

Grants Work in a Congressional Office

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SUMMARY

Members of Congress frequently receive requests from constituents for information and assistance in obtaining funds for projects. The congressional office should first determine its priorities. Congressional grants staff can be of the greatest assistance to their constituents when they have a thorough understanding of the entire grants process: defining the project, searching for likely funding sources, proposal writing, grant application, review and award procedure, and postaward requirements. A congressional office may on occasion choose to communicate with selected audiences by targeted mailings or sponsoring seminars on federal and private assistance.

One way an office can help is in counseling on proposal writing, which includes demonstrating the need for the proposed project, what methods to be used to accomplish these objectives, the means by which the project will be monitored and evaluated, plans for continuing the project beyond the period covered by the grant, and a detailed budget. If a proposal or serious inquiry is submitted to a congressional office, an assessment of the stated problem should be made. Another approach would be to call the agency contact or to recommend and/or arrange a meeting with agency offices in the district or state. Members are usually informed of awards first, which allows them to have an opportunity to notify recipients of grants.

Each congressional office handles grants requests in its own way, depending upon the overall organization and workload of the office. There may be a full-time grants specialist or several staff members under the supervision of a grants coordinator working solely in the area of grants and projects. In some offices, all grants requests are handled in the district or state office; in others, they are answered by the Washington staff.

An internal grants manual is a valuable tool for grants staff to develop. It can outline office policies and procedures. An office may wish to maintain detailed, cross-referenced files such as agency files, constituent files by county, and tracking records.

With reductions in federal programs, congressional grants specialists may wish to suggest other funding possibilities to their constituents as alternatives and supplements to federal grants.

A bibliography of books useful for grants staff and constituents is included.

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Grants Work in a Congressional Office

Introduction

Members of Congress frequently receive requests from constituents for information and assistance in obtaining funds for projects. Many state and local governments, nonprofit social service and community action organizations, private research groups, small businesses, and individuals approach congressional offices for information on funding, both from the federal government and from the private sector. The congressional office is seen by constituents as a potential source of assistance in:

- providing facts about financial and nonfinancial assistance available through federal programs
- clarifying the intricacies of proposal development, application, and follow-up procedures
- writing letters of support from the Member to the granting agency
- resolving problems that occur when an applicant is unsuccessful in obtaining funds or other assistance
- suggesting other sources for grant assistance in both the private and public sectors

Senate and House offices allocate staff and other resources to grants and projects activities in order to assist these constituents with projects of potential benefit to their districts, cities, or states. The grants person in the congressional office can serve constituents not only as an information resource, but also as a facilitator with agencies and foundations, and, in some cases, even as an advocate. The congressional office should first determine the priorities of its particular office:

- Where do grants requests fall within the operations of the office?
- Should grants officers be located in D.C. and/or the state or district?
- Determine the role of the grants staffer/officer: passive or active advocate?
- Assess volume of incoming grants requests.
- Establish criteria to determine how much attention should be given to each grants request, e.g., number of people who will be affected, visibility of projects, political implications, etc.

Because of cutbacks in federal programs, today many projects are made possible only through a combination of funding sources -- federal, state, and local government, and foundation or corporate grants. Whatever the funding source, it is important to emphasize that once a project has been clearly defined, constituents can improve their likelihood of success by doing preliminary research in order to find potential funding sources whose goals are most nearly consistent with their own.

The following report does not constitute a blueprint for every office involved in grants and projects activity, nor does it present in-depth information about all aspects of staff activity in this area. The discussion is aimed at describing some basics about the grants process and some of the approaches and techniques used by congressional offices in dealing with this type of constituent service.

Ways Grants Staff Can Assist Constituents

Because the state, local, or private group needing assistance may be unaware of available funding, or uncertain of how to go about obtaining it, a congressional office can be of help in identifying sources. The success rate in obtaining federal assistance is not high, given the competition for federal funds. A grants staff's effectiveness often depends on both an understanding of the grants process and on the relations it establishes with agency and other contacts.

