

Federal Grant Funding Opportunities for Special Districts in 2026

February 2026



Your Team



Kristi More

TFG Managing Partner of Grants



Amanda Wylie

TFG Grants Analyst

Agenda

- 2026 Federal Funding Landscape
- How to Get Prepared
- NSDA Grants Program Overview
- Upcoming Brown Bag Webinars

The Federal Funding Landscape in 2026

2025 in Review

Federal funding freeze

- Temporary pauses and delayed agency guidance slowed NOFO releases and award announcements.

Reprioritization of funding by the new administration

- Funding emphasis shifted away from DEI- and climate-focused initiatives toward traditional infrastructure, public safety, and energy reliability.

Federal budget shutdown

- The 43-day shutdown in Fall 2025 disrupted agency operations, delaying application timelines, technical assistance, and post-award processing.

Grants began to open up again

- As appropriations advanced, agencies restarted competitive programs and released delayed NOFOs late in the year.

Water and Environment Funding

USACE Funding Breakdown

USACE receives \$7.2M for Corps Water Infrastructure Financing Program (dam safety/levee improvements) and \$14.1M for Section 219 authorized water infrastructure and related projects.

EPA Grant and Loan Support

EPA supports SRF at \$2.76B and WIFIA at \$64.6M, alongside \$98M for Brownfields cleanup grants, and \$9M to assist rural communities managing PFAS impacts in agricultural settings.



*Special districts should focus on projects offering **multiple benefits** like water supply reliability and groundwater management to meet federal goals.*

Reclamation Funding Landscape

For WaterSMART grants (WEEG, SWEP, EWRP, WS), \$15M is provided (reduction of \$39M from FY 2025). Up to \$5M in “additional funding” is provided for enhancing threatened and endangered fish species habitat.

Cybersecurity and Homeland Security Grant Landscape

Grant Program Extensions

State & Local Cybersecurity Grant Program was extended through September 30, 2026, with execution details pending for FY 2026.

Proposed Funding

Proposed funding levels for popular grant programs increased 5.5% from FY 2025: \$342M for Assistance for Firefighter Grants (AFG), \$342M for Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER), \$337.25M for Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG).



Special districts should prepare cybersecurity investments and governance to enable rapid grant application upon funding finalization.

DHS Operating Status and Impacts

The February 2026 DHS shutdown may delay some NOFOs, affecting FEMA grant timelines and availability.

Workforce, Rural Development, and Transportation Funding

Workforce and Infrastructure Funding

The EDA received \$100M for Public Works and \$39.5M for Economic Adjustment Assistance programs.

Rural Development Funding

USDA Rural Development makes available \$1.25B in direct loan authority, \$650M in guaranteed loan authority, and \$5M for competitive Community Facilities grants supporting essential public facilities in rural communities.

Transportation Funding

The Reconnecting Communities Grant Program was appropriated \$30M (the FY 2025 funding level was \$0) to advance planning or capital construction projects that address infrastructure barriers.



Special districts should consider partnering with other local governments, nonprofits, and private entities to strengthen applications and demonstrate community-wide support.

Grants on the Horizon in Early 2026

DOI BOR – WaterSMART Grants

- Drought Resiliency Projects
- Water and Energy Efficiency Grants (WEEG)
- Environmental Water Resources Projects (EWRP)
- Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse

DoD – Community Infrastructure Grants

- Defense Community Infrastructure (DCIP)

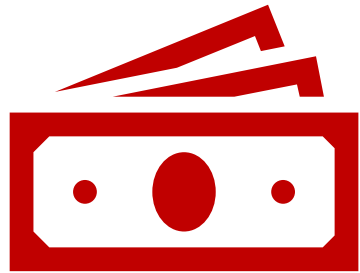
DOT – Transportation Planning & Infrastructure

- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning (TOD Planning)

DHS FEMA – Firefighter Grants

- Assistance to Firefighters (AFG)
- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

What does this all mean?

