



Google Ad Grant success guide

A nonprofit's full
lifecycle playbook



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How to set up, run, and maximize your \$10K Google Ad Grant

A lot goes into making your organization successful. But you're tasked with figuring out how to achieve that success with tighter budgets, shorter timelines, and limited resources. That includes how much you're able to spend on advertising.

A study from Tapp Network and TechSoup found only **23% of nonprofits use paid digital ads**. Of that 23%, **the majority spend less than \$500 per month on paid advertising**.

As any marketer knows, it's hard to generate a successful campaign with only \$500.

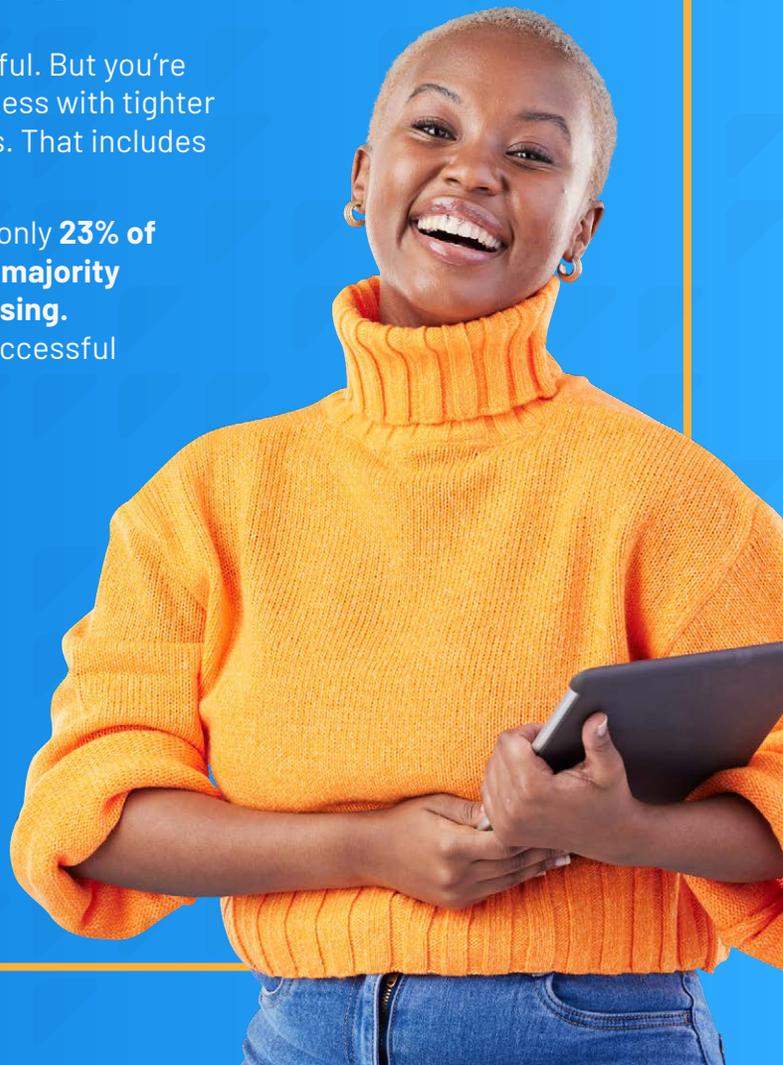
What if someone gave you 20x that amount to spend on your campaigns EVERY MONTH?

You could build awareness, drive donations, and attract more members and volunteers.

Does it sound too good to be true? It's not.

That's exactly what you get when you receive a Google Ad Grant. This guide provides an overview of the program, step-by-step instructions to sign up, and tips to maximize the resource for your organization.

First up, what are they?





Introduction to Google Ad Grants

Nonprofits do some of the most important work in our communities. But reaching the people who can support, join, or benefit from that work often takes resources that are hard to spare. That's where Google Ad Grants step in.

Google Ad Grants provide **eligible nonprofits up to \$10,000 per month** (that's \$120,000 per year) in **free advertising on Google Search**. These ads appear when people look for causes, services, or opportunities like yours. When managed well, they can bring new donors, volunteers, and members to your organization every single day.

For many nonprofits, the grant becomes a digital lifeline, helping them reach audiences they could never afford to advertise to otherwise.

This guide walks you through everything you need to know, from understanding and applying for the grant to building impactful campaigns and keeping them optimized long-term. Whether you're just starting or already have an active account, you'll find practical examples, templates, and strategies that can help you get more out of every dollar (and click).



Eligibility

Before diving into campaigns and keywords, you'll need to ensure your organization qualifies and that your account is set up correctly.

Eligibility requirements

To qualify for Google Ad Grants, your organization must:

- Be a registered nonprofit with valid charity status (501(c)(3) in the U.S., or equivalent internationally).
- Be verified by [TechSoup](#) and enrolled in [Google for Nonprofits](#).
- Have a secure, high-quality website that clearly represents your mission, with HTTPS enabled and no commercial intent.
- Adhere to [Google Ad Grants policies](#) and standard Google Ads guidelines.

