Eligibility First

Do not apply for a grant your club is not eligible to receive. Check the exact program rules before writing an application, preparing a budget or paying for help.

Three decisions before you start

INELIGIBLE: STOP

The rules exclude your applicant type, tax status, location, project or proposed costs. Move to another opportunity. Do not invent qualifications or use another organization's EIN as your own.

UNCLEAR: ASK FIRST

Send the program contact your legal name, IRS classification, project and location. Request written clarification before preparing the full application. The word nonprofit does not establish 501(c)(4) eligibility.

ELIGIBLE: ASSESS CAPACITY

Confirm the club can meet the deadline, supply the required documents, provide any matching funds and complete the project and reporting. Eligibility permits consideration; it does not guarantee an award.

The club's eligibility and readiness checklist

Applicant	Does the notice explicitly allow our organization type and 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) classification?
Project and place	Do the proposed activity, beneficiaries and service area qualify? Are our proposed costs allowed?
Time and documents	Can we meet the deadline, registrations, supporting documents and partner requirements?
Money and delivery	Can we cover required match, any reimbursement timing and the work promised?
After the award	Who will keep spending records, submit reports and manage applicable monitoring, audit and closeout requirements?

AI instruction to copy

"Review this official grant notice [LINK/TEXT] for our [TAX STATUS] Lions Club in [LOCATION]. Return STOP, ASK FIRST or CONSIDER APPLYING. Cite the exact eligibility language. Check applicant type, tax status, geography, project, costs, deadline, match and required registrations. Identify unknowns. Do not invent qualifications. If eligible, list preparation and post-award obligations."

Updated November 4, 2026. Federal source: Grants.gov: Grant Eligibility.

Federal Grant Research

Grants.gov publishes federal opportunities. Begin with the official notice and the awarding agency's instructions. Federal grants fund defined purposes and have specific applicant rules.

Search first, then read the complete notice

Start at Grants.gov. Use current search tools to narrow by eligibility, agency, category and opportunity status. Confirm geography in the actual notice. Federal listings include separate categories for nonprofits with and without 501(c)(3) status. Selecting a category does not establish that your club qualifies.

Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), including eligibility, allowable activities and costs, match, application instructions, evaluation criteria and amendments. Individuals may apply only where the opportunity permits individuals. A club application must use the proper organization applicant profile.

Registration takes planning

For organization applications through Grants.gov, complete SAM.gov entity registration, obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI), and set up the Grants.gov account, organization profile and authorized submitter. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Federal registration is free. Allow time for verification: it can take weeks or longer. Follow the notice's required submission system.

Examples to research, with eligibility still to confirm

USDA Rural Development - Community Facilities: loans, grants or a combination for eligible essential rural community facilities. Published applicant types include public bodies, community-based nonprofit corporations and federally recognized tribes. Rural population and other requirements apply. A Lions Club's tax status alone does not establish eligibility. Ask the Florida Rural Development office about the applicant and project.

Economic Development Administration (EDA): economic and regional development programs with program-specific applicant rules. Some routes allow nonprofits working with local government. EDA does not provide personal grant money to individuals. Confirm the exact NOFO and its submission system.

An award comes with responsibilities

Budget and project-plan requirements vary. Before applying, identify who will manage records, financial and performance reports, permitted spending, monitoring, applicable audits and closeout. Grant funds must support the approved purpose. Never fabricate qualifications, expenses or results.

Federal grant scam checks and timing

Verify federal opportunities through Grants.gov and official agency .gov sites, using the application system named there. Never pay to release a supposedly won federal grant. A legitimate paid consultant is separate from a government registration or application fee. The federal fiscal year runs October 1-September 30, but deadlines occur throughout the year. A narrower eligibility group does not guarantee less competition or an award.

Official references

Eligibility | Organization registration | USDA Community Facilities | EDA opportunities | Post-award responsibilities | Grant scam guidance | Federal fiscal year

Federal guidance reviewed November 4, 2026. The following directory entries retain their November 2 review date; check current program rules before applying.

