The Accidental Grantwriter:

A Survival Guide

Librarian to Librarian Networking Summit

East Carolina University

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For the past several years, funding for library programs has been reduced, eliminated or suspended

Improving Literacy Through School Libraries

For the first time since it was created in 2001, this program was zeroed out of the federal budget in 2011.

"This decision shows that school libraries have been abandoned by President Obama and the Department of Education," according to Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director of the American Library Association's Washington office.

The [DOE] has withdrawn funding from numerous successful literacy programs in order to launch new initiatives to bolster science, technology, engineering and math education," Sheketoff says. "Apparently, what the Department of Education fails to realize is that the literacy and research skills [that] students develop through an effective school library program are the very building blocks of STEM education."

Reading is Fundamental

On March 2, 2011, President Obama signed a bill that eliminated federal funding for RIF, the nation's largest organization providing free books and literacy resources to 4.4 million children at 17,000 locations throughout the US.

For 44 years, RIF has provided millions of books to children from low-income families, children with disabilities, homeless children, and children without adequate access to libraries. RIF has been an authorized, national program for over 30 years. RIF has received bi-partisan support and has been funded by six administrations without interruption until now.

LSTA Collection Development Grant

This program was discontinued after the 2011-12 school year and is not currently offered by the State Library of North Carolina

Other grants remain available from the State Library of North Carolina

http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/lsta/lsta.htm

At the same time, School Library Media Coordinators in North Carolina are increasingly expected to do more with less.

North Carolina School Library Media Coordinators Standards

"The demands of providing a 21st century education dictate new roles for School Library Media Coordinators. School Library Media Coordinators are called on to have a larger role in their schools and school communities…School Library Media Coordinators are valued for their leadership abilities throughout the school as well as in the media center. …

To deliver this level of service, searching for supplementary funding sources has become a necessity.

School districts with strong business, industry, and community support may be able to leverage local resources to compensate for cutbacks at state and federal levels. Low-wealth, rural districts may have few local resources to tap but may be able to leverage high levels of need to win grants from private and public funders.

Few low-wealth school districts have the funds to employ personnel dedicated to the pursuit of grant funds so existing staff may be tasked with writing grant proposals in addition to numerous competing responsibilities.

The purpose of this workshop is to equip participants with the basic tools required to successfully apply for grants and manage grant-funded projects.

**By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:**
- Determine and describe need
- Locate funding opportunities
- Read and interpret funding guidelines
- Match opportunities with needs
- Understand the components of a grant proposal
- Create a budget that supports the project
- Manage grant-funded projects

Destination: Unknown

Needs and Wants

- Hotel, motel, cabin, suite?
- Swimming pool?
- Child friendly? Pet friendly?
- Handicap accessible?
- Restaurants? Special diets?
- Seasonal activities?
- Recreational access?
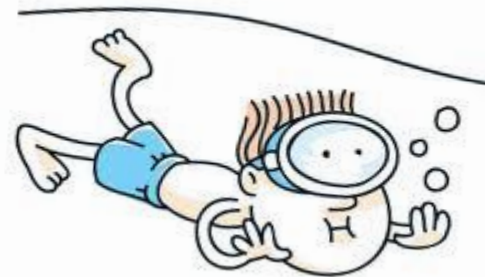
Strategic Planning

Standard 1: School Library Media Coordinators demonstrate leadership.

School Library Media Coordinators lead in the school library media center and media program to support student success.

- Contribute to the development and implementation of the school improvement plan.

- Participate in shared decision making addressing all aspects of the school library media center's function

- Participate with classroom teachers in professional learning communities to address student and professional achievement.

- Foster collaboration among members of the school community to meet the school improvement goals.

In Other Words:

- Participate actively on your School Improvement Team
- Categorize and prioritize needs
- Create short-term and long-term "wish lists"
- Develop strategies to enable realization of goals and objectives
- Implement strategies, monitor progress, and make necessary adjustments to maintain forward motion

Data Sources

- http://www.census.gov

- http://www.ncpublicschools.org

- http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/resources/statistics.html

- http://www.osbm.state.nc.us/ncosbm/facts_and_figures/state_data_center.shtm

- https://www.ncesc.com/default.aspx

Standard 3. School library media coordinators implement a comprehensive 21st century library media program.

