



Getting Started

To secure financing for your business, start at the beginning: how much money do you need and for what?

Counselors at your local Small Business Development Center can help estimate your financial needs for both startup and expansion.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers some [tips on estimating startup costs](#).

[Bplans.com](#) has an [online startup costs calculator](#).

Funding for startup and growing businesses often depends on your stage of business and the amount of money you need. The Business Owner's Toolkit offers an [overview of business financing](#) and their [Quick Pick](#) chart identifies funding sources based on your stage of business.

You know how much money you need and the most likely funding source. Now get more information about loans, grants, and other business financial resources.

Grants

- **USDA Value Added Producer Grants** - The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities and increase producer income.

You may receive priority if you are a beginning farmer or rancher, a socially-disadvantaged farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as a family farm, a farmer or rancher cooperative or are proposing a mid-tier value chain. [See details](#).

- **National Association for the Self-Employed Growth Grants** - Worth up to \$4,000 each, NASE Members can apply for small business grants. Small business grants are useful for financing a particular small business need. Past recipients used their growth grants for computers, farm equipment, to hire part-time help, marketing materials, website creation and more.

Growth Grant applicants must be a NASE member in good standing for three months prior to submitting an application (annual members may apply immediately. Monthly members may apply 90 days after joining the NASE.) [Read more](#).

43777 Central Station Drive • Suite 300 • Ashburn, VA 20147
Tel: 703-777-0426 • Fax: 703-771-5363

- **USDA Rural Business Development Grants** - [The Rural Business Development Grants](#) program is designed to provide technical assistance and training for small rural businesses. Small means that the business has fewer than 50 new workers and less than \$1 million in gross revenue. [Check your business address for eligibility](#) and learn more about the application process on the website.
- **Small Business Innovation Research** - [Small Business Innovation Research](#) and [Small Business Technology Transfer](#) grants fund research and development efforts of a high risk nature that may have excellent commercial potential. Apply for SBIR grants if your small business will be engaged in federal R&D, with the potential for commercialization. SBIR grants are offered by agencies such as the [National Institutes of Health*](#), the [Department of Defense](#) and the [National Science Foundation](#).
- **Small Business Technology Transfer** - STTR grants are designed to facilitate cooperative R&D between small businesses and U.S. research institutions, where the outcome has the potential for commercialization. If you are collaborating with a non-profit university or federal lab, you may qualify to apply for SBTT grants from federal agencies such as [NASA](#), the [Department of Education](#), or the [Department of Health and Human Services](#).
- **Other Grants** - Unfortunately, most grants are for nonprofit organizations, not small businesses. Be very careful of advertisements promoting “free money for your business.” These ads can be very misleading, often suggesting that you can receive a list of many grant sources for a fee of a few hundred dollars.

Use the federal government’s free, official website, [Grants.gov](#) rather than commercial sites that may charge a fee for grant information or application forms. Grants.gov centralizes information from more than 1,000 government grant programs to help states and organizations find and apply for grants.