Websites that include unrelated advertising (like affiliate links or AdSense) or lack meaningful content may be disqualified. The site should clearly communicate your mission, programs, and ways to get involved.

Application process

Compared to most grants, the application process for Google Ad Grants is very easy. You don't have to compete with other nonprofits, and there is no application deadline.



Based on previous experience, this is an average timeline (business days) to complete each step:

- TechSoup validation token: 5-14 days
- Google for Nonprofits enrollment: 2-14 days
- Google Ad Grants prequalification (Step 1): 3-5 days
- Google Ad Grants account setup (Step 2): 5-25 days
- Application review: 10 days



Tip from Daxko

Don't enter any billing information. The grant covers your spend entirely adding billing details can create account conflicts that delay approval.



Setting up your account for success

Once approved, it's time to build a solid foundation. Google's account structure rules are designed to help you stay compliant while running efficient campaigns.

Account structure essentials

- Minimum of two campaigns, each with at least two ad groups.
- Each ad group must contain two or more ads.
- Every ad must include two to four sitelink extensions (mini links that improve visibility and click-through).

Keyword & policy guidelines

- Avoid single-word keywords unless they're your branded terms.
- Exclude overly generic keywords (like "donations" or "volunteer").
- Pause any keyword with a Quality Score below 3 (automating this rule is recommended).
- Maintain a monthly CTR (Click-Through Rate) of 5% or higher.
- Track at least one conversion per month.

Performance & compliance checks

Google regularly audits Ad Grant accounts. Non-compliance, low CTR, broken URLs, or unapproved keywords can trigger automatic suspension.

To stay safe:



Log in at least once a month to show active management



Review and update campaigns every few weeks



Keep your website active and up to date; inactive pages can cause ad disapprovals



Building high-performing campaigns

Getting your account approved is only the first step. The real impact comes from how you use your grant. Google Ad Grants can support every area of your organization; from program sign-ups to volunteer recruitment, if you know how to structure your campaigns strategically.

Each campaign should align with a clear organizational goal. Think about where you most need visibility or participation.

Common nonprofit campaign types

1. Membership & program registrations

Promote memberships, after-school programs, or community events. People are actively searching for opportunities near them; your ads should meet them where they are.

Examples:

- Summer camps
- Youth sports leagues
- Swimming lessons
- Senior wellness programs



Pro tip: Use location-based targeting and include your city or neighbourhood in ad headlines (e.g., “Join Summer Camp in Tampa”).

Examples

Your Local Boys & Girls Club | Preschool & Youth Sports | T-Ball, Soccer,...

Register For Programs & Enroll in Fun Today. Programs ans Sports For All Ages, Stages & Capabilities. Social Responsibility. Youth Development. Healthy Living. Highlights: Membership Option Available, Donation Optio...

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[Youth Sports Leagues](#)

Ad · www.example.com/

Community Rec Center | Gentle Yoga For Seniors | Senior Arts & Crafts

Gentle yoga focuses on basic postures, and breathing exercises. No experience necessary. Senior Arts & Crafts helps maintain hand- eye coordination while fostering community. Amenities: Basketball, Soccer, T-Ball, Flag...

2. Childcare & family services

Many families don't realize that your organization offers childcare. Search ads can make your programs visible to parents looking for reliable local options.

Example headline ideas:

- "Affordable Childcare Near You"
- "Safe After-School Care by [Your Org Name]"



Pro tip: Your strengths set you apart and you should want to share them with everyone. Use your 30-second elevator pitch to identify the most valuable selling points for your organization or program. Use those selling points to create impactful campaigns.

3. Hiring campaigns

Turnover happens. Running year-round hiring campaigns helps you maintain a steady candidate pipeline for key roles.

Roles to feature:

- Lifeguards
- Camp counsellors
- Childcare providers
- Administrative staff



Pro tip: Create separate ad groups for each job category to match relevant keywords and landing pages.

Example

YMCA After School Care | Learn More About the Program

Structured activities that promote empathy, inclusion, and service learning. YMCA After School Care is more than just child care. Choose Your Membership. Locations Near You. Children Ages 5-12. Afterschool. Service catalog: Summe...

[YMCA Locations](#)

[Infant Child Care](#)

[Preschool Program](#)

[Donate to the Y](#)

 Call (713) 659-5566

Examples

YMCA Swim Instructor | Part Time Swim Instructor | We're Hiring, Apply Now

Training and certifications provided by the YMCA. Build confidence, save lives! The YMCA is hiring for their Swim Instructor positions. Amazing Team. Thriving Community. Competitive Pay. Group Classes. Amenities: Class Variety...

[Lifeguard Positions](#)

[View Open Positions](#)

[YMCA Child Watch](#)

[Ways To Give](#)

 Call (713) 659-5566

Flexible Work Schedules | We're Hiring, Apply Now | Childcare Jobs Hiring Near...