"School Library Media Coordinators develop an appropriate and high quality library media collection that facilitates 21st century teaching and learning. They use collection mapping and other collection analysis tools to ensure that the collection is dynamic, learner-centered, supports the North Carolina Essential Standards and Common Core State Standards, and meets the unique needs of the school and its learners…

School Library Media Coordinators:

- Exercise professional judgment in selecting resources that reflect the diverse developmental, cultural, social, and linguistic needs of students.

- Collaborate with local technical staff to ensure that digital resources are easily accessible and reliable.

- Evaluate and select new resources based on the collection development plan.

- Continuously evaluate the library media collection to ensure that it is accurate and current and meets teacher and student needs for recreational reading and curriculum-based materials in a variety of formats.
- Collaborate with members of the school community in assessing needs and using needs assessment information to inform the school's collection development plan.

Show Me the Money

The assumption is typically made that a school district is responsible for providing whatever is currently defined as necessary to operate its schools and conduct its legally mandated business. At one time this may have included slates, chalkboards, and coal for the potbelly stove in the middle of the classroom. Today, the list can include computing devices, broadband connectivity, e-readers, digital textbooks, and 24/7 access to online learning opportunities.

Funds to support the basic operation of public schools are allocated by local, state, and federal governments. Teachers, schools and districts with needs and wants that exceed basic allotments can augment their budgets through activities such as:

- Direct solicitation
- Fund raising
- Grant writing

More conventional needs such as the purchase of standard supplies and materials should be met through solicitation or fund raising, as grants are generally awarded to applicants that propose innovative but achievable solutions to challenges such as:

- Enhancing student engagement and motivation
- Closing achievement gaps between subgroups
- Dropout prevention in at-risk populations
- Afterschool care for latchkey youth
- Literacy acquisition for struggling readers

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Some grant opportunities may seem to have little to do with library media resources or programming but connections can always be made between academic subjects and the Information and Technology Essential Standards.

Collaboration is critical to winning grants!

Partnerships between classroom teachers and librarians or schools and public libraries can result in powerful proposals that enrich teaching and learning and enhance library/media resources.
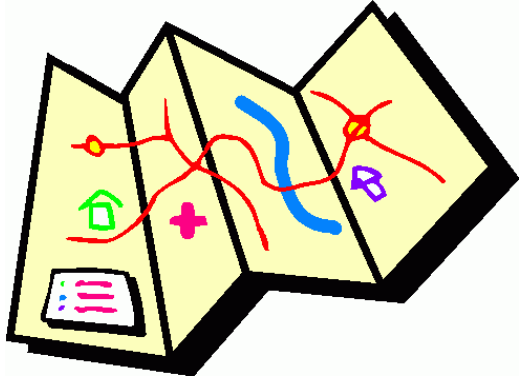
Resource Road Map

Grants are awarded by private foundations and public agencies, each with its own funding cycle and guidelines. Some grants are posted annually at predictable intervals such as:

- NC Bright Ideas (September deadline)
- Dollar General Back to School (May deadline)
- NC Arts Council (March deadline)
- Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries (December deadline)

Other grants are posted at irregular or unpredictable intervals or once-in-a lifetime (like Race to the Top or Innovative Approaches to Literasy). Grant seekers can subscribe to valuable but expensive print and online databases that keep subscribers informed of available opportunities but few school districts have the funds to invest in these services. The following free websites and online newsletters can help grant seekers locate current grant opportunities.