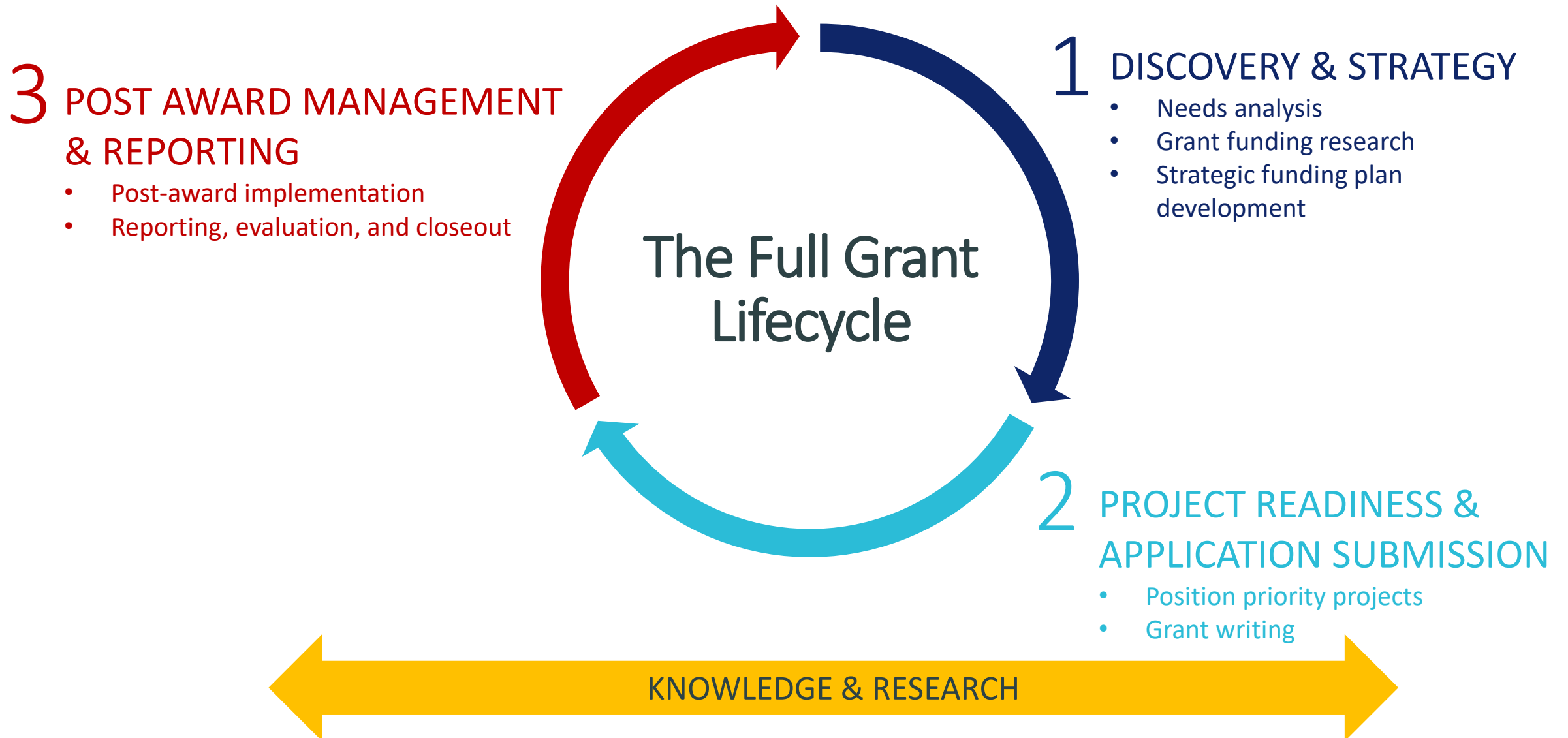


Federal grant funding will continue
to be available to special districts
in FY 2026 and beyond!

*Applicants that focus on project readiness **NOW**
are best positioned to respond quickly when
funding becomes available.*



How Do I Get Prepared?





Discovery and Strategy

Opportunity Tracking

- Stay informed about funding opportunities through federal, state, and foundation sources
- Monitor funding trends and shifting priorities year over year
- Track upcoming and anticipated grant programs, not just what is open today
- Subscribe to the grants.gov daily alerts and agency email notifications, listservs, and funding notices

Strategy Development

- Identify 3–5 priority projects on an annual basis
- Focus on medium- to long-term projects, not urgent needs. Consider their position in your budget.
- Ask and clearly define:
 - What the project will accomplish?
 - Why is it needed?
 - Who benefits?
- Confirm projects align with known funding priorities and eligible uses
- Be realistic and strategic to avoid overextending staff capacity



Project Readiness & Application Submission

Project Readiness

- Gather and organize supporting documentation early: plans, studies, cost estimates, maps, and schedules
- Engage program officers with questions and seek feedback on your project concept
- Answer readiness questions:
 - Do you have a clear scope and timeline?
 - Are costs defined and defensible?
 - Are required partners identified and engaged?