Apply to become a Boys & Girls Club team member today. Strengthen your community and change lives by joining the B&GC team today. Amazing Team. Thriving Community. Competitive Pay. Group Classes. Amenities: Class Variety...

[Lifeguard Positions](#)

[View Open Positions](#)

4. Volunteer recruitment

Volunteers are searching online for ways to give back. Your ads should highlight the impact they'll make and the ease of getting started.

Example headline ideas:

- "Volunteer with [Org Name] Today"
- "Help Support Local Youth, Volunteer Now"



Pro tip: Identify where you want your organization to grow and build campaigns around those opportunities. Struggling to find staff for a specific class? Launching a new program? Use ads to increase awareness and encourage participation.

Example

Volunteering for Teens | Teen Volunteers | B&GC | Volunteer at Boys & Girls Club

Volunteer at the Boys & Girls Club of America & positively impact where we live. Become a source of strength and encouragement in your hometown. Become a volunteer. Join a Community. A Membership Made For You. Over 25...

[Our Locations](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

5. Donation campaigns

Donations sustain your mission, but people won't give if they can't find how. Use donation-focused ads to make contributing effortless.

Examples:

- "Support [Org Name] – Donate Online"
- "Your Gift Changes Lives"



Pro tip: Google requires you to run at least two campaigns, but you can diversify how you promote the same opportunity; for example, promoting a fundraiser through both volunteer and donation campaigns to capture wider intent.

Example

Ad · www.bgca.org/monthly-giving

Give a Gift Today | Support The B&GC | Donate | Boys & Girls Club

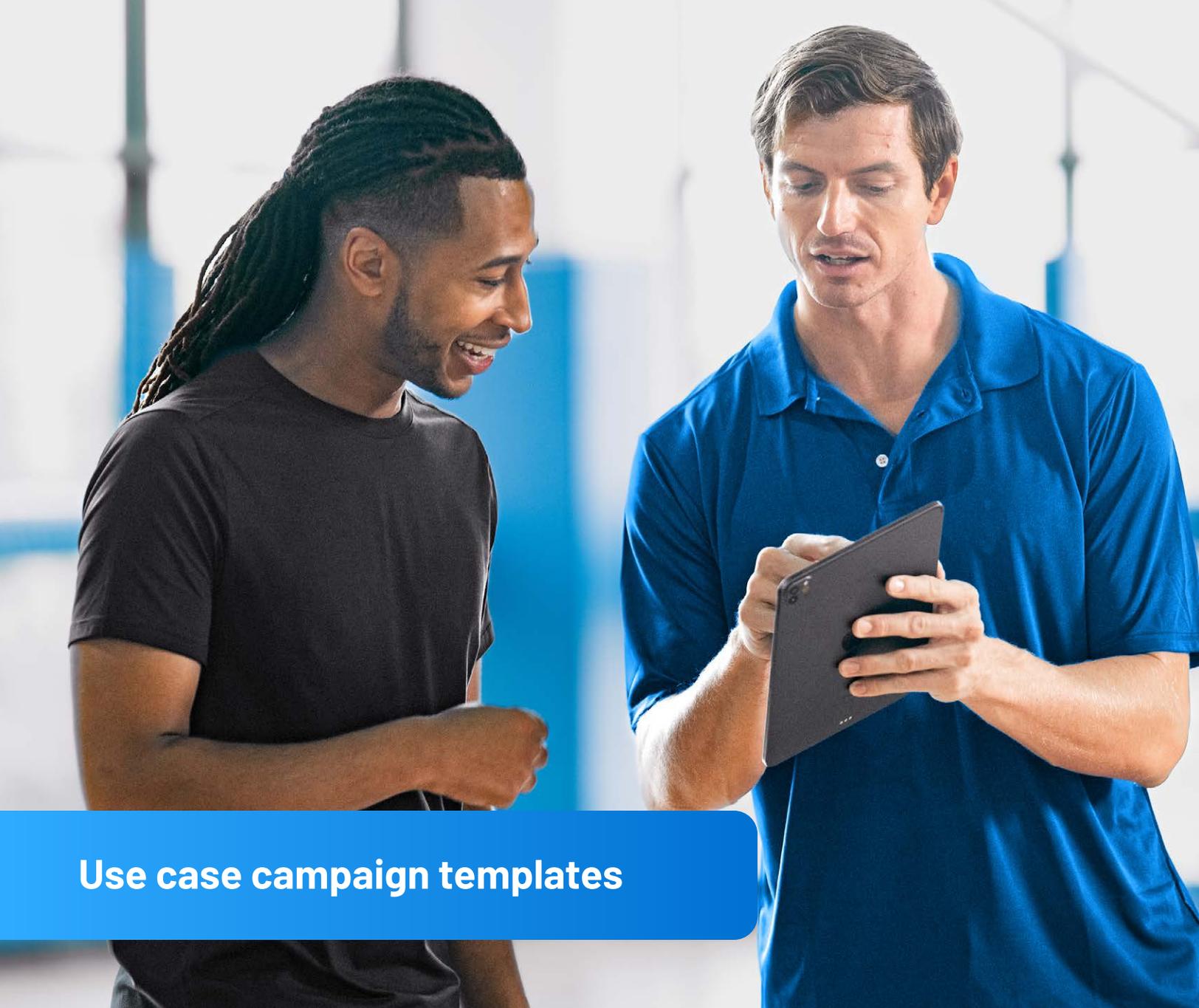
Every great future has a starting point. Theirs start with you. Join the community that's helping kids soar through every age and stage. Join a Community. Make An Impact. Your Gift Matters. Help Shape the Future. Service catalog:...