Florida Lions Funding & Fundraising Guide

Grants, donations, sponsorships and fundraising tools | Reviewed November 2, 2026

Eligibility key: C3 REQUIRED = a Lions nonprofit applicant needs 501(c)(3) status for the specified route. C4 ACCEPTED = published rules explicitly permit 501(c)(4) organizations, subject to verification. CONFIRM = 501(c)(4) eligibility is not clearly established, varies by program, or needs individual review.

An EIN or nonprofit incorporation alone does not establish 501(c)(3) status. Software access, discounted processing and grant eligibility are separate questions. Donations to 501(c)(4) clubs generally are not deductible as charitable contributions. Source: IRS, Donations to Section 501(c)(4) Organizations.

IRS guidance on 501(c)(4) donations

Funding sources: grants and direct support

Walmart / Sam's Club - Spark Good Local Grants

C3 REQUIRED for Lions applicants | C4 EXCLUDED

Local cash grants of $250-$5,000. Requires Spark Good account, Deed verification and service in the facility's area. CORRECTION: the original handout said C4 clubs qualified; the current program-specific rules explicitly exclude them. Broader Spark Good account access does not establish grant eligibility.

https://www.walmart.org/sg/Join-Spark-Good/program/local-grants

Walmart - Storefront Fundraising

C4 ACCEPTED | C3 also eligible

Permission to fundraise outside a store, not a cash grant. Published rules include Deed-verified C4 organizations. Submit the activity for facility approval; confirm current facility procedures.

https://www.walmart.org/content/walmart-org/en_us/how-we-give/program-guidelines/spark-good-storefront-reservation-program-guidelines.html

Publix - Community Giving

CONFIRM C4 eligibility

Online requests for donations, gift cards, sponsorships, giveaways and program ads. Focus includes youth, education, hunger and homelessness. Public overview does not clearly approve C4 clubs; ask community relations before applying.

https://corporate.publix.com/community/requests

Publix Super Markets Charities

C3-focused route | CONFIRM before a C4 application

Separate foundation channel. Registration guidance references C3 determination letters, but does not clearly establish C4 acceptance. Ask directly. Hunger and housing requests have separate seasonal windows.

https://publixcharities.org/request-support/faq/

Funding Sources, Continued

Program-specific rules take priority over general corporate giving descriptions

Winn-Dixie - Community Giving

CONFIRM C3/C4 requirements for a specific opportunity
Hunger relief and disaster recovery partnerships. The current community page is not a general open-grant application and does not establish C4 eligibility. Ask about a specific local request or partnership.

https://www.winndixie.com/community/

Costco - Charitable Contributions

C3 REQUIRED | C4 not eligible for listed giving program
Supports children, education, health and human services. Current guidelines specify monetary requests only. This updates the original handout's general warehouse-donation description.

https://www.costco.com/charitable-giving-faq.html

Target - GiftCard Donations

C3 REQUIRED for clubs | Accredited schools also eligible
Submit the official request form to a local store with verification documents. Gift cards, not merchandise. Subject to available funding.

https://corporate.target.com/about/purpose-history/communities/grants-corporate-giving

Lowe's - Hometowns / Community Impact Grants

CONFIRM C4 recipient eligibility
Physical renovation of community spaces; nomination is different from recipient eligibility. Public FAQ lists nonprofits, schools and municipalities without clearly specifying C4 acceptance. The 2026 nomination window closed March 20; future rounds are not guaranteed.

https://corporate.lowes.com/our-responsibilities/community-impact/faqs

The Home Depot Foundation - Grants

C3 REQUIRED for cited nonprofit grant routes
Veteran Housing Grants require an established C3 plus substantial housing-development capacity. Path to Pro also accepts qualifying schools and C3 skilled-trades programs. These are specialized programs, not general club fundraising grants.

