

FREE GUIDE · OCTOBER 2026

The Small Nonprofit Grant Checklist + 2026–27 Deadline Calendar

Get grant-ready, screen a funder in five minutes, and plan a year of applications.

1. Grant-readiness checklist

The documents funders ask for again and again, on one page. Tick them off once and every application gets easier.

2. 5-minute fit check

Ten yes/no questions that tell you whether a grant is worth writing before you spend a weekend on it.

3. Month-by-month deadline calendar

70 dated deadlines and recurring cycles from funders in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, South Dakota and nationwide, plus 18 programs that accept requests any time.

4. Finding grants with free tools

How to use Grants.gov, ProPublica's 990 lookups and your community foundation without paying for a database.

About the dates. Every deadline in this guide was checked on the funder's own website (listings verified October 18, 2026). Funders change dates, amounts and rules without notice, so **always confirm on the funder's site before you apply**. The current open lists live at fundfinch.com/grants and are updated weekly.

FundFinch is a grant research service for small U.S. nonprofits. This guide is free to share with your board, staff and volunteers. FundFinch doesn't write applications and can't guarantee eligibility or awards.

Grant-readiness checklist

Most funders ask for the same documents. Gather them once, keep them current, and you can answer most small-grant applications in an afternoon.

Legal & tax status

- ☐ IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter (PDF). No letter yet? A signed fiscal sponsorship agreement plus your sponsor's letter
- ☐ EIN and your exact legal name, as the IRS lists it
- ☐ Articles of incorporation and bylaws (current, signed)
- ☐ State good standing / charitable registration, where your state requires it
- ☐ Most recent Form 990, 990-EZ or 990-N confirmation (990-N filers: be ready to send your budget and financials instead)
- ☐ SAM.gov registration and Unique Entity ID, only if you'll apply for federal grants (free; renew every year)

Money

- ☐ Board-approved operating budget for this year
- ☐ A project budget template: expenses, plus other income and in-kind support
- ☐ Last fiscal year's financial statements (income statement and balance sheet)
- ☐ Audit or review report, if you have one (many small funders don't require it)
- ☐ List of current and recent funders, with amounts
- ☐ Bank details for electronic payment, and who can sign agreements

People & governance

- ☐ Board list: names, affiliations, city, and officer roles
- ☐ Short bios of your executive director or lead volunteer and key staff
- ☐ Conflict-of-interest and non-discrimination policies (adopted by the board)
- ☐ Organization chart or a sentence on how the work gets done (staff vs. volunteers)

Programs & results

- ☐ Mission statement in one or two sentences
- ☐ Program description: who you serve, where, how, and how many each year
- ☐ Last year's outcomes: two or three numbers and one short story
- ☐ How you track results (sign-in sheets, surveys, pre/post tests, partner data)
- ☐ Need statement with a cited local data source (Census, county health data, school district)
- ☐ Two or three letters of support or partner commitments you can update quickly
- ☐ Photos you have permission to use

Ready-to-paste boilerplate

- ☐ Organization history (about 150 words)
- ☐ Answers to common questions: need, approach, evaluation, sustainability
- ☐ A one-page summary you can send to a program officer before applying

Systems

- ☐ One shared folder with all of the above, named so anyone can find it
- ☐ A grants calendar with application and report deadlines
- ☐ One person responsible for each application and each report

Tip: update this folder every time your fiscal year closes or your board changes. Out-of-date budgets and board lists are an easy way to look disorganized to a funder.

The 5-minute fit check

Run every grant through these ten questions before anyone starts writing. Print a copy per opportunity, or copy the questions into your tracking spreadsheet.

Funder & program	Link to guidelines	Date checked
Deadline (and time zone)	Amount we'd request	Who owns this

#	QUESTION	WHAT "YES" MEANS	ANSWER
1	Eligible applicant?	We are the type of applicant they accept (501(c)(3), fiscally sponsored, school, government, Tribe...).	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
2	Right place?	We serve their geography: state, county, city or service area.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
3	Right purpose?	Our project matches a priority they name, in their own words.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
4	Right kind of money?	They fund what we need: program, general operating, capital, equipment or capacity.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
5	Right size?	Our request sits inside their stated range or typical past grants (check their 990).	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
6	Organizations like us?	In the last 2–3 years they funded groups of our size and type (990 grant list or grantee page).	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
7	Open door?	They accept unsolicited requests (a private foundation's 990-PF says if it only funds preselected charities).	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
8	Enough time?	The deadline is at least 3 weeks away, or we already have most of the pieces.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
9	Can we comply?	We can meet the match, registrations, attachments and reporting they require.	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐
10	No deal-breakers?	None of their exclusions apply to us (e.g. no religious programs, no salaries, budget caps).	Yes ☐ No ☐ ? ☐

8–10 yes: apply. Put the deadline and a start date on the calendar today.

