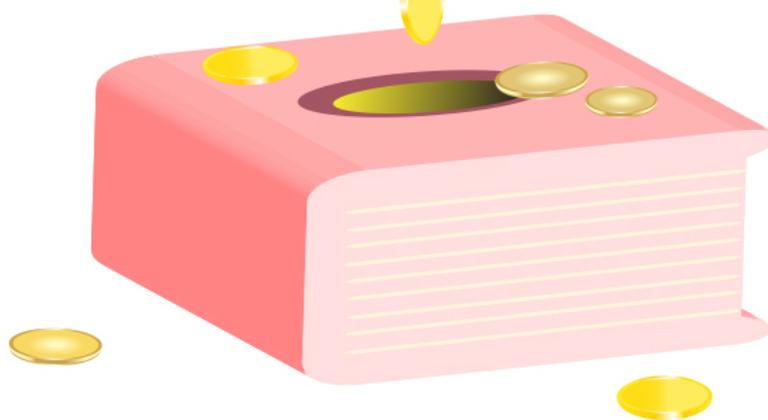


SCHOOL GRANTS

Ten Tips to Getting Your
Grant Funded



MELINDA BOSSENMEYER, ED.D.

Ten Tips to Getting Your Grant Funded

I first became aware of grant writing as a teacher more than 25 years ago. My first school grant was for \$300 for additional teaching supplies. It was a short grant appropriately titled “A Mini-Grant”, and was funded by my district.



Some 25 years later, I have written Federal grants, State grants and foundation grants, most of which were funded.

During an 8 year period as Director of Professional Development for San Diego County Office of Education, I wrote approximately 40 grants ranging from \$30,000 to nearly \$1,000,000. I am pleased to say that 38 out of 40 were funded.

This article will share ten tips from my experience in getting your school grant funded.

A grant is a monetary award given by a government agency, foundation, corporation, or other entity to another body in order to plan, implement or operate a particular program or fund a particular project.

1. Preparation Is The Key To Securing a Grant

Grant writing is like baking a cake. You need to include the right ingredients, in the right amounts. You need the proper tools to be successful in your cake making and experience is often the best indicator of a successful outcome. Grant writing, like baking, cannot be rushed and takes time to plan, gather ingredients and bake.

2. Follow School District Protocol for Writing Grants and Receiving Funding.

One of the first steps, prior to applying for a grant, is getting administrative approval and securing an individual who will implement the grant. A little known fact in the school community is that schools typically cannot receive grant funds exceeding \$5,000 without School Board Approval.

For larger grants, the School Board should be made aware of the grant application and in fact, many State and federal grants require the Superintendent to sign off to submit the grant application.

Not sure of your districts requirements? Check with the grants office or district assistant superintendent.

3. Implementing The Grant Is As Important As Securing The Grant.

Often the person writing the grant is different from the person who will be implementing the grant or program.

Who will put the program into place? What steps will be necessary and who will develop a timeline of activities?

Other considerations include:

Who is responsible for training the staff? What will they do to evaluate the success of the funding? Who will write the final report to the funder, etc.



4. Funding Sources For Your Grant?

First, consider writing a small foundation grant prior to writing for a large federal grant.

Foundation and corporation grants are funded between \$500 and \$50,000 with most funded at the \$5,000-10,000 level.

Peaceful Playgrounds maintains a list of grants clearing houses on our [Grants webpage](#). Check it for additional recommendations. A couple of my favorites are:

- [Grants 4 Teachers](#)  Your complete online resource for information related to K-12 grants. They focus on the needs of teachers, particularly K-12 educators. Their goal is to help teachers save time and money by maximizing their online experience.
- [Grants.gov](#)  Allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all federal grant-making agencies, and encompasses over 900 grant programs offered by the twenty six Federal grant-making agencies. It streamlines the process of awarding over \$350 billion annually to state and local governments, academia, not-for-profits, and other organizations.

Grants 4 Teachers has a database of grants that are currently available and is a good listing for both foundation and government grants. Grants.gov is the spot to find grants offered through the Federal Government and Department of Education.

At Peaceful Playgrounds, many of our customers pay for our program with grant funding from various sources. A list of some of the funding sources will be listed on our grants page.

5. Get a Copy of a Successful Grant from the Agency you are Applying to for Funding.

The “School Grants” website has an index to sample educational grants which will provide you with some helpful examples of grants that have been funded.

Grant samples in the index include: Physical Education for Progress (PEP), a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant and a Service Learning Grant to name a few.

Most foundations have a list of winning grants or grant winners that are listed on their foundation website page. Either download a sample winning grant or contact a grant winner for a sample of their winning grant. Since their grant was funded, most people are willing to share.

6. Include 7 Elements in Writing a Grant Proposal.

Make sure to include the following 7 elements in your grant proposal.

1. **Introduction to the organization** – Description of your school or agency.
2. **Project description** – Include your project goal and solution, what you hope to achieve, funding level sought, and identify your population.
3. **Needs** – What problem are trying to address or correct?
4. **Solution** – The program you wish to purchase and why?
5. **Project Plan and Activities**
6. **Budget** – What the grant funds will be spent on.
7. **Evaluation** – How do you know if the program was successful in accomplishing your goal? Did it solve the problem that you identified?

7. Use Statistics.

The single best tip for securing a grant is to utilize statistics.

Statistics make a compelling case for why you need the funding and why the funder should fund your grant rather than the other grant applications in the stack.

Below are a few data banks that I find particularly helpful in writing grants for physical activity, physical education, etc.

- [Kids Data](#)  Offers a tremendous amount of data from all counties, cities, and school districts in California related to the health and well being of children. Bonus: all information on the site is totally free!

- [Kids Count](#) ➡ Community-Level Information on Kids.
- [Poverty Statistics](#) ➡ For every County and School District in the Country.
- [School Health Policies and Programs Study \(SHPPS\)](#) ➡ A national survey periodically conducted to assess school health policies and practices at the state, district, school, and classroom levels. SHPPS was most recently conducted in 2006. SHPPS also was conducted in 2000 and 1994; the next SHPPS is planned for 2012.

8. Never Exceed the Funding Amount.

Creating the grant budget should not be a difficult process. Vendors should provide you with assistance and estimates.

Basically two things can go wrong in the budget section. Try to avoid both problems. First, a grantee requests more money than the funding amount. If the funder identified a maximum funding amount of \$5,000, do not apply for \$5,050. It tells the funder that you will not have enough money to complete the project. Many readers scoring the grant application will throw out your application citing that you did not meet the grant guidelines.

The second error is when you forget to add shipping and sales tax if applicable. Make sure that your total includes all fees that will be associated with the grant. Once a grant is funded it is extremely rare that you can ask for more money.

9. Attend a Grant Writing Workshop.

Many organizations are beginning to offer grant writing workshops and webinars.

We at Peaceful Playgrounds offer a monthly webinar, which is free for attendees. [Peaceful Playgrounds Grants Webinars](#) are offered monthly.

Free PEP Grant writing webinars are offered during PEP season which include information on [Peaceful Playgrounds](#), [We Count](#) and the [Fundamental Movement Program](#), with information to include in your PEP grant application.

10. Think Positive Thoughts.

Remain positive that your grant will get funded. If you find that your grant was not funded, call for feedback or ask for a scoring sheet. Remember the grant cycles are cyclical. It may be necessary to find a new funding source.

Hang-in-there. Make changes and ask for feedback from other grant writers.

[Getting Grants](#) ➡ Alexis Carter-Black – Self Counsel Press, WA