

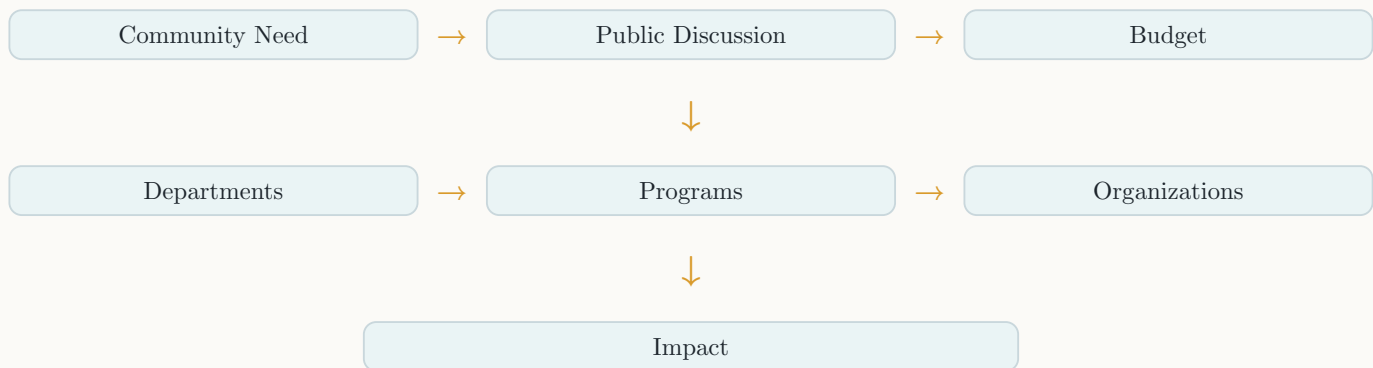
Follow The Money

How money flows from Washington to your neighborhood

Why Day 2 Matters

Yesterday, you learned that opportunities do not start with random ideas. They start with real demand:

Day 1 Framework



As you started the Opportunity Report homework, a bigger question showed up:

“Okay, I found a department. I found a budget. But where did the money come from, who controls it, and how do organizations actually get access to it?”

That is the point of Day 2.

Day 2 Big Idea

Yesterday: **Find the demand.**

Today: **Trace the money.**

Tomorrow: **Build the deal.**

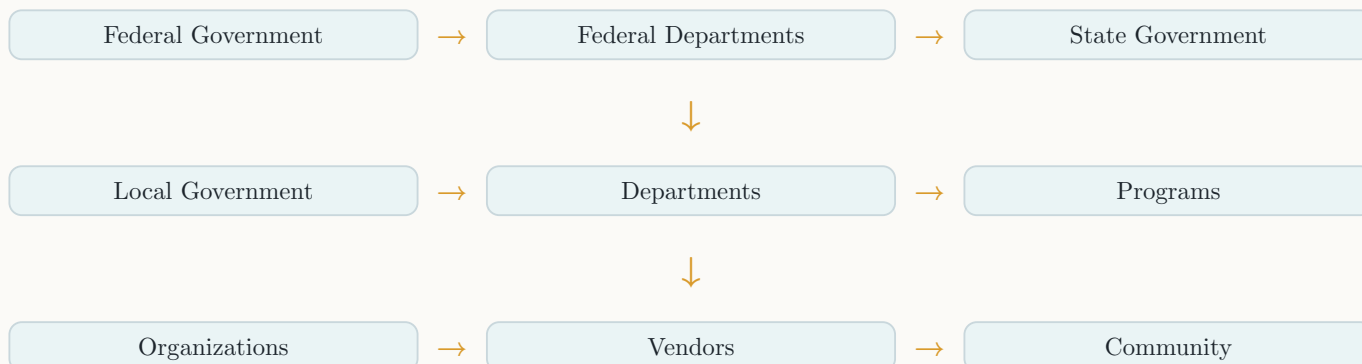
By the end of class, you should understand how money moves from federal departments into states, local governments, programs, organizations, vendors, and finally the community.

The Money Flow

Money is not just money. In community development, money is energy.

Concept	What It Means
Demand	Problems, needs, pressure, complaints, goals, and public priorities
Money	Energy that allows people to act on those priorities
Programs	Vehicles that move money toward a specific outcome
Departments	Public systems that direct the energy
Organizations	Operators that do the work
Vendors	Specialists paid to support the program

Federal-to-Local Flow



Plug mindset

Being “the plug” means you understand where demand exists, where money is moving, who controls decisions, and which organizations can help turn that energy into real programs.

Politics Turns Demand Into Decisions

The public creates demand by raising concerns, voting, attending meetings, sharing complaints, asking for services, and organizing around needs.

Government manages that demand through politics.

Politics is not only elections. It is also:

- Public meetings
- Committee discussions
- Department updates
- Strategic plans
- Budget hearings
- City commission votes
- Board decisions
- Grant applications
- Program approvals

How Demand Becomes Action



Departments manage the energy of public demand. Agencies, nonprofits, schools, and companies help make the work happen.

