

# Matching Grants



Matching grants may seem daunting or complicated. How do you get a matching grant, where do you get them and why? A matching grant is pretty simple – it's just a certain amount of money that will be used to match other donations.

Think of it more as an incentive for other donors to give toward a specific goal, rather than a special grant or donation.

## How they work

- **Grantor's role:** A foundation, corporation, individual or government agency provides the matching funds based on specific requirements.
- **Recipient's role:** The recipient, such as a non-profit, must raise a certain amount of money or in-kind support to “match” the grant.
- **Matching ratios:** The ratio is often expressed as:
  - 1:1 meaning the recipient must raise an equal amount or 2:1 – the donor will give \$2 for every \$1 or other variations.
- **Example:** A local animal shelter receives a \$10,000 matching grant offer. For every dollar they raise from the public, the foundation will match it, up to \$10,000. If the shelter raises \$10,000, they receive the \$10,000 match, bringing in a total of \$20,000.

Sometimes, the donor will give the funds even if the nonprofit doesn't raise all the money – it's important to know if that's the case or if the donation is dependent on meeting the match.

## Why they are used

- **Increases impact:** Matching grants double the fundraising impact of the recipient's efforts.
  - Many donors are willing to increase their donation amount if they know it will be matched.
- **Demonstrates community support:** They show potential future donors that the organization already has strong backing from other sources.
- **Encourages fundraising:** The “double your money” aspect motivates individuals and corporations to donate.
  - Research shows that approximately 84% of donors are more likely to donate if a match is offered, and about one in three donors would give a larger amount if their gift was matched.
  - The promise of a match makes donors more likely to participate.
- **Promotes sustainability:** They can be used to build a more stable financial foundation by diversifying funding sources and attracting new donors.
- **Effective fundraising strategy:** Campaigns that mention matching gifts often see a significant increase in the average response rate and average gift size.

## Matches: What & Why

- Matching grants are a fundraising tool used as a donation incentive. Your nonprofit secures a larger-sized donation, which is offered as a “match” to incoming donation.
- A matching grant can either be provided in advance, or conditional upon meeting a certain fundraising goal. The terms can vary, but the end result is the same. Your nonprofit builds fundraising momentum, gets donors excited about giving by offering to match their donations, and your matching grant puts you closer to achieving your fundraising goals.
  - Used as a tool to help you fundraise and bring in donors and donations.
  - Your nonprofit asks a donor to provide a grant to your nonprofit. (examples of grantors: a board member, local business, large donor, or community partner).
  - Your nonprofit leverages that grant as an incentive to donate to your campaign. You market the match and create excitement around donors being able to take advantage of the match.
- Matching grants DO NOT have to be huge- even \$200 can make a great match!

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## How to find a Matching Grant

- [Grant databases](#)
- **Government grants** – often have a matching component
- **Foundations**
- **Corporations**
- **Internal Network:** Talk to your board members, major donors, and other partners, as they may have inside information on potential grantmakers.
  - Maybe your board would all pitch in to create a match
  - Maybe a long-time donor would offer their regular gift as a match
    - This is a great opportunity to build that relationship and offer them a special opportunity. Tell them about your matching campaign and how effective they are. Ask them if they would offer their annual gift as a matching grant to encourage others to give.

## Process for Matching Grants

- Before Getting Started: Review your goals and fundraising strategy
- Your matching grant should be used to support your high-level goals.
  - A good matching campaign is about raising awareness and it takes time and effort. You also want your matching grant to seem special – it's not something you want to do every month. Use these for big, operational campaigns.
- Goals for the campaign: What are your goals for your event campaign?
  - More dollars raised or more donors gained?
  - Do you have a certain number you want to reach?
- Goals for the grant: What do you want the grant to do?
  - What goal is this money helping you reach?
  - Can you communicate the program/project or goal effectively?
- High-level goals: Consider what outcomes are most meaningful to your nonprofit and your campaign.
  - Involving donors in a more meaningful way, or connecting with sponsors?
  - Are you focusing on individuals, businesses or foundations?
  - Having a match is a great motivator for other large donors or grants!

## Promote the Match!

- Marketing your match will be crucial to its success.
- Countdowns create urgency
- Share your match progress on social media
  - Screenshot your match and post about how much is remaining!
  - Do Facebook live in your space to talk about where the money is going
- Promote the match in upcoming email campaigns, pre-schedule social media posts, and eblasts about your matching grant.
- Set a timeline and reach out to your contacts consistently over the course of the match
- Use a thermometer graphic or a coordinating theme for the campaign

## Following up:

- Thank your grantor
  - A speedy, personal, and sincere thank you is key in making the experience of providing a matching grant fulfilling and positive for your grantor! So be sure to thank them-- publicly (if desired) and personally.
  - If they are an anonymous grantor you can make a large general thank you for your grantor to your community.
- Let them know the data! Share specifics. How many donors made use of the match? Let them know this information—it goes a long way in showing impact and encourages the donor to want to make a match again.

Some of this information was taken from a [video](#) by NWA Gives and Mightycause.