

**Federal Grants<sup>1</sup>**  
Current as of April 26, 2020

*Because every organization's situation is unique, it is important that readers seek appropriate advice before taking or refraining from taking any action as a result of this document.*

There are several reasons that your organization may want to seek federal grant funds:

- 1) If you're a non-profit or other grant eligible organization, you must engage in a variety of strategies to solicit and secure funds to support operations;
- 2) Federal grant awards tend to be larger, multi-year grant awards to support projects, programs, research, and other activities;
- 3) There are over \$600 billion in routinely allocated federal funds that are announced and posted annually; and
- 4) The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Emergency Security ("CARES") Act allocated a record amount of additional relief funding to Federal agencies which will be awarded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to apply for federal funds, you must register your organization at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), the publicly accessible Federal website where you will find all federal grant opportunities posted. The website allows you to do several things:

- 1) Register to receive grant notifications and alerts,
- 2) Search for current, forecasted or archived grant opportunities,
- 3) Submit applications for Federal funding,
- 4) Manage submitted applications in Workspace,
- 5) Track the status of a submitted application, and
- 6) Access blogs, tutorials and other resources to guide you through the process.

There are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can apply for federal funds. They include:

- 1) Completing a one-time registration process on [www.login.gov](http://www.login.gov)
- 2) Securing a DUNS Number and Unique Entity Identifier
- 3) Registering your organization at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), and
- 4) Logging on to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and creating a profile for your organization.

Completing the registration process does not obligate your organization to apply for Federal funding and registration is not required to conduct a search of grant opportunities. If you need assistance, video tutorials to walk you through the process are available on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and Helpline information is also available on the website.

The benefits of registering now are:

- The application window is narrowing. In a push to get relief funds to the organizations that need them, grant opportunities may have as little as 30 days from the date of posting to due date;

<sup>1</sup> This document was drafted by Kim Richardson of Kimberly Richardson Consulting, LLC in Birmingham, Alabama.

- Completing the registration process early gives you peace of mind. Being registered allows your organization to focus its efforts on developing your competitive application once an aligned opportunity is identified
- The registration process is taking longer than normal due to the high volumes of entities now seeking to register to receive grant funds, and
- The registration is a multi-step process that is conservatively estimated to take several weeks to complete. Starting early is advised.

Strategies you can use to increase your likelihood of success in securing federal funds include:

- Identifying compatible organizations with which you can partner to apply for funding
- Identifying a non-federal source of funding to cover your initial expenses before seeking reimbursement. Most Federal grants are awarded on a reimbursement.
- Simplify the process by having standard components of your grant applications already written (e.g., organization background, program descriptions, sustainability plan, and qualifications of key staff members, etc.)
- Consult with your finance staff and/or financial advisor to determine if it's beneficial to apply for a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate or to accept the 10% de minimis rate
- Purchasing software that will allow you to easily convert documents to PDF
- Completing and saving standard forms which are required for all grant applications for Federal grant funds (e.g., SF-424, SF-424a, etc.)
- Setting-up a folder of commonly requested attachments in PDF form. This includes documents such as the Board of Directors List, your IRS Non-profit Determination Letter, resumes and bio for key staff, and annual financial audits
- You can also reach out to your federally elected representatives to determine their process for securing a letter of support to accompany your application.

Important websites to know as you conduct your search are:

- [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) – the website where all federal grants are posted
- [www.login.gov](http://www.login.gov) – a key site where you will begin your registration process and complete a one-time authorization process.
- [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) – another key site that you must know for completing the registration process, and
- [www.whitehouse.gov/omb](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb) – a website of the Office of Management and Budget where you can access the Uniform Guidance and other important documents that guide the use of federal funds should you receive a grant award.