

# Federal Grants 101



**Presented by the  
Office of Congresswoman  
Suzan DelBene**

October 19, 2015 – Redmond Library  
October 21, 2015 – EDASC Mount Vernon

# Today's Goals

- **Basic overview of the appropriations process**
- **Basic overview of how federal grants are disbursed**
- **How to search and apply**
- **How your congressional office can help**
- **Additional resources**

# Federal Funding – Key Terms

1. A federal program is **authorized**
2. A federal program receives **appropriations**

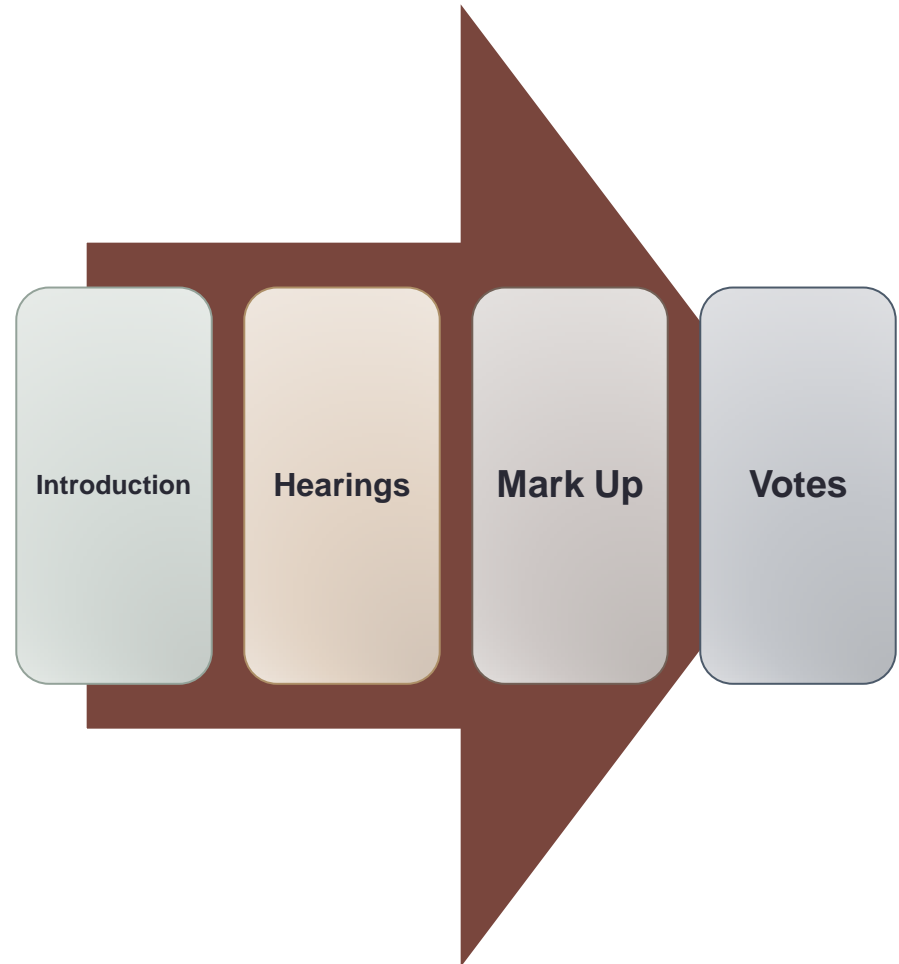
**Authorized** = legal authority to operate

