

## Bringing Federal Funds to the First State -- March 2008

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By Congressman Mike Castle

While recent media attention has been given to the process of federal "earmarking," it is important to be aware of the millions of dollars in federal funds that is currently available to states, localities and organizations. My office receives a steady flow of questions from Delaware organizations looking for assistance with their application for a federal grant. Grants can serve as a powerful resource for Delaware, but the application and approval process can be confusing and often times overwhelming.

To help navigate through the red tape involved in the grants process, I recently hosted a Federal Grants Fair at Del-Tech in Wilmington. Over 200 Delawareans joined me in hearing from expert panelists along with Rashmi Rangan, from the Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council. I was energized by the excitement of the dozens of organizations across the state - and their members- who are dedicated to improving our community and provide opportunities for those in need. Hopefully, they learned more about the federal grants process and are better equipped to bring additional funding into Delaware.

Make no mistake, grants are very competitive and often in a national competition for funding and are channeled to very specific projects or causes. Federal grants exist to fund initiatives such as community infrastructure, education, homeland security, and programs for those in need. The competitive nature ensures that the money administered is used properly and put toward a good cause. One of my longstanding goals in Congress has been making certain that we are putting taxpayer dollars to good use. So, while no funding is easy to come by, I encourage Delawareans and interested organizations to apply for the federal funds put into the grant system.

It can be a daunting and time consuming task to locate the grants that match the mission of your organization, but I encourage you to research the websites like [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and [www.cfda.gov](http://www.cfda.gov) as well as the grants section on my site, [www.castle.house.gov](http://www.castle.house.gov). Each agency has a different process by which they distribute grants. For specific questions about the grants and process, the best thing to do is to contact the organization awarding the funds.

I believe we have a strong sense of community in our great state and that was evident at the recent Federal Grants Fair. The participation and interest in the grant process was truly inspiring and I hope more organizations are motivated to participate in the process. By using the tools and resources available, we can elevate some of these programs and bring more taxpayer dollars home to Delaware.