

What School Administrators & Educators Need to Know About Grants

A Seminar Outline Prepared by Dr. Gil Woolard, CFI

Introduction- Why You Need to Know About Grants

If you manage a School, Church, or other non-profit organizations, there are several things you will want to know these days about your employer (board or superintendent who hired you), and the students, client or customer to be served. First, what are their primary concerns, challenges and needs? If they will tell you, the chances are that these all have to do with providing "an appropriate education (as defined in their mission and goals), AND attaining the resources or funds to fulfill both their mission and goals, and to keep their organization in business -- first and foremost..

Other than public schools, non-profits go "out of business" about as fast as profit-making businesses, or about twenty-five percent each year; likewise, about twenty-five percent are likely new start-ups, too. So their concern and challenge, like any business, is the so-called "bottom line" except they are not "in business" to make a profit... they simply want to fulfill their mission and stay afloat! In order to do these two things, they continuously Need additional resources and/or funding. First, for many, Grants are a source of funding, especially when the non profit's mission matches the interest of one or more grantors.

Second, while you may not be able to write or to attain the grant yourself, and the grantor (grantmaker) probably will not fund a proposal or application specifically for the purpose of purchasing the products or services you really want, a grantor may be interested in your mission, the need(s) of the students or the persons being served. So if products or services you want will help to meet these needs, they could be included in a grant proposal's strategies for meeting these needs, in the budget, and in the request for funding, too! Bingo!

I. What are Grants?

Resources or Funds, not normally available, to Meet Specific Needs

- A. Resources may be in the form of Gifts or Donations of Equipment, Supplied, or even Labor**
- B. Funds may be in the form of Full Funding of Needs, Partial or Matching Funds.**

II. General Sources of Grants

Governmental Agencies or Private Sector Grantors

- A. Governmental Agencies generally fund, with public funds, what they or their legislative body consider to be a public need, usually targeting specific populations or geographical areas with specific criteria or requirements in order for recipients to qualify for a grant.**
- B. Private Sector sources are private Foundations, Trusts, Individuals, and Businesses that generally fund what they consider to be their purpose, or to address needs of special interest to their founders, trustees or boards, and may or may not target specific populations or geographical areas. Note: they are private agents who may set whatever criteria or requirements they wish, and they can pretty much fund what they wish.**

- III. Who** are recipients of grants, known as the “Grantee”? While a grant recipient may be any individual, business or agency that meets the Grantor’s qualifications, selection criteria or requirements, most would be considered non-profit or charitable organizations, such as: A. Schools or colleges, B. Churches or religious organizations, C. Youth or Special Population organizations, D. Community organizations, such as Food Banks, Shelters, Child Care (pre-school and after-school), Environment & Historical organizations

IV. How Recipients(Grantees) find Grants or Grantors

Because of an organization’s mission or reputation, they may be asked to apply by Grantor, but most Grant seekers must search for possible funding sources that match their needs

- A. Grantors may publish Ads or RFPs (Request For Proposals) to attract possible Grant applicants, and available federal grants are always published in the Federal Register and the “Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance”(www.cfda.gov). Additional information on available federal grants and online applications are frequently available from the federal agencies’ website, for examples, some of the most common sources of grants for non profits are: grants for schools as shown on US Dept. of Education’s site(www.ed.gov/GrantApps/), U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services(<http://www.hhs.gov/grants/>), and U.S. Dept. of Labor(www.doleta.gov).

The latter two also provide grants to schools and other nonprofits.

- B. Grantor Directories are published by several commercial publishing house , but the signal directory in the U.S. is The Foundation Center with headquarters in New York and Washington, DC, that provide a set of their directories of over 60,000 foundations in at least two public libraries in each state, on CD, and on their website (www.fdncenter).

- C. Professional periodicals may frequently carry notices of new grant opportunities, too.

