

# Finding grant opportunities you can win

## Focus on the grant opportunities you stand the best chance to win.

Every grant opportunity comes with a cost of time and resources to cultivate the funder and prepare the grant application. For this reason, it's important to carefully read the signs and signals that will help you prioritize the grant opportunities you are more likely to win.

What factors make for a quality prospect—and what are signs you should pass on a funding opportunity and move on?

## Signs of a strong grant funding prospect:

- + **Relationship:** The best prospective funder is one that's funded your organization before. Focus first on foundations where you have or can forge a personal connection or where there is a funding history between your organization and the foundation.
- + **Mission match:** Not every foundation is meant to be a funder for your organization. Hone in on funders where there is a clear alignment between your organization's mission and the funder's vision.
- + **Geographic focus:** Many funders limit their grant making to particular geographic locations and communities. Review the funder's guidelines and look at their patterns in giving for evidence they make grants in the areas you provide services.
- + **Similar funding:** One of the strongest indicators that a foundation may be open to funding your organization is a track record of making grants to organizations and projects like yours. Pay attention to which foundations are supporting nonprofits that provide similar services in your community.

## Signs that a grant funder might not be a match:

- + **Lack of connection:** Your organization has no existing connection to the funder and you haven't had any positive personal interaction with someone at the foundation before the application deadline.
- + **Mismatch:** This funder has never funded a project or organization similar to yours and you've received no signal from the funder that says they are interested in your project or organization.
- + **Closed door:** This funder "doesn't accept unsolicited proposals" and you have not received a personal invitation to apply. It is possible to get a grant from a funder with this restriction, but that almost always requires first establishing a relationship.

Your time for grant seeking is limited. You want to be sure you are focusing on the best grant opportunities for your organization. By reading the signs, you can prioritize the funders that merit your attention and increase your chances of grants success.