Sources of grants for libraries

State Library of North Carolina

http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ld/grants/lsta.html

NEA Foundation

http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/grants-to-educators/

NC Bright Ideas

http://www.ncbrightideas.com/

Target
https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/grants

Ezra Jack Keats Foundation
http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/introduction/

Library Grants
http://librarygrants.blogspot.com/

Grants Alert
http://www.grantsalert.com/

eSchool News
http://www.eschoolnews.com/funding/

Foundation Center Grant Newsletter

http://foundationcenter.org/newsletters/

Email Alerts for Federal Grants

http://www.grants.gov/

Grant Prose Grant Alerts

http://grantproseinc.com/grant-alerts-2/

Grant Siren Grant Alerts

http://www.grantwriters.net/grant-siren.php

Learning the language

- **RFA**-Request for Applications
- **RFP**-Request for Proposals
- **NOFA**-Notice of Funding Availability
- **NIA**-Notice Inviting Applicants
- **DUNS** Number-Data Universal Numbering System (Dun and Bradstreet)
- **501(c)(3)** Letter of Determination-letter from IRS stating tax exempt status
- **SAM**-System for Award Management (federal)

- **SPOC**-Single Point of Contact for Intergovernmental Review-NC Does not participate in this process
- **EIN/TIN**-Employer Identification Number/Tax Identification Number
- **CFDA** Number-Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number
- **Congressional district** – NCXXX (format)
  http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/
- **Type of Applicant**: G. Independent School District
- **Federal Register**-publication where grant announcements are officially posted
- **Absolute priority**-Purpose of grant to which all applicants must respond
- **Competitive preference priority-**Additional purpose to which applicants may respond to earn bonus points
- **IRS Proof of Tax status** for school districts-877-829-5500 opt. 4 then 2

- **PI/Co-PI**-Primary Investigator (Project Director)

- **APR**-Annual Performance Report

- **EDGAR**-Education Department General Administrative Regulations applicable to grants from USED

- **OMB Circulars**-Office of Budget and Management publications with guidelines for different types of applicant organizations

- **GPRA**-Government Performance and Results Act mandatory evaluation measures

- **GEPA 427**-General Education Provisions Act equitable access and non-discrimination statement

- **Program Officer**-Person employed by funder to interact with grant applicants and manage aspects

- **In-Kind –**Non-monetary services or resources contributed to the project that can be assigned an estimated monetary value if matching is required

CHARTING A COURSE

Grant Land is a vast territory, inhabited by as many different cultures as there are potential funding sources, each with its own customs and dialect. Choosing your destination involves studying the options and identifying the one that best fits your organization's mission, needs and capacity.

Types of Funding Sources

Private foundations

- Grants vary widely in amount and timeline
- Successful proposals often require "conversation" between foundation and applicant
- Deadline can be rolling or multiple times per year
- Applicant's mission must align with foundation's charitable purpose and funding priorities
- Can be restricted geographically, demographically, or by special characteristics of applicant
- Management and relationship with funder can be formal or informal, restrictive or loose, depending on culture of foundation

Governmental agencies

- Government grants often for larger amounts than foundation grants

- Applicants can ask funder technical questions but cannot obtain insight into application

- Deadlines announced as programs are authorized

- Unpredictable schedule, often non-recurrent

- Rigid proposal guidelines and scoring process

- Education grants often restricted demographically but seldom restricted geographically

- May be distributed regionally or by congressional district for political reasons

The 10 Essential Questions

1. Is your organization an eligible applicant?
2. Does the grant provide funds for something you need or want?
3. What are the odds of receiving the grant (how many are being awarded)?
4. What is the estimated size of individual grants?
5. How long is the project period? Can you accomplish your goals in the this amount of time?
6. How long do you have to prepare the application? Can you complete it by the deadline?

7. Can you obtain all the required documents by the deadline (IRS Proof of Tax Status, DUNS number, audit, organizational chart…)

8. Will you require approval and/or signatures from authorized personnel? Can you obtain this by the deadline?

9. Is your organization registered in Grants.gov (required for most federal grants-can take several weeks to complete)?

10. Does your organization have the capacity to prepare the proposal/application? Does your organization have the capacity/infrastructure to manage the project?

PAIN vs GAIN

After answering these questions, carefully weigh your options to decide whether the time and possibly money to be invested in the preparation of the application has a real potential to contribute a significant enough amount of needed resources to your organization to justify the effort of applying for a grant.

