

How to apply for a business grant step by step

Applying for grants takes time. Here's a step-by-step process you can follow.

Step 1: Shortlist grants that match your business. Your first step is to identify at least two to three programs that fit your stage, location, industry, and revenue. Check eligibility carefully. A polished application for a grant you don't qualify for is wasted time.

Step 2: Build a grant tracker. Create a simple spreadsheet that logs each program you're considering. Include the program name, eligibility notes, award amount, deadline, required materials, and your status. A template is included below.

Step 3: Prepare a reusable grant packet. Most applications ask for the same core information. Prepare these materials once and update them as needed:

- A business overview (founded date, structure, location, industry)
- Revenue figures for the past one to two years
- Proof of women's ownership or other eligibility documentation
- A compelling two to three paragraph business story
- A clear use-of-funds statement, and
- A short video introduction (under two minutes – often required)

Step 4: Draft a tight use-of-funds budget. Grant applications often ask how you'll use the funds if you win. Generic answers like "for marketing and operations" don't stand out. Reviewers want to see that you've thought through exactly how the money will be used and why it will move your business forward.

Step 5: Get feedback. Ask your business mentor or a trusted business person to review your application and materials for feedback.

Step 6: Submit early and confirm receipt. Don't wait until the deadline. Early submissions avoid last-minute technical issues, and some programs confirm receipt via email. If you don't receive a confirmation, follow up.

Step 7: Repeat. Much like applying for a job or scholarship, your application may be rejected without any specific feedback. Don't take it personally. Save your application

materials – your business story, use-of-funds budget, and video can often be adapted for the next application.