

Google Ad Grants Strategy for Nonprofits

Free ad spend only helps when searches, ads, landing pages, and tracking all work together.

At a glance: Google Ad Grants can provide qualifying nonprofits with up to \$10,000/month in text-based Google Search ads. The hard part is turning search demand into real actions: donations, volunteer signups, program inquiries, calls, event registrations, or applications. **Simple rule:** do not build campaigns around what the nonprofit wants to say. Build them around what the right person is searching for and what next step they should take.

The Strategy Framework

1. Define the real goal What it means: Pick the action the grant should support, not just traffic. How to do it: Choose one primary goal per campaign: donate, volunteer, register, call, apply, inquire, or download.	2. Map search intent What it means: Search intent is the reason behind the search. A donor, volunteer, and person needing help use different words. How to do it: List the audiences, write the phrases they would type, then match each phrase to the right page and action.	3. Build mission-based campaigns What it means: Campaigns should reflect the nonprofit's actual programs and services. How to do it: Group keywords by theme: donations, volunteers, adoption, programs, events, resources, or local services.
4. Match ads to landing pages What it means: The page after the click must answer the search quickly. How to do it: Volunteer searches go to volunteer pages. Donation searches go to donation pages. Program searches go to program pages.	5. Track meaningful conversions What it means: A conversion is the action that shows the visit mattered. Vanity clicks are not enough. How to do it: Track donations, forms, calls, signups, registrations, applications, and other real next steps.	6. Review and optimize What it means: Ad Grants is not set-it-and-forget-it. Google rules and campaign performance need attention. How to do it: Check search terms, disapprovals, CTR, low-volume keywords, landing pages, and conversion data monthly.

Quick Example: Mapping Search Intent

Audience	What they may search	Send them to	Track
Donor	"donate to animal shelter"	Donation page	Donation or donate click
Volunteer	"volunteer opportunities near me"	Volunteer signup page	Form submission
Person needing help	"free community resources"	Program/resource page	Call, form, or download

Launch Reality Check

Before You Launch

- Verify Google for Nonprofits eligibility and Ad Grants activation.
- Make sure the site explains the mission and has functional pages.
- Create specific donation, volunteer, program, event, and resource pages.
- Install GA4/GTM and test conversion tracking before judging performance.
- Make sure someone owns review, cleanup, and compliance.

The Hard Parts

- Approval can take patience if website or eligibility issues slow things down.
- Policy and disapproval messages are not always obvious.
- Some keywords will be too broad, too narrow, low-volume, or limited.
- Tracking gets technical when donations, forms, calls, and third-party tools are involved.
- Traffic can look good but do little if the page or follow-up is weak.

Strategy check: If the search, ad, landing page, conversion action, and follow-up do not connect, the grant will leak value. Free ad spend does not fix a broken digital experience - it exposes it.

Need help turning Google Ad Grants into a real nonprofit growth channel?

Let's identify your biggest growth opportunities. | psppcompass.com | solutions@psppcompass.com | (720) 263-2711

Sources: Google Ad Grants FAQ and Google for Nonprofits account management / website policy pages. Program details can change; review current Google policies before applying or managing campaigns.