

Researching Grants

The Basics:

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Researching Grants

This module is divided into three sections, indicated by the tabs at the top:

- **The Basics** provides background information to help you get started.
- **On The Web** points you to places online that can lead you to possible funders for your project.
- **On Foot** describes how to develop relationships and find potential funders by exploring your community.

You can click on any tab at any time.

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Have you ever wondered...

- *What is a foundation?*
- *What is the difference between a private foundation and a public charity?*
- *Is there a difference between the term “non-profit” and “not-for-profit”?*
- *How do I find grants for my project?*

We'll lead you to places where you can find answers to questions like these...

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This module is a guide

We'll walk you through a series of resources that provide unique information and learning opportunities related to locating funding sources (many of them online).

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Foundation Center

[Guide to Funding Research](#)

Here you will find:

- Answers to your initial, basic questions
- A glossary of terms

- A comprehensive view of the field
- Tips for beginning your research
- Information about IRS tax Form 990-PF (something you will need to know!)
- And much more...

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GrantSpace.org

Find opportunities to read, listen, talk, watch and LEARN more...

[Skills](#) related to researching grants such as finding funders, foundation fundraising, fundraising planning and other topics relevant to the non-profit grantseeker.

+ Online classes, live chat discussions, forums and more.

List of [training courses](#) available related to finding funders and fundraising planning.

+ Classes, self-paced e-learning, live webinars and recorded webinars. Many are free.

Answers to your basic and specific [questions](#) about finding grants.

+ The Knowledge Base includes information on topics such as:

- How to find grants for your non-profit.
- Where you can find information on corporate giving.
- What non-profits need to know about IRS tax form 990-PF.

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Chronicle of Philanthropy

Learn about researching grants from a very [broad perspective](#):

Live Discussions and Transcripts

e.g. "How to Avoid Nonprofit Jargon and Why it Matters"

Podcasts

e.g. "Promoting Smart Online Conversations"

News, articles, slideshows

e.g. "A Grant Maker Helps Nonprofits Innovate"

Sponsored Webinars

e.g. "Everything you ever wanted to know about corporate, foundation and government grants"

On The Web

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Researching Grants “On-the-Web”

To find specific funders/grants for *your* VISTA project, search these sites:

- The Foundation Center
- The Grantsmanship Center
- GrantsAlert.com (for education grants)
- Grants.gov (for federal grants)

To help you keep track of the data you find, both online and “on-the-ground,” download and use the attached workbook.

- [Grants Research Workbook \(PDF\)](#)
- [Grants Research Workbook \(Word doc\)](#)

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The Search Process

Use a “3 lens” approach when searching for potential grants. Look for funding that targets:

The topic or focus of your project
education; housing; health services; at-risk youth, etc.

Your specific geographical area
rural Idaho; Northeastern urban center e.g. Boston, etc.

The size/scale of your organization
small non-profit operating in local area; large multi-site or multi-state organization with larger scale of needs, or something in between.

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The Foundation Center

Visit the [Foundation Center](#) or any of its four field offices for extensive information on private foundations, community foundations, grantmaking public charities and corporate giving programs.

- New York, NY – headquarters
- Washington, DC
- Atlanta, GA
- Cleveland, OH
- San Francisco, CA

Libraries at these centers provide a full range of research tools including the “Foundation Finder” and the “Foundation Directory Online”.

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The Foundation Center

There are more than **450 “Cooperating Collections”** – local libraries, community foundations and non-profit information centers located across the U.S. (and even in several countries) which provide a full range of research tools.

Find one near you...

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The Foundation Center: The Foundation Finder

When you enter a geographic location, an alphabetical list of foundation names located in the designated state will appear. Each name is a live link.

When you click on any given foundation name, the following will come up:

- Name, address, email and URL
- Type of grantmaker
- Brief description
- Some financial data

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The Grantsmanship Center

The Grantsmanship Center’s [website](#) contains extensive data about funding sources throughout the U.S. and much of it is available for free.

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The Grantsmanship Center

On this site you'll find detailed information about *local, federal* and even *international* funding sources.

Local sources include:

- Top grantmaking foundations by state
- Community foundations by state
- Corporate giving programs by state
- State government homepages

The Funding Sources tab provides a [large interactive map](#) of the U.S. which allows you to narrow down your search. Let's take a look...

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GrantsAlert.com

This site is specifically geared towards [education grants](#). If your VAD's focus involves education at any level, be sure to check this site out.

You can choose to view grants from foundations, the federal government, corporations, the state and fellowships.

"Our number one goal is to make life easier for those who devote their time to searching for education grants and identifying new funding opportunities for their organizations..."

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Grants.gov

This site is a primary for finding (and applying for) [federal grants](#).

You don't have to register to *find* grants, but if you want to apply, you'll need to register.

Federal grants often focus on poverty – this is a resource that shouldn't be overlooked.

You can sign up (subscribe) to receive notification of new grant opportunity postings.

On Foot

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Researching Grants “On Foot”

Another effective approach for locating potential grants is to look more closely at your local community—your neighborhood and surrounding areas. This means doing some legwork:

- Identify local businesses, faith-based organizations and other non-profits in and around your community which are thriving.
- Check out chain stores, such as Home Depot, Walmart, Target, etc. and local branches of banks.
- Meet your local merchants.

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Researching Grants “On Foot”

Find out who knows who in your community—that means talking to people: first friends and colleagues; then people with whom you do business or come in contact with in your VISTA service.

Find out if they know where or from whom you might receive support for your project—monetary support (small at first) or in-kind goods or services.

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Important Guidelines for Grant Seekers

Have a good idea of what you’re looking for

- Know what kind of support (funds, services, other) your organization needs.
- Know what grants, if any, your organization has received in the past.

Keep in mind, it’s ultimately about relationships

- What you do find potential funders, do your homework—learn who they are, what they do and why, and who they generally support.
- Foster relationships in ALL your contacts with potential funders—even online ones. It will pay off.