

Taking THE LEAD on Grant Writing

LET'S FACE IT. SOMETIMES A REALLY GOOD CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

PROGRAM can be expensive—worth every penny, but expensive. It often takes more than the federal or state funds you have been allotted. That's when a strong leader must step forward and begin the quest to secure the necessary funding, and that frequently means applying for a grant.

According to **Grant-Sources.com**, there are thousands of grants available through federal and state government grant programs, private foundations and scholarship programs. These range from \$500 to \$50 million. In addition to **Grant-Sources.com**, there are a number of Web sites that list federal government grant opportunities (see the sidebar with this story). You can check with your state department of education for grants that may be available at the state level, and the Foundation Center (www.fdncenter.org) has listings that include foundation and other private sources of grants. The SchoolGrants Web site at www.school-grants.org also has links to state grant opportunities (although not all of the links work), as well as links to foundation and corporation grants.

Securing funding of a major grant is not a simple task and is best accomplished through teamwork. For teachers who are seeking to secure such funding, support from administration is essential to their success. Patrick Miller, the author of *Grant Writing: Strategies for Developing Winning Proposals*, says that proposal directors should be identified by administration as soon as the decision is made to apply for a grant. According to Miller, proposal directors should have experience, time to devote to the project, demonstrated leadership abilities, and a commitment and belief in the project.



Successfully securing a grant begins with a creative, innovative idea, but after that comes the hard work. It takes time and effort to explore the vast array of grant opportunities to find the one that is right for your project. Miller stresses that it is vital to have a good match between what the funding agency wants to support and what you want to do with the funding. He adds that once you find a good match, be sure you follow the specific requirements spelled out in a request for proposal or grant application.

Gil Woolard, who has taught college-level courses on grant writing, suggests establishing a school grant team composed of five to seven faculty members who are interested in writing grants. His team members would include a good researcher, a good writer, a good proofreader and a good word processor. Woolard notes that this spreads out the workload and the responsibility, and helps to prevent one individual from spending countless hours after school working on the proposal.

When putting together your team, you

Sources for Government Funding

Here are some Web sites to visit for lists of government grants that are available.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
www.cfda.gov

Federal Funding Programs
www.federalgrantprograms.org

Government Grants
www.gov-grants.com

American Grants
www.unclesamsmoney.com

Grant Sources
www.grant-sources.com

USA Government Grants
www.usagovernmentgrants.org

might consider someone who is good at handling budgets and someone with great attention to detail. You need to present supporting materials for your project and its budget, and you need someone who will help to ensure that your application is complete and you have not missed any of the small details that can get it rejected—everything from the deadline to the packaging. The team leader may have to work to keep everyone on the same page. Mary Ann Burke, author of *Simplified Grantwriting*, notes that team members may have varying ideas about what activities and strategies are most critical for immediate development. When this occurs, the group should take the time to create both long- and short-term strategic plans. Once those current and future plans have been clarified, Burke says the team should be prepared to identify the appropriate funding sources.

Burke notes that although the school leadership team will initially determine what program should be expanded or developed to meet the needs of the students, other key stakeholders may have to be involved in the grant proposal development and implementation. In addition to teachers, these stakeholders may include school site and central office administrators, program support and clerical staff, parents and community members, community-based organizations, legislators and local businesses.

Most federal, state and foundation grant proposals require certain elements, among them an introduction; the reason for the



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project; the goals or objectives, along with a timeline for achieving them; planned activities; the budget; an evaluation plan; and a plan for sustainability. Government grants may require certifications or government agency forms. There is a broad scope of work to cover and many details that must be correct if you are going to be successful. It will take teamwork and strong leadership. In describing the characteristics of an effective fundraiser, *Webster's New World Grant Writing Handbook* says, "A good fundraiser provides leadership without anyone realizing it. He guides the process, orchestrates the players, and motivates the team to move forward."

When that leadership results in a grant for state-of-the-art equipment or funds to establish an innovative new program, your students and your community will reap innumerable rewards. ■

Grant Writing Tips

Patrick Miller's book *Grant Writing: Strategies for Developing Winning Proposals* is a good source for helpful information and samples for writing grants. Miller is a life member of ACTE and a former university professor who taught professional and technical courses. He has also worked as a director of grants and a contract administrator, and has served as a grant and project consultant to school districts. In addition, Miller has served as a national grant reviewer and panel leader for the U.S. Department of Education, so he is able to approach the subject from different angles. Miller's book is available through the ACTE bookstore. For more information, visit www.acteonline.org.