SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING FOR TEACHERS
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Session Description

Successful Grant Writing for Teachers
With so many grant opportunities available, it is hard to know where to start! Discover best practices in finding, writing, and obtaining grant dollars for your classroom and school. Walk away with a list of grants available just for you along with the motivation and skills to request them.

Session Objectives
Upon completion of this session, participants will:
• Discover tips about getting grant funds
• Discover tips for planning grant proposals
• Explore crowdfunding
• Explore grant proposal writing skills
• Create a grant proposal plan
• Explore foundation grants in Oklahoma
PRINCIPLES FOR OBTAINING GRANT RESOURCES

Principle 1: There are grant dollars available for everything!!

• FEDERAL AGENCIES
• PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS
• CORPORATIONS
• PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
• PHILANTHROPISTS
Principle 2: They must give their money away!! And they want to give it to you!!
Principle 3: An effective search strategy will work!

- Pick the one or two Federal Agencies.
- Pick about 6 to 12 Foundations.
- Fall in love ♥ and court them!!
- Seek them regularly on schedule. *Once in awhile is not the right schedule. Grant seeking should be regular!*
CROWDFUNDING WEBSITES

This site includes websites with descriptions, a list of articles about crowdfunding and media fund raising, a list of newsletters, and a list of directories for fund raising options and topics.

DonorsChoose – http://www.donorschoose.org/?gclid=CPTk8o669sUCFQiqQaQodbLkAxA

Appbackr – a website for apps for phones - http://www.appbackr.com/
Chipin - http://www.chipin.com/

Indiegogo - http://www.indiegogo.com/
Kickstarter - http://www.kickstarter.com/
Peerbackers - http://www.microventures.com/
Profounder - https://www.profounder.com/
Quirky - http://www.quirky.com/
Buzzbnk - https://www.buzzbnk.org/
Bolstr - http://www.bolstr.com/
Funderthunder - http://www.funderthunder.com/
Wefunder - https://wefunder.com/
Gofundme - http://www.gofundme.com/
RocketHub - http://www.rockethub.com/
Experiment - https://experiment.com
Things to Know about Crowdfunding

- Target Audiences: Alumni, Parents and Family Members, General public, Philanthropists, Business Contacts
- Online access - information is there forever. Do not violate minor’s privacy & safety
- Public
- A broker administers
- Legal contract
- Project timeframe
- Video & photo information - Do not violate minor’s privacy & safety
- Someone pays for the service
- IRS regulations vary
- Broker may be able to keep all funds from unmet goals
- Fraud is inevitable.
- Outcomes will include both successes and disasters!
PLANNING A GRANT PROPOSAL

Sample plan:

What do we want to do?
• Improve mathematics and science learning for low performing students.

Why?
• Because their grades are lower.
• Because their test scores are lower when they enter the school.
• Because they struggle to stay in school.
• Because they drop out in high numbers. (says who? document)

How do we want to help?
• Tutors
• Cohort groups
• Teacher mentors
• Engage students in authentic math and science activities, research, projects

Why?
• These are the best practices for improving learning and retention (says who? document)
Our plan

What do we want to do?
•

Why?
•

How do we want to help?
•

Why?
•
My Grant Proposal Idea

GOAL (IN ONE SENTENCE)

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

OBJECTIVES (2 OR 3 AS EXAMPLES)

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

WHY? (NEED STATEMENT)

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Tips for New Grant Writers

My first bit of advice to you as a new grant writer is to remember that even if you have never had any prior experience with grant writing, you surely know at least what writing is, and grant writing, first and foremost, is writing.

First think about the qualities that constitute good writing. The basics are: good spelling and grammar; logical organization of ideas; the use of interesting and/or expressive words and phrases. Whether you are writing a grant proposal, a term paper or magazine article, you can't go wrong with these attributes.

Now, here are my ten tips for good grant writing:
1. **Read all instructions and ... FOLLOW THEM!**

Do not improvise when writing a proposal. If your funder asks for specific information, do not substitute some variation. For example, most funders will ask for your current and last year's budget. Do not just provide one or the other. If your funder asks for information in a specific, numbered order with each item numbered, provide the information in that format.