Congressional grants staff can be of the greatest assistance to their constituents when they have a thorough understanding of the entire grants process:

- defining the project
- searching for likely funding sources
- proposal writing
- grant application
- review and award procedure
- post award requirements

Providing Information to Constituents

Basic information on federal and private grants sources can be given to constituents by sending them the CRS Info Pack 50G, *Grants and Foundation Support: Information for Constituents*. It discusses sources of information on federal programs and private foundations, contains explanatory excerpts from the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, a report on how to write a grant proposal, and a listing of libraries throughout the country that house Foundation Center Cooperating Collections (for information on private and corporate funding). Constituents may consult many of the published sources described at large public or university libraries or depository libraries which serve as repositories for U.S. government publications.

Congressional offices may also prepare their own information packets on programs which are requested most frequently. Such packets could include program descriptions,

brochures, the latest rules and regulations, changes in agency policy, application forms, etc.

Newsletters are a good way of reaching a large number of people. Some congressional offices choose to send out either a special grants and projects newsletter or include a section on grants and projects in their regular newsletter. Subjects that could be developed are new legislation, new appropriations, and descriptions of recently awarded grants.

A congressional office may on occasion choose to communicate with selected audiences. Targeted mailings can inform interested constituents of *Federal Register* announcements of new programs in specific areas or changes in deadlines or regulations for existing programs. The office may wish to inform constituents of the possible impact of new legislative or executive actions which might revise existing programs, create new ones, or alter funding levels. Constituents can be informed of important dates and deadlines, and the advantages and limitations of various programs. They can also be made aware of community, state, or federal officials who share common concerns.

Another way of getting information to interested constituents is for a congressional office to coordinate seminars on federal and private assistance. An office can sponsor programs bringing together federal, state, and local officials, as well as academic and corporate specialists, experienced volunteers, and constituents working in the same area. Many agencies and corporations are willing to provide speakers for district seminars arranged by congressional offices and also to provide such materials as brochures, sample proposals, and lists of information contacts. While well-planned, balanced programs tailored to a particular audience can create good will, coordinating and following through on such meetings take a great deal of staff work and time. Such programs may also result in additional demands being made on the sponsoring office.

Counseling on Proposal Writing

Information on proposal writing is included in CRS Info Pack 50G, *Grants and Foundation Support*. While most congressional offices do not actually write proposals, they are frequently approached by inexperienced constituents seeking guidance on what makes a good proposal. They may wish to pass on the following suggestions:

- Allow sufficient time to prepare a thoroughly documented proposal, well before the application deadline. If possible, have someone outside the organization critique the proposal prior to submission.
- Follow the instructions given in the application form or in other material provided by the agency or foundation. Answer questions as asked.
- Be sure that the proposal is clear and brief. Avoid jargon. Take pains to make the proposal interesting. Reviewing panels have limited time to devote to any single proposal. Whenever possible, fit the style of the proposal to the style of the agency or foundation being approached.

- When no form or instructions for submitting grant proposals are provided, the proposal should include:

A cover letter on the applicant's letterhead giving a brief description of the purpose and amount of the grant proposal, conveying the applicant's willingness to discuss the proposal in further detail

A half-page summary that includes identification of the applicant, the reasons for the request, proposed objectives and means to accomplish them, along with the total cost of the project, an indication of funds already obtained, and the amount being requested for this grant

An introduction, in which the history, credentials, and accomplishments of the applicant are presented briefly (supporting documents can be included in an appendix)

A description of current conditions demonstrating the need for the proposed project

A statement of the project's objectives in specific, measurable terms

A description of the methods to be used to accomplish these objectives

A description of the means by which the project will be monitored and evaluated

A discussion of plans for continuing the project beyond the period covered by the grant

A detailed budget

Following Up on Constituents' Requests

If a proposal or serious inquiry is submitted to a congressional office, an assessment of the stated problem should be made. First, this benefits the grant seeker, since any application for assistance will require that the problem be clearly stated and that the proposed solution provide some remedy. Secondly, this initial assessment can provide staff with a sense of direction: Are there other projects currently under way that address the problem? Is there an appropriate federal program that is designed for such a project, or is the issue better addressed through local, state, or private organizations, or through legislation? Will the sought-after aid produce other problems for the community? What are its chances for success?