[Ways to Give](#)

[Give Monthly](#)

[Contact Us](#)





Use case campaign templates

You don't need to start from scratch. These campaign templates are based on the most successful strategies we've seen nonprofits use under the Google Ad Grants program.



Membership growth campaign

Objective: Drive new member sign-ups.

Suggested structure:

- Keywords: "join gym near me," "youth fitness programs," "community memberships"
- Headlines: "Join [Org Name] Today," "Memberships for All Ages," "Find Your Local Y"
- Description: Highlight benefits like community, family programs, or wellness resources.
- Extensions: Add links for "Class Schedule," "Member Benefits," and "Join Online."



Donation drive campaign

Objective: Increase online giving.

Suggested structure:

- Keywords: “nonprofits to donate to,” “charity donation near me,” “support local community”
- Headlines: “Donate to [Org Name],” “Make a Difference Today,” “Your Gift Supports Local Families”
- Description: Share how each donation helps and keep messaging emotionally clear.
- Extensions: “Ways to Give,” “Corporate Sponsorship,” “Recurring Gifts.”



Volunteer recruitment campaign

Objective: Attract new volunteers

Suggested structure:

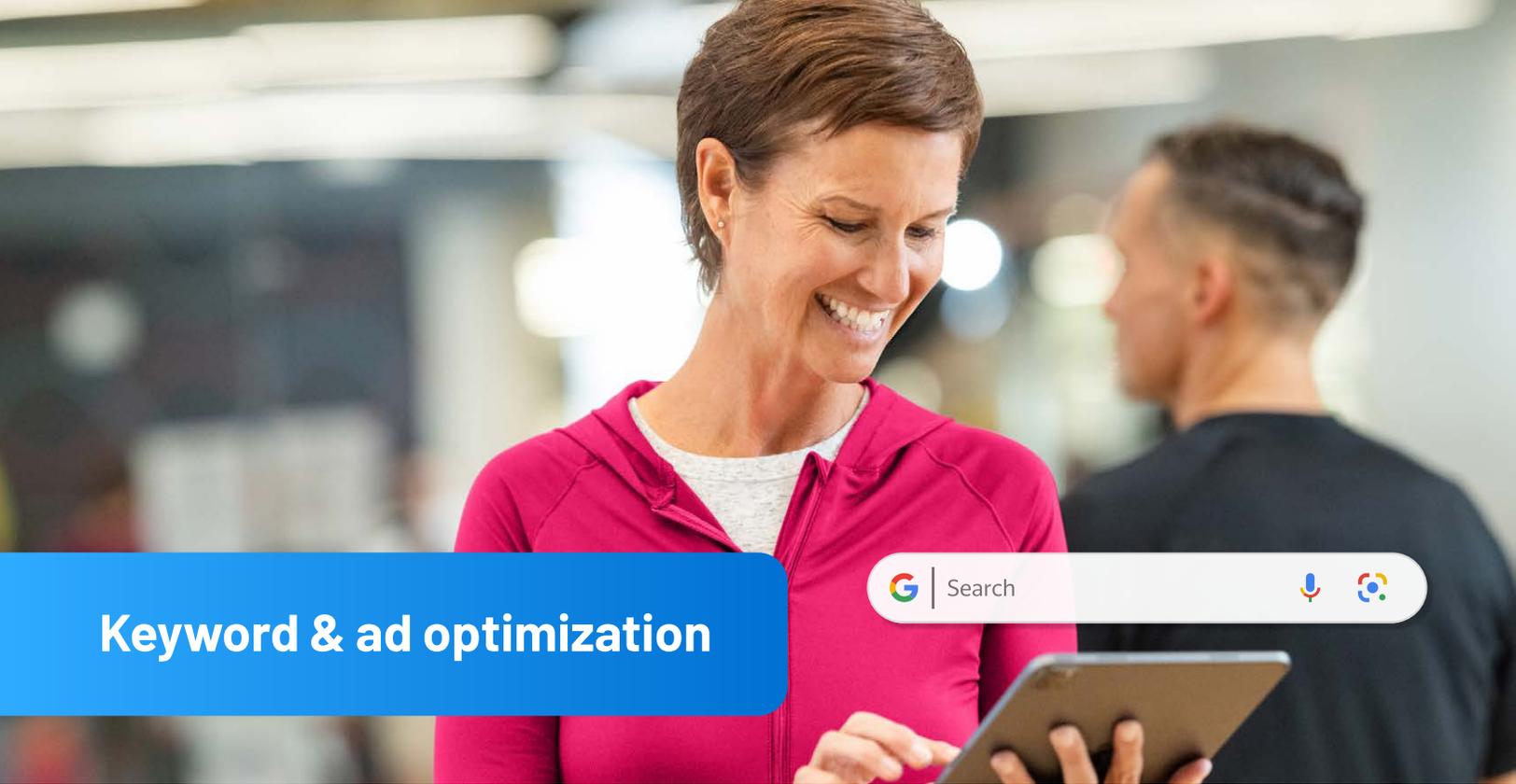
- Keywords: “volunteer near me,” “community service opportunities,” “nonprofit volunteer programs”
- Headlines: “Volunteer at [Org Name],” “Give Back to Your Community,” “Make an Impact Today.”
- Description: Emphasise personal growth and impact – how volunteering helps people and strengthens the community.