2. **Create and use templates for proposals**

I always create proposal templates for general operating support and for each program my organization maintains. Because so many of the foundations to which I apply accept the New York/New Jersey Common Application Form, this is the template I use. Using a template does not mean, however, that I just mail the same proposal to everyone. A template easily can be shortened or re-arranged, with information deleted or added.
3. Try to know the subject matter
In order to know your subject matter (cancer research, social services for the elderly, the need of a business school for a real time trading room), you have to ask questions. Make sure you check your organization's files for past proposals on a particular program. These kinds of files can be very helpful in showing you how a program has evolved through the years. Sometimes you may want to place your program in a larger context so you may need to do some library or online research. It is logical to put your program in the context of the larger county or city, but maybe not so logical to try and relate to national issues. While we're on the subject of knowledge, make sure you also know the giving history of any particular funder you approach.

4. Be honest!
Do not make claims that are exaggerated or, even worse, untrue. Two of the most overused words in proposal writing are "unique" and "innovative." Lots of programs are well-run, economically sound and worthwhile without being especially innovative or unique. I know that many funders say they are interested in innovation and many ask why your program is unique, but I think it is best to use these words with caution.
5. Be straightforward and stick to the point.
A grant proposal needs to tell a story. You want to communicate the importance of the work you do and the real difference it makes in the lives of your program participants. It is easy to fall into the "hearts and flowers" trap. Use less flowery language, rather than more, and don't intentionally pull at the heartstrings. Do use short profiles of the people you help and quotes from them. Let them help tell your story. A good proposal should have heart, but not give heartburn.

6. Watch those outcomes!
Many funders will ask you to predict outcomes for a particular program. Be very careful what you predict - it will come back to haunt you in reports and renewal requests. Do not inflate your outcomes to grab the attention of a prospective funder. But share the outcomes in the reports.
7. Admit your mistakes.
Every organization has had programs that didn't work and outcomes that were never achieved. Don't cover these up or sweep them under a rug. Instead, try to explain what happened and what steps you have taken or will take to correct the situation. Try to make mistakes a learning experience that helps you create better programs in the future.

8. Do not miss deadlines
Do not miss deadlines. Your funder does not care if the dog ate your homework or your grandmother is sick. Or that we had a tornado!!
9. **Work hard on budgets**

If you have worked in development for more than a week or so, you already know that gathering budget information can be really difficult. Sometimes, the information exists, but not in the format you require. In other instances, there may be multiple, contradictory budgets. It is your job to find the people in your organization who really know budgets and work with them to put logical budgets together for your funders. Don't leave the budget for the last minute. It can take more time than writing the entire proposal! Maybe START with the budget.

10. **Neatness counts**

Neatness does count. Make sure you check your spelling and page numbering. Make sure budgets are legible. Do not use little tiny type in an effort to squeeze in more information. Do not spill beverages on your paper proposal. Convert documents to PDF files. Make sure you follow all instructions about numbering pages, the order in which to present attachments and labeling attachments. Do not send material, such as video tapes, unless it is specifically requested. If sending paper, send in a large 8x11 envelope instead of a folded letter envelope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Giving Foundations in Oklahoma</th>
<th>Tulsa Community Foundation</th>
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<tr>
<td>The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, Inc.</td>
<td>Oklahoma City Community Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>William K. Warren Foundation</td>
<td>The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>Inasmuch Foundation</td>
<td>ConocoPhillips Foundation</td>
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<td>The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation</td>
<td>Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation</td>
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<td>Presbyterian Health Foundation</td>
<td>Southern Oklahoma Memorial Foundation</td>
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<td>Communities Foundation of Oklahoma</td>
<td>H.A. and Mary K. Chapman Charitable Trust</td>
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<td>Helmerich Foundation</td>
<td>ONEOK Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>Sarkey's Foundation</td>
<td>The Maxine and Jack Zarrow Family Foundation</td>
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<td>McMahon Foundation</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>John Steele Zink Foundation</td>
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<td>Grace and Franklin Bernsen Foundation</td>
<td>Oklahoma Gas &amp; Electric Co. Foundation</td>
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<td>Larkin Bailey Foundation</td>
<td>The David E. and Cassie L. Temple Foundation</td>
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<td>Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation</td>
<td>American Fidelity Corporation Founders Fund, Inc.</td>
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Seven keys to improving your level of funding from private foundations:

**Preparation:** Get permission from your administration to approach a foundation or grant program.

1. **Talk in terms of benefits to the foundation’s mission, not your project.** You’ll be dealing mostly with family foundations, which require a different approach than public agencies. With federal agencies, it’s not a problem to submit highly technical proposals, but that’s not true with family foundations. They often don’t have scientific backgrounds. You need to shift the dialogue.