5–7 yes, or several "?": email or call the funder with one specific question before writing.

A "no" on 1, 2 or 10, or 4 or fewer yes: skip it, or move it to a watch list for next year.

Where to find the answers fast

Questions 1–4, 8–10: the funder's guidelines page or RFP. Questions 5–7: the funder's most recent 990-PF (private foundations) or Form 990 Schedule I (public charities, including community foundations), free on ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer. Part 4 shows you where to look.

2026–27 grant deadline calendar

Deadlines and cycles from funders we verified on their own sites, October 2026 through October 2027. Many are regional, so check the "where" column first.

Always confirm on the funder's site. Dark-green dates are published for the 2026–27 cycle. **Gold dates** follow the funder's stated recurring schedule (for example "quarterly: Jan 1, Apr 1, Jul 1, Oct 1"); the 2027 date may differ, so check before you plan around it. Times and time zones matter: many portals close at 5 PM local time or earlier.

October 2026

Oct 22	Social Justice Fund Northwest 2026 Rural Organizing Grant	Rural, frontier and reservation communities in Idaho, Montana,...	\$10,000–\$25,000 (one- or two-year grants)
Oct 30	Be Outside, Idaho (Idaho Recreation and Tourism Initiative) 2026–2027 grant cycle	Idaho	Up to \$2,500 (reimbursement)
Oct 31	CatCause Annual Grant Program	Nationwide	Up to \$1,500
Oct 31	Oregon Cultural Trust Organizational & Professional Development Grants (fall cycle)	Oregon	Organizational development up to \$2,500;...

November 2026

Nov 2	Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation CARE Fund (nonprofit staff wellbeing)	Contra Costa County, California	Up to \$10,000 (one-time)
Nov 9	Community Sustaining Fund of Thurston County Fall 2026 grant cycle	Thurston County, Washington	Up to \$1,500
Nov 9	Idaho Community Foundation Women's Gift Alliance grants (Kootenai County)	Kootenai County, Idaho	See funder site
Nov 11	M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust Strategic Project Grants (letter of inquiry)	Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington	Requests of \$100,000 or more (total...)
Nov 15	Black Hills Area Community Foundation Nonprofit Staff Investment Grant	Black Hills region, South Dakota	\$5,000 (five grants)
Nov 15	Black Hills Area Community Foundation Community Service Center Trust Fund Grant	Rapid City area, South Dakota	See funder site
Nov 15	SNPT Snip the Cycle spay/neuter grants (Fall 2026)	Nationwide (open worldwide)	\$20,000 available this cycle
Nov 16	Coquille Tribal Community Fund 2026/2027 grant cycle	Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson and Lane counties, Oregon	\$1,000 minimum request
Nov 17	Chobani Community Impact Fund (Idaho Community Foundation) Food & nutrition security grants	Twin Falls and Jerome counties, Idaho	See funder site
Nov 18	Asian Pacific Community Fund Asian Pacific Community Giving Circle grant	Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, San...	\$5,000
Nov 20	First Federal Foundation (First Federal Bank) Winter grant cycle	Idaho communities served by First Federal Bank	Typically \$1,000–\$5,000
Nov 20 (opens Oct 21)	Yolo Community Foundation West Sacramento Endowed Fund for Nonprofits	West Sacramento, California	\$500–\$2,000