https://corporate.homedepot.com/page/grants

Team Depot - Volunteer Partnerships

CONFIRM project and C4 eligibility
Volunteer assistance and project partnerships, including veteran and disaster work. Separate from Foundation grant applications; no blanket C4 approval established.

https://corporate.homedepot.com/page/team-depot

Chick-fil-A - Local Operators

CONFIRM with the local operator
Ask about event meals, gift cards, sponsorships or fundraising partnerships. Local operator decisions are separate from national award eligibility.

https://www.chick-fil-a.com/customer-support/who-we-are/giving-back/how-do-i-request-a-donation-from-chick-fil-a

Additional Funding & Local Leads

Check service area, program fit and application windows before preparing a request

Chick-fil-A - True Inspiration Awards

C3 REQUIRED for U.S. nonprofit applicants
Competitive annual grants. The posted 2027 application round is closed. Check the official page for future opportunities and category requirements.

https://www.chick-fil-a.com/true-inspiration-awards/learn-more

Florida Blue Foundation

CONFIRM the specific grant's C3/C4 requirements
Health, food security, mental well-being and healthy communities. The overview does not establish blanket C4 acceptance. Read each request for proposals and ask the Foundation. Corporate contributions are a separate route whose published guidelines require C3 status.

https://www.floridablue.com/foundation/community-investments

Duke Energy Foundation

C3-based grant routes | CONFIRM exact Florida opportunity
Research only opportunities serving Duke Energy communities. Published America250 rules require C3 applicants; that 2026 window is closed. Do not extend one program's rules to every opportunity or assume C4 acceptance.

https://www.duke-energy.com/community/duke-energy-foundation

MIDFLORIDA Credit Union

CONFIRM C4 eligibility
Written requests for money, prizes, giveaways or participation benefiting its service communities. Include event date, attendance and recognition offered. Public guidelines do not state a C3-only rule or explicitly approve C4 clubs.

https://www.midflorida.com/about-us/community/corporate-giving

Local businesses to investigate

McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Subway, Domino's, Pizza Hut, Panera Bread, Dunkin', Starbucks, Aldi, Tractor Supply, Ace Hardware, CVS, Walgreens, Dollar General, Dollar Tree, and local banks or credit unions.

All are CONFIRM leads. They are prospects from the original handout, not verified open grants or confirmed C4-friendly programs. A local franchise sponsorship may have different rules from a corporate foundation grant. Ask about food, supplies, printing, gift cards, event sponsorships or volunteer assistance.

When a program requires a C3

A club may explore working with an eligible Lions foundation or community partner, but the funder must permit that arrangement. The eligible organization must genuinely oversee the funded project and comply with the grant terms. Do not use another organization's EIN as if it belonged to the club.

A question to send before applying

"Our Lions Club is a 501(c)(4), EIN [EIN]. We are requesting [SUPPORT] for [PROJECT]. Does this exact program accept our classification? If not, do you permit an eligible 501(c)(3) partner to lead the project? Please send the current written eligibility requirements."

Tools for Collecting Donations & Running Events

These are fundraising services, not a list of grant-making organizations

Zeffy

C4 ACCEPTED | C3 also eligible
Donation forms, ticketing and other fundraising tools. U.S. eligibility expressly includes C4 nonprofits. Requires an EIN and an organization bank account. No nonprofit platform or processing fees; optional donor contributions support the service.

https://support.zeffy.com/is-my-organization-eligible-to-use-zeffy-8m24r

Donorbox

C3 NOT REQUIRED | C4 use subject to onboarding
Donation forms, recurring giving, event tickets and supporter campaigns. Public product guidance permits nonprofits, individuals and businesses. Confirm payment-provider approval, features and total fees.