   Weak approach: Research auditory cognition.

   Better: Help kids with hearing problems.

**Key:** Make sure your proposal fits their mission.
2. **Use the relationship model.** The key to family foundations is building relationships. They often are minimally staffed and informally run. See if you can meet (through networking) and get to know the board members. Often they can offer advice and suggestions you won’t find anywhere else.

3. **Do your homework before the initial contact.** You can target local and regional foundations, as well as ones suited to your research. Check out GuideStar, the Foundation Center, OK Center for Nonprofits, Norris, Inc., Oklahoma State Regents, specific foundation websites and similar web sites to find foundations whose missions line up with your program.
4. **Seek information only on the first phone call.** Soliciting doesn’t work well on an initial phone call. Instead, dig for information in a brief, focused way. (If the phone isn’t an option, consider the same approach via e-mail or formal letter.) You want to obtain as much guidance as possible.

**Questions to consider:**

**Baseline questions:** What are the deadlines for proposals?

When does the board meet and how often? If the foundation says it accepts proposals year-round and doesn’t have deadlines, don’t believe it. That’s why you ask the board meeting time — you want to be on the right side of the meeting.
Assessment questions:

How many applications do you receive/did you receive this year?
What percentage do you fund?
What is the typical grant amount?
What are some favorite ideas that usually get serious consideration?

Note: Don’t give up if you are out of their league. Some foundations may not be used to working at school budget levels, but may make an exception if they get excited enough about a project.

• Example: In an initial phone call, my student was told that the foundation never gives more than $10,000. She asked for $10,000. They liked her proposal so much they gave her $50,000, and asked her to submit another proposal for $150,000 for the following funding cycle.
Open-ended questions: What are some recently funded initiatives?
Pet peeves?
Review criteria that would be helpful for our organization to know? This kind of information will help you guide the application process, knowing what to avoid and what to underscore.

Try to get a personal meeting with a director or the board, but it’s OK if you can’t. At this stage, you’re just looking for information. If possible, set up a conference call with key decision-makers to get more information and build relationships. The idea is to get them excited about what your program means to them. At a personal meeting, share photos of benefactors of your project.
Follow up. Write a targeted letter describing who you are, what your research is, how it fits with the foundation’s objectives, and that you’re seeking funding. Limit it to two pages, but ask to be allowed to present a full proposal.

Then follow up again with a phone call. For small family foundations, make the call about two weeks after the expected arrival of your letter. For larger foundations, give them three or four weeks. That’s enough to review the material. Foundations respond to people who are persistent, not pushy.

• Send a thank you note for the consideration, whether or not you receive a grant! Common courtesy for their time is appreciated.
Talk about publicity on projects. One terrific way to make your point about the value of your project: Show how past projects have been publicized. Publicize existing projects in your state or school publications and, if possible, local press. Private foundations tend to respond to well to publicity; it helps them visualize the results of your research.

Be a gatekeeper. Make only one proposal from your school to an agency. Some require this. This is controversial, but it helps solve a key problem with private-foundation fund raising — uncoordinated or scattershot proposals from several principal investigators from the same institution.

It may puzzle the foundation board about your institution’s priorities if they receive several proposals.

• Note: As you might imagine, this can open a can of worms about directors competing for different projects, but if it’s only a question of working out details with a couple of other proposers, it might be worth doing.
Finally, proposers shouldn’t be discouraged by the economy. While giving is down this year, the overall trend is upward. Sometimes foundations are telling folks they aren’t taking on projects. But they expect the purse strings to loosen up next year. That’s why it’s key to build relationships now.

• **Note:** Private giving made no decline during the last 7 recessions and depressions in the United States!

**Resource** - John Greenhoe, Director of Foundation Relations and Development Communications, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich.