

Grant Writing Primer

Step One: Determining a Project

If you need help determining what type of project gets funded, go online and look at some of the grant opportunities out there to see what projects have been successful in the past. Also, consider involving a colleague in the project. This way you share the work of preparing the grant and implementing the project.

Step Two: Getting the Go-Ahead

Once you have decided on a project, do the following:

- Write a quick summary of your objectives, who will be involved, your implementation plan, and how it will be evaluated. Include a short list of potential grant organizations.
- Share your summary with your administrator or curriculum coordinator. Once you have their support for the project, ask them to write a letter of support to include in your grant application. The letter should praise your abilities as a teacher, your ability to follow through with ideas, and how the project will benefit the school as a whole.

Step Three: Finding a Grant

To save yourself valuable time and effort, consider the following when you're researching grants:

- Read the guidelines for each grant opportunity carefully. All granting organizations have rules for making grants; unfortunately, many grantees fail to read them carefully. Read them through once and then ask the following questions.
 1. Does my project fit the type of grant offered? Be sure to check the specifications for grade levels, gender specifications, economic status, subject area, etc.
 2. Is the financial amount appropriate? If it's too much or too little for your project, your chance of getting the grant may be lessened.
 3. What is the deadline? Be sure to check when applications must be submitted. Give yourself enough time to write a successful grant application.

Step Four: Fine Tuning your Grant Application

- Call the grant-making organization and discuss your project with them. Communication with the grants office can help you in two important ways:
 1. It gives you a better understanding of the type of project they are interested in funding as well as what exactly they are looking for in your application.
 2. You have the opportunity to communicate your excitement and the details of your project. While granting committees have objective criteria for awarding grants, a familiarity with your project can help them see its merits.

Step Five: Submit, Resubmit, and Follow-up

Try to identify more than one granting organization that will fund your project. If you are exceptionally fortunate (and have a great project, of course) and you receive more than one grant, you can always decline one grant, or propose implementing the project on a wider scale.

Don't be discouraged if you are turned down. Grant writing is a fine art and grant-making a fickle one. Follow-up by calling the organization and asking politely if they can give you constructive criticism on why you were turned down. You may receive productive feedback that will help you in the future. Most grant offices welcome these types of calls.

Good luck and let us know if you find these tips to be helpful!