

THE EXCELLENCE DISTRICT — GRANTS & FUNDING GUIDE

Verified: September 13, 2026

Purpose

This guide helps members identify legitimate funding pathways, understand basic eligibility, and avoid wasting time on opportunities that do not fit. Funding programs change quickly, so every application should be checked against the official source immediately before submission.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

1. Start with your actual goal: education/training, business growth, R&D, apprenticeship creation, retail activation, community programming, or another clearly defined need.
2. Confirm whether the applicant must be an individual, business, nonprofit, public agency, educational institution, employer, or other eligible entity.
3. Confirm geography, deadline, matching requirements, allowable expenses, and required registrations.
4. Build the application from the official notice. Do not rely on social-media summaries.
5. Save the opportunity notice, application instructions, submission confirmation, and final application package.

CURRENT / HIGH-VALUE FUNDING PATHWAYS

GRANTS.GOV

Best for: Federal grant discovery.

Official source: <https://www.grants.gov/>

Use: Search by agency, category, eligibility, deadline, and funding opportunity number.

Important: Most federal grants are not general-purpose cash grants for individuals. Eligibility is opportunity-specific.

AMERICA'S SEED FUND — SBIR / STTR

Best for: U.S. small businesses developing technology, scientific, engineering, or commercialization-focused R&D.

Official source: <https://www.sba.gov/loans/additional-funding-opportunities/grants/>

Status: Active federal R&D funding ecosystem; individual agency solicitations control.

Important: This is not a general small-business operating grant. The project must fit an agency R&D topic or solicitation.

DOWNTOWN POP-UP OPPORTUNITY FUND — INVEST ATLANTA

Best for: New retail businesses activating vacant downtown Atlanta storefronts.

Official source: <https://www.investatlanta.com/businesses/small-businesses/fifa-world-cup-2026>

Funding: Invest Atlanta currently describes grants from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Status: Application availability should be rechecked immediately before promotion or submission.

WORKSOURCE ATLANTA WIOA TRAINING FUNDING

Best for: Eligible Atlanta residents and qualifying workers seeking training in high-demand careers.

Official source:

<https://www.atlantaga.gov/government/departments/atlanta-department-of-labor-and-employment-services/wioa-education-and-training-services>

Funding: Eligible participants may receive WIOA-funded career training for programs of up to two years, subject to eligibility and approved-provider requirements.

Related support can include career planning, job search assistance, and certain supportive services.

HOPE CAREER GRANT

Best for: Qualified Georgia students pursuing designated high-demand diploma or certificate programs.

Official source: <https://www.tcsg.edu/free-tuition/>

Funding: For eligible students receiving the HOPE Grant, the HOPE Career Grant can cover tuition in designated high-demand programs.

Examples currently listed by TCSG include construction, welding, industrial maintenance, commercial truck driving, electrical lineman, computer technology, health science, and other high-demand fields.

TOP STATE FOR TALENT PRE-APPRENTICESHIP & APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (TSAP)

Best for: Georgia employers and Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors creating or expanding apprenticeship pathways.

Official source: <https://www.tcsg.edu/tsap/>

Status: Current Georgia apprenticeship-funding initiative. Application rounds and award requirements must be checked at time of application.

PUBLIC SERVICE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (PSAP)

Best for: Georgia state, city, and local public-service employers creating or expanding Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Official source: <https://www.tcsg.edu/psapinfo/>

Funding: TCSG describes contract completion awards of \$5,000 per apprentice for up to 10 apprentices for selected participating employers.

TRADE-TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP EXAMPLE — ATLANTA TECH

WCCI R.I.S.E. to Excellence Scholarship

Best for: Atlanta Technical College students with financial need who are enrolled in eligible industrial-trade programs.

Official source: <https://www.atlantatech.edu/financial-aid-types-of-financial-aid/>

Potential uses include books, supplies, tools, tuition, or certification costs, subject to the scholarship's current terms.