Nov 23	Sammamish Rotary Foundation Community Grants	East King County, Washington	\$250–\$2,500
Nov 30	Aberdeen Area Community Foundation Community grants (December meeting)	Aberdeen and surrounding communities, South Dakota	See funder site
Nov 30 (opens Oct 23)	Cottage Grove Community Foundation 2027 Community Grants	Cottage Grove area (south Lane County), Oregon	See funder site
Nov 30	Roundhouse Foundation Small Grants	Rural Oregon	\$500–\$2,500
Nov 30	Roundhouse Foundation Local Food Purchase Grants	Rural Oregon (communities under 40,000)	Up to \$6,000 (pantries, senior centers,...
Nov 30	Roundhouse Foundation Technical Assistance & Professional Development Grants	Rural Oregon	Up to \$5,000
Nov 30	Roundhouse Foundation Capital Grants: building maintenance, new construction, vehicles (LOI)	Rural Oregon	Maintenance up to \$25,000; vehicle up to...
Nov 30	Roundhouse Foundation Library Collections & Programming Grants	Rural Oregon (communities under 40,000)	Public libraries up to \$5,000; school...
Nov 30	Walmart / Sam's Club Spark Good Local Grants (FY27 Cycle 3)	Nationwide (apply to a store, club or DC that serves your area)	\$250–\$5,000

December 2026

December (dates not posted)	Canton Community Foundation (Sioux Falls Area CF) •recurring, confirm Canton-area grants	Canton, SD area	See funder site
Dec 1	Idaho Women's Charitable Foundation 2026–2027 grant cycle	Ada, Adams, Boise, Camas, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette,...	\$20,000–\$35,000 (over one or two years)
Dec 1	Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund 1st quarter 2027 grant round	Lincoln, Tillamook, Linn, Lane, Benton, Polk, Yamhill, Marion,...	See funder site
Dec 4	Spirit Mountain Community Fund Small Grants (letter of inquiry)	Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk,...	Up to \$7,500
Dec 11	Sun Family Foundation Humble Leadership Award	Orange County, California	\$25,000 unrestricted (one-time)
Dec 13	Washington Trust for Historic Preservation Coastal Preservation & Adaptation for Rural Communities (CPARC), Cycle 2	Rural Washington communities of 50,000 or fewer	Up to \$200,000 (about \$350,000 available...
Opens Dec 15	Opal Apples Youth Make a Difference grants (youth-led food/nutrition nonprofits)	See funder site	See funder site
Dec 15	Pacific Power Foundation Safety/Wellness grant cycle	Pacific Power service area: Oregon, central/southeastern...	Generally under \$10,000; most \$2,000–\$5,000
Dec 15	Pacific Power Foundation Small capital request (any cycle)	Pacific Power service area: Oregon, central/southeastern...	Up to \$5,000
Dec 31	Polk County Cultural Coalition 2027 cultural grants	Polk County, Oregon	\$500–\$3,000

January 2027

January	Banfield Foundation Community Care Grants (quarterly windows Jan, Apr, Jul)	Nationwide	See funder site
January	Dollar General Literacy Foundation Adult, Family & Summer Reading grants open (Youth Literacy in spring)	Near Dollar General stores	See funder site
January	Roundhouse Foundation •recurring, confirm Small, Local Food Purchase & TA grants reopen (open Jan – Nov 30 each year)	Rural Oregon	\$500–\$6,000 by program
Jan 1	Wildhorse Foundation Quarterly grant	Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties, OR; CTUIR ceded...	Up to \$30,000 per year
Opens Jan 4	Midco Foundation Community grants (window Jan 4 – Mar 12, 2027)	KS, MN, ND, SD, WI	Up to \$5,000
Jan 4	Spirit Mountain Community Fund Large Grants (letter of inquiry)	Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk,...	Up to \$50,000 program / \$100,000 capital
Jan 5	Henry Lea Hillman, Jr. Foundation June 2027 funding cycle	Portland, Oregon region	See funder site
Reopens Jan 14	Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Quarterly grants (Q1 portal closes when it hits its application cap)	Nationwide	See funder site
Jan 15	The Mockingbird Foundation Music education grants, Round 32 (initial inquiry)	Nationwide (U.S. only)	\$100–\$10,000 (one-time)
Jan 31	Idaho Commission on the Arts Entry Track (emerging arts organizations)	Idaho	See funder site

February 2027

Feb 1	Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Restoration Grants (winter offering)	Oregon	See funder site
Feb 1 (opens Nov 1)	Skagit Community Foundation Annual Grant Cycle	Skagit County, Washington	See funder site
Feb 1 (FY27 pattern)	Walmart / Sam's Club •recurring, confirm Spark Good Local Grants: FY27 Cycle 1 ran Feb 1 – Apr 15	Nationwide (local store/club)	\$250–\$5,000
Feb 5	James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation Standard Grants (inquiry form)	Oregon	See funder site
Feb 15	The Kinsman Foundation Betty Kinsman Fund for Arts, Culture & Humanities	See funder site (Oregon-based foundation)	See funder site
Feb 28	Aberdeen Area Community Foundation Community grants, for the March meeting	Aberdeen area, SD	See funder site
Feb 28	Oregon Cultural Trust Organizational & Professional Development Grants (spring cycle)	Oregon	Up to \$2,500 / \$1,000