! *Prepare materials before a grant is released to avoid short deadlines*

Grant Writing and Application Submission

- Carefully review the funding opportunity requirements and align your project with the evaluation criteria
- Create an application checklist and ensure all additional forms and attachments are accounted for
- Coordinate internal roles and responsibilities early
- Follow all instructions exactly. Formatting, page limits, and deadlines matter!
- Schedule time for review, approvals, and submission well before the deadline. When possible, aim to submit at least two days before the final deadline.



Post Award Management & Reporting

Post Award Implementation

- Understand that post-award requirements vary by program
- Expect federal requirements related to:
 - Procurement
 - Program administration
 - Recordkeeping and documentation
- Follow the rules outlined in the award agreement and guidance

Reporting Evaluation and Closeout

- Track progress toward project goals and deliverables
- Submit required performance and financial reports on time
- Maintain organized records for audits and monitoring
- Communicate regularly with the funding agency if issues arise
- Plan ahead for grant closeout and final reporting

Knowledge Base and Research

Building a Strong Foundation

- Maintain a centralized internal repository for:
 - Project descriptions
 - Data and metrics
 - Standard narratives and attachments
 - Lessons learned from previous applications and awards
- Document institutional knowledge to ensure organizational continuity

Ongoing Research and Learning

- Use grant research tools to understand eligibility, match requirements, and typical award sizes
- Review successful applications when available
- Stay informed about changing priorities, requirements, and compliance rules
- Treat grant readiness as an ongoing process, not a one-time task



Make sure you are receiving the NSDA Weekly Grants Update and other special alerts!

Grant Funding Research Tools

- Grants.gov
 - Federal grants only
- Federal Register
 - Federal grants only
- Government/Funding Agency Websites and Listservs
 - All grants
- The Foundation Center
 - Foundation grants only
- Guidestar
 - Foundation funding background only (does not list grants)
- Google
 - All grants
- Paid subscriptions



