

Funding Strategy

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Organization:	Epikon, LLC	Organization:	Consultant
Project Name:	Funding Strategy	Date:	06-21-24

Reference: *Funding Strategy for Epikon, LLC*

Summary

Enclosed is a Funding Strategy for Epikon, LLC. The purpose of this document is to provide a roadmap for the best grants to pursue that have the highest likelihood of success and return on investment. In this case, we pursued business grants.

A funding Strategy is a living document that will adapt with new opportunities and the wins and losses we incur along the way. We have found grants reasonably worth a five-figure sum in the short term, and six figures in the long term. Below, I'll share the funding research process, next steps to implement the strategy, and a list of the top pursuits we recommend.

Funding Research Process

The typical first step is to filter grant opportunities by programmatic alignment, funding history, and average award size. Because it was necessary to search for business grants, the applications and databases normally consulted were of no use, except in the rare case that a foundation grant was willing to consider for-profit applicants.

Because business grants are rarer than nonprofit grants, there are two traditional redoubts: Small Business Association ([SBA](#)) grants and Small Business Innovation Research ([SBIR](#)) grants. The bulk of government grants as of the time of this writing are related to two things: Advanced (even AI-assisted) weapons and armor for the Armed Forces, and high-tech interventions for opioid and other addiction.

It was thus necessary to employ the sort of advanced internet searches used in data journalism.

Results fell broadly into two categories: Grants aimed at businesses that have already met certain thresholds for achievement, and those marketed at startups. As Epikon has not yet been fully launched, it seemed appropriate to mention both sets of grants.

Respectfully,

Christopher Cox

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Last Updated: June 21, 2024

Funding Sources to Consider

Funding Agency	Program	Eligible Projects	Funding Available	Deadline	Website
Women's Net	Amber Grant; Startup Grant; Business Category Grant	Various	\$10K – \$35K	Monthly	Website
<p>Women's Net offers three grants of at least \$10,000 each: The Amber Grant, for which all businesses can apply; the Startup grant, to which businesses can apply if they have fewer than \$10,000 of revenue; and the Business Category grant, which applies to businesses that do not normally win the first two grants.</p> <p>The Amber Grant's parameters are wide open, which is never ideal.</p> <p>Each September, the Business Category grant is awarded to a business related to "Education and Child Care." Past winners have been diverse in their focus, but the wording of the grant tends to presume applications by after- school programs, and those taking care of very young children.</p> <p>Thus, it appears that the Startup Grant is the best choice for Epikon. This is the only grant in this funding strategy that seems to be specifically geared to completely new businesses, and an application can be submitted at any time.</p>					
Amazon	Amazon Small Business Grant	Various	\$15K-\$25K	Projected: May 24, 2025	Website
<p>Though next year's deadline for this grant has not been announced, it can be assumed to be close to the deadline for 2024.</p> <p>Like most other listed grants, the Amazon Small Business Grant grant requires little more than an essay portion, and that the business in question have a business account with the funding agency's website.</p> <p>Applicants must answer questions about the inspiration, impact and purpose of their organization, which will vary little from the questions for most of the grants listed below.</p> <p>Uniquely, Entrepreneur.com will partner with Amazon to narrow down a list of semi-finalists; other Amazon Business customers will vote on a final winner they consider to be the most deserving.</p> <p>It would thus be appropriate to focus on the human element involved in Epikon, and how few other organizations focus on rare languages. People who are overwhelmed by data will tend to fall back on those who provide them human stories.</p>					

Venmo	The Venmo Small Business Grant	Various	\$10K	Projected: May 2025	Website
<p>The Venmo Small Business Grant requires a few short responses to essay questions like most of the other grants represented here. Predictably, it likewise requires applicants to have a Venmo business account. It is unique in two ways.</p> <p>First, applicants are to provide proof of business status, have at least \$500 of sales in the previous three months, and have 10 or fewer employees.</p> <p>Second, the rules of this grant explicitly state that the submission must be written by you personally, so I am unable to be of service in this specific application.</p>					
FedEx	FedEx® Small Business Grants Program	Various	\$20K-\$50K	Projected: March-Apr. 2025	Website
<p>The FedEx Small Business Grants Program has existed since 2012 and its website lists winners going back as far as 2018. The program requires applicants to open a business account with FedEx, and the same battery of simple questions about applicants' inspiration for starting a business.</p> <p>Specific rules for applications were removed from the website by the time of this writing, but a list of past grantees shows that the social consciousness of Epikon makes it a good fit for this program.</p>					
Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation	Core Program Request for Proposals	Unrestricted	Up to \$300K over three years	Rolling	Website here
<p>The founders of the Draper Richard Kaplan (DRK) Foundation have a background in venture capitalism and understand business. As such, they provide relatively-unrestricted funding in large sums over a period of three years, as well as practical and scaling support.</p> <p>Further, this foundation's interest is in what it calls "Post-pilot, pre-scale organizations." The Foundation defines such organizations as those around three to five years old (they're willing to compromise on this point) with a "program, product or service is already in the market or in the field," and which they have reason to believe is working.</p> <p>Epikon may not fit that exact definition at this precise moment, but this amount of money (plus the value of free business mentorship) puts Epikon in the exact same ballpark as Duolingo when it was a startup.</p> <p>Applications may be submitted throughout the year. Twenty-five percent of applicants make it to the first round of interviews.</p>					

Honorable mentions: As mentioned above, SBA and SBIR grants remain a live option for Epikon – it just happens that the federal government isn't interested in language at this particular time. If, for example, US foreign policy leads American soldiers yet again into places where relatively rare languages are spoken, that may quickly change.

[Cartier Women's Initiative](#) and [Tory Burch Foundation](#) award businesses that are already more established, and Epikon can be precisely in their wheelhouse as soon as it has a proven track record.

Other: Finally, a business in its infancy often benefits from the help of consultants and the local business community. Georgia-based resources can be found [here](#).

Timeline Overview

July 2024	August 2024	September 2024
October 2024	November 2024	December 2024
January 2025	February 2025	March 2025
		1 st : FedEx apps open
April 2025	May 2025	June 2025

1st: FedEx apps close

10th: Venmo apps open (projected)
24th: Amazon app due (projected)
31st: Venmo apps close (projected)

July 2025

22nd: Amazon winners announced (projected)

August 2025

September 2025

October 2025

November 2025

December 2025