https://donorbox.org/product/fundraising-for-nonprofits

Fundraise Up

C4 MAY QUALIFY - CONFIRM | C3 also served
Online donation checkout and recurring giving. Official policy says some C4 organizations may qualify, with additional review or restrictions. Configure receipts accurately.

https://fundraiseup.com/support/501c3/

PayPal - Standard Business / Donation Tools

C3 NOT REQUIRED for general business payments | CONFIRM donation features
Payment collection and website donation tools. Standard account access is separate from charity verification, discounted rates and Giving Fund eligibility. Ask PayPal which features support the club's C4 status.

https://www.paypal.com/us/business/charity-nonprofit-solutions

PayPal Giving Fund - Separate Charity Route

C3 REQUIRED for ordinary Lions nonprofit applicants | C4 not listed
Not the same as using a standard PayPal account. Published rules specify eligible charitable classifications and certain other entities; a C4 club must not assume it qualifies.

https://www.paypal.com/us/cshelp/article/how-do-i-enroll-in-paypal-giving-fund-help219

Give Lively

C3 REQUIRED | C4 not eligible for nonprofit membership
Donation pages, text-to-donate and fundraising campaigns. Membership is limited to eligible C3 public charities and private operating foundations. Platform tools are free; payment and other service fees can apply.

https://www.givelively.org/faqs/application-for-give-lively-membership-an-overview

GoFundMe

C3 nonprofit route | C4: ask about Organization fundraiser route
The nonprofit database and Nonprofit Pages do not support C4 clubs. A separate Personal or Organization fundraiser route can support entities outside the charity route, subject to terms and payout verification. Confirm the club's setup and do not promise a charitable tax deduction.

https://support.gofundme.com/hc/en-us/articles/203603984-Choosing-a-fundraiser-type

Event & Campaign Platforms

CONFIRM means published material reviewed did not establish explicit C4 approval

Eventbrite

C3 NOT REQUIRED for general event ticketing
Event listing, registration, paid tickets and check-in. Free tickets have no ticketing fees; paid tickets generally do. Account/payment verification and event rules still apply.

https://www.eventbrite.com/help/en-us/articles/193833/

32auctions

CONFIRM C4 and payment setup
Online silent auctions for donated baskets, services and experiences. Free setup, optional upgrades and online-payment fees. Ask whether the intended club and payment account qualify.

https://www.32auctions.com/silent-auctions/free-silent-auction-software

OneCause

CONFIRM C4 eligibility
Paid event fundraising software for auctions, ticketing, sponsors, guest management and checkout. Request written eligibility and a full quote for the club's event.

https://www.onecause.com/plans/

RallyUp

CONFIRM C4 eligibility for each fundraising activity
Campaign and event tools, including auctions and donation appeals. Verify payout requirements and activity availability. A platform feature alone does not establish permission to run a raffle.

https://rallyup.com/pricing/

Funraise

CONFIRM C4 eligibility
Donation forms, campaigns, recurring giving and donor records. Requires nonprofit/NGO status; public pricing FAQ does not clearly confirm C4 acceptance. Free monthly plans can still carry transaction/platform fees.

https://www.funraise.org/pricing

Classy / GoFundMe Pro

CONFIRM C4 contract eligibility and feature restrictions
Classy is now GoFundMe Pro. Provides nonprofit campaign software. Do not assume its contract rules match personal GoFundMe campaigns; related Nonprofit Pages and GoFundMe peer-to-peer features exclude C4 organizations.

https://prosupport.gofundme.com/hc/en-us/articles/37288737656091-Introducing-GoFundMe-Pro

Cost comparison for any platform

Ask for subscription fees, platform fees, processing fees, optional donor tips, auction upgrades and payout timing. A free account does not necessarily mean every transaction or feature is free. Confirm eligibility separately for software use, payment processing and charity discounts.