V. Major Components of a Grant Proposal

Once a possible grant source (grantor) is found, the grant writer can determine if a specific grant proposal format or an application is required by the grantor in applying to them for a grant. Some grantors accept applications and proposals “by invitation only,” which means the grant writer or applicant must first request permission to apply. Such a request is usually done in the form of a “Letter of Inquiry” to the Grantor. Succinctly, the Letter of Inquiry should spell out what the grant is requested for, what needs will be addressed, by whom, the qualifications of the applicant, how much money is requested, and how the project will be evaluated. If other grantors or agencies are participating in providing funds or services to the proposed project, they should be listed, too; many grantors like to see other “Buy-Ins,” which helps to ensure the project’s success. Such “Support letters” should not exceed one to two pages. Sometimes, a “Letter of Inquiry” is all that is required, and the project is funded without further grant proposals or applications being necessary; however, this is highly unusual, and a more detailed proposal or application is then required. If the grantor states what is required in a grant proposal or application, such instructions must be followed exactly...to the letter! Otherwise, the grantee may submit a grant proposal in whatever format desired, but the following is suggested as minimum grant proposal content if there are no other guidelines:

- A. A one-page, or less, project summary
- B. A descriptive statement of Need, detailing exactly why the project proposed and funds are

needed, utilizing object evidence data, such as Census Data, Kids Count, or Tests Results - in not more than two pages.

- C. Proposed project description (goals, objective, activities, and evaluative criteria), showing exactly how the needs will be addressed - in not more than three pages.
- D. Proposed Project Budget, detailing exactly how the funds, by source, will be expended, - in not more than one page (If more space is needed put support data in appendix).
- E. Information on Grantee's organization, key persons and their qualifications - one page.
- F. Conclusion (a review of the above) - in one or two paragraphs on the last page.
- G. Appendix (only if absolutely needed to support above components).

VI. Grant Management Considerations

- A. The Grantor will send the Grantee a notice of Approval ...do Not expend any funds in anticipation that the grant proposal or application will be approved! Payback otherwise.
- B. A Grant is like a contract – due consideration must pass between parties for it to be valid.
- C. Once the project proposal or application is “Approved” by the Grantor, the proposed activities and budget expenditures must be followed exactly as stated as the Grantee's part of the contract. If a change is necessary, an Amendment to the proposal must be submitted and approved by the Grantor prior to making the changes or expenditure.
- D. Grantee may only expend grant funds as detailed, listed or outlined in the proposal.
- E. Grantee should designate person(s) responsible for implementing and administering the proposed project, including preparing necessary reports and fund reimbursements as required by the Grantor. The person(s) preparing and submitting the grant proposal may NOT always be the person(s) responsible for implementing and administering the grant project. Therefore, it is critical that both parties (the Grant writer and the Grant Project Administrator) be involved in the submission of all reports, audits, evaluations, and communications with the Grantor.

VII. New Fed ED Grant Requirements (Terms) under the NCLB Law

Sustainability, Scientific Research Documentation, School Report Cards, Highly qualified Teachers and Aides, Parental notification, Accountability, Special Needs Students, Etc. are Some of the requirements of the new NCLB, or “The No Child Left Behind” Act, updating the ESEA, or Elementary & Secondary Education Act” that includes the one you likely have heard about, Title One, but the requirements may apply to other federal education Laws, Programs and Grants, too, such as the Adult Education Act, the Career & Technical Education Act (under which many of the nation's Vocational Schools, Technical Education and Community Colleges operate), and several new “Thrust” of the US Dept. of Ed, such as After-school Programs, IDEA for the special programs for handicapped students, and the “Community Learning Centers” program

While even more new programs are likely to be announced in the near future, an example of the latter is the Community Learning Centers grant, recently approved for small rural schools. Reviewing some of these on www.myschools.superintendent/grants/ will give you some idea how the specific new terms of the NCLB Act can be met – even by a small school (in the state of SC, at least). However, a larger school or district may have a lot more “hard data” to support such a grant.