**Appropriations** = funding

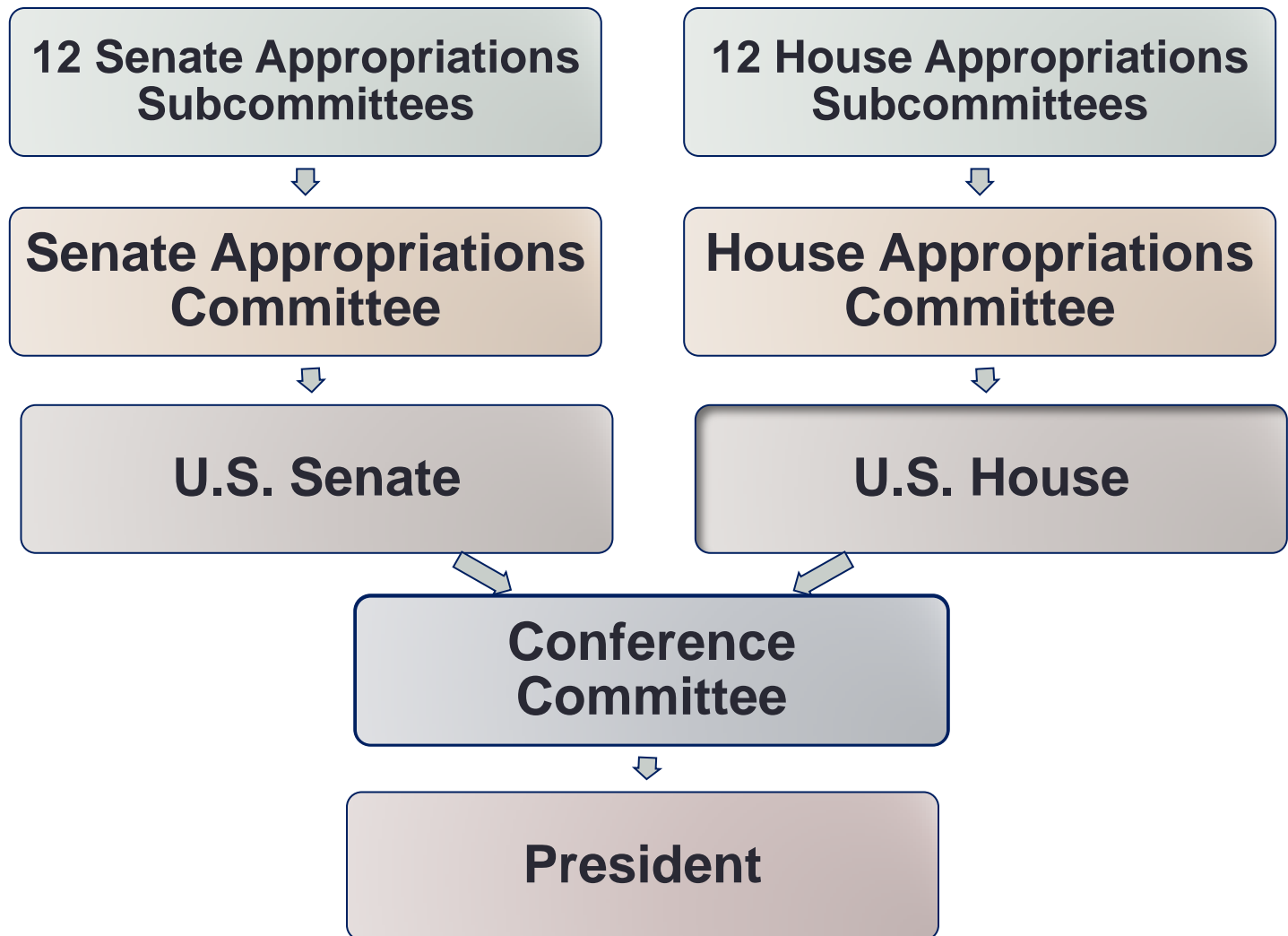
- **Grants** - funds which are provided to applicants through programs administered by federal agencies.
- **Loans** - assistance in the form of loans, advisory, and technical assistance.

