

Grant Options Targeting Black Women

by Pamela Fay

Despite the promise of free grant money all over the internet, these opportunities are few and far between for black women who want to enter or advance in the business world. There are some government grants, however, if you expand your search beyond Uncle Sam, there are more grants available. Typically, these grants are available to help black women enter fields where they are traditionally underrepresented. Exclusionary programs are rare (and discriminatory), so while none of these programs are solely for black women, they are strongly targeted. And while you're searching, don't forget to ask your school. Many schools with large endowments (Ivy Leagues and private schools) have programs that you will only discover if you ask.

UNCF Social Entrepreneurship

United Negro College Fund's Social Entrepreneurship program provides a leadership opportunity for recent college graduates with up to 10 years of work experience. The UNCF program, working in conjunction with New Sector Alliance, a leadership development organization, places its participants full-time and on-site at a non-profit organization. The participant receives strategic leadership experience and is supported by mentors and coaches from leading management consulting firms, graduate programs and other non-profit organizations.

United Negro College Fund: UNCF Social Entrepreneurship

<http://uncf.org/forstudents/use.asp>

AAUW Career Development Grants

AAUW provided 48 grants for fiscal year 2009-2010. Thirty-nine percent (296) of the grants were awarded to minority women. The grant supports women with bachelor's degrees who are seeking to re-enter the workforce, advance, or change careers. Black woman and other woman of color receive special consideration for the grant. The average award is over \$600. AAUW, formerly known as American Association of University Women, has as its mission the advancement and equitable treatment of women and girls.

AAUW: Career Development Grant Recipients

http://www.aauw.org/learn/fellows_directory/cd.cfm

TMCF Student Entrepreneur Grants

Black woman who attend one of the 47 member historically black colleges and universities and 6 historically black law schools are eligible for the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Student Entrepreneur Grant. The grant is intended to encourage young black entrepreneurs to develop new business concepts. In 2010, each student received a grant valued at \$10,000 to start her business.

Thurgood Marshall College Fund Student Entrepreneur Grant

http://thurgoodmarshallfund.net/v1/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=277:thurgood-marshall-college-fund-awards-student-entrepreneur-grants-to-launch-new-businesses&catid=81:press&Itemid=306

Government Grants

The Grants.gov site features an advanced search engine that allows you to enter specific criteria. However, you cannot select “Black women” or even “Minorities” as the eligible applicant criteria. Select “Grants” for the “Funding Instrument Type” and all available grant opportunities will appear for all government agencies. Browse through to find suitable grants. Check frequently because opportunities come and go.

U.S. Department and Health and Human Services: Find Grant Opportunities
http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp

AKA Educational Advancement Foundation

Alpha Kappa Alpha is one of the country’s oldest sororities for black women. Their Educational Advancement Foundation funds 100 people and projects each year. The qualifications are open, ranging from mentoring programs to seed money to research projects. The emphasis is not necessarily on business; however, it is not excluded in the description of the foundation’s grant bequests. Their objective is to do the “most good for the most people” and they seem to favor variety.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc: Educational Advancement Foundation
<http://www.akaef.org/about/>

Grants for Business and Professional Education

Raise the Nation Grants

Raise the Nation offers grants and scholarships to single mothers for continuing education. The funds, which help pay tuition and living expenses, go to women who are trying to raise their standard of living by advancing their careers and have already been accepted in a post secondary institution.

Raise the Nation: Grants and Scholarships
<http://raisethenation.org/index.cfm?fa=scholarship.grants>

NACME Fellowships

The National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering offers fellowships, scholarships and grants to underrepresented minorities to pursue studies in the field of engineering.

National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering: NACME Fellowships
http://nacme.org/NACME_D.aspx?pageid=105

Pell Grants

Federal Pell Grants provide a maximum of \$5,350 in 2010 to low-income undergraduate and some graduate students. The money must be used at participating institutions and the grant amount depends on income and enrollment status, i.e., full-time or part-time.

U.S. Department of Education: Federal Pell Grant Program

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html>

References

MSNBC Online: Free Money from Stimulus? Are You Kidding?

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29643680>

United Negro College Fund: UNCF Social Entrepreneurship

<http://uncf.org/forstudents/use.asp>

AAUW: Career Development Grant Recipients

http://www.aauw.org/learn/fellows_directory/cd.cfm

Thurgood Marshall Fund: Thurgood Marshall College Fund Award Student Entrepreneur Grants to Launch New Businesses

http://thurgoodmarshallfund.net/v1/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=277:thurgood-marshall-college-fund-awards-student-entrepreneur-grants-to-launch-new-businesses&catid=81:press&Itemid=306

U.S. Department and Health and Human Services: Find Grant Opportunities

http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp

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Raise the Nation: Grants and Scholarships

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National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering: NACME Fellowships

http://nacme.org/NACME_D.aspx?pageid=105

U.S. Department of Education: Federal Pell Grant Program

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html>