The initial review of the request should also involve an assessment of the applicant. A formal grant proposal will require an applicant to establish credibility. Individuals connected with a proposal might mention education, training, and professional credentials. Credibility for an organization may be established by giving its history, goals, activities, and primary accomplishments, as well as by letters of support. By reviewing such information, a congressional office may avoid the hazard of offering support for a questionable applicant and may be in a better position to make decisions about support when several communities or organizations are applying for the same program -- will all be treated equally or will support be given to selected applicants.

A written request from a constituent should always be acknowledged. If the request is a fairly common one, the office may be able to respond with a prepared packet of materials on available programs. Another alternative would be to send a copy of the constituent's letter to the agency with a buck slip, asking the agency's attention, and to inform the constituent of your action and advise that he or she will be hearing more from the office once the agency reports back. Another approach would be to call the agency contact. This procedure is generally more time consuming for a congressional staffer than a simple referral, but it is often more informative. The agency may provide facts about budget levels, authorizations and appropriations, the amount of money available for the program, the total amount requested in applications on file, the number of applications received, and the number likely to be approved, agency priorities, categories of competition or targets by region, key dates and deadlines, and information on who makes recommendations and decisions.

If the constituent decides to submit a formal grant application for a particular program, the congressional office may recommend and/or arrange a meeting with agency offices in the district or state. Another way to get input from the agency early in the process is a pre-review of the application. Many agencies provide procedural review of proposals one or two months before the application deadline. Such a review, while not dealing with the substance of the proposal, allows an agency to inform the applicant of any technical problems or omissions to be corrected before the proposal is formally submitted.

When a constituent notifies the congressional office that a proposal has been submitted, the office can send a letter to the agency expressing the Member's interest in being kept informed of developments relating to the application. In addition, the letter may also request a list of all applicants for the particular grant. This enables the office to consider initiating letters of support from the Member to those applicants in his or her state or district who did not approach the office prior to submission of their application. Whether the Member chooses to support a particular applicant or extends support to all applicants from the state or district, the office should maintain contact with all interested parties as it is notified of progress reports from agency contacts.

Announcing Grants Awards

While there is some variation, the usual announcement procedure in cases of allocated federal funds is for the agency making the award to notify the Senate office first (a Senator of the President's party may be first notified), then the House office, and

finally the recipient. This allows Members of Congress to have an opportunity to notify recipients of grants. Not all awards are announced publicly. In the case of block grants, the Office of Management and Budget notifies Senate offices of the allocations among the states. The state's decision on how to distribute funds among local communities is, however, not necessarily communicated to congressional offices. In these cases, a good state agency contact may be willing to provide the office with this information.

It is a good practice to discourage constituents from pursuing requests that are unlikely to be approved at the federal level: suggest consideration of other funding sources early in the process. In cases where grant applications are made and turned down, the congressional office may notify constituents of their right to know why the award was not granted and what the appeals process is. Constituents may ask the agency for an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, or may give the agency permission to provide the congressional office with this information. Alternative programs or other approaches may be suggested following an adverse decision. The constituent might also decide to improve upon the initial application and start the whole process over again.

Organizing Office Grants Operations

Each congressional office handles grants requests in its own way, depending upon such factors as the Member's philosophy on federal support for local projects, the relation of certain proposals to his or her legislative activity, or the Member's particular interest in specific locations or types of projects. Other factors may include the degree of economic distress in any given locality and the current level of federal assistance it receives.

Grants activities in any congressional office depend very much upon the overall organization and workload of the office.

- **Most offices divide responsibility by function**, i.e., legislation is assigned to legislative assistants and correspondents, press and newsletters are under the purview of a press secretary, and caseworkers do casework. Offices organized in this way may have a full-time grants specialist or several staff members under the supervision of a grants coordinator working solely in the area of grants and projects.
- **Some offices divide responsibilities by subject area**, i.e., a specialist in health issues is involved with legislation, correspondence, casework, grants, projects, speeches, and press releases in that subject area.
- **DC, state, or district office?** In some offices, all grants requests are handled in the district or state office; in others, they are answered by the Washington staff; still others divide grants and projects activity between the district or state office and the Washington office. Regardless of how this responsibility is assigned, it is helpful to have at least one person in the district or state office and one person in the Washington office familiar with the whole process.