# 12 Appropriations Bills

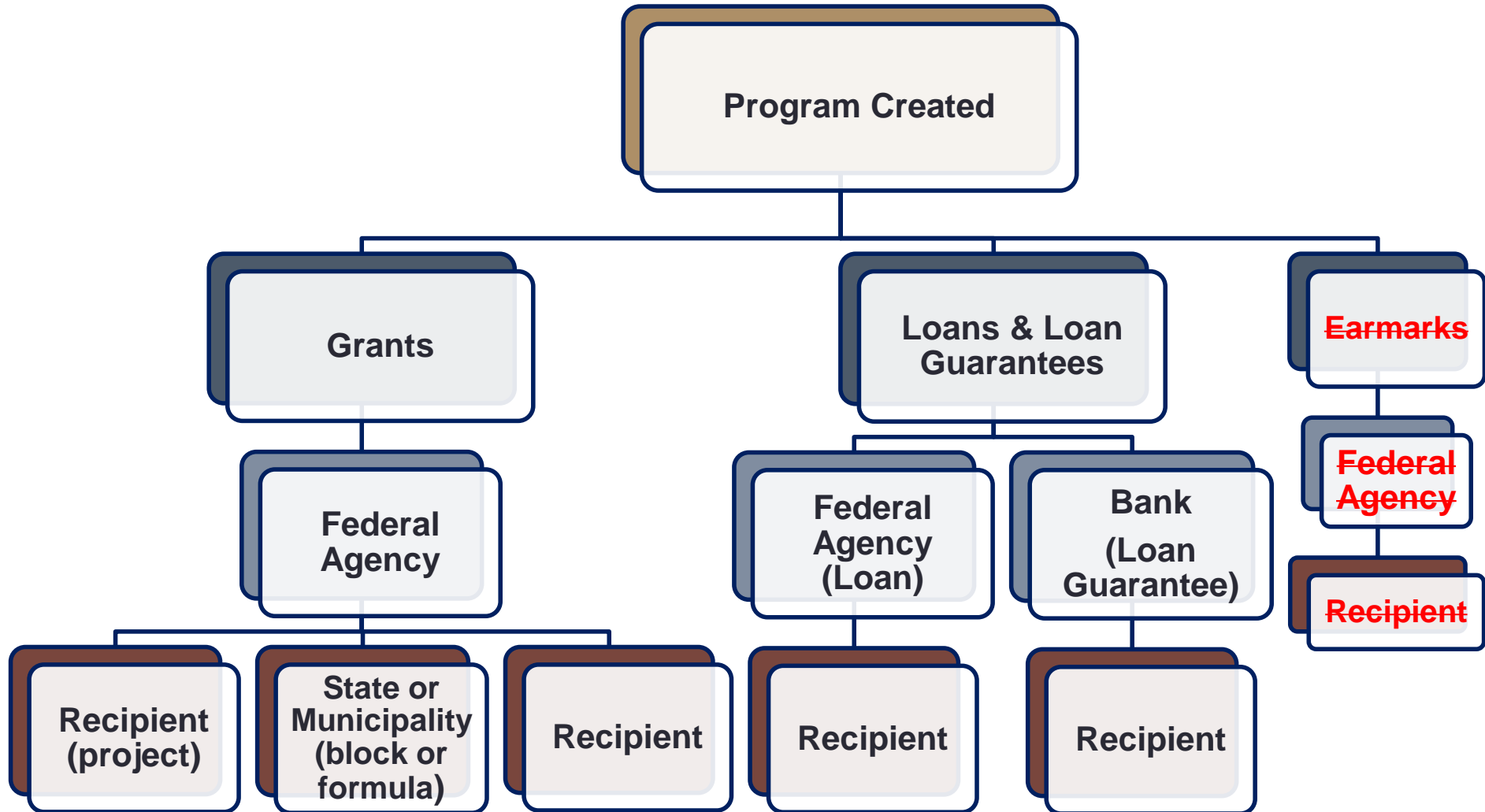
- **Agriculture**
- **Commerce/Justice/Science**
- **Defense**
- **Energy and Water**
- **Financial Services**
- **Homeland Security**
- **Interior/Environment**
- **Labor/HHS/Education**
- **Legislative Branch**
- **Military/Veterans (aka Milcon)**
- **State/Foreign Ops**
- **Transportation/Housing**



