

Some agencies make it easy to learn about “[forecasted](#)” grants, or potential funding opportunities. Grant-making agencies, pending budgetary and discretionary spending approvals and federal agency program decisions, often offer previews of their planned funding opportunities. This guide walks you through how to find forecasted grants, open grants, and past grantees as well as questions you might consider asking previous grantees about their experience.

This guide is designed to help you:

- Learn about the grant making process and how agencies make and publicize grants;
- Find past grantees to help you design your project; and
- Prepare for grants that are not yet open.

If you are a legal aid organization and would like individualized technical assistance on a specific grant or funding for your specific practice, reach out to [resourcedesk@nlada.org](mailto:resourcedesk@nlada.org).

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*Read summaries of curated research and FAQs on federal pass-through in [The Justice in Government Project's \(JGP\) Toolkit](#). For technical assistance regarding federal pass through funds contained in the JGP [Grants Matrix](#) contact JGP Director Karen Lash at [klash@american.edu](mailto:klash@american.edu).*

*If you would like individualized technical assistance on a specific grant or funding for your practice, contact NLADA's civil legal services team at [resourcedesk@nlada.org](mailto:resourcedesk@nlada.org). Be sure to sign up for email alerts when open and forecasted grant opportunities that can fund legal services are announced through NLADA's [LegalAidResources.org](http://LegalAidResources.org), which hosts information for over 250 programs that can support civil legal aid.*

## 1. Why should I care about forecasted grants?

Federal grant solicitations are typically open for 30-60 days once posted. You may feel like that's not enough time to identify partners, design a program, and submit a strong application. Ideally, you would start the process well ahead of the date the grant solicitation goes live. You can give yourself a head start by tracking information about forecasted grants.

## 2. How do I find out about forecasted grants?

Forecasted grants can either be found on Grants.gov or on grant-making agency websites. Some agencies, like the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), reliably put forecasted grants on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). To see these forecasted grants, on the Search Grants tab, under the "Opportunity Status" field (left side) check the "Forecasted" option. When you click on a forecasted opportunity, you will be taken to the forecast tab of the "View Grant Opportunity" page. If the opportunity looks like a good fit, reference the estimated synopsis start date and the estimated application due date and mark your calendar. Start planning how you will identify partners and design your program.

Some agencies include forecasted grants information on their website. Others do not consistently make the information available. That said, history often provides some clues. For example, although we did not find forecasting information about the Treasury Department's Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic Grant Program, it has been a reliable and longstanding source of funding for civil legal services, and has been offered [since passage of the Revenue Reform Act of 1998](#).

## 3. What about state-administered federal pass-through funds? Where do I find out when my state will post grant solicitations for those block and formula grants?

Unfortunately, there is no centralized source for this information. When you are searching for federal pass-through funds administered by your state, you'll need to find that information on the website for the state agency that administers a specific grant. Each funding stream has a state administering agency and a state administrator usually selected by the governor. Raising awareness about the importance of legal aid to accomplishing state administrator goals and the allowability of legal aid as a funding partner can be done at any time and ideally well before funding decisions are made in your state.

Helpful tips:

1. See The Justice in Government Project's Grants Matrix [here](#) to find the state administrators for each of the federal pass-through programs that allow spending on civil legal aid.
2. Many of these funding streams also require the state administrator to submit a plan outlining how the state will spend its funds. This and other information in the Grants Matrix can help inform your strategy to educate state administrators about the importance of your work.

## 4. How can I prepare for grants that aren't open yet?

Find out everything you can about the grant. In addition to reading the forecasted information if available, see if there's an earlier grant solicitation. To find a previous year's solicitation, go to the "Search Grants" tab of [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Under the Opportunity Status heading check both "Closed" and "Archived" to cover your bases. Add the [CFDA number](#) if you have it, the agency, and a key search term you know is in the title. Although a new solicitation can always have different priorities and/or new terms, it will help you think about your prospects for the next round.

Relatedly, some agencies conduct webinars for prospective grantees. It is worthwhile to search if prior webinars are still available on the agency's website.

It's also helpful to learn about prior grantees. Some questions to guide your research:

- Have organizations similar to yours been awardees in the past?
- Are there any awardees in your state? Are they already your partners?
- Can you reach out to learn about their experience with the grant?
- Are there organizations in your community that might be prospective partners?
- What can you find out about the successful grantee's program?

5. If I'm interested in grants from federal agencies that do not post forecasted information on Grants.gov, where else can I look for forecasted grant opportunities?

Although Grants.gov encourages agencies to publish their forecasts in Search, currently only one of the agencies most relevant to civil justice communities reliably posts on Grants.gov – HHS. Other agencies relevant to civil justice communities post forecasted information as follows:

**[U.S. Department of Education \(ED\)](#)**

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

[HUD](#) states that they post forecasted opportunities on Grants.gov. However, we have not seen any forecasted grants on Grants.gov. Instead, try looking at the previous year's grant information, [here on HUD](#) or through the Grants.gov search, to see when they were announced – although the fact that a grant got posted in April of a prior year does not necessarily predict when (or if) it will post in the future, but can be a factor in your planning.

**[U.S. Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#)**

**[U.S. Department of Labor \(DOL\)](#)** (see "Upcoming ETA Competitive Funding Opportunities")

**[Community for National and Community Services \(CNCS\)](#)**

6. In addition to finding open grants on Grants.gov, do agencies also post information about their open grants?

Yes, most agencies also have their open grants information on their website. In addition, some agencies post information about their grants not available on Grants.gov, including information about webinars or other guidance materials. Here are links to agencies' grants information pages:

**U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)**

[Food and Nutrition Service](#) (administers domestic nutrition assistance programs)

[Rural Development Community Development Initiative Grants](#)

[Office of Advocacy and Outreach](#)

**[U.S. Dept. of Education \(ED\)](#)**

**U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

[Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

[Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#)

**[U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)**

**[U.S. Dept. of Justice \(DOJ\)](#)**

**[Community for National and Community Services \(CNCS\)](#)**

## 7. How can I find previously awarded grantees?

Often the most direct route to find this information is from the actual awarding agency. You can find previously awarded grantees here:

### [U.S. Dept. of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#)

#### **U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

[Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#)

[Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\)](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

### [U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

#### **U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ)**

[Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\)](#)

#### **DOJ Office for Justice Programs (OJP)**

OJP includes several grant-making program offices that have grants allowing for legal services: Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office for Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

### [U.S. Dept. of Labor \(DOL\)](#)

#### [Community for National and Community Services \(CNCS\)](#)

#### [Reentry-related grants from DOJ, DOL, and ED](#)

Another way to see previously awarded grantees is through [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov). This site is the official source for spending data for the U.S. Government. Its mission is to show the American public what the federal government spends every year and how it spends the money. In what's described as "a continuing effort," USAspending.gov links financial data from hundreds of federal agency sources.

## 8. Any tips on deciphering the federal government's alphabet soup of acronyms?

The federal government has seemingly cornered the market on difficult-to-follow acronyms. Even grant "solicitations" can be called different things by different agencies such as Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Grants.gov has a helpful "[Grant Terminology](#)" page that helps decipher the myriad grant terms and acronyms.