- **State delegation cooperation:** Since some constituents request the aid of the entire state delegation for a grant or project, cooperation among Members of the delegation can minimize duplication of effort and permit more effective use of staff time. To increase the chances of a project's funding, Members may solicit the support of other Members either from the same geographic region if the proposal would benefit a wide area, or from those who hold key positions in leadership or on committees which exercise funding and oversight of the federal program. Political considerations can limit the amount of such cooperation. One state's delegation has established a State Projects Office to help its constituents learn about the grants process and follow through on all applications until awards are made.

Managing Grants Requests

To assure continuity, particularly in cases of staff turnover and shifting responsibilities, and to monitor the progress of the grants and projects operation, several resources can be developed.

The Office Grants Manual

An internal grants manual is a valuable tool for grants staff to develop. It can outline office policies and procedures. Among the items that might be included in this volume are:

- A written record of the Member's policy on letters of endorsement and press announcements, along with samples.
- A checklist of procedures to facilitate the training of new staff.
- Sample project worksheets, allowing space for agency contacts, status reports, and follow-up timetables.
- A constantly updated telephone listing of contacts in federal, state, and local agencies, and foundations who are heavily relied upon because of the frequency of requests under their supervision, or of those who have proven especially helpful.

File Systems and Logs

A congressional office may wish to maintain detailed, cross-referenced files such as agency files, constituent files by county, and tracking records.

Agency Files

- Agency files (could also be arranged under broad subjects, or use subject subdivisions: for example, Defense Department, district contracts; Education Department, education pilot projects.)

- Program files include detailed information on the most frequently used programs in communities in the state or district, with a fact sheet describing each program, plus agency brochures, contacts, etc.
- Project files may contain lists of applicants for each project. Some offices keep records on the steps taken in support of all grant applications as documentation.

Constituent Files by County

- These can prove especially useful for the Member's visits to the state or district.
- In addition to the correspondence on each grant application, local press coverage of awards can be included.
- These clippings, along with letters from grateful constituents, can serve as a source for favorable quotations.

Tracking Requests

- Monitor grant applications as they move through an agency's review process.
- Maintain a follow-up calendar or log.
- Track all grants awarded in the district or state -- even those your office didn't work on.

Communicating with Staff

A weekly grants and projects report or memorandum is one way to keep both the Member and other staff fully informed of significant developments. This is particularly important for offices organized by functional responsibility.

- The report prepares the Member for the types of questions that may be asked during visits to the state or district and provides topics to be addressed in speeches.
- The legislative staff will benefit from knowing about pending state or local government actions that would have an impact on grants and projects. Conversely, grants and projects staff should also be able to rely on the legislative staff for information about pending bills that would alter or create federal programs or change relevant funding levels. Sometimes, comments from constituents can supply data on whether programs are carrying out legislative intent and whether changes in agency regulations or legislation are needed. Such recommendations might then be the subject of congressional oversight hearings or might result in recommending changes in legislation.

- The press secretary should also be kept up to date on programs of interest in the district, so that current information can be presented in newsletters and press releases.
- The staff may want to maintain a listing of federal grant recipients and the amount of federal dollars received each year for their state or district. Figures can be found in the *Consolidated Federal Funds Report*, published annually by the Bureau of the Census for the Office of Management and Budget; or on a quarterly basis by searching the House Information Resources database *Post Awards* (POST).

Basic Grants Library for a Congressional Office

The following works can be obtained free of charge to create a basic congressional office grants library. Additional sources are given in *Grants and Foundation Support: Selected Sources of Information on Government and Private Funding* (CRS Report 97-67 C), which is included in CRS Info Pack 50G.

CRS Products (congressional staff may call x7-7132 to order):

Grants and Foundation Support: Information for Congressional Offices (Info Pack 50G)

To help congressional offices respond to grants questions, CRS has compiled a packet of material which can be sent to constituents. The packet describes publications, many available in local libraries, as well as Internet sources about federal, private, and state grants; reproduces excerpts from the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* describing *Catalog* highlights, a "State Single Point of Contact List" for information about federal programs, and guidance on "Developing and Writing Grant Proposals." For private funding, the Info Pack also includes addresses and telephone numbers of Foundation Center collections in every state.

Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies (CRS Report 95-413 PGM)

For congressional staff use to contact grants officers in specific federal department and agencies, to ask for agency publication lists, and request copies of regulations and guidelines on programs.

The Federal Money Trail: Data Sources on Federal Aid, Grants, Loans and Procurement in States and Local Areas (CRS Report 96-709C)

Information on reports such as *Federal Expenditures* and *Consolidated Federal Funds* (both from the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census) that list federal grants to states and local recipients.

Managing Projects and Grants Work (CRS Video Program VT94-1346; CRS Audio Brief AB50304)

Based on a CRS presentation for district offices on April 6, 1994, a staffer responsible for handling grants requests in a congressional office shares her experiences, outlining office management techniques, key sources and contacts.

Where to Get Publications from Executive and Independent Agencies
(CRS Report 97-129 C)

For congressional staff seeking publications that describe executive department and agency programs and to obtain grants brochures and specifications.

Key Books (all are available free of charge to congressional offices):

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. Washington, GPO. Annual with mid-year supplement.

Key directory of information on federal funding programs. Distributed free to each congressional office by the General Services Administration, (202) 501-0563. Congressional offices may wish to request copies for district and state offices as well. In addition, the *Catalog* is available on the Internet (<http://www.gsa.gov:80/fdac/>), and as part of the House Information Resources system *Pre-Award* (PREA) database, available in individual House offices and in CRS facilities. The *Pre-Award* database provides information about Federal grant programs available from the *Catalog* with updates from the *Federal Register*; a *Post-Award* (POST) file identifies grant recipients during the latest four quarters reported by federal agencies. House offices may call HIR, x76002, for information and access to its systems. All House and Senate staff may search the *Catalog* on the Internet and use HIR systems on computers in House and Senate Reference Centers and the La Follette Congressional Reading Room.

Congressional Directory. Washington, GPO. Biennial.

Useful for agency contact names, phone numbers and addresses. Produced by the Joint Committee on Printing and distributed to every congressional office.

Federal Register. Washington, GPO. Daily Monday through Friday.

Latest federal department or agency program regulations appear first in the *Federal Register*. Clip and file those of possible interest to your constituents, based on inquiries and areas of concern. For House offices, House Information Resources publishes the *Federal Funding Report*, a weekly compilation of notices from the previous week's *Federal Register* dealing specifically with federal domestic assistance programs.

Frontline Management; A Guide for Congressional District/State Offices. Washington, Congressional Management Foundation, 1989.

Although dated (with no new edition planned), the chapter on *Managing Projects Work*, which identifies grants management as comprising the bulk of such work in district and state offices, still provides an excellent overview of managing such requests. The Foundation provides copies of its publications free to congressional offices: (202) 546-0100.

Foundation Directory. New York, The Foundation Center. 2 v. and suppl. Annual.

Key directory of private funding sources, arranged by state. Part one provides descriptions of the over 8,700 largest American foundations; part two includes information on over 4,000 private and community foundations, geared to supporting local organizations. Entries include factual and financial data, statements of purpose

and activities, types of support, limitations, application information, and names of donors, officers and trustees. Includes a subject index, by broad topic of interest. Distributed to each congressional office by The Foundation Center, (202) 331-1400. The Center also publishes a number of other directories and guides to private funding, some of which are available for use in CRS Reference Centers and the La Follette Congressional Reading Room.

U.S. Government Manual. Washington, GPO. Annual.

Tells which programs are administered by which agencies or departments, and gives names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons to contact for guidance. Produced by the Federal Register at the National Archives and Records Administration. Every congressional office receives at least one copy.

In addition, congressional staff should obtain a state government directory to be able to refer constituents to the correct state agency handling the area of interest; or collect information about key state programs of interest to their constituents.