*Sign up for email
notifications and
subscriptions*

NSDA Grant Services Overview

Grant Services Available to NSDA Members

Grants Weekly updates
and grant alerts for high-
priority programs

NSDA Office Hours

Access hundreds of
successful grant
applications

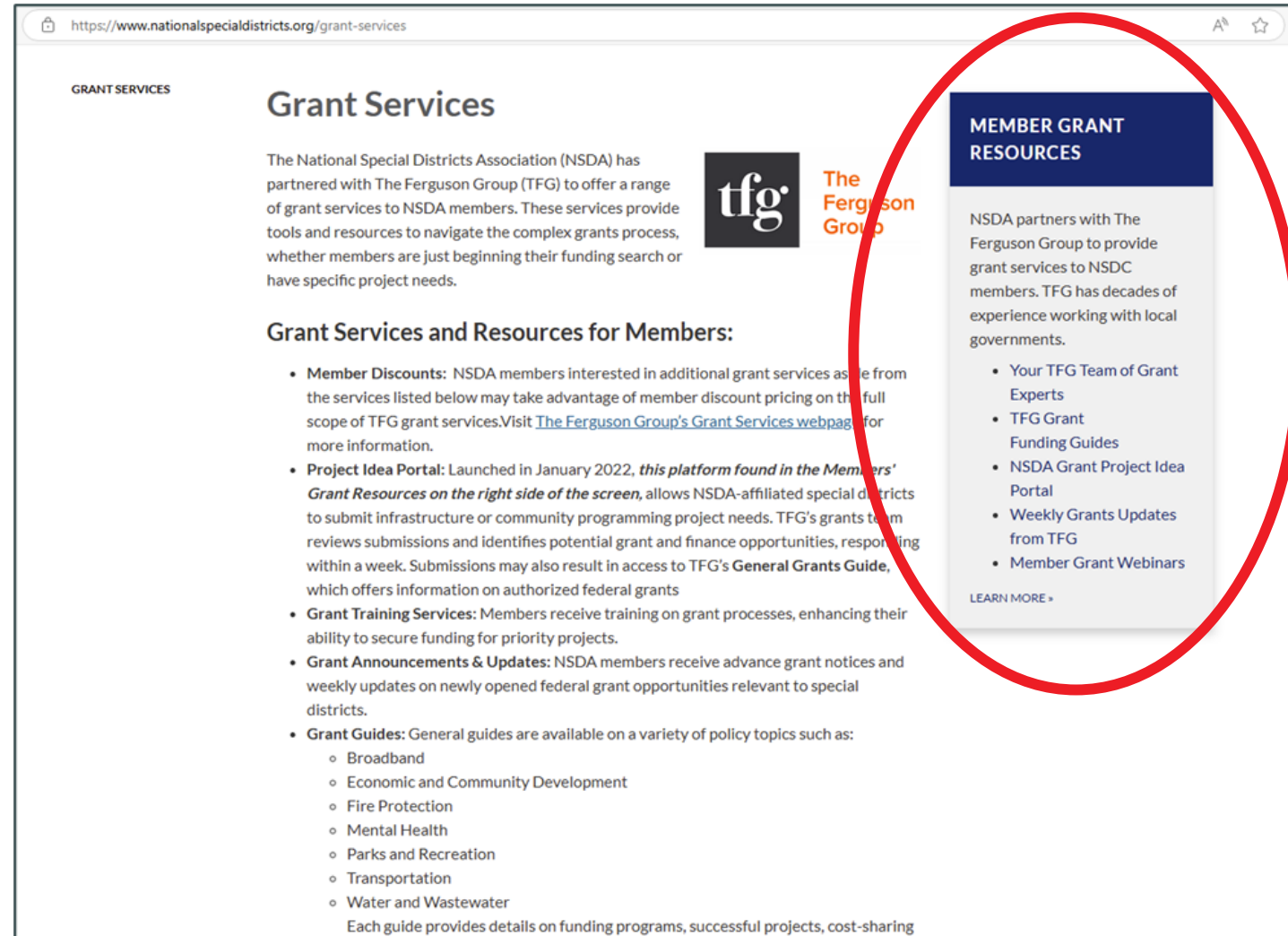
Grants training

Overview of grant funding
options on select topics

NSDA member discount for
full grant services:

- Needs assessments
- Grant writing, editing, and review
- Grant advocacy
- Specialized grants training

NSDA Website



https://www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/grant-services

GRANT SERVICES

Grant Services

The National Special Districts Association (NSDA) has partnered with The Ferguson Group (TFG) to offer a range of grant services to NSDA members. These services provide tools and resources to navigate the complex grants process, whether members are just beginning their funding search or have specific project needs.

tfg The Ferguson Group

Grant Services and Resources for Members:

- **Member Discounts:** NSDA members interested in additional grant services aside from the services listed below may take advantage of member discount pricing on the full scope of TFG grant services. Visit [The Ferguson Group's Grant Services webpage](#) for more information.
- **Project Idea Portal:** Launched in January 2022, *this platform found in the Members' Grant Resources on the right side of the screen*, allows NSDA-affiliated special districts to submit infrastructure or community programming project needs. TFG's grants team reviews submissions and identifies potential grant and finance opportunities, responding within a week. Submissions may also result in access to TFG's **General Grants Guide**, which offers information on authorized federal grants
- **Grant Training Services:** Members receive training on grant processes, enhancing their ability to secure funding for priority projects.
- **Grant Announcements & Updates:** NSDA members receive advance grant notices and weekly updates on newly opened federal grant opportunities relevant to special districts.
- **Grant Guides:** General guides are available on a variety of policy topics such as:
 - Broadband
 - Economic and Community Development
 - Fire Protection
 - Mental Health
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Transportation
 - Water and Wastewater
 Each guide provides details on funding programs, successful projects, cost-sharing

MEMBER GRANT RESOURCES

NSDA partners with The Ferguson Group to provide grant services to NSDC members. TFG has decades of experience working with local governments.

- Your TFG Team of Grant Experts
- TFG Grant Funding Guides
- NSDA Grant Project Idea Portal
- Weekly Grants Updates from TFG
- Member Grant Webinars

[LEARN MORE >](#)



www.nationalspecialdistricts.org/grant-services

Grant Project Idea Portal



NSDA Grants Team will respond within 48 hours to all requests submitted via the portal



NSDA Grant Project Idea Portal

This form is to collect information on priority projects for National Special District Association members seeking funding assistance. Please complete the information requested. TFG Grants staff will then evaluate potential funding sources for the project and set up a meeting to discuss options and opportunities.

* Required

Contact Information

1. Name of Your District *

2. Which NSDA Member Association is your district affiliated with? *

☐ Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts

☐ Association of Water Board Directors - Texas

☐ California Special Districts Association

☐ Florida Association Special Districts

☐ South Carolina Association of Special Districts



Book a consultation!