Federal Departments Manage Big Problems

Federal departments are not just names to memorize. Each department manages a category of public problems.

Federal Department	Problem Managed
Department of Education	Student outcomes, college access, school support
Department of Labor	Jobs, training, workforce pathways
HUD	Housing, neighborhoods, community development
HHS	Health, families, human services
Department of Transportation	Mobility, roads, transit, infrastructure
Department of Energy	Energy, utilities, efficiency, resilience
USDA	Food, rural development, agriculture, nutrition
Department of Commerce	Economic growth, business development, industry

Every local department has a relationship to bigger systems above it. A city workforce office may connect to state workforce funding. A housing department may connect to HUD. A transportation project may connect to federal infrastructure dollars.

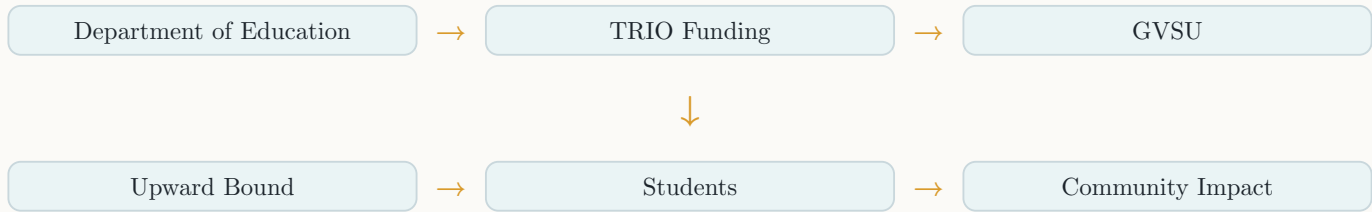
What to look for

Do not stop at “this department has a budget.” Ask: What larger federal or state priority is this connected to?

GVSU TRIO Upward Bound Example

GVSU TRIO Upward Bound is a strong example because it shows how federal money can become a local program students can actually touch.

TRIO Funding Example



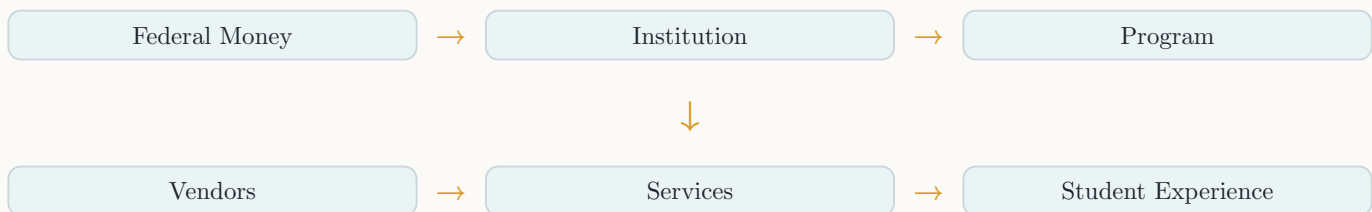
GVSU can be understood as a primary receiver of federal education funding. But the opportunity map does not stop there.

Programs buy things.

That means a program may need:

- Mentors
- Trainers
- Speakers
- Transportation
- Food
- Event support
- Technology providers
- Curriculum support
- Marketing support
- Local business partners

Program-to-Vendor Flow



This is how students start seeing local opportunity: not only who received the grant, but who gets paid to help the program work.

Federal Signals: Grants.gov and USAspending.gov

Federal data helps you understand what the government is currently prioritizing and what it has historically funded.

Tool	What It Helps You See
Grants.gov	Current and upcoming federal funding opportunities
USAspending.gov	Historical spending, recipients, sub-awardees, agencies, and award amounts
Year-End Spending Reviews	What a department actually spent money on
Local Budgets	What local leaders are prioritizing right now

Federal data is not the whole answer. It is signal.

Signal helps you ask better questions:

- Which federal departments are active in Michigan?

- What did they fund over the last two years?
- Which industries or workforce needs show up repeatedly?
- Which agencies or organizations received money?
- Which companies or vendors supported the work?

Context creates opportunity. The more you understand the money environment, the stronger your Opportunity Report becomes.

Michigan Then Local

After you understand the federal department, zoom into Michigan.

Michigan has its own economic identity:

- Automotive and mobility
- Advanced manufacturing
- Health care
- Education
- Logistics
- Food and agriculture
- Water and environmental assets
- Workforce development needs

That means certain federal funding themes may show up more often here than in other states.

Then zoom into a local city:

City	Possible Departments	Questions
Grand Rapids	Economic Development, Housing, Workforce, Parks, Public Works	What is growing, missing, or under pressure?
Detroit	Workforce, Transportation, Housing, Public Safety, Planning	Where is money moving and who is organizing around it?

Your job is to trace how federal priorities become state activity, then local department action, then programs and projects.

People Control Every Level

Money flows through systems, but people make decisions.

This is why LinkedIn matters.

You are not just researching departments. You are learning who runs them, who influences them, and who can connect programs to partners.

