

GUIDE TO FINDING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EFFORTS



A Guide from the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice

The [Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice](#) (EJ IWG) includes several federal agencies and White House offices that increase local community capacity to promote and implement innovative and comprehensive solutions to environmental justice issues. More information about the EJ IWG can be found [here](#). A goal of the EJ IWG is to provide greater public access to federal information and resources, and this guide is part of that effort. This guide shares tips on using [beta.Sam.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#) to search for federal assistance and help find the most relevant information.

[Beta.SAM.gov](#) is hosted by General Services Administration and provides detailed, public descriptions of federal assistance listings. You can use [beta.SAM.gov](#) as a first step in looking for assistance listings across all government agencies to form a “big picture” of potential funding options. This [video](#) shows more information on it.

Once you find a listing that you are interested in on [beta.SAM.gov](#), you need to follow up with that specific agency using the contact information provided or link to the listing on [Grants.gov](#). [Grants.gov](#) is hosted by the Office of Management and Budget and provides a centralized location for grant seekers to find and apply for federal funding opportunities. The [Grants.gov](#) system houses information on over 1,000 grant programs and vets grant applications for [federal grant-making agencies](#).

Did you know?

The federal government provides assistance for several environmental, educational, health care, research, infrastructure, economic development and other programs and projects through grants, loans, scholarships, insurance and other types of financial assistance. The [Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice](#) (EJ IWG) created this guide to help environmental justice stakeholders know where to start looking for these opportunities. It leverages the wealth of information available through government websites that are free to use.

Tools, trainings and guides from EJ IWG agencies on government resources and specific topic areas are on page 4.

FAQs on Finding Resources

1. Where do I begin?

Visit the beta.SAM.gov website. On this homepage, scroll down to the section “Federal Assistance” and click on the second bullet point, “[Search Assistance Listings](#).” Then scroll down to the section titled, “Eligibility” and click on the arrow pointing down to see the different categories that may apply to you under “beneficiary” and/or “applicant” tabs. When you see a category that may be applicable to you, click on it to highlight it in blue. It should then be added to your search criteria. You can highlight more than one category in your search.

What is the difference between an applicant and a beneficiary? Applicant means who is eligible to apply for assistance. Beneficiary means who will benefit from the assistance. For example, a state or tribal government (applicant) could apply for assistance that would benefit a minority group (beneficiary). Or, a nonprofit organization (applicant) could apply for assistance that would benefit a low-income group (beneficiary).

There are many different categories you can search for as a “beneficiary” and/or “applicant.” Examples are noted in the tables to the right. To see all of the ways you can search for assistance, please visit the beta.SAM.gov website.

While you don’t need an account to look for assistance listings on beta.SAM.gov, it may be helpful to sign up for an account with them to save your searches. For more information, visit their [quick start guide](#), [learning center](#) and/or call their toll-free number at 1.866.606.8220.

BENEFICIARY CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

Government - Federal; Interstate; Intrastate; State; Local
American Indian; Federally Recognized Tribal Governments; Native American Organizations
Minority Group; Black; Spanish Origin; Asian; Other Non-White; Migrant; Refugee/Alien; U.S. Citizen
Low Income; Moderate Income; Pension Recipient; Welfare Recipient; Unemployed
Rural; Major Metropolis; Urban; Suburban; U.S. Territories
Organizations; Nonprofits; Private Institutions
Individual, Family, Women, Children, Senior Citizen, General Public
Physically Afflicted; Disabled
Small Business, Industrialist
Professionals: Health, Education, Scientist, Researcher, Engineer, Architect, Artist, Humanist, Builder, Contractor, Developer, Farmer, Rancher, Agricultural Producer
Specialized Group (e.g. health professionals, students, veterans); Veteran, Service person, Reservist (including dependents)
Student/Trainee; Graduate Student; Education; Preschool; School

APPLICANT CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

Government - General, Federal, Interstate, Intrastate, State, Local
Federally Recognized Tribal Governments; Native American Organizations
U.S. Territories and Possessions (includes institutions of higher education and hospitals)
Minority Group
Organizations/Institutions; Public and Private Nonprofits; Private Organizations, etc.
Specialized Group (e.g. health professionals, students, veterans)



2. There are a lot of results when I check off the categories under “beneficiary” and as an “applicant.” Should I also add in some different types of “keyword” searches to narrow the results? What are some examples of these keywords or phrases?