Federal Assistance

There are hundreds of grants or loans for various purposes available from federal departments and agencies. Other federal funds not dispensed through grants, but nevertheless much sought after, are used for defense procurement, construction of federal installations, or infrastructure, e.g., military bases, federal office buildings, and federal projects such as flood control and highway construction. Congressional offices can assist state and local governments and eligible private sector organizations in becoming aware of available funds and how to go about obtaining them.

Staff members can contact federal agencies to determine agency interest in certain projects; relay the findings to those interested and qualified for assistance in their states and districts; track department and agency disbursements through an House Information Resources database (*Post-Awards*); and notify home state governments, organizations, businesses, and people of what funds are available. Once a grant application is filed, offices frequently keep in touch with agencies. Contact can be maintained by letter, phone, or in person as the situation dictates. Concerted action on the part of the staff may result in more federal funds being spent in a state or district thereby providing greater benefit to the constituency.

THE CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE

The key source to information about federal programs, projects, services, and activities which provide assistance or benefits to the American public is the ***Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance***. It contains financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by departments and agencies of the federal government. Copies are sent to each House and Senate office by the General Services Administration, and congressional offices may wish to request copies for district and state offices as well. Updated information on federal programs appears in the daily ***Federal Register***.

The *Catalog* is also available on CD-ROM and in other electronic formats, on the Internet, and online through the House Information Resources (HIR) office. House offices may access *Catalog* information plus updates from the *Federal Register* through the HIR database *Pre-Award Grants* (PREA); Senate and House staff may use computers in the Senate Reference Center, the Rayburn Reference Center, and the La Follette Congressional Reading Room to search this system, or to search the *Catalog* on the Internet. All formats allow users to retrieve program information such as:

- federal agency administering a program
- authorizing legislation
- objectives and goals of program
- types of financial and nonfinancial assistance provided
- uses and restrictions
- eligibility requirements
- application and award process, including deadlines
- criteria for selecting proposals
- amount of obligations for the past, current, and future fiscal years
- regulations, guidelines and literature relevant to a program
- information contacts, headquarters, regional, and local offices
- related programs
- examples of funded projects
- formula and matching requirements, where applicable
- post assistance requirements

In addition, through its *Post-Award* (POST) database, HIR furnishes information about federal grants which have been awarded in the last four quarters. HIR also publishes the *Federal Funding Report*, a weekly compilation of notices from the previous week's *Federal Register*, dealing with federal domestic assistance programs.

Congressional grants specialists may suggest that constituents seeking federal funding begin by themselves consulting the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* and the *Federal Register* at federal depository libraries or other large libraries in their area; or conduct subject or keyword searches of the *Catalog* on the Internet. Descriptions of programs identified will have to be carefully analyzed by constituents seeking assistance to see whether they may be appropriate. At this point, a telephone call or letter to the agency contact person can provide invaluable help. State and regional contacts for federal departments and agencies are given in the *Catalog*. Agencies often prepare guidelines and application packets for specific programs. They may also provide a list of grantees from the previous fiscal year and indicate the amount of money still available for the coming year.

Some congressional grants specialists go one step further in serving their constituents by actually identifying potential funding programs either from their own files or by doing their own *Catalog* searches. Congressional staff can use the printed or online *Catalog* and other grants and foundation sources in CRS House and Senate Reference Centers and in the La Follette Congressional Reading Room.

Types of Federal Assistance Available

Currently, programs in the *Catalog* are classified into 15 types of assistance, including financial and nonfinancial types of assistance.

Grants: Grants are generally considered a desirable form of financial assistance since they represent an outright award of funds.

- *Formula Grants*, allocations of money to states or their subdivisions for activities of a continuing nature not confined to a specific project
- *Project Grants*, funding, for fixed or known periods, of specific projects or the delivery of specific services or products, including fellowships, scholarships, research grants, training grants, traineeships, experimental and demonstration grants, evaluation grants, planning grants, technical assistance grants, survey grants, construction grants, and unsolicited contractual agreements
- *Direct Payments for Specified Use*, federal financial assistance provided directly to individuals, private firms, and other private institutions to encourage or subsidize a particular activity
- *Direct Payments with Unrestricted Use*, federal financial assistance provided directly to beneficiaries who satisfy federal eligibility requirements with no restrictions as to how the money is spent

Loans: Since loans must be repaid, they are often viewed by applicants as less desirable than grants. However, with the reduction of federal funds available for grants and the increasing level of competition for such funds, loans are often the only form of assistance available.