Power Level	People To Identify
Federal	Department leaders, grant officers, program staff
State	Agency leaders, program managers, regional contacts
Local Government	City commissioners, board members, department directors
Department	Directors, managers, coordinators, procurement staff
Organizations	Executive directors, program managers, partnership leads
Vendors	Business owners, consultants, trainers, service providers

LinkedIn purpose

LinkedIn is not just for job hunting. In this class, LinkedIn is a map of people, roles, influence, and relationship paths.

Shared Google Sheet: Marketing Network Tracker

Today, teams will begin tracking departments, people, programs, vendors, and opportunities in a shared Google Sheet.

Recommended tabs:

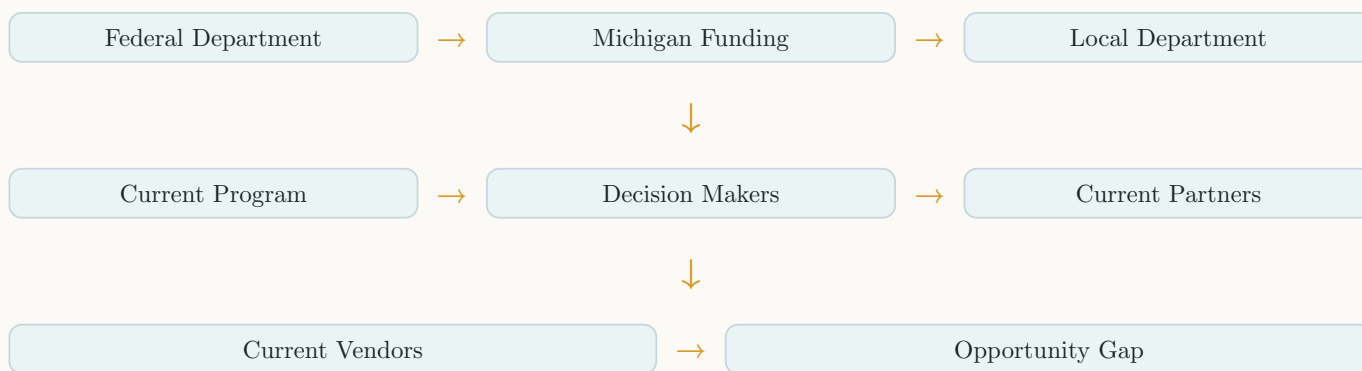
Tab	Purpose
Departments	City, department, mission, budget, related federal department
Leadership	Department, director, title, LinkedIn, email, notes
Current Programs	Program, department, budget, goal, funding source
Vendors & Partners	Organization, program, role, website, LinkedIn
Federal Signals	Federal department, grant, award, recipient, source link
Opportunities	Problem, department, possible program, possible partners
Team Notes	Team discoveries, questions, sources, next steps

The sheet becomes the team's network map. It helps you move from "I found a problem" to "I know who controls the system and who can help solve it."

Team Exercise: Department Intelligence Map

Teams of 2-5 will trace one opportunity path.

Team Trace



Your team should collect:

- One federal department connected to the issue
- One Michigan funding signal
- One local department
- Current programs or projects
- Decision makers and LinkedIn profiles
- Current partners or vendors
- One opportunity gap

AI Research Prompts

Use ChatGPT as a research assistant, not a replacement for your judgment.

Prompt 1: Department Explainer

“Explain what this department does in plain language.

Department: [insert department] City or government level: [federal, state, local]

Tell me:

1. What problem this department manages
2. Who it serves
3. What programs it usually funds
4. What types of organizations it works with
5. What local opportunities could connect to this department“

Prompt 2: Money Trace

“Act as a public funding analyst.

Using the information I provide, help me trace this issue from federal priorities to Michigan activity to a local department.

Issue: [insert issue] Federal department: [insert department] Michigan signal: [insert grant, award, or spending clue]
Local city: [Grand Rapids or Detroit] Local department: [insert department]

Explain how the money or priority could flow downward and what local organizations might be involved.“

Prompt 3: Chamber Partnership Builder

“Act as a community partnership strategist.

I am researching this local department and opportunity:

Department: [insert department] Problem: [insert problem] Goal: [insert department goal] Chamber members or local organizations: [paste list]

Create 5 possible program concepts. Each concept must use at least 3 organizations from the list.

For each concept include:

- Program name
- The 3+ organizations involved
- Each organization's role
- Why the partnership makes sense
- Expected outcomes
- Possible funding connection“

Final Deliverable for Day 2

Each team will submit a clean Google Doc that AI can help turn into a report by the end of class.

The document should include:

☐ Department Intelligence Map

☐ Federal department connection

☐ Michigan funding signal

☐ Local department and current programs

☐ Decision makers and LinkedIn links

☐ Partners and vendors

☐ Opportunity gaps

☐ 5 new partnership ideas

☐ Expected outcomes

☐ Potential funding connection

What you are really learning

Day 1: Find the problem.

Day 2: Trace the money.

Day 3: Build the partnership.

Day 4: Pitch the program.

The goal is for you to stop acting like students completing a worksheet and start acting like an economic development team.

You are learning how money, organizations, and people connect.

That is how you become the plug in your city.