



NISN FACILITIES PROGRAM

Screening Funding Opportunities



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A photograph of a person's legs wearing red boots with floral embroidery, standing on a stack of books in a library. The books are stacked vertically, and the person is standing on top of them. The background shows bookshelves filled with books.

BACKGROUND

This slide set is part of a learning module for school leaders about screening potential funding opportunities. For access to other resources and referenced tools, visit the [Indigenous Resource Hub](#) and navigate to the Facilities topic area.

THE SCREENING STEP

The topic of this training resource is screening potential funding, such as grants, in order to select well-suited opportunities to pursue. This process assumes you have already identified some promising leads for funding. Please see other resources on the NISN Indigenous Resource Hub if you have not already identified funding leads.

THE SCREENING STEP

Once you have a batch of leads, or as leads cross your desk, you need to screen them.

Doing this thoroughly and with a realistic mindset is key to successfully growing grant funding; however, you could spend every day of your workweek reading through instructions.

By approaching the process strategically, you will be able to rule out grants that aren't a great fit quickly and understand key information about promising grants early.

SCREENING OPPORTUNITIES: 3 QUESTIONS

Using a set of three guiding questions can help with efficient and strategic screening. These questions work through whether your school is eligible, how well you align with a funder's approach, and how competitive you may be. These are numbered and should be addressed in order to make the best use of your time. If you determine your organization or project is not a good fit, then the subsequent steps can be skipped.

#1

**Can
They...**

#2

**Should
They...**

#3

**Would
They...**

INFORMATION SOURCES

The information used for answering these questions depends on the funder. Common resources include:

- Funding databases and directories
- Funding alert summaries
- Funder websites
- Funder grant guidance/instructions
- Application portals
- Foundation Annual Reports
- Foundation 990 tax returns

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT ELIGIBILITY

First, check your eligibility. Does your organization meet all funder requirements for applicants?

#1
Can
They Fund
Your
School?

ELIGIBILITY

- ✓ Organization tax classification
- ✓ Geography and service area restrictions
- ✓ Minimum age of organization requirements
- ✓ Minimum/maximum organizational budget size

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT ALIGNMENT

Next, assess how well you and your project support the funder's and funding opportunity's aims and how well their funding meets your needs.

#2
**Should
They be
Interested in
Funding
You?**

ALIGNMENT

- ✓ Organization priorities
- ✓ Grant strategies/purpose
- ✓ Award amount range in relation to your needs
- ✓ Project types funded
- ✓ Allowable and unallowable grant funds use
- ✓ Matching funds requirements

THIS QUESTION IS ABOUT AFFINITY

Third, consider factors that affect the likelihood you will be selected for funding among other eligible and aligned agencies and projects.

#3
**Would
They be
Likely to
Fund You?**

AFFINITY

- ✓ Whether funder is a past grantor
- ✓ Likely performance on scoring/review criteria
- ✓ Agency and project similarity to past grantees
- ✓ Type and size of agencies typically funded
- ✓ Board and staff relationships
- ✓ Number of awards and proportion funded

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are some specific requirements to keep an eye out when it comes to school facilities funding:

- Tribal resolution/support may be required for projects on reservation land.
- Government education grants often require support from a Local Educational Agency (LEA).
- Many funders require recipients to be a 501(c)3. This requirement may be overcome by using a fiscal sponsor, partner acting as applicant, or by setting up a foundation to support your school's fundraising.
- Most federal grant programs require nonprofit ownership of school facilities to allow for facilities to be mortgaged or debit financed.
- Capital projects may have requirements for land ownership and site control.

SCREENING WORKSHEET

Use the Funder Screening Worksheet to apply the Can They, Should They, Would They inquiry model.



NISN FACILITIES PROGRAM Funder Screening Worksheet

Background: This document is part of a learning module for Finding Funding. This module is designed to help school leaders understand the types of funding that may be available and to match opportunities to their needs.

Instructions: This worksheet serves as a guide to assess a potential grant program or other type of funding source. When you have identified potential funding, or a "prospect," complete the information areas that follow to help determine whether the opportunity is something you may want to pursue. *The screening questions in the table should be completed from left to right as the information serves to rule out opportunities.* For example, if you learn your school is not eligible for support while completing the first question, there is no need to go on to the second and third screening questions. This tool is designed to help guide your initial research. There are additional considerations that may influence your decision—such as internal capacity to prepare a proposal and communications with a funder. The worksheet is not a substitute for reading through grant guidelines and other information more thoroughly.

Date completed:

Funder and/or opportunity being screened:

Use the space below to address each question for your school's matching opportunities		
1. Can They Fund You?	2. Should They Fund You?	3. Would They Fund You?
<i>Do you meet all eligibility requirements? These may include IRS tax classification, geographic limits, service area limits, organization type, and other considerations.</i>	<i>Does your work align with the funding agency or foundation? Look for things like program priorities and limitations, grant strategies, award range in relation to your needed funding, and funds use restrictions.</i>	<i>Do your school and project resemble previously funded grants? Things to consider include your relationship with the funder, similarity to past grantees, competitiveness of opportunity (# of awards).</i>