You can also search with “keywords” under the “keyword tab.” Remember to use quotation marks when typing in a keyword search on a phrase (e.g. “environmental justice”). Examples of keywords may include: Infrastructure - Brownfields - Job Training - Lead - Emergency Response - Community-based - Environment - Underserved - Diversity - Poverty - Underrepresented - Economically Disadvantaged - Homeless - Health Disparities - Environmental Health - Environmental Justice - Vulnerability - Sustainable Development - Health Risk - Health Impact - Place-based - Tribal Nation - Affected Communities - Community Revitalization - Indigenous Population - Minority Community.

3. Can I search only using keywords, such as “environmental justice,” and not check off any boxes under “beneficiary” and/or “applicant”?

You may not see all of the opportunities available if you just do a “keyword” search on “environmental justice.” Different agencies may use different words to describe environmental justice efforts. It may be a good idea to do several different types of searches using the categories under “beneficiary” and/or “applicant” (e.g. minority, low-income, etc.) first. Please see the answer to question 2 for ideas of keywords to search.

4. Do I need to check off any boxes under “type of assistance”?

You can check off boxes under this category to refine your search, depending on what type of assistance (e.g. grant, loan, etc.) you are searching. If you do not check off any boxes in this category, you will see all of the results for all of the different types of assistance that [beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.sam.gov) identifies.

5. Now that I have a list of results from [beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.sam.gov), what do I need to do next?

Once you have a list of results, you will need to click on and look at each listing to follow up with that specific agency to find out more about the opportunity. The agency’s contact information is provided on the bottom of the [beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.sam.gov) listing. If the opportunity is a grant, you can also link directly to [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) for more information about how to apply for the grant. Please remember that [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) only has information on federal grants. [Beta.SAM.gov](https://beta.sam.gov) provides information on all federal assistance, not just grants.

6. Where can I find tips on grant writing and information on the grant definitions, policies and eligibility?

[Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) has the following links:

[Grants Learning Center](#)

[Grant Events & Trainings](#)

[Getting Started Checklist](#)

[Grant Writing Basics](#)

Other agencies have also created tip sheets and recorded webinar trainings on how to access federal resources:

- The EJ IWG webinar recording “[Increasing Awareness of Federal Grants and Resource Opportunities](#)” provides an overview of the [Grants.gov](#) registration process. It covers how environmental justice stakeholders can search for funding opportunities and apply for those opportunities using [Grants.gov](#).
- The Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) hosted the [Grants Education and Technical Assistance Webinar Series](#) for Tribes, Tribal Organizations, Indian Health, Tribal and Urban Indian Health Programs. You can use this [link](#) to access the presentation slides of this webinar series.
- The US Department of Agriculture created a [Guide to Funding Resources](#).
- The US Department of Housing and Development compiled [Tips on Writing a Winning Grant Submission](#).

7. Are there other tools and guides to help find government resources on specific topic areas (e.g. brownfields, water, air, etc.)?

Yes, please visit EPA’s [Resources for Creating Healthy, Sustainable and Equitable Communities](#) for more tools and guides on government opportunities for specific topics - including brownfields, water, air, renewable energy, and rural communities.

8. Are there any listservs or newsletters that I can sign up for to stay updated on upcoming federal resources, opportunities and trainings?

You can sign up for EPA’s [EJ Listserv](#) for ongoing announcements on federal agency environmental justice resources, opportunities and trainings. You can also sign up for HRSA’s [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy weekly newsletter](#), which includes information on funding opportunities.

9. Are there any other resources that could be obtained from the federal government that could help support an environmental justice effort or project?

Eligible state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations may be able to obtain personal property that the federal government no longer needs. Check out the [Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program](#) at General Services Administration and/or contact a [State Agency for Surplus Property representative](#) in your region for more information. Donated property might qualify as a matching in-kind donation for some grants – you will need to check directly with the organization administering the grant.

10. I recently heard about “Opportunity Zones” as a tool to help economically-distressed communities. Where can I find more information?

Opportunity Zones are a tool designed to spur economic development and job creation in distressed communities by offering incentives for private investors. An Opportunity Zone is an economically-distressed community where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. For general information, please visit [Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions](#). To learn more about the benefits and see if your community qualifies as an Opportunity Zone, please search your state government website and “Opportunity Zones” online (e.g., [California Opportunity Zones FAQ](#)).

To share feedback on this IWG Guide, please send an email to ejstrategy@epa.gov.