March 2027

Mar 1–29	M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust Strategic Project Grants: spring letter-of-inquiry window	AK, ID, MT, OR, WA	Requests of \$100,000+
Opens Mar 15	AAFP Foundation •recurring, confirm Family Medicine Cares USA, free clinics (window Mar 15 – Jul 15)	Nationwide	See funder site
Mar 15	Pacific Power Foundation Education/STEM cycle (incl. youth development)	Pacific Power area: OR, WA, CA	Most \$2,000–\$5,000

Mar 31	Chambers Family Foundation Grant proposals (Lane & Benton counties)	Lane and Benton counties, Oregon	See funder site
April 2027			
April	Banfield Foundation •recurring, confirm Community Care Grants quarterly window	Nationwide	See funder site
Apr 1	Wildhorse Foundation •recurring, confirm Quarterly grant (deadlines Jan 1, Apr 1, Jul 1, Oct 1)	NE Oregon counties; CTUIR area	Up to \$30,000/yr
May 2027			
May 1 (FY27 pattern)	Walmart / Sam's Club •recurring, confirm Spark Good Local Grants: FY27 Cycle 2 ran May 1 – Jul 15	Nationwide (local store/club)	\$250–\$5,000
May 31	Aberdeen Area Community Foundation •recurring, confirm Community grants, for the June meeting	Aberdeen area, SD	See funder site
June 2027			
Opens Jun 1	Roundhouse Foundation •recurring, confirm Library Collections & Programming Grants (open Jun 1 – Nov 30)	Rural Oregon	Up to \$5,000
Jun 15	Pacific Power Foundation •recurring, confirm Community Enhancement and Environmental Respect cycles	Pacific Power area: OR, WA, CA	Most \$2,000–\$5,000
Opens Jun 15	The Mockingbird Foundation •recurring, confirm Music education grants: inquiry form opens (closes Jan 15)	Nationwide	\$100–\$10,000
July 2027			
July	Banfield Foundation •recurring, confirm Community Care Grants quarterly window	Nationwide	See funder site
Jul 1	Wildhorse Foundation •recurring, confirm Quarterly grant	NE Oregon counties; CTUIR area	Up to \$30,000/yr
August 2027			
Aug 1 (FY27 pattern)	Walmart / Sam's Club •recurring, confirm Spark Good Local Grants: FY27 Cycle 3 ran Aug 1 – Nov 30	Nationwide (local store/club)	\$250–\$5,000
Aug 31	Aberdeen Area Community Foundation •recurring, confirm Community grants, for the September meeting	Aberdeen area, SD	See funder site
September 2027			
Sep 15	Pacific Power Foundation Arts/Culture cycle	Pacific Power area: OR, WA, CA	Most \$2,000–\$5,000
Sep 30	Chambers Family Foundation •recurring, confirm Proposals complete by Sep 30 for the next funding meeting	Lane & Benton counties, OR	See funder site
October 2027			
Oct 1	Wildhorse Foundation •recurring, confirm Quarterly grant	NE Oregon counties; CTUIR area	Up to \$30,000/yr

Any time of year: rolling and monthly programs

The Ford Family Foundation: Good Neighbor Grants. Always open; decisions in 6–10 weeks. Rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, CA.

The Ford Family Foundation: Technical Assistance Grants. Always open; decisions in 6–10 weeks. Rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, CA.

South Dakota Community Foundation: South Dakota Fund grants (letter of inquiry). Letters of inquiry accepted all year; LOI reply in about 15 business days. South Dakota (statewide).

Ben B. Cheney Foundation: Letter of inquiry (project grants). No deadlines; letters of inquiry accepted all year. Requests under \$15,000 can be decided in 1–2 months. Certain communities in Washington, Oregon and far northern....

James F. & Marion L. Miller Foundation: Fast Track Arts Grants. Apply any time; decisions in 6–8 weeks. Oregon.

Ability Central: California Community Impact Grants. Rolling review; decisions within 90 days. California (projects serving people in California).

The Awesome Foundation: \$1,000 micro-grants (local chapters). Rolling; most chapters decide monthly. Nationwide (apply to a chapter near you; chapters worldwide).