NSDA Bookings

Consultations

Meet with Amanda Wylie and Kristi More t... [Read more](#)

30 minutes

Booking for **Consultations**

STAFF GROUP

Amanda Wylie, Kristi More

February 25

DATE

< > February 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

All times are in (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) ▼

TIME

3:30 PM

TFG Federal Grant Guides

Grant Guides provide a general overview of federal grant programs for certain types of services

- Cybersecurity
- Drinking Water
- Dam and Hydropower
- Economic Development
- Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure
- Emergency and Disaster Preparation
- Fire Prevention and Safety
- Grid Modernization
- Library and Museums
- Public Facilities
- Public Health
- Parks and Recreation
- Rural Projects
- Stormwater
- Water Ecosystem and Restoration
- Wastewater
- Water Supply

Grant Funding Guide



Subject Specific Grant Guide

Grants to Support Water and Wastewater Projects

This guide identifies funding opportunities released in Fiscal Year 2023 which support water and wastewater projects. These opportunities prioritize evidence-based, cost-effective programs for pressing water supply and water infrastructure issues.

January 2024

Prepared by
The Ferguson Group

1901 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006

202.331.8500

TheFergusonGroup.com



Provides insight into programs offered in the prior fiscal year, including their key priorities and eligibility requirements!

Grant Overview

The purpose of this program is to develop, expand, or strengthen a multidisciplinary approach to better respond to human trafficking. Eligible entities are city or township governments, county governments, federally recognized Native American tribal governments and organizations, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, and state governments.

Program History

	Award Amount	# of Awards
2021	\$21 million	28

Key Information and Tips

Total Funding: \$22 million

Award Range: Varies by program

Match: 25 percent

Solicitation date: March 10, 2023

Proposal due: May 1, 2023

- Funding will be made under three categories: Development of new local or tribal human trafficking task forces, expansion of local or tribal ECM human trafficking task forces, and enhanced support for statewide task forces

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=346741>

FEDERAL GRANT PROFILE



Department: U.S. Department of Justice
Agency: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

FY 2023 Enhancing School Capacity to Address Youth Violence Program

Grant Overview

The Enhancing School Capacity to Address Youth Violence Program supports targeted efforts to address youth violence through implementing evidence-based prevention and intervention efforts in a school-based setting (K-12th grade only). The goals of the program are to (1) reduce the incidence of school violence through improved school safety and climate and (2) prevent youth violence, delinquency, and victimization in the targeted community. Eligible applicants are city, township, and county governments; for-profit organizations, other than small businesses; federally recognized Native American tribal governments and Native American tribal governments; 501(c)(3) and non-501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations; public, state, private, and tribal institutions of higher education; special districts governments; and state governments.

Program History

	Total Funding	# of Awards
2022	\$24,500,000	22

Key Information and Tips

Total Funding: \$22,000,000

Award Range: Up to \$1,000,000

Match: Not required

Solicitation date: March 15, 2023

Application due: Grants.gov May 3, 2023; JustGrants May 17, 2023

<https://oiaa.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/foiaidn-2023>



Awardee Profile

Archway Charter
School of Chester, PA

Amount: \$1,000,000

Year: 2022

Archway Charter School of Chester, PA received funding to expand and enhance peer-support and school-based mental health services that address two objectives: (1) To provide peer support activities that engage alienated youth through restorative practices. (2) To provide school-based mental health services to help students overcome stressors & the trauma of poverty and exposure to violence.

Awardee Profile

Brooklyn Human
Trafficking Task Force

Amount: \$750,000

Year: 2022

The Brooklyn Human Trafficking Task Force will build capacity for law enforcement, victim services, medical, legal, education, and other sectors to address trafficking, including through local and regional efforts as well as nationwide impact and mentorship.

How to Access NSDA Grant Services

1

Submit your funding needs to the NSDA Project Idea Portal

- Easy to use online tool to provide information on specific project needs or general funding inquiries

2

Book time during NSDA Grant Office Hours

- TFG reviews and connects with your district through a personal consultation

3

Sign up for upcoming NSDA TFG Brown Bag Webinars

- Registration found on the NSDA Events Calendar and email notification from NSDA

Upcoming 2026 Brown Bag Webinars

April 16, July 16, September 9



Topics will be informed by you!

Fill out the 2026 NSDA Grants Survey to
indicate your areas of interest

Thank you!

Contact us at
NSDAGrants@tfgnet.com



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