

# GRANT FUNDING

## General Information

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The City of Rock Hill has a Grants Division made up of staff who work to secure external funding for the City. The Division is primarily responsible for seeking grant opportunities, developing grant applications, and managing grant funding by working collaboratively with City Departments. The City's Grants Division is unable to provide direct grants assistance to community organizations, but has assembled the following information that can be a good starting point for organizations interested in obtaining grant funds.



## SECURING GRANT FUNDING IS A PROCESS OF:

1. Identifying potential funding opportunities
2. Assessing potential funding opportunities for compatibility with your organization's programs and services
3. Developing and submitting an application
4. Maintaining a good relationship with the funder

## BELOW ARE SOME RESOURCES FOR EACH STEP IN THE PROCESS:

01

### IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IS ACCOMPLISHED IN MANY WAYS, INCLUDING:

- Internet searches - be as specific as possible
- Email lists - search online for organizations who support the type of programs and services your agency provides. Visit their web sites and subscribe to their email list.
- Searching on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) - this website provides a searchable listing of federal funding opportunities and allows you to save searches to receive email alerts.
- Paid subscriptions to online grant funding search tools
- Word of mouth and networking with other agencies and groups who have received grant funding in the past

02

### ASSESSING POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMPATIBILITY WITH YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

This is an often overlooked, but very important step in the process. When you find potential opportunities, read through all available guidance, including any Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) or Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Review these sources of information carefully to be sure:

- Your organization is eligible to apply
- The program/service you provide matches up with the funding priorities
- That what you want to use the funding for is an eligible expense
- The timing of the award and the period of performance matches up with your organization's timeline and capabilities
- Your organization is capable of meeting the required outcomes, including reporting, results, and deadlines

**03**

### **DEVELOPING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**

This is a process that includes collecting data about the problem you are trying to solve, how your program or service addresses the problem, past results and expected outcomes and organizing this data in a meaningful way that tells your story to the funder. Be sure to know and follow all specific instructions for developing and submitting an application.

**04**

### **MAINTAINING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FUNDER**

This is an ongoing process. If an award is not received from the funder, you can foster a good relationship by thanking them for the opportunity to apply and requesting feedback on the review of your application so that you may make improvements on future applications. If an award is received, everything you do from that point forward will influence their perception of your organization, so be on time with reporting, be respectful in communications, follow through on what you stated in your application, and communicate challenges and solutions to overcoming those challenges with the funder throughout the grant period.

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## **THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “FREE MONEY.”**

Grants come with many requirements that must be met, based on agreements between the funder and the applicant organization. Some requirements are financial, such as matching funds and other requirements including programmatic elements, specific outcomes and outputs, as well as evaluation and media. Be sure to familiarize yourself with all the requirements for both the application and administration of the grant award to ensure that your organization can meet requirements.

## OTHER TIPS:

If you are just starting out, it's a good idea to start with small, private sources of funding to get familiar with the process and to develop your organization's capacity for grants. These small successes can lead to bigger opportunities in the future, as you demonstrate past successes with implementing grants.



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Training and other resources are available to assist you in implementing these steps and more. Below are free sources:

1. SC State Library offers free grant training periodically. Find out more at their website: <http://guides.statelibrary.sc.gov/grants-research-assistance>



2. [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) has an Online Learning Center with tutorials and webinars on various topics. You can also sign up for their monthly newsletter, which provides tips and updates. If you plan to apply for federal grants, you should visit this site months in advance of a deadline to go ahead and register your organization to be able to apply. There are a few processes involved, including obtaining a Dun & Bradstreet number and registering with [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). These approvals can take weeks or up to a month.

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There are numerous fee-based resources out there as well. A few are:

1. GrantFinder, GrantWatch and other online searchable funding databases
2. The Foundation Center and Guidestar provide information about funding agencies
3. The Chronicle of Philanthropy provides news and helpful information about funding sources



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Often, organizations choose to contract with professional grantwriters until they build their own capacity. An internet search can locate articles and resources to assist in determining if this is a good option for your organization and tips for locating and hiring a grantwriter.

