Economic Development Handbook
ED 101

CHAPTER 7 – Grants

The Cavalier County Job Development Authority first got into the grant writing business in 2001, when we applied for a USDA/Rural Development/Rural Utilities Service grant for computer equipment for the hospital, school and the new learning facility at the Langdon NDSU Research Extension Center. Since then, we have written and received over $1.3 million for projects within our Cavalier County Strategic Plan. Grant programs are a very useful tool for leveraging local resources. Keep in mind the process is time-consuming and detail-oriented, but very rewarding when you achieve success.

-Carol Goodman, Executive Director CCJDA

Researching and Applying For Grants

Federal Grant Sites

Grants.gov

1. Go to http://www.grants.gov
2. Click 'grant opportunities' (on the left hand side in the red area).
3. Click basic search.
4. If you know the funding opportunity number or the CFDA (Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance) number it is much easier to search by one of these – if you don't, use as few words as possible in your keyword search – pick out the most unique word in the grant name – the search will return every opportunity with at least one work in your search – so you may have to dig through the results.

For more detailed information on finding grants using grants.gov, please see the Find & Apply Guide

Federal Grant Making Agencies: This is a list of over twenty agencies that make grants.

Grant Research Sites

Rural Assistance Center (RAC)

1. Go to www.raconline.org
2. Click on 'Funding & Opportunities'
3. Under 'Funding Opportunities' click 'Browse by Topic' or "Browse by State' to see all the grant opportunities in North Dakota.

Rural Assistance Center(RAC) is a great resource when searching for specific grants because they group the funding possibilities into categories by topic/funding area, which is nice when you are looking for funds for a specific project. RAC also seems to update frequently.

North Dakota Grant Sources

There are several grant sources in North Dakota. To see a list of resources please view the North Dakota Department of Commerce's Economic Developer's Toolkit.

Foundation Grants

The Foundation Center has a Directory of Foundation Funders

1. Click on 'Find Funders' toward the top of the page
2. In the FOUNDATION FINDER search box, simply click on your state (ND) and it will bring up a list of all the foundations in North Dakota. Not all of them offer grants, but it will give you a list to start your grant search. The Foundation Center is a good resource to learn about which foundations are located in North Dakota or funded in the state. It is a good website to find foundations; however you may have to do additional research to determine which foundations fund specific types of activities.

Getting Your Organization Grant Ready

General Administration Requirements

To be eligible to apply for a federal or state grant, as well as some foundation grants, your organization must have a DUNS number and register a CCR number. The best way to get your organization set up to receive grants is to follow the Applicant User Guide on Grants.gov. This guide will walk you through several processes step-by-step including obtaining a DUNS number, registering CCR number.   Grants.gov offers an Organization Registration Checklist also.

DUNS number

CCR site

Writing Grants

Federal Grant Tutorial
To view a narrated tutorial on how to complete a federal grant:

1. Go to the APPLICANT RESOURCES page
2. Click on ANIMATED TUTORIALS
3. Click on COMPLETING A GRANTS.GOV APPLICATION

This will open up an Adobe Captivate tutorial—it takes a few minutes to load—where you can watch a short video on how to apply through the electronic process.

General Grant Process

While every grant varies in regulations, the following steps can generally be followed when applying for a grant.

1. Identify the Grant Program
2. Determine if you qualify-- this is usually under ELIGIBLITY
3. Find the MATCH required and matching funds regulations
4. Determine the appropriate applicant
5. Read the Guidance CLOSELY – look for key phrases - pay close attention to scoring criteria
6. Call the Grant officer listed in the contacts and explain your project and ask if it is a fit for the grant program
7. Develop a Grant Budget
8. Write the Narrative according to the Grant Guidelines
9. Obtain supporting documents

10. Determine if grant is subject to **12372 Intergovernmental Clearance (SPOC).** If so, the current contact is Jim Boyd at North Dakota Department of Commerce and he will need a copy of the grant either before or at the same time you submit it to the agency. It is best to call him as soon as you find out that it requires an Intergovernmental Review and he will tell you what his office will need.

    Jim Boyd, ND Department of Commerce, 1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 2,
    P.O. Box 2057 Bismarck, North Dakota 58502-2057
    Telephone: (701) 328-2676 Fax: (701) 328-2308 **jboyd@state.nd.us**

11. Submit electronically—almost all federal grants are now required to be submitted by uploading them on the grants.gov website.

Letters of Interest (LOI)

Some grants will ask for a letter of interest before the grant deadline. Guidelines for letters of interest will vary by agency. Generally, you are asked to indicate interest, estimate the amount you will be applying for, and indicate use of grant funds. In most cases, LOIs are due shortly after the Notices of Funds Available (NOFA) comes out and about 30 days before the grant deadline.

Writing an LOI does not bind you to applying for a grant but if an LOI is required, not writing one bars you from applying. If you think there may even be a chance of applying for the grant, then **ALWAYS** submit the LOI if one is requested.

Letters of Support

Often grants will ask for Letters of Support. Depending on the topic area of the grant, there are several entities in your area you can ask to provide a letter of support. Some of the groups that have provided letters of support to CCJDA in the past include the following:

- Langdon City Commission
- Cavalier County Commission
- Northern Lights Arts Council
- Area Schools
- Maple Manor Care Center
- Cavalier County Memorial Hospital
- Area Business
- Realtors
- Utilities

One tip we recommend to make sure the letters of support are returned in time is to write up an example letter or talking points and ask the entity writing the letter to place it on their own letterhead, make revisions and sign it.

> Writing up a sample for the community letters of support should serve only as a **guideline**, and they should include language of why the grant will be valuable to the community and their organization. The letters should not all sound the same!
>
> -Carol Goodman, Executive Director CCJDA

Managing Grants

Grant Administration

Each grant will have its own requirements for managing the paperwork and reporting on the project. When you receive your grant award documents look for the instructions and expectations for managing the grant. These are usually clearly defined.

Setting up for Grant Management

- Set up your financial system to be able to isolate grant funds. CCJDA has used the class system in QuickBooks to achieve this and it has been very effective
- Our accountants have been very happy with this method
- Set up a binder with tabbed sections
- Set up your bank information with the granting agency so funds can be automatically deposited into your account
- Each grant program will have their preferred process to draw down funds
- Carefully read and then sign the grant documents

> **NOTE**: If your board has not drawn up a resolution allowing you to sign grants on behalf of the organization your board chair will need to sign the documents.
>
> -Carol Goodman, Executive Director CCJDA

Questions to ask Grant Officers

- What is the mechanism for drawing down funds?
- How frequently do I report?
- Are reports narrative, financial, or both?
- What federal forms are used for reporting?
- Will there be an audit?
- Should the grant match/grant breakdown be done by line item or overall budget?
- How long do we have to store records?
- Will there be an onsite visit?
- Can final report be done in house or does the granting agency require you to use a third party?
- Are there any meetings I will be required to attend as a result of the grant?

The grants CCJDA has been awarded are included in the benchmark reporting system.