NGS

SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Grant Funding for Window Films from NGS

Intelligence provided by Grants Office

INTRODUCTION

The number of school shootings and instances of hate crimes each year is increasing. As government and school officials, first responders, and emergency managers respond to these emergencies, they are likely turning to solutions like Security Window Film from NGS to help reduce visibility and delay forced entry, thus providing first responders with a few extra, crucial minutes.

With global temperatures on the rise, building managers are searching for sustainable solutions. NGS Solar Control Window Film solutions which come in dual function safety + solar can help to reduce an organization's energy consumption, reduce its carbon footprint, and increase cost savings all while improving safety by protecting people and property from intruders or airborne debris.

So how can your organization keep your communities and the planet safe, and how can you fund these initiatives?

Most grantmakers will fund items like Window Films from NGS as part of a more comprehensive approach to solving a particular problem, such as increasing the physical security of a building, protecting its inhabitants, reducing damage caused by manufactured and natural disasters, or improving energy efficiency. It is up to the applicant to determine how these items will meet their goals effectively. NGS window film solutions can become essential project enablers, empowering agencies to pursue broader objectives across their organization.

GETTING YOUR ORGANIZATION GRANT READY

Grants are tools used to fund ideas, projects, needs, and/or services. Most grants are funded by federal, state, or local governments or foundations. Grant funding can be just what you need to launch a new program or project. Successful grant writing and management begins with being prepared. Building a strong grants team and identifying the right grants at the right time is the basis of starting the grant process on the right foot, and hopefully a few feet ahead of others.

Assemble your Team

Recruiting your grants team is one of the most important parts of grant seeking. Your team should include, but not necessarily be limited to (based on the grant requirements):

· a project lead/manager

· a grant writer (if you do not have someone, there are contractual options)

· a member of your finance team

· at least one member of each of the departments/divisions that will be part of the grant project or program if awarded
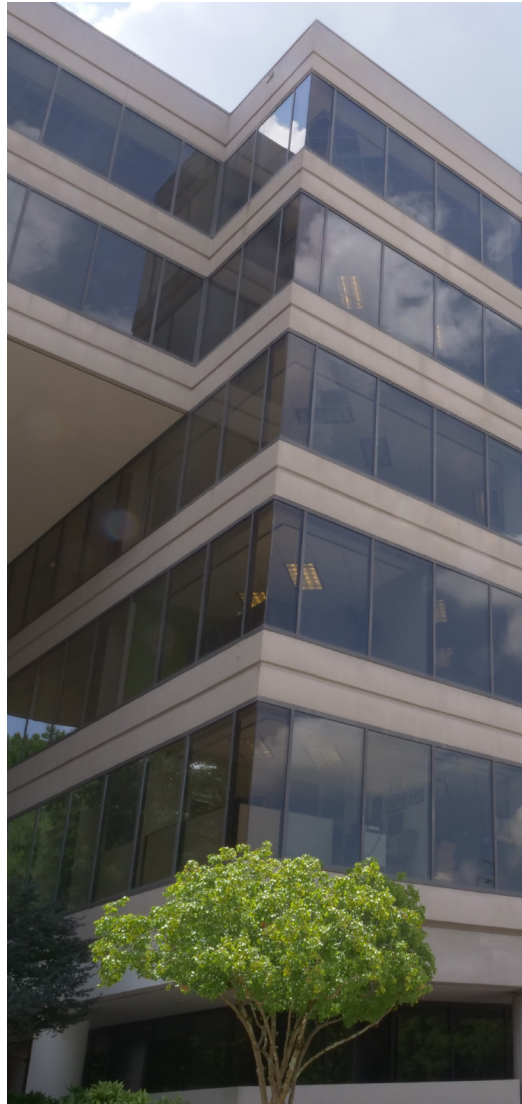
You will also need the approval of appropriate management staff before applying for a grant so is important to include them in your team as well or at least keep updated as you plan. Smaller organizations may require team members to wear multiple hats. Your grants team may also sometimes include outside partners.

Planning for Partnerships

If your proposed project or desired grant program requires outside partnerships, make sure to invite and include these organizations in the planning process as soon as possible. Grantors expect partners and partnerships to be on-board, approved, and involved before the award, if included in the grant application.

Well-thought-out and practical partnerships can strengthen a program or project and increase the approval chances of a grant. Grantors are not only looking for projects or programs that align with the grant but also ways in which their granted funds will help the greatest number of individuals. Partnerships can be an excellent way to achieve this goal. Partnerships also help to spread the workload of a grant project and incorporate additional knowledge, expertise, manpower, and resources.

