

# Registering to Receive Funds From the Federal Government- A Resource for NPOs and Small Businesses

*Audra Davis and Nicole Sibilski, GPC, two leading fundraising and proposal writing professionals in Tennessee, have teamed to create a series of papers that provide realistic, tactical advice on grant funding, innovation, program sustainability, and for profit proposal writing in the midst of the Coronavirus Crisis. The goal of these papers is to help nonprofits and small businesses create and implement strategies that can help their organization survive during these unprecedented times.*

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“Grant readiness” is a term that describes what an organization needs to do to be eligible for grant funding. While “grant readiness” looks different for each organization, registering to be eligible for federal grant funding is essential to applying/bidding for federal grants/contracts. While no federal Coronavirus-related RFPs have been released yet, starting the registration process now is vital to ensuring you'll be ready to apply when opportunities do arise.

**Who should register?:** Any for-profit or nonprofit entity that anticipates doing business with the federal government should register. “Federal grant funding” encompasses a wide breadth of agencies - from Department of Justice to USDA, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and Department of Health and Human Services, just to name a few.

**I'm not a nonprofit. Should I register?:** *Yes.* For profit businesses are eligible to receive certain grants. This includes (but is not limited to): Small Business Innovation grants, Workforce Development and Job Training grants, and a variety of Economic Development opportunities (particularly to rural areas counties). Additionally, businesses that intend to bid on federal contracts will have to have a DUNS and SAM.

**How much does it cost to register?:** Registering your organization to receive federal grant funding is FREE. Any emails or phone calls that require a credit card or down payment to register your business is a scam - hang up or delete immediately!

## **Essential Registrations - DUNS, SAM, and Grants.gov**

*Who Should Apply:* All for-profits and nonprofits that anticipate seeking grant funding or responding to federal bids within the next 4-6 months.

- **Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS number)\*** - To obtain a DUNS number, access the Dun and Bradstreet website at: <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. To expedite the process, let Dun and Bradstreet know that you are a public/private organization getting ready to submit a federal grant application. The DUNS number you use must be registered and active in the System for Award Management (SAM).

*\*D&B assigns a DUNS to each physical location of a business.*

- **System for Award Management (SAM) Registration\*** - To create a SAM user account, Register/Update your account, and/or Search Records, go to <https://www.sam.gov> Once you update your record in SAM, it will take 48 to 72 hours for SAM to complete the validation processes. Once SAM information must be updated at least every 12 months to remain active (for both recipients and subrecipients). The Point of Contact (POC) you enter on the SAM registration will get an email approximately one month prior to renewal. Grants.gov rejects electronic submissions from applicants with expired registrations. TIP - You will need an EIN/TIN to receive a SAM number; verify your SAM/DUNS business name against your state registration. Any discrepancy between the two can delay the SAM and DUNS registration process.

*\*Don't forget about set-aside codes! If your business qualifies, you can receive special consideration for bids or grants. More information can be found at:*

<https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-guide/types-contracts>

- **Grants.gov Registration** - Grants.gov is an online portal for submitting federal grant applications. It requires a one-time registration in order to submit applications. While Grants.gov registration is a one-time only registration process, it consists of multiple sub-registration processes (i.e., DUNS number and SAM registrations) before you can submit your application. You can register to obtain a Grants.gov username and password at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html> . If this is your first time submitting an application through Grants.gov, registration information can be found at the Grants.gov “Applicants” tab. The person submitting your application must be properly registered with Grants.gov as the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for the specific DUNS number. See the Organization Registration User Guide for details at the following Grants.gov link:  
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>
- **eRA Commons Registration (NIH or Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) funding only)** – eRA Commons is an online interface managed by NIH that

allows applicants, recipients, and federal staff to securely share, manage, and process grant-related information. This is a one-time registration separate from Grants.gov registration. In addition to the organization registration, Business Officials and Program Directors listed as key personnel on SAMHSA applications must have an account in eRA Commons and receive a Commons ID in order to have access to electronic submission and retrieval of application/grant information. It is strongly recommended that you start the eRA Commons registration process at least six (6) weeks prior to the application due date. For organizations registering with eRA Commons for the first time, the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must complete the online Institution Registration Form. <https://public.era.nih.gov/commons/public/registration/registrationInstructions.jsp>

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of required registrations, but the minimum requirements to contract with the federal government. Certain opportunities may require additional registrations. If you have any questions about the process or where to find upcoming opportunities, feel free to reach out to us. Good luck to everyone, and take care of each other.

Audra and Nicole

**Nicole M. Sibilski, GPC** has earned over \$32 million in grant awards for nonprofits and small businesses since 2012. Nicole is a Certified Grant Professional through the Grant Professional Certification Institute. Her 2018 presentation at the Grant Professional Association's national conference in Chicago, Illinois, "Protecting your Grant Strategy Against Economic Forces" has been regarded as a leading approach to assessing and implementing grant strategies in a recession. You can reach her at [Nicole@Sibilski.com](mailto:Nicole@Sibilski.com) or 615.707.4042

**Audra Davis Consulting** has worked for more than 20 years in the areas of nonprofit management, fundraising and communications. After 16 years as a fund development professional, Audra launched her practice with a vision for helping nonprofits and organizations obtain increased funding and greater community awareness. As a consultant, Audra has helped clients raise almost \$26 million for services such as affordable housing, foster care, healthcare, higher education, mental health, and research. Audra also serves as an Expert Consultant for the Center of Nonprofit Management. She can be reached at [Audra.Davis@Me.com](mailto:Audra.Davis@Me.com) or 615.496.3716.