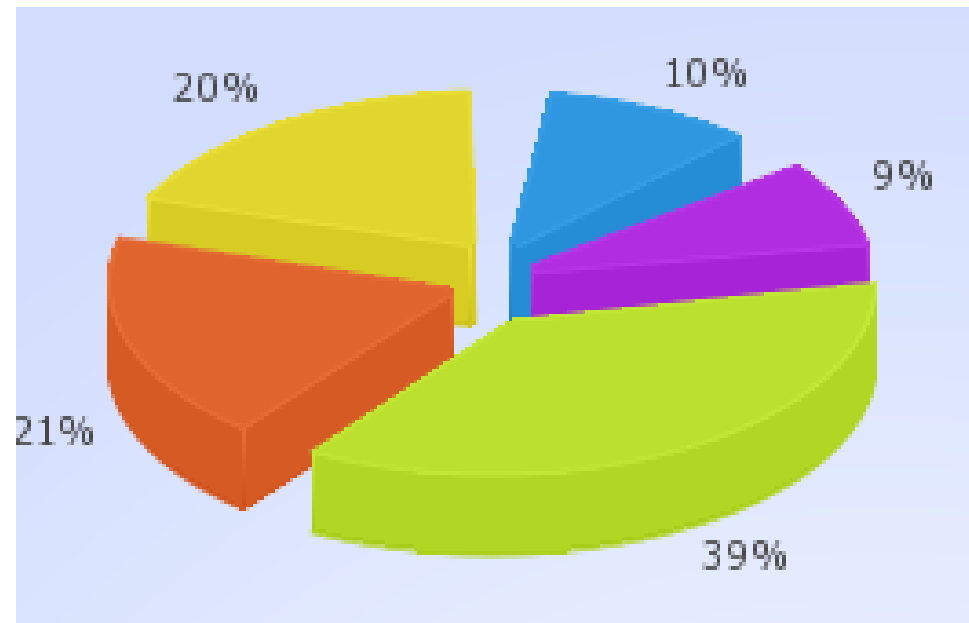
# Legislative Process for Appropriations



# How Federal Funding is Delivered



# Top 5 Issuing Agencies



- **517** Department of Health and Human Services
- **276** Department of the Interior
- **266** Department of Agriculture
- **136** Department of Justice
- **115** Department of Housing and Urban Development

Source: CFDA.gov  
Last updated October 12, 2015

# Types of Grants

## Categorical

- Provide funding for limited types of activities. They may be used only for purposes established in statute, regulations, or grant guidance.
- Approximately **90%** of federal grant funding is categorical.
- EX: Highway programs and education grants

## Block

- Block grants provide more leeway for states by providing funding for broad eligible activities identified in the authorizing legislation.
- EX: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

## Entitlement

- Entitlement grants require payment or services to all eligible persons and are often awarded based on a formula.
- EX: Social Security Disability Insurance, and low income programs.



# Types of Grants

## Formula

- Formula grants are allocated based on a decision rule such as x dollars per public school pupil. The purpose is to allocate funding based on quantifiable variables.
- EX: Title I grants for local education agencies

## Discretionary

- Discretionary grants are awarded to eligible grant recipients based on a competitive, or merit-based, process. These types of grants are also commonly called competitive grants.
- EX: Dept. of Education's Race to the Top program; Dept. of Transportation's TIGER program

## Matching

- Matching grants require that the recipient contribute something towards the project costs.
- EX: FEMA grants can include in-kind services match or cash match requirements. Some block grants also have a match requirement.

# What Is Best For Me?

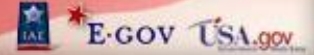
- Federal funding is a competitive arena. Identify the most appropriate sources of funding early in the process to ensure that the effort expended is worthwhile.
- **Most federal funding goes to state and local governments, which in turn make sub-awards to local entities such as nonprofit organizations.**
- Local governments seeking funds for community services, infrastructure, and economic revitalization may be most eligible to tap into state or federal funds.

# How to Search for Federal Grant Opportunities

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)**
  - [WWW.CFDA.GOV](http://WWW.CFDA.GOV)
- **GRANTS.GOV**
  - [WWW.GRANTS.GOV](http://WWW.GRANTS.GOV)