- *Direct Loans*, the lending of federal funds for a specific period of times, with a reasonable expectation of repayment; may or may not require the payment of interest
- *Guaranteed/Insured Loans*, programs in which the federal government makes an arrangement to indemnify a lender against part or all of any defaults by those responsible for repayment of loans

Insurance: Some federal programs provide financial assistance to assure reimbursement for losses sustained under specified conditions. Coverage may be provided directly by the federal government or through private carriers and may or may not require the payment of premiums.

Goods and properties:

- *Sale, Exchange, or Donation of Property and Goods*, programs which provide for the sale, exchange, or donation of federal real property, personal property, commodities, and other goods including land, buildings, equipment, food, and drugs
- *Use of Property, Facilities, and Equipment*, programs which provide for the loan of, use of, or access to federal facilities or property wherein the federally-owned facilities or property do not remain in the possession of the recipient of the assistance

Services, Information, Training, and Employment:

- *Provision of Specialized Services*, programs which provide federal personnel to directly perform certain tasks for the benefit of communities or individuals
- *Advisory Services and Counseling*, programs which provide federal specialists to consult, advise, or counsel communities or individuals, to include conferences, workshops, or personal contacts
- *Dissemination of Technical Information*, programs which provide for the publication and distribution of information or data of a specialized technical nature frequently through clearinghouses or libraries
- *Training*, programs which provide instructional activities conducted directly by a federal agency for individuals not employed by the federal government
- *Investigation of Complaints*, federal administrative agency activities that are initiated in response to requests, either formal or informal, to examine or investigate claims of violations of federal statutes, policy, or procedure
- *Federal Employment*, programs which reflect the government-wide responsibilities of the Office of Personnel Management in the recruitment and hiring of federal civilian agency personnel

Establishing and Maintaining Contacts

Most federal agencies have a number of offices: a central office in Washington; a series of regional offices; and, in some cases, local or area offices. Each program in the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* has a section on information contacts, either giving the name, address, and telephone number of the program officer, or referring applicants to the regional, state, or local office of the agency. Addresses and telephone numbers for these offices are given in appendixes of the *Catalog*. In addition, the *Catalog* has a "Single States Contacts List," reproduced (in excerpts from the *Catalog*) in the Info Pack IP 50G, *Grants and Foundation Support*.

Some agencies prefer that congressional offices not deal directly with program officers but channel their requests through congressional liaison offices. Establishing a good relationship with the liaison staff is usually beneficial--they are normally well informed and willing to share information with congressional grants and projects staff. CRS Report 95-431 PGM, *Congressional Liaison Offices of Selected Federal Agencies*, and House and Senate telephone directories list congressional liaison offices. The liaison office may be willing to set up a tour of the agency for congressional staff so that they may become more familiar with the way the agency is organized and where responsibilities are assigned, as well as with published materials that may be available on various programs.

State and district grants and projects staff usually work closely with federal agency representatives in their areas, with state and local elected officials and former officials, and with councils of government. Many federal programs are administered directly by state agencies or other entities within the state, and many states have programs funded out of their own appropriations which supplement or complement federal programs. Local councils of government, where they exist, have access to federal funds for providing technical assistance, guidance, and counseling in the grants process. Constituents are, as

a rule, best served by being put in touch with program officers closest to them as early as possible.

Some congressional grants and projects veterans report that a congressional office that encourages cooperation among local organizations, foundations, units of government, and councils of government can serve as a catalyst for applicants by improving communications, which may in turn enhance the chances for proposal approval. When congressional staff take the time to express appreciation for assistance provided by federal personnel, foundation officials, and others involved in the grants process, they may possibly improve their chances for future assistance.

