



*Representing the Lehigh Valley and the Poconos  
in Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District*

## Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance Guide

A step-by-step guide to locating and securing federal funding

### From the Desk of Congressman Mackenzie

REPRESENTING THE LEHIGH VALLEY & THE POCONOS

Thank you for contacting my office regarding funding opportunities that may be available through the federal government. I understand that identifying and applying for grants and federal loans can be a difficult and intimidating task. That's why we've created a Grants and Federal Domestic Assistance Guide to help you navigate the process.

Funding is made available through federal agencies for new and existing projects that address a variety of public needs.

I am hopeful this guide will enable you to locate these resources and more easily obtain funding for the betterment of the Lehigh Valley and the Poconos.

My top priority in Congress is to serve and represent you, and my office is dedicated to helping you navigate this process in any way we can.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us and find out if we can meet your specific needs.

Sincerely,

**Ryan Mackenzie**

Member of Congress, PA-07



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# Where to Begin

Federal funding is a complex, time-consuming process. Success comes down to four steps and starting early.

<p><b>01</b></p> <p>Determine the type of funding your organization may qualify for</p>	<p><b>02</b></p> <p>Search for and identify funding opportunities</p>	<p><b>03</b></p> <p>Develop and submit funding proposals</p>	<p><b>04</b></p> <p>Obtain letters of support</p>
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## KEYS TO A STRONG START

<p><b>Start early, watch every deadline.</b> Finding the right opportunity takes time; a strong application takes more. Stand out from the pool.</p>	<p><b>Use every resource.</b> Lean on colleagues with grant-writing experience and regional organizations that specialize in proposals.</p>
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## We're Here to Help

Because each organization has their own unique set of objectives and goals, grant seekers should lead the research so no opportunity is overlooked, but our staff offer guidance throughout and the tools to build a competitive application.

Visit [mackenzie.house.gov/services/grant-applicants](https://mackenzie.house.gov/services/grant-applicants) for more information.

## Contact Our Offices





<p><b>Washington, D.C.</b></p> <p>121 Cannon House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515</p> <p>(202) 225-6411</p>	<p><b>Lehigh County</b></p> <p>1125 S Cedar Crest Blvd., Suite 109 Allentown, PA 18103</p> <p>(484) 781-6000</p>	<p><b>Carbon &amp; Monroe Counties</b></p> <p>1163 Interchange Rd., Suite C Lehighton, PA 18235</p> <p>(570) 807-0333</p>
<p><b>Northampton County</b></p> <p>2151 Emrick Blvd., Suite 204 Bethlehem, PA 18020</p> <p>(610) 333-1170</p>	<p><b>Downtown Allentown</b></p> <p>840 W Hamilton St., Suite 201 Allentown, PA 18101</p> <p>(484) 781-6932 Services available in Spanish</p>	



# Determining Eligibility

First, identify the type of organization you represent. Local governments and nonprofits rarely qualify for the same opportunities as small business and individuals.

## COMMON ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

 Government	 Public Housing	 Education	 Non-Profit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Governments</li> <li>• Local Governments</li> <li>• Special District Governments</li> <li>• Native American Tribal Governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Housing Authorities</li> <li>• Indian Housing Authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public School Districts</li> <li>• Public &amp; State-Controlled Institutions of Higher Education</li> <li>• Private Institutions of Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status with the IRS</li> <li>• Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status</li> </ul>

Unsure of your eligibility? Check it here: [www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-eligibility](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-eligibility)

## ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Federal grants for individuals are limited. Students, small businesses, and benefit-seekers are often ineligible but other assistance programs exist.

 Students	 Individuals	 Small Business
<p>Usually ineligible for federal grants, but the Department of Revenue offers loan repayment and other educational funding.</p> <p><a href="http://studentaid.gov">studentaid.gov</a></p>	<p>Individuals can submit applications on their own behalf, but will not qualify for grants intended for organizations.</p> <p>For personal assistance or benefits, start with <a href="http://USA.gov">USA.gov</a> and <a href="http://benefits.gov">benefits.gov</a>, contact our offices, or visit <a href="http://mackenzie.house.gov/services/help-federal-agency">mackenzie.house.gov/services/help-federal-agency</a>.</p>	<p>Grants are administered by the Small Business Association (SBA). Explore grant and loan opportunities at:</p> <p><a href="http://SBA.gov">SBA.gov</a></p>

# Finding a Grant

Two free databases hold most federal opportunities and both are updated daily. Funding opportunities can be found online in either the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) at [CFDAA.us](https://www.cfdAA.us) or at [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov). Check often as listings expire and new ones open frequently.



## Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

CFDA is the authoritative source on federal funding for individuals and organizations at all levels, run by the General Services Administration (GSA). This source is completely **free**, with over 2,000 programs and an exhaustive list of non-financial assistance. I recommend this as your first stop.

- **68 Federal Agencies** in seven categories (formula grants, project grants, direct loans, and more)
- **Search** by agency, date, category, keyword - plus an Advanced Search to further narrow results
- **Each listing has extensive information** such as: descriptions, eligibility, deadlines, and contacts
- **Running lists of added and removed programs** for quick review
- A full **guide to writing successful proposals**

Visit [CFDAA.us](https://www.cfdAA.us) for more information



## Grants.gov

This program is managed by the Department of Health and Human Services and **provides over 1,000 programs across all 26 grant-making agencies** with a centralized location to find and apply for federal funding opportunities.

- CFDA describes programs; Grants.gov shows which are **accepting applications now**
- Most agencies require you **apply through this secure site**
- **Register once** to be able to submit unlimited applications

Visit [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) for more information

## State Funding Opportunities

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania administers many grant programs of its own. All programs can be found at [PA.gov/grants](https://www.PA.gov/grants).

## **CAUTION**

Grant Fraud is becoming increasingly common. If you suspect a government scam, file a complaint directly with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [ReportFraud.FTC.gov](https://www.ReportFraud.FTC.gov) or call 1-877-382-4357.

\*Please note: The information above is not exhaustive. Congressman Mackenzie is not affiliated with, nor endorsing, any of these resources.

# Noteworthy Organizations and Programs



## Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

A federal-state partnership for economic growth across Appalachia. Distressed counties may qualify for significant grant support, often with matching funds. ARC prioritizes projects that:

- **Modernize and revitalize** critical infrastructure
- **Expand access** to affordable, reliable broadband and telecommunications
- **Enhance** energy reliability and reduce costs through efficient, sustainable solutions
- **Support** retention, expansion and diversification of businesses leveraging regional assets
- **Promote entrepreneurship** and position the region as an attractive place to live and work
- **Strengthen workforce** development systems for current and future industry needs
- **Build** local leadership capacity and support community-driven economic development

Learn more at [ARC.gov](https://www.arc.gov) or call (202) 844-7700



## FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

Direct financial assistance to fire departments, non-affiliated EMS organizations, and State Fire Training Academies. Since 2001, AFG has funded critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, and training - equipping personnel to recognized standards, improving operational efficiency, and supporting community resilience.

For more information, visit [FEMA.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters](https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/firefighters) or call (866) 274-0960.



## USDA Rural Development (USDA RD) Community Facilities Program

USDA RD runs over 50 assistance programs, including the Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program. This is affording funding for essential facilities in rural areas (no private or commercial ventures). Examples of essential community facilities include:

### Health Care

Hospitals, Medical & Dental Clinics, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living



### Public Facilities

Courthouses, Town Halls, Airport Hangars, Street Improvements



### Community Support

Childcare & Community Centers, Fairgrounds, Transitional Housing



### Public Safety

Fire & Police Stations, Prisons, Vehicles, Public Works Equipment



### Education

Museums, Libraries, Private Schools



### Utilities

Telemedicine and Distance-Learning Equipment



### Local Food Systems

Community Gardens, Food Pantries & Banks, Kitchens, Food Hubs, Greenhouses

Visit [RD.USDA.gov/programs-services/community-facilities](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities) for more information

# The Grant Lifecycle



## PHASE 1

### Pre-Award

Funding Opportunities &  
Application Review

Grant Cycles start with the **Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)**. FOA contains everything needed to assess eligibility and interest.

**Applicants can submit proposals** during this time.

#### Agencies then:

- Carry out an initial screening to ensure the application is complete
- Review and assess applications for substance
- Complete a financial review of the applicant's proposed budget
- Make decisions and announce awards



## PHASE 2

### Award

Award Decisions &  
Notifications

Upon completion of the review process, selected applicants review a Notice of Award (NOA). An NOA is an official, legally binding issuance of an award. Accepting the award obligates an awardee to the grant's full terms and conditions.



## PHASE 3

### Post-Award

Implementation,  
Reporting & Closeout

**Implementation of the grant may begin.** During this phase, awardees should **report progress** to any awarding agency to ensure compliance as requirements and schedules vary by grant. **Review award terms carefully**; monitoring awarded funds keeps the process transparent and further prevents fraud.