## CATALOG *of* FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE

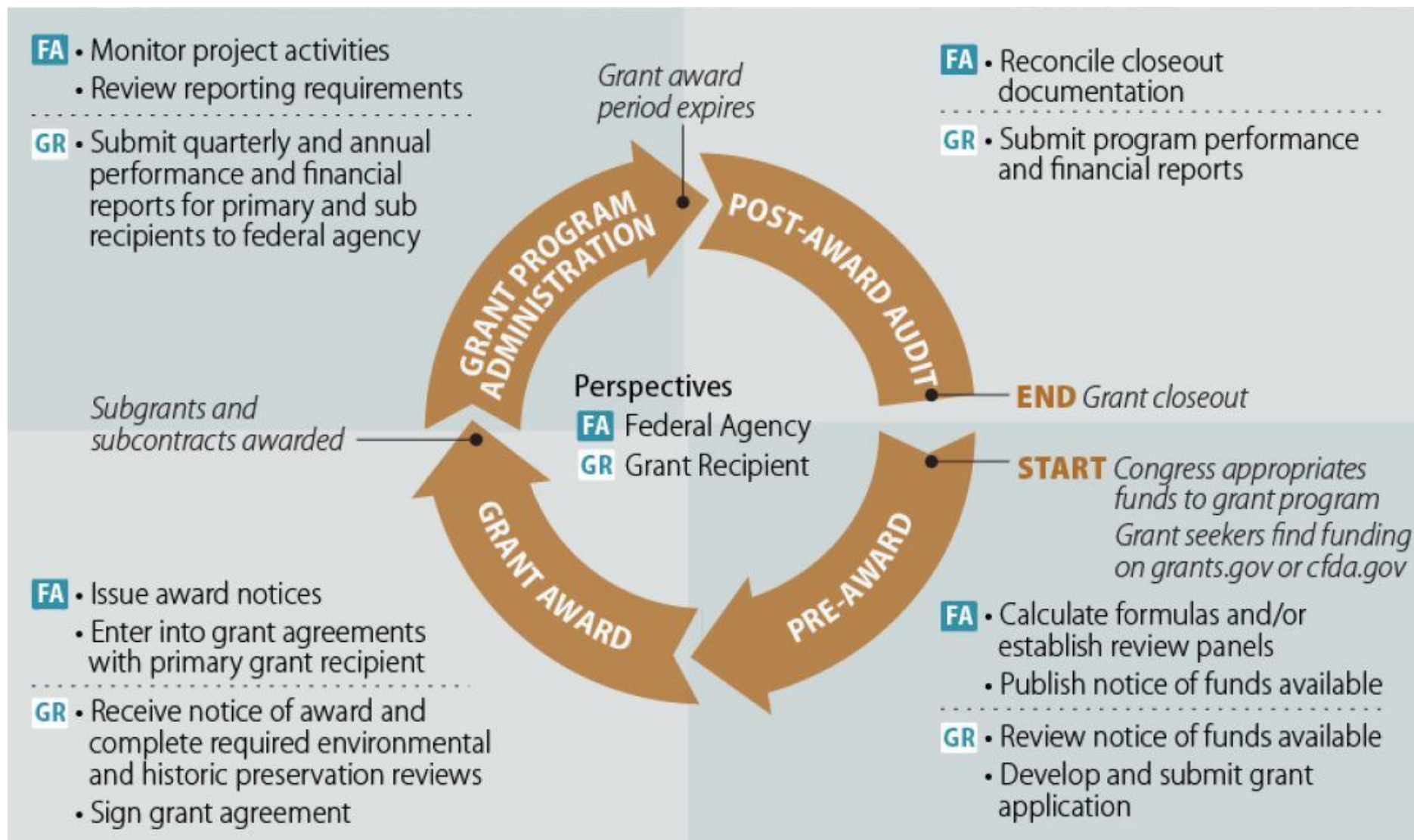


- **Refer to CFDA to get an idea of programs created by Congress that might match your funding needs; actual funding depends upon annual congressional budget appropriations.**
  
- **For each program, CFDA describes:**
  - **Objectives**
  - **Eligibility Requirements (for applicant and beneficiary)**
  - **Application and Award Process**
  - **Post Assistance Requirements**
  - **Financial Information (including Obligations and the Range and Average Award)**
  - **Contact information for the appropriate agency and local offices**



- **Find & Apply**
- **Register as soon as possible!**
  1. **DUNS**
  2. **SAM**
  3. **AOR**
- **Learn Grants**

