

Funding & Grant Resource List

The following is a list of potential funding sources for both entrepreneurial support organizations and the startups themselves. However, be cautioned that priorities change. Programs and funds listed below may eventually be sunset, and new opportunities may rise to take their place. Be sure to visit www.grants.gov to search for current and forecasted funding opportunities from the federal government.

Select Federal & National-Level (U.S.) Programs

- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
 - Provides grants for regional innovation, incubators, and entrepreneurial ecosystem building.
 - Programs: Build to Scale, Tech Hubs, Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance grants.
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
 - I-Corps - Programming established to explore the commercial potential of university-based tech by standardizing entrepreneurial training.
 - Regional Innovation Engines - Highly competitive large-scale grants to create regional tech-driven ecosystems.
- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) & Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)
 - Non-dilutive federal grants for R&D to advance commercialization.
 - While both programs target small business enterprises, STTR requires a partnership with a nonprofit research institution.
 - Agencies include DOC, ED, HHS, DHS, DOT, EPA, NASA, NSF, NIH, DoD, DOE, and USDA.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development
 - Programs: Rural Business Development Grants, Value-Added Producer Grants (for agribusiness).
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
 - Programs: 7(a) loans, microloans, SBA 504 loans, 8(a) HUBZone.
 - Resource Partner Network: Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Women's Business Centers, SCORE mentors.

Select State & Regional

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
 - Federal funding administered by states/localities for infrastructure, facilities, and small business support.
- Federal Regional Commissions such as the Appalachian Regional Commission
 - Federal agency but targets specific geographic regions
- State Economic Development Agencies
 - Often offer seed funds, matching grants, and workforce training support.

Small Startup Cities

- Many states have venture development organizations (e.g., Ohio Third Frontier, Georgia Research Alliance).
- State Rural Development or Innovation Grants
 - Federal resource guide for rural communities can be found at www.rural.gov
 - Many states provide matching funds for incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneur support organizations. Check with your state department of economic development and governor's office.

Foundations & Philanthropy

Many private foundations have geographic limits, specific programs that they support, or are invitation only. Below are some of the more widely recognized foundations that support entrepreneurial development.

- Blackstone Charitable Foundation
 - Has a history of supporting ecosystem development and launching programs such as Blackstone LaunchPad, that foster entrepreneurial skills training.
- Kauffman Foundation
 - Known for entrepreneurship ecosystem grants and research support. Also developed entrepreneurial training programs, such as Kauffman FastTrac.
- Lemelson Foundation
 - Provides funding to advance innovations ecosystems. Just note that they typically do not accept unsolicited proposals but are open to hearing about pioneering activities.
- VentureWell
 - Provides entrepreneurial support and small grants primarily to support startups with academic ties.

Corporate & Private Sector

- Amazon Web Services (AWS) Activate (cloud credits, support for incubators/accelerators).
- Bank & Utility Foundations (Wells Fargo Foundation, Truist Foundation, regional power company foundations).
- Google for Startups (in-kind support, credits, ecosystem partnerships).
- Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub (cloud credits, technical support, mentorship).

Local & University-Based

- Chambers of Commerce / Local Business Councils
 - Small grants, pitch competitions, and revolving loan funds.
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)
 - Facilitate access to capital in low-income communities

Small **Startup** Cities

- Community Foundations
 - Often support workforce, innovation, and economic development initiatives locally.
- University Research Grants & Proof-of-Concept Funds
 - Many universities provide small seed grants or commercialization funds for faculty/student startups.

Specialty & Targeted Funding

- National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) – Supplier diversity funding and contracts.
- Veteran Business Outreach Centers (VBOC) – Grant-linked support for veteran entrepreneurs.
- Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) – Certification and funding access for women entrepreneurs.