Pro tip

Always send traffic to landing pages that reflect the ad’s intent. If your volunteer ad leads to a generic homepage, it will lower your Quality Score and CTR.





Keyword & ad optimization

Once your campaigns are running, the key to success is relevance. Google rewards ads that connect precisely with what users are searching for – meaning well-written, keyword-aligned ads not only perform better but also maintain compliance.

Building effective ads

Each ad consists of headlines and descriptions.

- Headlines: up to 30 characters each; include 12–15 variations.
- Descriptions: up to 90 characters; include 2–4 versions.

Headline Types

1. Keyword Headlines

- Match your ad directly to search intent.
- Example: “Gym Near You,” “Summer Camp Registration.”

2. Brand Headlines

- Reinforce recognition and credibility.
- Example: “Join [Org Name],” “Your [City] YMCA.”

3. CTA Headlines

- Prompt direct action.
- Example: “Sign Up Today,” “Donate Now.”

Example

**Children's Sports at the YMCA | Sign Up
for Youth Sports | Kids Baseball Near Me**

When kids play Y-Sports, they develop more than just skills, they develop character. Sports and recreational activities let you have fun while improving mental health!

[Home](#)

[Child Watch](#)

This is an example of a CTA headline

This is an example of a keyword headline

A few more examples of headlines

Keyword headlines	Brand headlines	CTA headlines
Fitness Programs Near You	Your YMCA Name	Sign Up Today
Fitness Class Schedule	YMCA of Your Town	Registration Open Now
Gym Near You	Your Neighborhood YMCA	Membership Sign Up
Fitness Center Near You	YMCA On Your Street	Join Us Today

Ad extensions

Use 2–4 sitelink extensions per ad. They increase your visibility on the search results page and give people more ways to interact.

Avoid Google’s automated extensions, customize them yourself to stay compliant and relevant.

Examples

 **Daxko**
https://www.daxko.com

Daxko | Solutions for YMCAs, BGCs, and JCCs
Your chosen technology partner for member management, payment processing, and more solutions to accelerate your mission.

Login
View all Daxko platforms and log in to your account.

Operations
Efficient operations make happy members. ... Looking for ...

Careers
We create everything from membership management ...

Company
Our mission is to power health and wellness throughout the world ...

[More results from daxko.com »](#)

https://ymcahouston.org

YMCA of Greater Houston
The YMCA of Greater Houston is focused on impacting everyone in our community. We offer a variety of programs, classes, and services to bring people ...

Tellepsen Family Downtown ...
Facility Hours: Monday-Thursday: 5 am-9 pm. Friday: 5 am-8 pm ...

Childcare and Camps Programs
Summer Camp - Early Care Overview - Child Watch - ...

Locations
Aldine – Greenspoint Family YMCA. 500 Greens Road (In ...

Career Opportunities
Are you interested in working for the Greater Houston YMCA?

[More results from ymcahouston.org »](#)

Keyword optimization

The right keywords connect your ads with your audience.

Google bans:

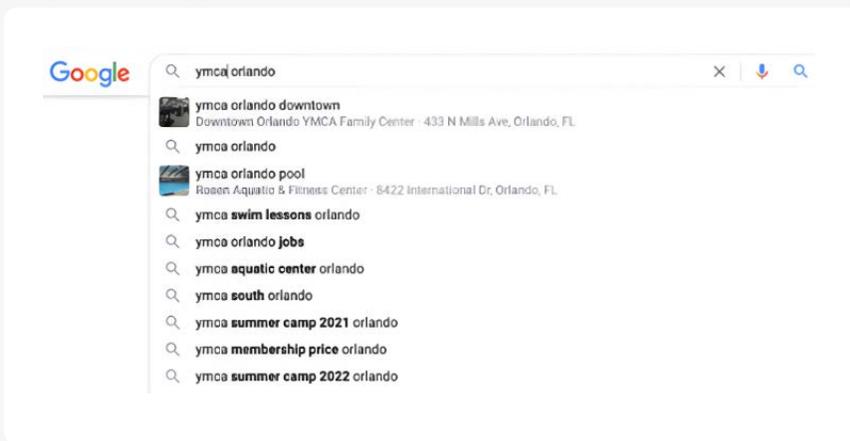
- Single-word keywords (except branded terms)
- Overly generic terms (“donations,” “nonprofit”)
- Keywords with Quality Scores of 1–2

Group similar keywords together within each ad group. Your ad copy should naturally use the same terms.

