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# Introduction

What exactly is a grant? In order to qualify, most nonprofit organizations need to apply for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status with the federal government. Public schools fall into a special nonprofit status even though they are different than other nonprofit organizations. When a grantor gives you money, you are entering into a contract with that funder to perform activities as you have set out in your grant proposal.

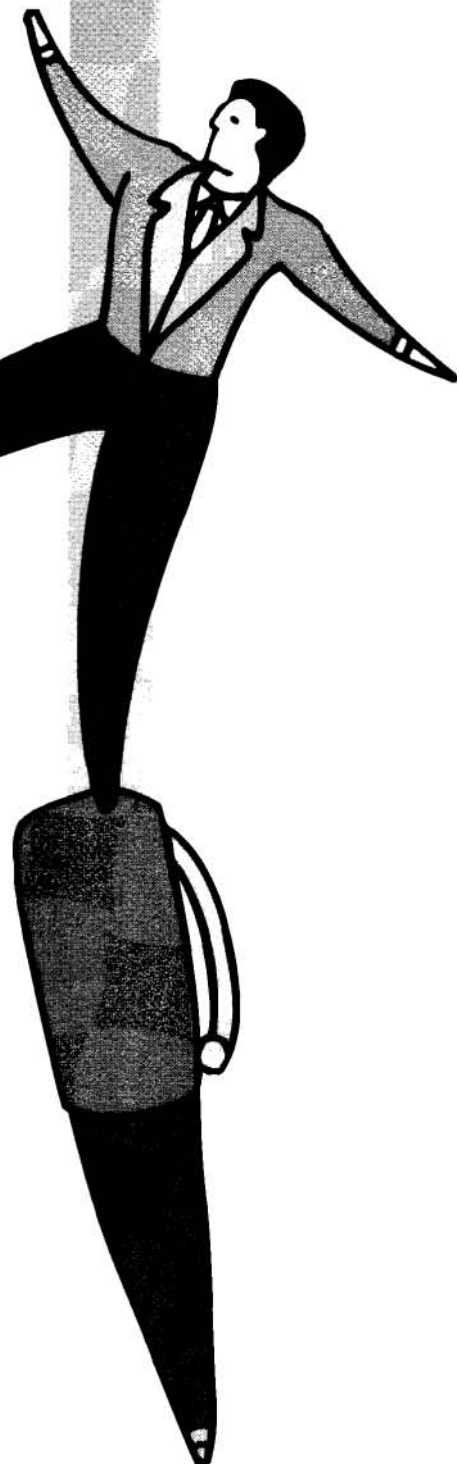
Why a grant? The funds from grants can allow you to offer your students and faculty programs and training that might not be made available any other way. An effective grant funded project can give you the tools to create meaningful change in the lives of your students that the school or community could not otherwise accomplish. This can be both an exciting and overwhelming prospect.

Grant writing can be an intimidating process. Some funders require you to read through pages and pages of detailed instructions (and yes, you need to read every page). Federal grant applications tend to fall into this category. Other funders provide a paragraph or two of very general information. Individual donors often do not have any formal processes at all, requiring you to contact them through a query letter process. Some funders give you the option of submitting 30 pages of information; others want you to summarize your program in five pages or fewer. A federal grant application can be as many as 40 pages!

Where does this leave you? The good news is that all grants have some basic elements in common. Once you understand the fundamentals that all grants share, the process becomes much easier. You will complete a similar process for all grants that you write, tailoring each proposal to a specific funder.

For example, some funders only support medical research, while others only support educational programs. Obviously, you need to target appropriate funders. The second part of this is that some funders require a more formal tone than others. Does this mean you need to alter your program according to each funder? No. Your program will remain true to the needs you are trying to address. What it does mean is that you need to conduct careful research and emphasize the elements of your program that will appeal to your chosen funder. Show how your project meets the needs of the funder and the programs they prefer to support.

But before we get too far into the process, let us review a few "musts" to keep in mind before beginning.



## ***The Importance of Teachers***

When seeking educational grants, remember that teachers are very important in the process. Teachers must be **involved** and must be stakeholders in the project. One or two teachers are not enough to carry a grant successfully in the school setting. Multiple teachers need to be involved, and **commitment** to the project needs to be obtained before a grant is developed. Use your grant committee to help involve teachers and inform those who are not directly involved in the grant writing and developing process. Explain the importance of the project and the projected outcomes. Also consider developing a culture that encourages grant ideas. In the downtimes, encourage personnel to be thinking of and making notes for future grant projects. These can be reviewed and discussed by the formal grant committee.

## ***Parts of a Grant***

Although the order of some elements may vary, a general outline of a grant includes the following.

### **Abstract of Project: A brief overview of the project**

Included in the Narrative

Title: The name of the project

Project Summary: Introduces the project (also referred to as Summary of Project, Project Description, Project Overview, Discussion of Project, etc.)

Statement of Need: Detailed information on why the project should be funded (also referred to as Problem Area, Justification, Rationale, Critical Impact Statement, Definition of Need, Defense, or Assessment)

Goals and Objectives: Goals of the project and how they will be met

Project Methods (Activities): Methods used to meet objectives

Timetables: Total length of project, including essential milestones

Evaluation of Program: How outcomes of project will be evaluated

Dissemination, Utilization, and Sustainability: Sharing results with others and continuation of project

Budget: Detailed outline of expenses

Other Items That May be Included in the **Narrative** or in the Addenda

Facilities and Equipment: What is needed and where the project will take place

Personnel: Who will be involved in **the project** and their qualifications



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