

Google Ad Grants is a social impact program that connects people to causes through free Google Ads
 Since 2003, the Ad Grants Program has awarded over 115,000 Ad Grants and \$8 Billion in free advertising to nonprofits in 50+ countries.

Guide to partnering with an agency

Ad Grants' unique features require specific expertise to best utilize the grant and succeed online. Often, partnering with an agency professional can extend your organization's resources and maximize value. This guide will help you better understand what to expect from an agency relationship and offers questions to ask potential partners.

Read on if you are a Grantee who...

- Is considering whether to hire an agency to start or manage your Google Ad Grant
- Is currently working with an agency and would like to evaluate successful campaign management

Checklist: Questions to ask a potential agency partner

- ❑ **What is your experience and expertise with nonprofit organizations? With Google Ad Grants specifically? How many Ad Grants accounts does your agency manage? Can you share case studies or customer examples?**
 - *Nonprofit organizations require a strategic approach to marketing that differs from other industries. Discuss these differences to ensure a potential partner excels at strategies designed for the space, and can clearly articulate how to develop Ad Grants into a successful marketing channel for your organization.*
 - *Look for a partner that has experience with Ad Grants accounts, but don't automatically assume that volume of Ad Grants accounts managed guarantees quality. Your chosen partner should understand and focus on nonprofit-specific conversion types like time on site, email capture and donation funnel, and should have a point of view on how Ad Grants can complement other digital channels like display and email.*
- ❑ **Are you a Google Ad Grants Certified Professional?**
The Ad Grants Certified Professionals Community aims to validate agencies with Ad Grants experience and nonprofit sector specialization. Other professionals may not meet our eligibility requirements, but provide the right support for your needs.
- ❑ **What is your business model? How are your fees structured? Do you have a minimum monthly ad spend requirement? Do you have any trial offers or training packages? Can you just help us get started?**
Agency business models vary greatly. Some offer Ad Grants onboarding strategies and training for self management with little to no cost for organizations. Discuss whether you need set-up/training only or full-service ongoing account support. As a best practice, understand who owns the account and how they might transition it in the event you need to switch agencies or bring account management in-house.
- ❑ **Do you help with the Ad Grant application or just set-up and management of already approved accounts?**
- ❑ **Do you offer additional services such as website optimization or Google Tag Manager/Analytics set-up?**
- ❑ **What does a successful Google Ad Grant campaign look like? How do you help your clients determine appropriate goals for their Ad Grant account?**
Ad Grants is different from standard Google Ads, and a clear understanding of these differences is very important! A strong mission-based keyword strategy, audience-specific campaigns (e.g. donor, volunteer), call to action messaging and meaningful conversion goals are critical to success. Discuss your organizational goals upfront and ensure potential partners can articulate how they will set up, manage and optimize your campaigns to achieve your desired outcomes.
- ❑ **How do you manage Google Ad Grants campaigns on a day-to-day basis? What is the frequency of communication we can expect? What types of reporting and analysis do you provide? Does reporting require an extra fee?**
- ❑ **What technology solutions (such as 3rd party donation platforms) does your agency recommend, rely on or integrate with and why? Do you work with my existing donation platform?**
- ❑ **How will I know our organization is successfully utilizing the Google Ad Grant? What information will you share with us to demonstrate this? What tools and insights will be made available to share results with our board?**

Checklist: Building a successful partnership with your agency

Setting up for success

You are the expert when it comes to your organization! It is important that you share as much information as possible about your nonprofit upfront in order to set up your agency partner for success:

- What is the history of your organization? What is your core mission?
- What are the industry trends? Who else plays in your space, and what is your unique contribution?
- What are the key outcomes for your marketing efforts? What marketing channels work or do not work well?
- What actions do you want visitors to take on your website?
- Do you have specific campaigns or seasonal pushes?
- Do you have certain programs already at capacity, such that marketing these may not be as useful?
- Who is your target audience for your marketing efforts? Are you trying to reach multiple audience segments?

It is your agency's job to take all this information so they can develop and execute a successful Ad Grants strategy. During the onboarding phase, you should expect your agency to:

- Translate your organizational goals into measurable, digital, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) such as donations, newsletter subscriptions, event sign-ups, etc.
 - For example, if your organization's mission is to fund after-school programs for underprivileged youth, your marketing KPIs could be to: drive program awareness through site engagement, funding through donations, and program engagement through event participation.
 - Assign values for your KPIs when possible. For instance, event sign-ups might be worth more than email subscriptions, so you could optimize toward a higher target value for events than emails.
- Set up conversion tracking / ensure your site is tagged properly to track your defined KPIs
- Build campaigns (keywords, ads, sitelinks) that capture relevant user interest and intent for your nonprofit
 - Be sure to review proposed keywords and ads and provide feedback (you know your organization best!)

We recommend using Google Analytics (GA) for robust tracking capabilities. GA is a free tool that allows Grantees to track an array of valuable actions like donations, event sign-ups, etc. GA also tracks time on site and depth of page views for awareness goals

- *Tip: Google Tag Manager offers close integration with Google Analytics. Use Tag Manager to configure and deploy your Google Analytics tag configurations. Ask your agency partner if they can do this for you.*

Ongoing partnership expectations:

Depending on the scope of the partnership, you should expect regular performance updates and optimization recommendations:

- Reporting:** A strong agency partner should provide performance reports that clearly show how your Ad Grants campaigns are driving meaningful outcomes for your organization
 - Don't settle for dollars and clicks reporting only!
 - Performance reports should highlight conversions (your KPIs), cost per conversion, and the transaction value if applicable (e.g. donation amounts, ecommerce sales, etc.)
 - Look for positive trends in performance over time to measure growth, especially volume of conversions, conversion value, click-through-rate (CTR) and cost per conversion
- Optimization recommendations:** Ad Grants **should not** be a "set it and forget it" marketing channel. Optimal performance requires regular, detailed optimizations and management, which requires a significant time investment. Your agency should provide recommendations to improve performance and scale impact:
 - Test new keywords, ad copy, landing pages; remove poor performer; launch new campaigns
- Strategic thinking and testing opportunities:** Your agency partner should be up to speed on the latest features and opportunities in Ad Grants, and share those with you!
 - Test automated bidding to maximize conversions and bid over the \$2 manual bid limit
 - Set up a paid account to extend impact by targeting best performing and/or competitive search queries and accessing additional features such as remarketing and display
 - Prepare and adjust campaigns for news cycles, awareness days, and key moments (e.g. Earth Day or a celebrity promoting a cause) to capture increased interest and maximize impact