Partnerships should be documented throughout the application and in the attachments, such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or sub-contract. This helps identify the roles, responsibilities, and resources of each partner involved in the grant and indicates that the partners are involved, approved, and committed to the grant if awarded the grant.

NGS Installed 260,000 square feet of 3M Prestige 40 exterior solar film on this building in Atlanta, Georgia.

Choosing the Right Grant

Now that you have your team assembled, it is time to start looking for the right grant. There are several places to look for grants, and knowing where to go based on your priorities is key.

- Are you looking for a federal, state, or local government grant; or something simpler and more local, such as a foundation grant?

- Are you a nonprofit or for-profit, private or public entity?

- What is your problem or project/program idea?

- How much funding will you need?

- What is the program/project timeline and when would you like it to start?

- Do you have a grant writer, or will you need to hire or contract with one?

- How much time can you and your team devote to the application process?

Asking yourself these questions can help determine what type of grant to apply for and where to look.

Government Grants

Government grants, compared to privately funded ones, tend to require more time, have set timelines and funding limits, and are more competitive. The desired program or project structure to be funded through a government grant is predetermined and you, as the applicant, must explain how your project or program will align with the funder's structured expectations. Will the timeline and funding set meet your needs? Do you have a competitive and well-thought-out project or program proposal? Do you have a team in place to help write and execute the grant if awarded?

Government grants are those opportunities offered by federal, state, or local government agencies. The money to host these grants comes from taxes or other publicly generated revenue, thus government grants are often more prescriptive in project/program design and restrictive regarding allowable project/program costs.

If government grants sound like a good fit for you and your project/program, there are several places to look for opportunities. Federal grants are listed on Grants.gov and their departmental websites. You can also subscribe to grant alerts from grants.gov, individual departmental newsletters/alerts, association newsletters, or web searches. States and local government agencies also offer grants. Each state is different; however, checking applicable state/local department pages, registering for alerts, grant portals, and state or local associations newsletters, email alerts, and web searches are the most common grant search options. Networking and establishing relationships with your regional government or agency representatives is also a terrific way to learn about funding opportunities.

Private Foundation Grants

If your project/program idea or timeline does not align with an open grant opportunity or you do not have the experience or staffing to devote towards the pursuit of a government grant application, Private grants may be a better option. There are several ways to search for private foundation grants. Look for foundations that align with your mission and are committed to the same areas of interest, demographics, and projects that you are. It is strongly encouraged that you start locally. Local foundations allow the applicant to seek funding from a smaller pool of applicants and with a foundation that is committed to funding and bettering their (i.e., your) community. Chances are high that they are already familiar with your organization and its impact as well.

Private grants are those opportunities offered by foundations. These grant making foundations are diverse. Most grant making foundations are either corporate, individual or familial, or community-based. The money to host these grants comes from business profits, donations or fundraising, membership fees, or other personal wealth methods. As a result, private grants are often less limiting in allowable or unallowable project/program costs or design.

You may already know of several local foundations. If not, look for recently funded projects in your area and how they were funded. Watch local social media accounts and the press for ribbon cuttings or award presentations, including 'big check' photo opportunities. Ask your board members or local community groups if anyone also sits on a local foundation board. If foundation grantmakers are limited in your backyard, expand your search. Look for foundations that are committed to the same causes or professional affiliations/associations as your organization. Foundations can also be regional, statewide, nationwide, or global. Web searches, paid funder prospecting reports, and grant search subscription services can also help identify additional foundation grant sources.

TOP FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The federal government provides funding for various safety and environmental initiatives. We have provided a few examples to help get you started on your funding journey.

For School Safety Applications

COPS School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP)

Funded through the Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act of 2018 (STOP School Violence Act of 2018), the School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) provides awards to improve security at schools and on school grounds through evidence-based school safety programs.

Eligible applicants, including states, local government units, Indian tribes, school districts (including public charter schools and school districts with a single school), school boards, and law enforcement agencies, may use funds to improve building security by installing entry control and deterrent measures. A lower-cost solution, like installing security window film on all first-floor windows, will deter transgressors and help protect the building's inhabitants.

In 2023, $73,000,000 was available, with individual awards amounting to $500,000. A minimum 25% match is required. Approximately $1,000,000 of the available funding is reserved for microgrants for school districts, including rural, tribal, and low-resourced schools. Microgrant award requests must be for $100,000 or less. The application deadline was May 10, 2023, but this annual program opens every spring, so potential applicants can start planning their 2024 proposals now.