# Life Cycle of a Federal Grant



# **Role of a Congressional Office: Information and Clarification**

- **Disburse Request for Proposal notifications**
- **Clarify requirements, application status, etc.**
- **Notify of successful or unsuccessful applications**
- **Connect applicants to a federal agency or program officer**

# Role of a Congressional Office: Letters of Support

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

**AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**  
 Chairman: E. J. Wynn  
 Subcommittee on Agricultural Policy,  
 Agricultural Finance, and Farm Income  
 Subcommittee on  
 Conservation and Forestry  
 Subcommittee on Nutrition

**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
 Subcommittee on Courts, Jurisdiction,  
 Property and the Judiciary  
 Subcommittee on Regulation, Planning,  
 Consumer, and Antitrust Law

Dear Mr. Goetz,

According to WDC Seattle-King County, of the nearly 100,000 young people ages 14-24 living in King County, an estimated 20 percent, or one in five, are currently disconnected from school and living-wage work. Many of these young people face compounding challenges such as homelessness, foster care, or are involved in the justice system. This P3 proposal aims to mitigate challenges in serving Opportunity Youth by requesting that high school dropouts be permitted to retain their out-of-school status to receive continued work-force development services beyond GED/High School completion. The P3 pilot also proposes to integrate AmeriCorps members as near-peers to reach the hardest to serve youth facing the most challenging situations.

I applaud WDC Seattle King County for their efforts to address the multiple barriers facing our young people who need reengagement services to connect to education and the workplace. I encourage your full and fair consideration, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, of their application.

*John D. Brown*

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- Contact the Grants Coordinator **at least 1 week** prior to submission.
- Provide:
  - Agency, program name and CFDA or funding number
  - Executive Summary
  - Partners or participants
  - 1<sup>st</sup> CD economic and/or regional impact
  - A draft letter is always appreciated!



# Myths and Common Misperceptions About Federal Grants

- **Members of Congress review applications and decide who gets funded**
  - *It would be unethical for a Member to pressure an Agency to direct a grant to a specific group*
- **Anyone can get a grant**
  - *This isn't true, the process is very competitive*
- **Grants will “fix everything”**
  - *Grants are typically not huge dollar amounts, and many programs require that an organization reapply for ongoing support*
- **The Feds have the most money...**
  - *Don't assume that federal funding is your best source*

# **“Dealbreakers” For Grant Proposals**

- **Late submission**
- **Length exceeds guidelines**
- **Requested amount exceeds award ceiling**

# Tips For A Successful Application

- Identify the appropriate programs and contact federal agencies early in the process, before submitting formal applications
- Agencies like to fund partnerships
- Get partnerships and in-kind donations in writing
- Don't duplicate services already in a community
- Don't stretch what your organization is actually capable of
- Follow grant instructions *precisely*
- You are responsible for the actions of your grant writers, consultants and partners – you will be audited

# Tips If Your Application Is Unsuccessful...

- **Review your application with agency staff**
  - *“[Our application was] deemed ineligible due to costs included but not covered by the particular grant we applied to. It was a little confusing, but the USDA folks were quite helpful and encouraging. We received a call from the Washington office encouraging us to resubmit the same project next year and offering to guide us on the cost restrictions later this year to avoid the same ineligibility problem.”*
- **Consider attending an agency workshop on the program or an online course**
- **Consider other funding sources, including loans, equipment, technical assistance, or private funding**

# Additional Resources

- [USASpending.gov](https://USASpending.gov)
- [Congress.gov](https://Congress.gov)
- **Washington State Resources**
  - [ACCESS.WA.GOV](https://ACCESS.WA.GOV)
  - [COMMERCE.WA.GOV](https://COMMERCE.WA.GOV)
  - [WASHINGTONPTAC.ORG](https://WASHINGTONPTAC.ORG)
- **Puget Sound Grant Writers Association**
  - [GRANTWRITERS.ORG](https://GRANTWRITERS.ORG)
- **Foundation Center**
  - [FOUNDATIONCENTER.ORG](https://FOUNDATIONCENTER.ORG)
  - [KCLS.ORG/PHILANTHROPY](https://KCLS.ORG/PHILANTHROPY)

# Questions?

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## STAY CONNECTED



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