

I need funding for my business – where can I get a grant?

At the SBDC we are frequently asked how an entrepreneur can obtain a grant to start a *for profit* business. We do not like to be the bearer of bad news, however, the simple answer is that except for some very narrow specific purposes, we are not aware of any grant opportunities to start a for profit business. Grant giving organizations, public and private, almost without exception are focused on providing financial support to *not for profit* organizations meeting a community need or providing a community service.

There are numerous grant organizations (typing “grants” in Goggle.com resulted in 13,800,000 possibilities). There are many organizations that will sell information on how to write grants and where to obtain grants for a fee. However, your library can provide access to a tremendous amount of information about grants for free.

For instance, the Multnomah County Library has a Grants Information Center in the Central Library located at 801 S.W. 10th Avenue in Portland. The Center is located on the 2nd floor. The Multnomah County Library houses a “cooperating collection” for the Foundation Center, a nonprofit organization that gathers, analyzes and publishes information on philanthropic foundations. There are three other libraries in Oregon with cooperating collections and they are located at Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls, the Pacific Nonprofit Network in Medford and the Oregon State Library in Salem.

The Foundation Center has a web site (www.fdncenter.org) that includes information on its publications, helpful hints on the grant proposal writing process, news items and links to foundation web sites.

In addition to the publications of the Foundation Center, the Multnomah County Library has other materials on foundations, corporate philanthropy, government grants, proposal writing, fundraising and nonprofit management. You can access the Grant Information Center on-line at www.multcolib.org/about/mcl-grant.html.

The Grants Information Center is a reference collection and the resources must be used in the library. However, the library also has a substantial circulating collection on nonprofit management, fundraising and proposal writing. Your local community college may also have classes on writing grant proposals. Check their class schedule for information.

Another source of information on government grants is through the U.S. Small Business Administration at www.sba.gov. Click the “Hot Items” button on the left-hand side of the front page of their web site to see the link to grant information. Also check out the web site: www.grants.gov for links to government programs offering grants.

So, if you are a nonprofit organization or are establishing a nonprofit organization there may be many opportunities to obtain some financial support for your activities. However, if you plan to operate your business for profit, your more likely sources of

financing are more traditional sources such as personal savings and other resources, bank and non-bank lenders, the proverbial “friends and family” and credit cards.