As a local organization, you may have a better chance of receiving support from certain funders than Operation Warm does as a national organization. This tool will help you identify potential funding opportunities/grants for your program and provide guidelines for writing your first grant. Thank you for being a hero for kids in your community!

Things to Consider before Reaching out to Potential Funders

- Non-Profit Status & Documentation. The below documents are needed to apply for most grants.
  - Project plan (date, location, beneficiary served)
  - Distribution Budget (includes coats + any other expenses)
  - Tax information demonstrating nonprofit status (FEIN, IRS 501c3 letter, 990)
  - Financial information such as an annual operating budget or audit, and program budget
  - Board of Trustees or governing body
- Amount of time before Coat Giving Celebration
  - Grants can take anywhere from one week to 6 months to be reviewed, so researching in advance is key!

Finding Grant Opportunities

- If you are part of an organization or service club that has a National Foundation, (i.e. Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks, etc.) look into grant opportunities through the National Foundation first.
- Check to see if you are served by a local Community Foundation or United Way.
- Visit [https://www.cfstandards.org/about-us/community-foundation-locator](https://www.cfstandards.org/about-us/community-foundation-locator) to see if there is consortium of local funders in your area.
- Head to your local public library, and ask to use the Foundation Directory Online (FDO) database. This software tool will help you learn:
  - Who funds non-profits locally and what are their motivations
  - What do funders really want to know about your organization
  - How to identify potential funders by geography
- Find a local, for-profit sponsor
  - Many companies enjoy supporting local initiatives, and provide grants to support fundraising efforts.
    - One example is the Walmart Community Grants Program: [https://walmart.org/how-we-give/local-community-grants](https://walmart.org/how-we-give/local-community-grants). Local banks and insurance agencies are also good sources of local support.

Writing your Grant

- Find a volunteer willing to pose as a grant writer!
  - Unfortunately, because Operation Warm is a national organization, our staff cannot write local grants on your behalf, so finding a good writer is key! Ensure your writer can answer these basic questions:
    i. What is your mission?
    ii. What are you hoping to accomplish with your program?
    iii. How does your organization improve upon the work of other non-profits in your area?
    iv. How will you measure success of your program?
- Check out the following Operation Warm links for awesome data & stats to support your proposal!
  - [https://www.operationwarm.org/research-citations/](https://www.operationwarm.org/research-citations/)
  - [https://www.operationwarm.org/financials-filings/](https://www.operationwarm.org/financials-filings/)
  - [https://www.operationwarm.org/about-us/](https://www.operationwarm.org/about-us/)

While grants require an initial effort upfront, the rewards can be significant! GOOD LUCK!