To learn more about this grant, visit: https://cops.usdoj.gov/svpp.

For Nonprofit Safety Applications

Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) provides funding support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements to nonprofit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) set priorities annually to help ensure the appropriate allocation of scarce security dollars, and in 2023 there is one goal: enhancing the protection of soft targets and crowded places.

To meet this goal, recipients may use funds to install NGS security window film to deter terrorist attacks and mitigate damage to buildings and their inhabitants.

In 2023, $305,000,000 was available. Local applicants may request $150,000 per site for up to 3 separate sites. There is no match requirement for this grant program. Eligible nonprofit organizations apply to their respective State Administrative Agency (SAA), so application deadlines vary.

To learn more about this grant, visit: https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security or contact your State Administrative Agency (SAA).

For Emergency Management and Response Applications

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)

The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program is one of the grant programs that constitute the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) focus on all-hazards emergency preparedness, including the evolving threats and risks associated with climate change.

State, local, territorial, and tribal governments may use funds in a variety of ways to help them address the current National Priority Areas of Equity, Climate Resilience, and Readiness. One example is utilizing window film in the physical hardening of buildings. Another is improving disaster housing in underserved communities by increasing climate resilience with solar window film.

In 2023, $355,100,000 was allocated to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Funds are distributed to county and municipal emergency management agencies as determined by each state. Keep in mind there is a minimum 50% cost share required.

To learn more about this grant, visit Emergency Management Performance Grant or contact your State Administrative Agency (SAA).

For Sustainability Applications

Renew America's Schools Grant Program

The Renew America's Schools Grant was established by The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for schools to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at public school facilities entitled. Administered by the Department of Energy, this program helps schools create innovative, sustainable partnerships to facilitate improvements by way of repairs, renovations, or installations that improve indoor air quality, directly reduce school energy costs, or increase energy efficiency, such as sustainable window films.

Local education agencies in disadvantaged communities or are determined to be in high need can apply on their own or in partnership with nonprofit, for-profit, and community organizations with the knowledge and capacity to assist with energy improvements. In 2023, $80 million was made available with awards granted between $500,000 and $1.5 million for a 2 to 5-year project period. A 5% cost share of the total allowable costs is required.

To learn more about this grant, visit https://www.energy.gov/scep/renew-americas-schools.

COMMON PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

Once you have identified a grant to apply for and have assembled your team, you are ready to begin working on the grant proposal. A well-thought-out, ready-to-go project or program shows the grantors you have invested time, talent, and knowledge into your proposal. It is also beneficial to have this information always ready as some grant opportunities arise with short deadlines, which makes organizations that are otherwise unprepared unable to apply in time.

Common elements of a proposal include establishing the need, creating project/program goals and objectives, articling your project/program plan, drafting your project/program budget and justification, and identifying the anticipated benefits of the project/program.

Establishing Need

What is the problem or project you are looking to fund? Need help to identify your problem areas or project needs? Look at your most recent strategic plan. Your organization or department's strategic plan can help not only in the grant application process but also help identify which grants best align with your goals and needs now or in the near future, allowing you to apply for the grants that best meet your needs. Your next step is to develop a problem statement. Consider grant opportunities and sources that fit this need. Do not try to fit your project or program into an ill-fitting grant. This is a recipe for wasted time and an unfunded grant. Provide data and documentation to support your need. Strategic plans, needs assessments, local/state/federal data sources, professional journals, credible citations, and personal, identifiable, and documented stories can all help establish and reinforce your need statement.