Now, there are three more important, and critical, emphasis in this new NCLB Law which one must be aware. First, the current federal administration is attempting to involve the states in approving and setting standards for many of the new program, requiring that the individual states first apply to the federal government (US Dept of Ed, in most cases) for funds and the local schools and/or districts

apply to the appropriate state agency for funds from these new federal programs. The Grantee (school, district or nonprofit) must meet their state agency rules and requirements for applying for these "Flow-through" federal grant funds, so the Grantee should be well versed in both the specific federal program requirements and their state agency requirements, too. While these requirements are usually about the same, there may be some difference between the two, and certainly, from state to state. Also, keep in mind that while available from time to time, Direct federal funding of "Discretionary Grants of the Secretary" for individual schools or districts or nonprofit organizations are not as extensive as they once were, but some are available, from time to time (watch for the RFPs and deadlines!).

Second, the White House has now setup a new office to help fund, what is called, "Community and Faith Based" Organizations, including church related programs. While this is something that is quite new for the federal government, after years of the doctrine of "Separation of Church and State," programs funded under this new thrust does require that applicants show close coordination between their organization, private business (including vendors) as appropriate to the project, and any other appropriate public agencies, or what the federal officers like to call "Partnerships." The implications of these new emphasis will be discussed in more detail later.

Third, educators and nonprofit organizational leaders around the country are very concerned about both the implications of the NCLB requirements - especially the lack of funding in the Act to help meet these requirements, AND the appropriate process for implementation at the local level (see the letter from the American Association of School Administrators regarding their new partnership with the National Education Association to determine how best to address these concerns. Keep in mind that these are two of the largest, most politically active professional educational association in the USA). Finally, as may be expected with many of the private foundations and trust under the IRS gun (so to speak), foundations and trust who normally make considerable donations to schools and nonprofits are now adopting some of the same accountability requirements as found in this new NCLB Law.

So what does an administrator or "School Partner" need to know about this word, "Accountability"? First, the word was coined by Leon Lessinger when he was a School Superintendent in California, just prior to his move to the University of South Carolina, many years ago. The word was in his book, "Every Child A Winner," and it has been used by educators ever since. It means that every educator, at every level, must be able to prove with hard data, such as Test Scores or other hard data, that the instruction offered students will help improve their academic and/or educational goal attainment. Comparing such data to these attainments (such as graduation and employment rates) and to other students, classes and school, has become the norm of recent years. Hard data comparisons are now considered "scientific evidence" of either educational progress, or the lack thereof, and it can be one way to "Grade" students, classes (meaning teachers), schools and districts (meaning school administrators). So collecting and communicating such information or hard data are of critical importance to educators.

XIII The Importance of the School, or program, level Grant Team

Neither the district or school administrator, nor the Classroom Teacher, has the time to fully explore potential grant opportunities or to write a grant for their district, school, or program during "regular" school hours. Those who do so must depend upon someone else to do the "Grant Writing, or find the time outside of their normal working hours. Usually, this means spending some weekends, holidays, or vacation time "working on grants." This is especially true when there is only one or two staff members motivated to seek and write a particular grant. So what can a district, school, or program leader do to meet this challenge?

Form a Grant Team! Hopefully, the team will be composed of volunteers interested in addressing the same needs, but the team can be designated or appointed by the administrator. Selecting team members with various "special" talents will allow the team to divided or spread the workload among its members. For example, one may be especially good at research, one may be especially good at writing. Others may have talents in working with community groups, or working with budgets or statistics. Are you beginning to get the idea?

There is nothing about developing and writing a Winning Grant that is so terribly difficult for educators. It has many of the elements they have learned in Education 101 regarding accessing needs, writing good goal statements and objectives, developing strategies, plans and activities for meeting these goals and objectives, researching "what works," determining measures and instruments for evaluating an educational program, and finally, communicating all of these to others. If one can write a good curriculum guide and lesson plans for the guide, one can write a good grant proposal, too. The similarities are obvious, right?