ON THE GROUND

Once the decision has been made to pursue a funding opportunity, the team charged with preparing the application needs to read the entire set of instructions, which can be several hundred pages long. Read all supporting documentation including FAQs. Open all hyperlinks and explore. After reading once, read again and highlight, flag, and note anything that looks important. Discuss the instructions with team members. Contact the program officer to resolve anything that needs clarification before proceeding.

JUMP KIT

The following slides contain useful tools that can help you survive your visit to Grant Land. Keep these tools handy, learn to use them well, and share with fellow travelers.

TOOL #1

In general, the purpose of a grant is to *enhance*, *expand* or *initiate* a project or activity to address a need or problem, using strategies that have been successfully employed in similar situations, to achieve positive, measurable results.

Levels of Risk

Low Risk: Enhancing existing program

Moderate Risk: Expanding existing program

High Risk: Initiating new program

TOOL #2

Write every proposal with the belief that you will be funded and be prepared to implement the project upon award of the grant.

Write for readers who may not know or care personally about your organization and convince them that you will be the best steward of their funds.

TOOL #4

Grantors will be reluctant to trust you with their money if you appear careless in your proposal.

The devil is in the details.

Read and re-read proposal guidelines and follow all instructions precisely or your application may be DISQUALIFIED.

Note essential details like number of pages allowed, margins, font size and style, line spacing, number of copies to send, and *COLOR OF INK used for signatures.*

Clean up all:

- Spelling and grammar errors (Do not trust "Spell Check" or "Grammar Check")

- Typos

- Inconsistencies (factual, stylistic, graphic)

- Printing problems (if paper submission)

- Omissions/oversights

TOOL #5

Share the draft proposal with interested colleagues and ask for critical feedback and proofreading assistance.

spelling grammar punctuation

PARTS OF A PROPOSAL

Statement of Need/ Significance

- Introduce readers to the community

- Describe existing conditions, needs and resources

- Define problem to be solved by project

Profile

(School/District)_____ is a _____,
serving (target population)_____ living in
(location)_____. (Location) is a
_____ in _____. The
mission of (School/District) is _____.
(School/District) was founded in _____
and (services provided annually, since
founding, etc.) _____.

(a) <u>Significance</u>

Beaufort County Schools (BCS) is responsible for educating 6,900 children and youth living in Beaufort County, North Carolina, a large, low wealth county located in the state's coastal plain region. BCS is classified as a rural local education agency (LEA) eligible to receive funds under the Rural Low-Income School Program (RLIS). Established in 1705 as Pampticough Precinct, Beaufort County is home to the state's first capitol, oldest incorporated town, oldest existing church, and first public library. The county's landmass is split into northern and southern halves by the Tar-Pamlico River, a 180-mile long inland waterway that becomes a brackish marine estuary nearly four miles wide at the county's eastern border. The distance by land between Beaufort's northeastern and southeastern borders is nearly 100 miles. Further widening as it approaches the Atlantic Ocean, the Pamlico joins the Albemarle Sound to form the second largest marine estuary in the eastern United States.

Despite its ecological and historical significance, Beaufort is currently among the state's poorest counties. The North Carolina Department of Commerce ranked Beaufort a Tier One County for 2012, among the 40 most economically distressed in the state. According to the 2010 Census Data used to determine eligibility for this competition, 29% of the students enrolled in the district's schools are from families that live below the poverty line (SAIPE, Census 2010).

There are 14 public schools in the district, including three high schools, two middle schools, one alternative 6-12 learning center, and seven elementary schools of varying grade ranges. Six of the district's schools are clustered in the city of Washington and serve slightly more than half of the county's students. The remaining eight schools are widely scattered throughout the rural, 828 square mile county. All schools, with the exception of the alternative learning center and early college high school, maintain school library media centers staffed by certified library media coordinators. The alternative school hosts a small, self-service collection and the early college high school is located on the campus of a community college with a full-service library. The three highest poverty schools have participated in Reading is Fundamental (RIF) since 2009. The district's School Library Media Centers provide many students with the