Creating Goals & Objectives

Once you have established the need for the project or program, identify the goals and objectives. If applying for a grant that already has required goals and objectives, explain how your project or program will achieve them and how they align with your goals and objectives as well. "SMART" is a great tool when identifying goals and objectives for your project/program. "SMART" stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. Make sure each goal and objective are SMART. Explain each goal and objective specifically identifying each using SMART. Is the goal specific enough? How will you measure it? How will you know you have achieved the goal? Why is it relevant and necessary to this project/program? What is the timeline for achieving the goal?
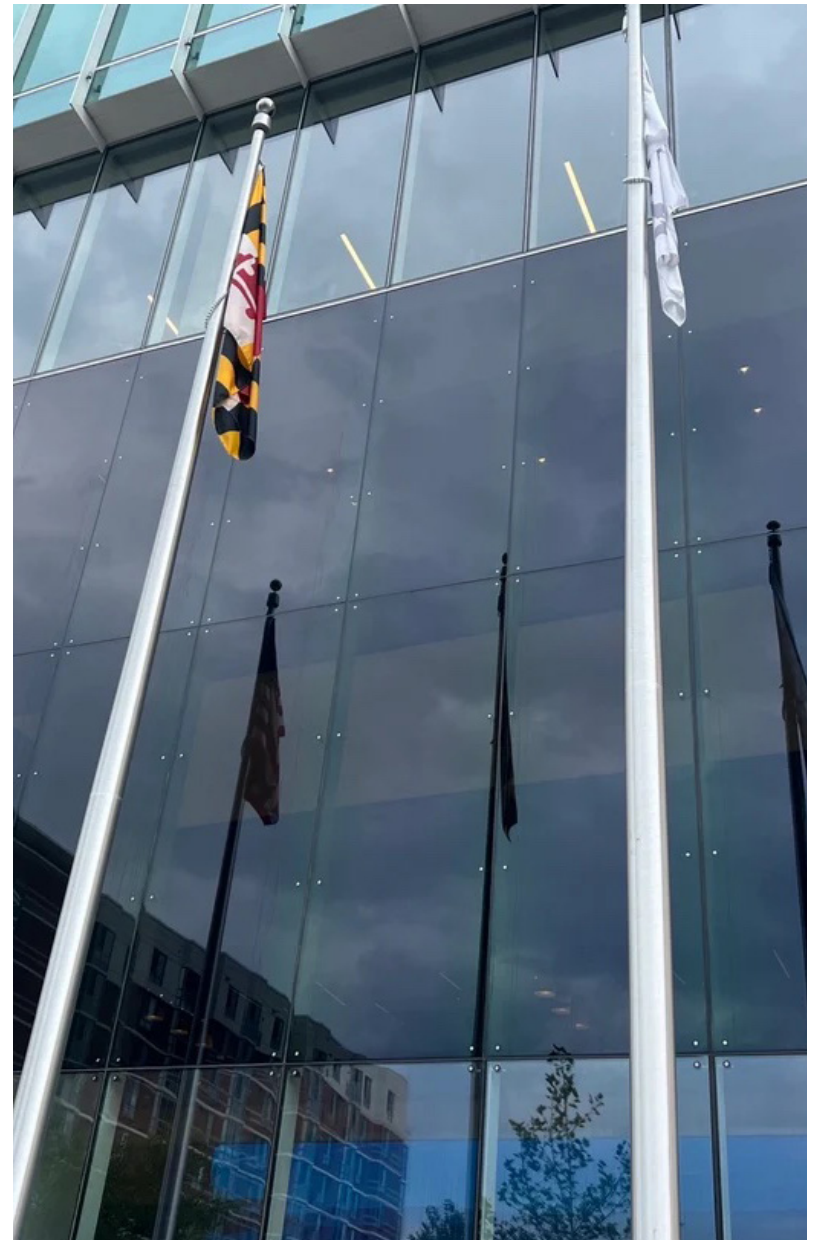
Articulating a Project Plan

A well-articulated proposal will also include a project plan. Now that you have identified your goals and objectives in detail, using your project plan explain in greater detail the timeline, specific personnel (or job titles) responsible for the project/program, and plan for implementation of the project/program. Follow up your plan for implementation with the next steps as well. How will you continue the program and funding once the grant ends? What are your plans? Remember the 5Ws and 1H in writing- what, why, when, where, who, and how. A detailed and well-thought-out project plan shows the grantor that you have spent time putting together a comprehensive project/program, are ready and responsible for grant funding, and are capable of completing the grant.

Drafting the Budget & Justification

Follow these same principles as you draft your budget. Make sure to follow all instructions and allowable/non-allowable expenses included in the grant guidance. Be as specific as possible when including staffing, benefit costs, bids/estimates for services and equipment, subcontractors/sub-applicants (if applicable), and indirect costs (and if you have a pre-approved rate or are electing the de minimis when applicable). You must be able to justify and explain each budget item. Unjustified or unidentified line items may cause a budget or grant to not be approved or a purchase to not be reimbursed later. All costs included must be directly tied to the grant project/program. Including the assistance of your finance staff during the budget development will ensure accurate and up-to-date budget information.