The Pollination Project: Daily Grants (seed grants). Rolling applications. Nationwide (open worldwide).

Costco Wholesale: Charitable contributions (warehouse donations and grants). Rolling; one application per fiscal year (Sep–Aug). Nationwide (communities where Costco does business).

Wildhorse Foundation: Rapid Response Grant. No deadline. Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties, OR; CTUIR ceded....

Idaho Humanities Council: Action Grants. Due the 1st of each month; decisions usually within 2 weeks. Idaho.

John T. Vucurevich Foundation: Grant inquiry (Rapid City area). No deadline; applications accepted year-round and staff set a timeline. Rapid City area, South Dakota (some neighboring communities).

NorthWestern Energy: Charitable Giving program. Local committees review requests year-round; reply in about 12 weeks. NorthWestern Energy service territory (Montana, South Dakota,....

Black Hills Energy: Charitable Giving Program (South Dakota). Apply any time, at least 6 months before your event; decisions take up to 120 days. Black Hills Energy service territories (incl. South Dakota; also....

First Interstate BancSystem Foundation: Community grants (branch-recommended). Requests reviewed monthly; no deadline. Communities First Interstate Bank serves.

Kroger Co. Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation: Foundation grants. Reviewed quarterly; see funder site. Nationwide (see funder site).

Albertsons Companies Foundation (Nourishing Neighbors): Innovation Incubation Fund RFP. No fixed deadline; reviewed monthly (invitation code: InnovationSpark). Nationwide (see RFP).

Banfield Foundation: Disaster Relief Grants. Applications accepted any time. Nationwide.

Source links for every listing are on the matching pages at fundfinch.com/grants/ (state, national, corporate and under-\$10,000 lists).

How to find grants with free tools

You don't need a paid database to build a good prospect list. These free, public sources cover most of what a small nonprofit needs.

- 1 **Start with your community foundation.** Most regions have one, and many run grant programs for local nonprofits or manage donor funds that give locally. Find yours with the Council on Foundations' [Community Foundation Locator](#), then read its grants page and ask the program officer which other local funders they'd suggest.
- 2 **See who funds groups like yours: ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer.** At projects.propublica.org/nonprofits you can open any foundation's filings for free. On a private foundation's Form 990-PF, Part XIV, line 3 lists the grants it paid (recipient, purpose, amount). Line 2 has a box the foundation checks if it only gives to preselected charities and doesn't accept unsolicited requests. Community foundations and other public charities report grants over \$5,000 per recipient on Schedule I of Form 990. Try the full-text search for your town plus your cause ("Bend" "food pantry") to find funders that already give nearby.
- 3 **Check federal grants on Grants.gov.** Grants.gov is free to search; filter by eligibility ("Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status...") and save searches. To apply, your organization must first register in [SAM.gov](#) (free) and get a Unique Entity ID. Grants.gov says to allow up to 10 business days for SAM registration to become active, and the registration must be renewed every year. Start early.
- 4 **Use Candid for free at a library.** Candid's foundation database is a paid product, but its partner locations (often public libraries) offer free access. Find one at candid.org/find-us.
- 5 **Verify status and names.** The IRS [Tax Exempt Organization Search](#) confirms a funder's (or your own) exempt status and has copies of filed returns.
- 6 **Ask locally.** Your state association of nonprofits (find it via the [National Council of Nonprofits](#)), United Way, Rotary and other service clubs, and businesses with local branches (banks, utilities, grocers) often know who funds what in your area.

A 30-minute weekly routine

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|--|--|
| ☐ Run your saved Grants.gov search | ☐ Run any new lead through the 5-minute fit check |
| ☐ Check your community foundation's grants page | ☐ Add deadlines and "start writing" dates to the calendar |
| ☐ Look up one new funder's 990 grant list | ☐ Update the readiness folder if anything changed |

Want the short list done for you?

FundFinch researches funders for small nonprofits: we check foundation 990s and funder websites and send the open opportunities that fit your mission, budget and location, each with its source and deadline.

Free mini-report

Your top 3–5 opportunities.

Request yours

Free weekly alert

5–10 verified open grants every week. fundfinch.com/guide

Free deadline lists

By state, national, corporate and under \$10K.

fundfinch.com/grants

Paid plans when you want more: Starter \$49/month, Plus \$99/month, or a one-off full report for \$149. Details at fundfinch.com.