

What's the Difference Between Solicited and Unsolicited Requests?

- Solicited means the funder has invited you to apply for a grant.
- Unsolicited is basically a cold call.

You've been researching prospective funders, and a few of them state on their websites that they do not accept unsolicited grant applications. What does this mean?

First, know that it's not uncommon. Many funders don't accept unsolicited grant applications. Some don't even accept unsolicited LOIs. This means you can't apply for a grant from them unless they invite you to.

So how do you get invited (or solicited) to apply for a grant? Many foundations have staff members—often called program officers—who are experts in the issue areas they fund. Their expertise may be academic, or they may have prior experience in the nonprofit world or community organizations, or all of the above. They often have relationships in the field, and will identify and reach out to potential grantees whose work seems to align with the foundation's mission and priorities, soliciting grant applications or starting conversations that eventually lead to grants.

The best ways to get attention from these organizations are to do great work and to make sure funders know about it. Networking is huge. Going to conferences, attending the events of regional associations of grantmakers, and building relationships with other nonprofits that work in your field or do complementary work are good ways to get on the radar of funders. And if a funder does accept unsolicited LOIs, that's a direct way to introduce your organization and ask if you can submit a solicited grant request.

You may also want to check out:

- [What is a letter of inquiry \(LOI\)?](#)
- [How do foundations make grantmaking decisions?](#)