Goals

In response to the above needs, the goals of this project are:
- To provide access to library books during non-school hours
- To update the library collection to support the Common Core and Essential Standards
- To help all students become proficient readers by the end of third grade

Goals can be broad, visionary

Objectives

These goals will be accomplished by:

SMART Objectives
Specific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime-Bound

By_____/_____/_____,   _____
[WHEN—Time bound]   [WHO/WHAT will occur—Specific]

from _____ to _____
[MEASURE (number, rate, percentage of change compared to baseline)

Project Description

- Describe actual operation of project

- Explain how program will accomplish goals and objectives

- Link all program activities to needs established in Needs Statement

Evaluation

- Link evaluation to project design and needs assessment

- Describe the tools you will use to measure and document progress toward goals

- Seek both formative and summative data

- Consider employing a professional evaluator if grant guidelines permit

Management

- Outline how project will be administered if funds are awarded

- Describe structure and capacity of applicant organization

- Address fiscal accountability

Budget and Budget Narrative

• Budget is a numerical outline of how funds will be used

• Budget narrative is a more detailed explanation of expenditures

• Be sure all expenditures are allowable by grant guidelines, EDGAR, and applicable OMB Circular

- All expenditures must be required to conduct project and must be described in project narrative

- Use realistic numbers for expenses and in-kind contributions

- Create mathematical statements that justify line items numerically: "X items @ per item = $Total"

- Budget narrative categories should be in same order as budget template

BUDGET NARRATIVE-PROJECT YEAR ONE (10/2012-9/2013)	
Budget Categories	**Budget**
a. Personnel	
1 .5 FTE Project Director@ $5,000/month x 12 months	30,000.00
20 Afterschool tutors @ $25/hr x 4 hrs/week x 18 weeks	36,000.00
20 summer tutors @ $25/hr x 4 hrs/day x 16 days	32,000.00
10 Bus drivers, afterschool and summer @ $14/hr x 1.5 hrs/day x 48 days	10,080.00
90 Substitute teacher days (Hill Center training) @ $100/day	9,000.00
TOTAL Personnel	*117,080.00*
b. Fringe Benefits	
FICA, Project Director, tutors, substitutes, Bus Drivers @ 7.65%	8,957.00
Retirement, Project Director, Tutors@ 14.23%	13,945.00
50% Hospitalization, Project Director @ $5,192	2,596.00
50% longevity, Project Director @ 4.5%	1,350.00
TOTAL Fringe Benefits	*26,848.00*
c. Travel	
Mileage/airfare, lodging, meals for Project Director and 12 representatives to attend annual training /conference @ ($400 mileage/airfare, $500 lodging, $100 food) x 13	13,000.00
TOTAL Travel	*13,000.00*

Sustainability

How will project activities be sustained after grant cycle ends?

- Project completed (building project)

- Seek other potential funding sources

- Obtain/expand community support

Other miscellaneous parts may include:

- *Cover Letter*

- *Abstract , Executive Summary*

- *Table of Contents*

- *Letters of Support*

- *Assurances and Certifications*

- *Memoranda of Understanding*

- *Organizational charts*

- *Resumes*

CAUTION

Before proceeding with any grantseeking efforts, discuss the idea with a principal or supervisor. Schools or districts may have administrative procedures and policies that must be followed regarding grants. Be especially wary of grants that require matching funds or obligate you, your students, your school, or your district to ANYTHING, whether monetary or non-monetary, which you may be unable or unwilling to fulfill.

Also be aware that the school or district authorizing the project is the recipient of the award, not the employee who writes the proposal. Grant funds are deposited in the school or district account and materials and/or equipment purchased with grant funds are owned by the school or district in which the applicant works and not by the individual applicant.

In other words...

Be careful what you wish for,

as the person authorizing submission of a grant proposal is legally obligated to do everything proposed and/or required if funds are awarded. Seeking forgiveness instead of gaining permission is not a good choice when money and contracts are involved.

Welcome home! You survived your trip to Grant Land and have returned with a new set of skills you can use on your next grant seeking adventure. Good luck and safe travels!