Foundations and Corporate Grants

With reductions in federal programs, congressional grants specialists may wish to suggest other funding possibilities to their constituents as alternatives and supplements to federal grants. Congressional grants staff will want to get to know the kinds and levels of private sector support that is available to their constituents. The Foundation Center, with an office in Washington, DC, provides each congressional office with its *Foundation Directory* and can advise congressional staff on a number of other sources on private funding and contacts.

Small local projects should begin their search for assistance at the community level from local businesses or institutions. Support may be available in the form of cash contributions or in-kind contributions of property, buildings, equipment, or professional expertise. In fact, evidence of such community-based support may lead the way to additional outside funding.

While there are all kinds of foundation and corporate grants available throughout the country, it should be pointed out that competition for these funds is great, and, just as is the case in searching for federal support, grantseekers enhance their chances for success by doing preliminary research to find grantmakers whose priorities and goals are consistent with their own.

Grantmaking foundations are established with the express purpose of providing funds for projects in their areas of interest, and all must comply with specific Internal Revenue Service regulations to maintain their tax-exempt status. Every year, each is required to give away money equal to at least 5% of the market value of its assets, and each must make its tax records public.

There are many different kinds of foundations, with widely varying resources and purposes. Some are national in scope; others are set up purely for the purpose of local giving. Some are endowed by an individual or family to provide funds for specific social, educational, or religious purposes; others are company-sponsored; still others are publicly supported community foundations.

Because of this variety, different strategies may be required for dealing with different foundations. There are a few foundations which publicize their funding policies, and even initiate projects, but generally they do not. Usually, the grantseeker must take the first

step and approach the foundation about his or her proposal. Although it is hard to generalize about foundations, they tend to be more flexible than federal funding agencies and to have fewer bureaucratic requirements. Many foundations see their purpose as providing short-term, startup funding for demonstration projects. Frequently, such foundations are the best primary source to turn to for funding emergency situations or small, high-risk, innovative programs. In some cases, foundation officials will work closely with inexperienced grantseekers to help them develop realistic proposals.

The Foundation Center is an independent national service organization, which provides a clearinghouse of information on private philanthropic giving. In addition to its major reference collections in New York, Washington, DC, Cleveland, and San Francisco, it maintains a national network of cooperating collections in each state, all open to the public. A list of these collections is included in the Info Pack 50G, *Grants and Foundation Support*. The New York and Washington collections contain a complete set of all U.S. foundation tax returns, while many of the network members have sets of state and regional foundation tax returns. In addition, these collections offer grant seekers a variety of useful specialized materials and services. For example, for a fee, the Foundation Center offers computerized searches for information on foundation grants by subject and location.

The Foundation Center publishes a number of directories and guides to private and corporate funding sources and grantsmanship. Major publications include the *Foundation Directory* (distributed to all congressional offices) providing essential data on over 6,700 of the largest U.S. foundations; the *Foundation Grants Index*, which lists over 60,000 grants awarded by over 950 largest foundations in the last year or two and is useful for identifying potential funding sources based on previously awarded foundation grants. The main listing of grants is arranged by state. Entries include lists of grant recipients, giving the date, amount and brief purpose of each grant; *Guide to U.S. Foundations*, a directory listing over 33,000 private and community foundations, including thousands of smaller ones not described in other sources. These smaller foundations are especially important as local sources of funding. These three major directories are available for congressional staff use in CRS House and Senate Reference Centers and the La Follette Congressional Reading Room. The Foundation Center also publishes a *National Directory of Corporate Giving*.

It is generally a good idea to try to identify state or local foundations; they may have a greater interest in local problems than do larger foundations principally concerned with programs of national significance. Foundation Center resources are a good starting point for identifying likely funding sources. The next step is to find out more about these foundations by obtaining copies of their annual reports and/or guidelines. Grant seekers will need to find out whether their projected proposals match the foundation's areas of interest and geographic guidelines, whether the proposal is within the foundation's budgetary constraints, and whether the foundation normally funds the type of project being considered.

Direct corporate giving is another potential funding source not to be overlooked. Many corporations provide support for local projects in areas where they have their headquarters or plants, or sponsor projects which somehow enhance their corporate image. Information sources on direct corporate giving are also included in the CRS Report 97-67

C, Grants and Foundation Support: Selected Sources of Information on Government and Private Funding.