

PIECING TOGETHER THE GRANT-WRITING PUZZLE

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Do your homework.

- Be sure the foundation or organization supports your project or activity.
- Check your school district's website for grant guidelines, applications, and what is current.
- If possible, find a buddy at school who has the same goals as you do and work together on the research and grant-writing process.
- Keep an on-going file listing due dates of your grants.
- Keep in mind Foundations' priorities-- geography, types of populations and specific projects.
- Keep your school demographic data, your school mission statement and your school improvement plan readily accessible. You will want to use part or all of that information in your proposal.
- Learn what the hot words are, such as special population, ethnic needs, language needs, higher order of thinking, higher achievement, higher levels of performance, and assessment needs.
- Make sure your grant is worthwhile and worth the time you invest. Personally, I would think twice before spend hours and hours on a grant for \$50.
- Read the Granter's website carefully. Learn what type of programs they fund and their target audience.
- Read the guidelines carefully so that you are aware in advance of what might be expect of the winners, like submit photos, write and send press releases, provide interviews, post results on a website, or attend their grant award ceremony.

2. Follow the application guidelines.

- Check the guidelines for requirements: proposal length, content and any additional requested documentation.
- Once you receive funding you must manage your grant. Mark the date in your file and on your calendar for example, if you are asked to write a final report within a certain time limit. Keep accurate records and ask your school bookkeeper for receipts to send to the foundation when requested.
- Provide any requested financial information. Re-read the directions after you have finished the proposal for accuracy.
- Provide your school bookkeeper with a copy of your grant budget for her record. Learn your school's policy regarding ordering. Keep in mind that you may need to include postage in your budget.

3. Be concise.

- Assume the readers know little or nothing about your field.
- Be brief and to the point.
- Define sections of grant with bold headings, sub-headings, etc.
- Keep your applications short and to the point.
- Make a timeline for your project completion.

4. Be specific.

- Be sure that the items purchased are directly related to your objectives.
- Be sure you focus on an educational issue.
- Decide how to meet your need and planned activities. Use an assessment to determine if your students have accomplished the goal.

5. Define your goals.

- Document with statistics and/or site research to support your proposal.
- Explain how you will reach your goals and how you will measure your success.
- Make sure that your project has clear, reasonable and measurable outcomes.
- State what the problem or issue is.
- Your narrative must provide a need statement that drives your entire proposal.

6. Make it long-term.

- If possible, link your proposal to a strategic plan.
- Include in the narrative your goals, objectives, activities and strategies, along with a timeline.
- Make your project replicable.

7. Think beyond \$\$\$.

- Ask for the reviews to find out how you can improve your next grant.
- Imagine how the Grantor can help you draw upon other resources and create opportunities.
- Keep your administrator up-to-date on your plans and seek their approval first.
- Recruit volunteers, involve the community helpers, engage the PTA or PTO, acquire in-kind donations, etc.
- Send a thank you letter in a timely fashion whether or not your grant was funded.
- When a Foundation provides you a point system for judging your grant application, pay particular attention to each category.

8. Provide clear-cut contact information.

- Be exact when typing the contact person's name and address.
- If a cover letter is used, make sure the person who is asking for funding and/or your school is indicated in the letter. If several individuals are signing the submitted request, identify one person for future contact.

9. Send the essentials.

- Include a one-page cover letter if not specifically prohibited by the funding agency. Briefly introduce your organization, describe our project, including the funding request. The cover letter should be signed by your school's principal and should be on school letterhead.
- Send only what is requested.
- When supporting material is requested, include letters from parents, newspaper articles, or other pertinent material.

10. Use Email.

- After you email your proposal do not call unless you are asked. The Grantor will usually post the date when you will be notified if your grant was funded.
- Send information electronically whenever possible.
- When emailing the proposal (sending it electronically), do not follow-up with a hard copy through the mail or with a Fax unless asked.

11. Start early.

- Do not expect to send an application and receive funding the next month. Often there are thousands of applications and my experience has been that the Grantor may be late with results and sometimes slow on funding.
- When planning your budget, ask for only what is closely matched with your planned activities or project--no frills. Be very realistic, and again, make everything you ask for directly related to your objectives.
- You may need some time to identify and locate a funding partner for a project.

11. Think broad.

- Consider local organizations, clubs, school district, your school PTA or PTO, businesses and/or individuals.
- Do not limit your search to a few sources.