**Grant Cycles complete with a closeout.** Submitting final financial, programmatic, and other reports is required within 90 days after the grant award expires. Once the awarding agency confirms the project is complete, the grant is closed out. Keep all records for at least three (3) years after the final expenditure report.

# Submitting an Application

Submit an application once an appropriate grant program and matching application is found. The proposal process is tedious; preparation is everything. I recommend you reach out to the point of contact for any of the funding programs you have selected as they have expertise and information to promote a smooth process.

**Before beginning**, I recommend you reach out to the point of contact for any of the funding programs you have selected as they have expertise and information to promote a smooth process. This information is typically listed on the **CFDA** or **Grants.gov** websites.

## Registering on Grants.gov

Most agencies require submission through **Grants.gov**. This website streamlines the grant application process by offering a centralized portal to register, download applications from all 26 awarding agencies, and apply. I recommend registering as soon as possible because this step may take one (1) to three (3) weeks and signing up for email alerts to stay on top of deadlines and new cycles.

- **Registrations could include:** Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), SAM.gov account and Grants.gov accounts
- **Step-by-Step tutorials** can be found under the “Applicants” tab
- **Allow one (1) to three (3) weeks to register**

Visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for more information

**Obtaining a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** is the first step in the registration process. This unique 12-character ID is how the government tracks federal funds to your organization. **Register at SAM.gov** as soon as possible.

## Writing a Winning Proposal

**A winning proposal is well-prepared, thoughtful, and concise. It will clearly explain the need for the grant, how funds will be used, and what makes the project deserving. Keep it neat, organized, and free of errors.**

- **New to Grant Writing?** Attend a grantsmanship workshop. Local libraries and development corporations may offer additional guidance.
- **Have several people review applications** before submission.
- **Applying through Grants.gov?** Review requirements outlined for each application as they vary between programs.
- **Applying directly through an Agency?** Contact that program’s point of contact as early as possible to learn the required submission method and any information that may help your application.

# Obtaining Letters of Support

Community support is essential and often required. Once you have a proposal summary, line up professional, academic, political, and community backers willing to write on your behalf. Their caliber establishes your credibility, which weighs heavily in review.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN EVERY REQUEST

Submit request for letters of support as early as possible, and include:



Organization Name and Description



Copy of Proposal Summary



Name and Contact Information for head of the granting agency or program



Sample Letter of Support

## Requesting Letter from Congressman Mackenzie

While my office is not directly involved in the selection of federal funding recipients, I am happy to provide letters of support when appropriate. When requesting a letter of support from my office, please provide my staff with a sample letter of support that includes relevant background information for your organization, as well as a concise description of how this funding will benefit your organization and the community as a whole.

**Please submit requests at least two weeks before the application is due.**

### Tight Deadline?

I understand that this is not always possible. My staff and I are sensitive to the pressure and stress that accompanies the grant application process. If you require a letter of support and are closing in on a deadline, please call to notify my staff.

## TRACKING YOUR APPLICATION

If you have submitted your application through **Grants.gov**, you will be able to track its progress through the review process on the website. It is also helpful to reach out to the point of contact listed for the program through which you applied, as they will be able to provide more detailed information about your application.

# Application Checklist

- Determine your eligibility** by identifying the type of organization you represent. Check at [www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-eligibility](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-eligibility).

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- Begin a general search for funding** using [CFDAA.us](http://CFDAA.us) and [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov)

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- Contact the agency** once you find an eligible program to confirm deadlines, qualifications, and understand requirements.

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- Register on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov)**. Allow 1-3 weeks for processing (register as early as you can!).

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- Develop your proposal and request letters of support.**

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- Complete a concise, well-organized application.** Proofread, and confirm it meets all program rules.

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- Submit your application!**

I wish you the best of luck with your applications! If you have any questions regarding the funding process, do not hesitate to contact any of my offices.

**My staff and I stand ready to assist you.**

## Contact Our Offices

### Washington, D.C.

121 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

(202) 225-6411

### Lehigh County

1125 S Cedar Crest Blvd., Suite 109  
Allentown, PA 18103

(484) 781-6000

### Carbon & Monroe Counties

1163 Interchange Rd., Suite C  
Lehighton, PA 18235

(570) 807-0333

### Northampton County

2151 Emrick Blvd., Suite 204  
Bethlehem, PA 18020

(610) 333-1170

### Downtown Allentown

840 W Hamilton St., Suite 201  
Allentown, PA 18101

(484) 781-6932  
Services available in Spanish

Visit [Mackenzie.House.Gov](http://Mackenzie.House.Gov) for more information.