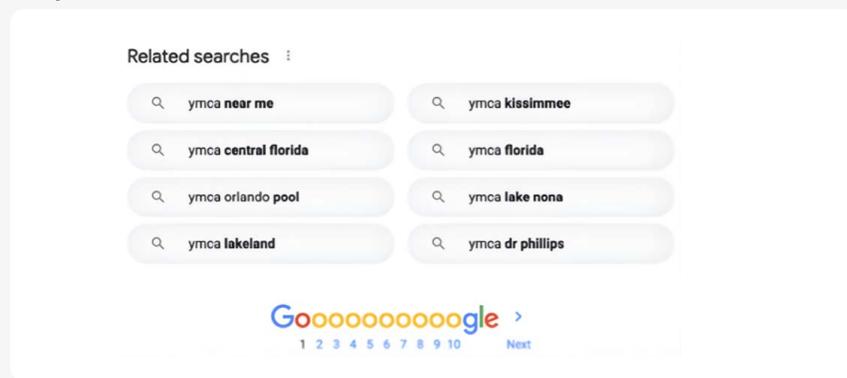
Free keyword research tools to try:

- [Google Keyword Planner](#): A free way to research new keywords related to your business and view estimated monthly searches and the cost to target them.
- [Google Trends](#): Shows search volume for your city or region, as well as any seasonal fluctuation.
- Google search suggestions: It appears as a drop-down box as you type in the Google search bar.
- Google related searches: Appears at the bottom of the Google search results page.
- [AnswerThePublic](#): An effective keyword tool that combines your main keywords with various question words (like who, what, why, etc.). You also get some keyword ideas through “preposition” and “comparisons” keywords.
- [Keywords Everywhere](#): The free version is a browser add-on that gives you related keywords and what people also searched for.

Google search suggestions



Google related searches



Pro tip

Make sure your keywords appear in your headlines or descriptions. This improves ad relevance and Quality Score.



Maintaining compliance + troubleshooting

Receiving the grant is an achievement. Keeping it active is a responsibility. Google's policies are strict, and even small oversights can trigger account suspension. A consistent maintenance rhythm helps you stay compliant and confident.

Key compliance rules

- Maintain a 5% average click-through rate (CTR) across all campaigns each month.
- Record at least one conversion per month (e.g., donation, sign-up, form submission).
- Pause or remove keywords with a Quality Score of 1 or 2.
- Use two or more sitelink extensions per ad.
- Log in at least once a month and make at least one account change per 90 days to remain active.