Working in a team has other advantages, too. Sharing ideas, discussing various ideas, and having someone "on the same wavelength" (with the same purposes) with whom you can bounce these ideas around. Teaming work is critical to a lot of things that educators do, just as it is for team sports, business and industry. Sharing the time, responsibilities, workload, and successes are good examples of "The total is greater than the sum of the parts."

Nothing is more rewarding and motivational than seeing "a job well done," but awarding winning grant teams can add to the excitement and fun of Grant Writing. This can be in the form of special recognition, in-house perks, and even cash bonuses. Imagine the extra excitement of having a winning grant team appear before their board to receive special awards and recognition. Adding to this excitement is the fact that many winning grant teams have actually developed and proven an idea that professional groups and community organizations will want them to present at one of their meeting, too! The Media will likely love it!

But how does one start in developing a Grant Team? Meetings and workshops to show both the need and how a team will work are good places to start. Even better is a workshop or college credit course on Grant Writing to learn the fundamentals and to meet others from the same school or program with the same interest and concerns.

College credit is always a good motivator, especially for educators, but having others with whom to share the workload and extra hours after school, on weekends, and holidays, make it easier for professionals to accept and to want to join the team effort. Nothing is more inspirational in Grant seeking and writing than seeing team members of teachers, counselors and administrators appearing before their board or peers to receive their awards for winning a successful grant application. "Go for the Gold" is a good slogan for a successful Grants Program!

Summary/Conclusion:

In this first decade of the new century, there is no doubt that administrators in schools and in non-profit organizations need additional funding and resources to fulfill their mission and goals. Grants are one way to help meet these needs. There are two sources of grants: governmental and private trusts and foundations, and both now are very competitive and have tough qualifications of potential grantees. Therefore, grant seekers and grant writers must know more about the grantor's requirements and how to find and write grant proposals that will win. But more than these, the staff of both schools and the non-profit organizations must be in a grant seeking mode and involved in the process. Grant seeking and grant writing can no longer be an isolated effort, separate from "where the action is" in the schools, classrooms, and in the community served. Today, we must recognize and reward these efforts!

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Dr. Gil ?? Who is this man, Anyway?

Dr. Gil is a former salesman, business manager, jet fighter pilot/instructor, public school administrator, grant writer, presenter, and teacher – but most of all, a teacher who loves teaching teachers how to teach... and to write WINNING Grants!

He has been married to the same lovely lady, also a master teacher, Betty, for over fifty years. They have three wonderful children, nine very special grandchildren, and have lived in the Carolinas for most of their lives.

For more particulars on Dr. Gil, be sure to check his web site at www.consultantinstruction.com, but for now:

Why This Workbook?

When Gil left the business world to open ATEC (Applied Technology Education Campus) located near the Camden, SC, airport (where else?), he was looking for funds to expand and to offer more programs, but whenever he took his ideas for new instructional programs to his boss and school board, they always said the same thing: “Great idea, Gil, just go find the money”! So after a couple of years of “finding the money,” (and several hundred articles, books and grants) he realized that this was part of his job! However, he learned that if he could teach others how to write winning grants, too, he could increase his effectiveness and programs. Soon, the University of South Carolina and Clemson University found out about his successes and he began to teach “Grant Writing” as part of his “Program Planning & Development” courses, as an Adjunct Professor for both universities. He developing his own hands-on workbook for use in his courses. Hence, his first text, “Grant writing Basics,” and later,

“Yes, You Can Write Grants that Win!”

Over the years, Dr. Gil has been involved in writing hundreds of grants and in teaching hundreds of students “the art & science of Grant Writing.” So it is to his close family, friends, all the people who helped and taught him, and to all his students, that this workbook is dedicated... let’s all “GO FOR THE GOLD!”

Gil Woolard

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