SMALL BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT GRANTS — INVEST ATLANTA

Best for: Eligible small businesses and commercial property owners in seven City of Atlanta Tax Allocation Districts.

Official source:

<https://www.investatlanta.com/businesses/small-businesses/small-business-improvement-grants>

Funding: Up to \$50,000.

Match: Invest Atlanta states awardees must provide a match equal to at least 10% of the grant award.

Geography: Campbellton Road, Hollowell-ML King, Metropolitan Parkway, Perry Bolton, Eastside, Westside, and Stadium Neighborhoods TADs.

Eligible uses include qualifying exterior and interior improvements. Program exclusions and project requirements apply.

Status: Confirm current application intake immediately before applying.

CURRENT OPEN / DATE-SENSITIVE GEORGIA OPPORTUNITIES — VERIFIED SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING — GEORGIA

Official source: <https://dca.georgia.gov/public-notice/2026-05-14/arc-nofo-update>

Eligible applicants: Local governments, water/sewer authorities, and other designated service providers in Georgia's Appalachian footprint.

Funding: Up to \$2,000,000 per project, with applicable match requirements.

Next stated deadline: October 9, 2026, subject to remaining funds.

Eligible projects include certain water, wastewater, stormwater, road, sidewalk, and qualifying bike-path/trail infrastructure projects.

SFY2027 REGIONAL WATER PLAN GRANTS

Official source:

<https://epd.georgia.gov/public-announcements-0/outreach/grants/regional-water-plan-grant-fund-s>

Eligible recipients include specified local, regional, and state governmental entities, authorities, regional commissions, school systems, colleges/universities, and state agencies.

Maximum award: \$150,000.

Recommended first-time applicant meeting deadline: October 9, 2026.

Application deadline: October 31, 2026.

Projects must implement recommendations from one or more Georgia Regional Water Plans and satisfy the program's endorsement requirements.

GEORGIA HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE LOAN REPAYMENT — FY27

Official source:

<https://healthcareworkforce.georgia.gov/loan-repayment-programs/loan-repayment-programs/lrp-faqs>

FY27 application cycle opened August 1, 2026.

Deadline: October 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

There is currently no application fee. Eligibility, service obligations, and award amounts depend on the specific loan-repayment program.

GEORGIA SMALL BUSINESS ROCK STARS — 2027 NOMINATIONS

Official source:

<https://georgia.org/business-support/small-business/georgia-small-business-rock-stars>

Nominations close October 31, 2026.

This is a recognition opportunity, not a cash grant, and should be displayed in the Opportunities section rather than mischaracterized as funding.

GEORGIA SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS & LOANS RESOURCE HUB

Official source:

<https://georgia.org/business-support/small-business/georgia-small-business-grants-loans>

This statewide resource hub points entrepreneurs toward SBA programs, regional commission financing, SBIR/STTR, export-finance resources, and other capital pathways. It is a discovery resource rather than a direct grant program.

FUNDING FIT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Applicant type matches.
- ☐ Geographic eligibility matches.
- ☐ Program purpose matches the project.
- ☐ Deadline is still open.
- ☐ Matching funds are understood.
- ☐ Required registrations are complete.
- ☐ Allowable costs match the budget.
- ☐ Required attachments are ready.
- ☐ Narrative claims are supported by evidence.
- ☐ No unsupported claims or inflated projections are used.
- ☐ A copy of the final submission is retained.

SCAM / QUALITY FILTER

Be cautious when a source:

- Guarantees approval.
- Requires unusual upfront payment to access a supposed government grant.
- Uses a domain or email that does not match the represented agency.
- Claims that every individual or small business automatically qualifies.
- Asks for sensitive information before presenting verifiable program details.
- Cannot produce an official notice, eligibility rules, or application instructions.

RESOURCE CENTER STANDARD

The live Resources Center should display the official source, eligibility, funding range when known, deadline/status, date last verified, next review date, and a clear next action. Expired items should be archived or marked clearly.

This guide is educational. It does not guarantee eligibility, funding, tax treatment, legal status, or award selection.