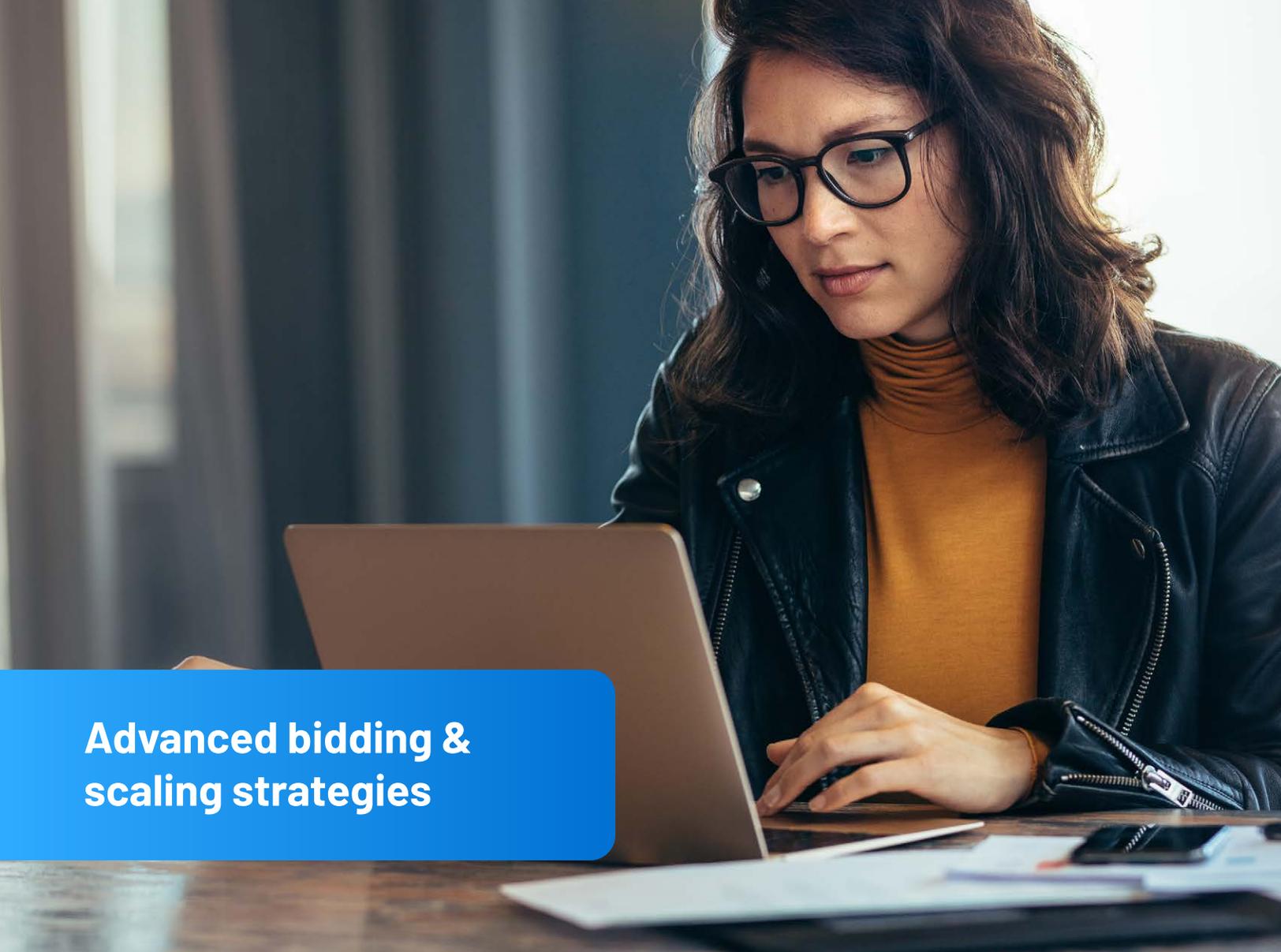
Pro tip:

Schedule recurring account reviews every two weeks to catch issues early.

Troubleshooting suspensions

Even compliant accounts can face temporary suspensions. Here's how to recover efficiently:

- **Identify the issue:** Review the suspension email from Google. The reason may not always be detailed, so cross-check against current policy requirements - CTR, keyword quality, website compliance, etc.
- **Resolve violations:** Update or remove problematic keywords, fix broken landing pages, and ensure all campaigns have required ad groups and extensions.
- **Contact Google support:** Reach out via the Request to Reactivate Ad Grants Account form or call 1-866-246-6453 with your Customer ID handy.
- **Submit for review:** Once updates are complete, notify support and wait for re-verification (usually 10-15 days).
- **Prevent future issues:** Build an internal checklist for policy reviews. Consistent optimisation reduces downtime and maintains steady visibility.



Advanced bidding & scaling strategies

Once your campaigns are stable and compliant, the next step is to scale impact. Remember, Google Ad Grants give you a free budget, but your daily cap (\$329) resets every midnight. Spending that full amount effectively is how you get the most value.

Smart Bidding

Google's Smart Bidding uses machine learning to adjust your bids automatically for better results. It's the only way to bypass the standard \$2 cost-per-click cap under the Ad Grants programme.

Common strategies include:

- Maximise conversions: Automatically increases bids for searchers most likely to convert.
- Target CPA (Cost Per Acquisition): Lets you define a target cost per conversion.
- Target ROAS (Return on Ad Spend): Adjusts bids based on predicted conversion value.



Pro tip:

Smart Bidding performs best when your conversion tracking is clean and consistent. Always test one strategy at a time and monitor results for a few weeks before switching.

Automation & testing

Automated rules: Set up rules to:

- Pause keywords when Quality Score drops below 3.
- Receive email alerts for major CTR fluctuations.
- Automatically increase bids for top-performing campaigns within compliance limits.

A/B Testing: Use your grant funds to test new:

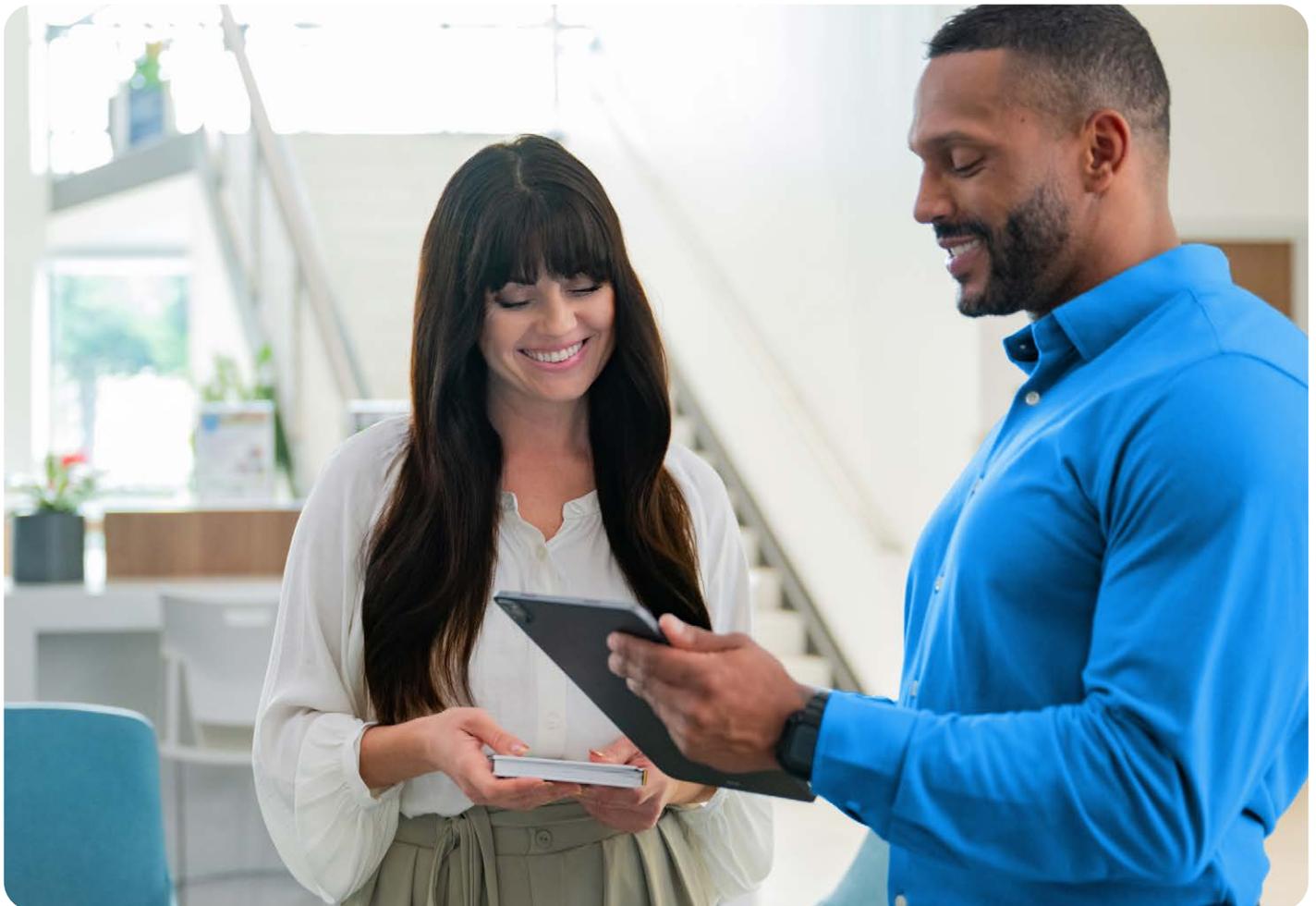
- Headlines and CTAs
- Landing pages
- Campaign formats or audiences

These insights can later be applied to your paid ad campaigns, too.



Pro tip:

Set each campaign's daily budget to \$329; Google will optimize spend across campaigns without exceeding the grant.





Case studies + next steps with Daxko

Seeing impact in action

Here's how nonprofits use Google Ad Grants effectively:

Membership Growth: A regional community organization used grant campaigns to target “gym near me” and “after-school programs.” Within three months, they doubled their membership sign-ups and saw a 25% increase in website traffic from local searches.

Volunteer Recruitment: A youth development nonprofit ran ads promoting community volunteer days. Click-through rates surpassed 8%, and volunteer form submissions increased by 40%.

Donation Drives: A mid-sized charity promoting year-end giving achieved 30% higher online donations compared to the previous year, all from organic searchers discovering them through grant-funded ads.

Google Ad Grants can be an excellent tool for your nonprofit organization to increase your online exposure substantially. The \$10,000 budget for online advertising can boost your brand recognition, drive donations, and attract new members and volunteers. And though creating a winning ad campaign can be tricky, the benefits of the Google Ad Grant far outweigh the challenges.

The information in this playbook should help your organization get started or back on track with this fantastic source of free traffic. But if you find your organization doesn't have the time or ability to manage your Google Ad Grant account properly, contact your dedicated Daxko representative to discuss ways our team can help.

Partnering with Daxko

Managing Google Ad Grants takes time, consistency, and compliance expertise, and that's where Daxko comes in.



Scan the QR Code

- Handles full grant management, from application to campaign optimization.
- Designs tailored strategies to drive measurable outcomes – memberships, donations, volunteer growth, and more.
- Keeps your account compliant, active, and performing all year round

Ready to get started?

Let us help you turn your \$10,000 monthly grant into meaningful community impact.

Schedule a consultation with Daxko's nonprofit marketing experts today.

