Note:** Not all agencies assign tracking numbers. If you do not see an agency tracking number, this does not mean that the agency did not receive or process your application. The assignment of tracking numbers is based on the policy of a particular agency.
- Once the federal grant-making agency receives the application, you will need to contact the agency point of contact for additional tracking and status information during the application review.
- When you are reviewing the FOA, you should write down the agency contact listed to help you track the status of the application once it is received by the agency and to answer any program-related questions throughout the application process.

## How My Office Can Help

Advocating for federal funding is one of my top priorities in Congress. From helping you find grants to writing letters in support of your applications, my office is here to support you throughout the grant process.

## Grant Search Assistance

Our office can assist grant seekers by helping identify available federal funding sources for a specific organization or project. A grant seeker can meet with a member of my staff to share organization background and detailed information on the type of funding that would benefit their organization or a specific project proposal. My staff can use this information to make recommendations on current funding sources and keep in touch with the organization to share new funding opportunity announcements that the grant seeker should consider exploring.

## Letters of Support

Grant seekers applying for a federal grant that would benefit our communities can request a letter of support from my office to include in their application. The grant seeker or organization must reside in or have a direct benefit to our constituents for us to consider writing a letter of support.

## Assisting with Federal Agencies

In some circumstances, our staff can serve as liaison between grant seekers and federal agencies to help follow up on the grant application. Grant seekers who need assistance communicating with federal agencies or would like a status update on their application can reach out to our office.

**Contact Information**

**Hannah Cook  
Grants Coordinator  
(630) 585-7672  
Hannah.Cook@mail.house.gov**

**Aurora District Office  
2000 W Galena Blvd  
Suite 303  
Aurora, IL 60506**

**Huntley District Office\*  
1187 E Dundee Road  
Suite 101  
Huntley, IL 60142  
\*By appointment only**

**Washington, D.C. Office  
2366 Rayburn House Office  
Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3515**