Donor Records, Grant Tracking & AI

Donor-management systems organize relationships; grant tracking does not automatically include finding grants

DonorDock

CONFIRM C4 eligibility
Donor records, communications and online giving. Its help guidance allows C3 or a similar eligible tax-exempt classification but does not explicitly establish C4 acceptance.

https://helpcenter.donordock.com/kb/guide/en/international-support-c2cveWRXKj/Steps/1896742

Bloomerang

CONFIRM C4 and payment eligibility
Donor management, fundraising, volunteer tools and reporting. Ask separately about software access and online-giving verification.

https://bloomerang.com/faq

DonorPerfect

CONFIRM C4 and payment eligibility
Donor database, gifts, communications, reporting and donation forms. Obtain approval for the club's classification and intended features.

https://www.donorperfect.com/

Network for Good / Bonterra

CONFIRM C4 and plan eligibility
Fundraising and donor-management software. Its Que grant tools can match opportunities and help draft proposals; confirm plan access and coverage. This is distinct from any similarly named donation-disbursement entity.

https://www.bonterratech.com/product/network-for-good

Virtuous

CONFIRM C4 and payment eligibility
Donor management with communications, online giving and automated engagement. Confirm requirements before contracting.

https://virtuous.org/software/crm/

Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT

CONFIRM C4 and payment eligibility
Comprehensive donor and fundraising records with reporting and AI features. Confirm suitability, costs and payment-service rules for the club.

https://www.blackbaud.com/products/blackbaud-raisers-edge-nxt

Little Green Light

CONFIRM C4 and payment eligibility
Donor and gift records, acknowledgments and tracking grant proposals/tasks. It helps manage requests already identified; do not present grant tracking as a grant-search database.

https://www.littlegreenlight.com/features/

Your Club's Next Steps

A repeatable process for researching, checking and requesting support

1. Confirm the applicant

Record the club's legal name, EIN and actual IRS classification. If using a separate foundation, use its records and authorized representative. Gather verification documents, bank information, a project budget and service-impact facts.

2. Search with the club's status included

"I represent a Lions Club in [CITY/COUNTY], Florida. We are a 501(c)(4), not a 501(c)(3). Our project is [PROJECT], serving [PEOPLE], and we need [AMOUNT/ITEMS]. Find local grants, business donations and sponsorships that explicitly accept our classification. Put C3-only options in a separate section. For each result show official source, support type, service area, eligibility language, deadline, application method and unresolved questions. Do not invent programs or infer C4 eligibility from the word nonprofit."

3. Verify the exact program

"Using these official guidelines [PASTE TEXT OR LINK], determine whether our 501(c)(4) Lions Club can apply directly. Quote the relevant eligibility language. Distinguish program access from grant eligibility, and nomination from recipient eligibility. If unclear, label CONFIRM and draft a short question to the funder."

4. Prepare a factual request

"Draft a one-page request to [BUSINESS] for [PROJECT]. We request [SUPPORT] to serve [PEOPLE/AREA]. Use our actual budget [BUDGET] and results [FACTS]. Leave placeholders for missing facts. State our 501(c)(4) status accurately and do not describe donations as tax-deductible charitable contributions."

5. Track and follow up

Suggested columns: Organization/program | Official source | C3/C4 rule | Cash/goods/service | Contact | Deadline | Amount requested | Date submitted | Follow-up | Decision | Reporting due.

Source and review notes

This guide combines the supplied October 2026 directory and the 19 platforms in the handwritten lists. Official program and vendor links appear with each entry. Eligibility pages were reviewed where available; CONFIRM entries intentionally record unresolved eligibility, not approval or rejection. Broad marketing pages are insufficient evidence of C4 acceptance. Current program-specific rules should govern when general pages conflict.

The most significant correction is Walmart Local Grants: C4 organizations are currently excluded, while eligible verified C4 clubs may request storefront fundraising space. Costco's current giving rules also specify C3 status and monetary requests only. No listing guarantees funding, platform approval or a future application round.

Prepared for Florida Lions Clubs AI Grant-Finding Training | November 2, 2026