Identifying Anticipated Benefits

Finally, identify the benefits of the project/program. Be specific and measurable as possible. Who will benefit? What are the expected outcomes? Are there larger implications and benefits or a ripple effect? Can this project/program be replicated on a larger scale for others? How is this project/program different and why is it necessary? This is your chance to stand out to grantors and share your vision for the project. Why should they pick you over all the other applicants?
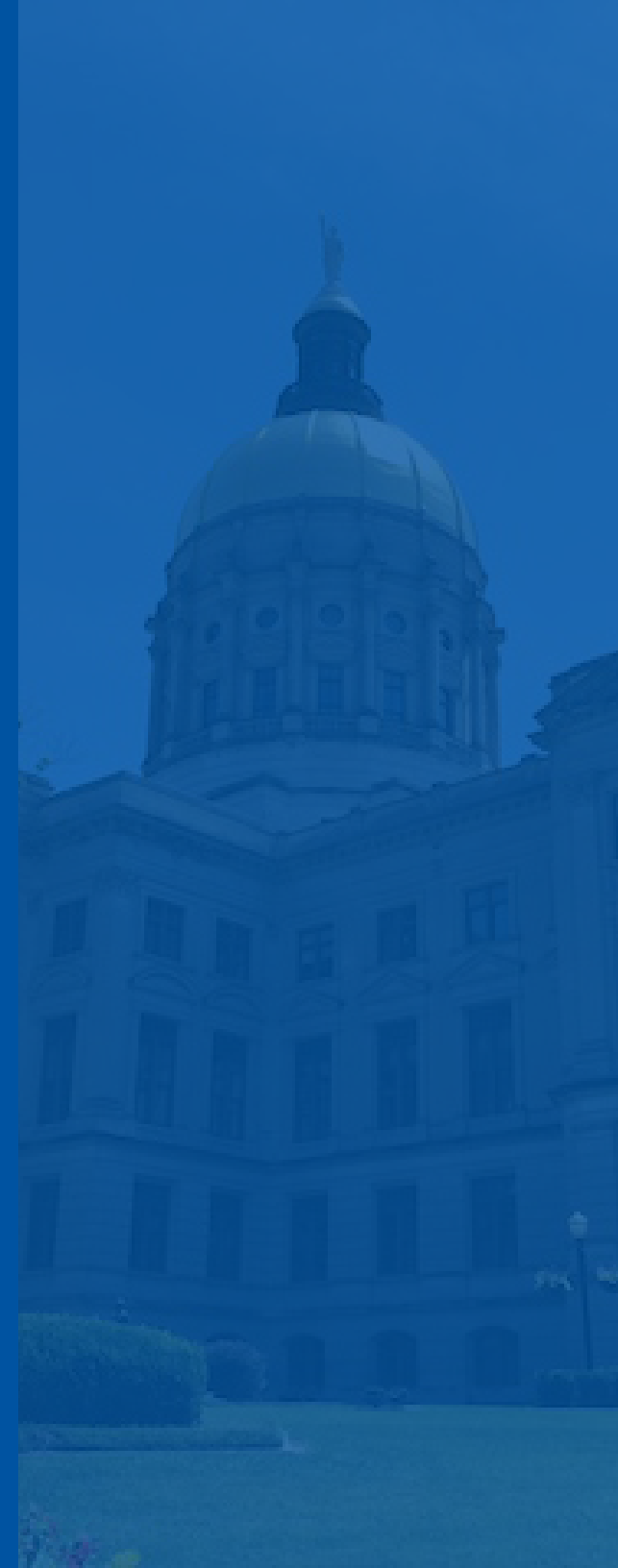
Solar Window Film installed on Marriott Corporate headquarters by NGS.

CONCLUSION

NGS, America's leading window film contractor with turnkey nationwide installations, has a clear mission—to protect people and property, preserve the planet, and create beauty by making buildings better. With the power of cutting-edge window film solutions, we have the potential to revolutionize building protection while minimizing our environmental impact. We extend an invitation to hard-working, forward-thinking organizations that value security and sustainability to discover the remarkable benefits of NGS Window Films and explore how we can assist you in finding relevant grants for your building projects.

Through our partnership with Grants Office LLC, a global leader in grants intelligence, NGS has assembled this funding guide to provide you with vital information about the funding landscape. Grants can provide support for your organization's efforts to procure various NGS products. As you embark on your grant-seeking journey, remember that NGS is here to discuss the appropriate solutions and grant opportunities tailored to your organization's needs. Whether you are interested in Safety and Security Window Films, which fortify windows against break-ins, mitigate the risk of shattered glass, and enhance privacy, or Solar Control Window Film, which minimizes solar heat gain and reduces the need for excessive cooling, leading to substantial cost savings and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, act today and become a catalyst for change.

Contact inquiries@filmsandgraphics.com now to learn more about available grant opportunities and how you can be a part of this transformative journey. Together, let us build a secure and sustainable future through the power of NGS.

NGS

GRANTS OFFICE
empowering communities