

Grant Writing Tips

Do you have a great idea for a special project that would open your students' eyes to a new way of seeing, or a project that would help foster cross-curricular work with another area? Are you unable to implement that idea because your school or district has no extra funds available for special art programs?

If so, read our "Tips on Obtaining Grant Money for Art Education." You'll learn where to look for grants and the basics of grant writing.

Obtaining grants can be a very rewarding process, but it takes patience, planning and persistence to succeed. The following tips will help make the process more manageable.

Tips on Obtaining Grant Money for Art Education

Planning Your Project

Have a well-developed idea about what you hope to accomplish and exactly how you will achieve your goal. Be clear about how the project you are proposing fits into your curriculum and larger goals as well.

Check to see if your district has certain requirements you must follow when writing a proposal for a grant. Also, check to see if there are experienced grant writers in your district who can offer you assistance. You may want to form a grant writing team of people who are interested in your goal. This team could include other art teachers, administrators, and parents.

Finding the Funds

Locate possible sources of funding.

Start with local and state funding, as the overwhelming majority of grants come from these sources. Look for local educational or arts foundations or other organizations in your area that help fund educational and arts projects. Try your state's Department of Education and your state's Art Education Association. About 7% of grant money comes from the federal government, but these funds are generally channeled through the state. Only 1% of funding comes from private sector foundations or corporations, but that doesn't mean you should overlook these possible sources. See Suggested Sources for Art Education Grants following this document.

Consider pursuing a mini-grant.

These usually provide funds of up to \$1,000. The application process is simpler, and you have a greater chance of success. Acquiring a mini-grant is excellent practice for writing a larger grant.

Determine whether there is a fit

between the particular grants you are considering and the program you wish to implement. Does the source of the grant support projects in your geographical area? Has the grantor given funding to projects similar to the one you wish to pursue? Is your budget within the parameters of past grants awarded by this source?

Writing the Grant Proposal

Consider requirements carefully.

If you fail to follow the guidelines exactly, you may be disqualified. Each part of an application must be completed accurately and in a manner that will make a convincing case for your proposal. Take time to carefully craft your writing. Clarity, spelling and grammar are all important. Have your team or a third party proofread your application.

A typical grant proposal consists of four sections: concept, program, budget and conclusion.

1. Concept

- A. Clearly document the need or problem the program will address.
- B. Explain the benefit of the planned program and how it fits the general mission of the school or district. Use definitive language when stating the benefit. For instance, use the verb "will" instead of "might" or "could."
- C. Include any supportive research that demonstrates success for the type of plan being proposed.

2. The Program

- A. Outline the main activities of the program. List the procedures, resources, events and conditions. Clearly outline the path from the activities to the desired goal. Address how the grant program will be part of your larger strategy.
- B. Lay out a timeline for all aspects of the program.
- C. Provide a clear, appropriate plan for assessing the success of the program. This step is essential.
- D. Projections should be made if this project can be repeated or extended into the future.
- E. Be sure to include all staffing and volunteer requirements.

3. The Budget

- A. Provide a detailed budget that covers all aspects of the proposal and justifies all expenses.
- B. Show that the requested funds are consistent with the project's objectives and activities.
- C. Be sure the costs are within the range of amounts the organization has previously granted.

4. The Conclusion

Here is the place to make a strongly reasoned yet emotional appeal conveying the need for the project. Give a "who, what, where and how" summary of the plan and restate the funding need. Make a case for your own and your district's ability to carry out the plan.

Additional Notes

Be sure to include a letter of introduction with the application. Keep copies of everything you send. When you receive an answer, whether you are granted the funds or not, write a thank you for the opportunity to apply.

If you do succeed, celebrate your victory and follow your plan to the letter. If you do not succeed, be patient and persistent. Ask why your proposal was not accepted. Often the scoring sheets can be obtained, and you can determine what to change for your next attempt. The effort is worth it!

Suggested Sources for Art Education Grants

The web sites and periodicals listed here are provided to assist you in locating grant money. Some of the sources are very specific and some will simply lead you to a source where you can find more information on your own.

Web Resources

(Web sites change over time so the paths listed may not remain exactly the same. The starting points, though, should stay similar enough to find the referenced material.)

Federal Grants

U.S. Department of Education--www.ed.gov

Type "Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination" or "Professional Development for Art Teachers" in the search box.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services--<http://hhs.gov/grantsnet>

U.S. Department of Justice--<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>

National Endowment for the Arts--<http://arts.endow.gov>

National Endowment for the Humanities--<http://neh.fed.us>

State Grants

Please check your own state's Department of Education or Department of Public Instruction web site for possible grants in your state.

Another source for art education grants is the state's Art Education Association if your state has one.

Private Sector Grants

The National Art Education Foundation (2003). Grant Applications in Art Education [Electronic Version]. Retrieved November 6 2003, from www.naea-reston.org, clicking on Special Programs, clicking on National

Art Education Foundation, and downloading the NAEF Grant Application Booklet (pdf).

OR

The National Art Education Foundation (2003). Grant Applications in Art Education. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

The Altman Foundation/Foundation Center. The Foundation Center is a clearinghouse for grants from the private sector. To access information about grants in education go to <http://fdncenter.org/focus/education>.

All Sources

School Funding Services

This site has a listing of funding and grant distribution by state.

<http://schoolfundingservices.org>

School Grants

This user-friendly site lists grants from many different sources.

<http://www.schoolgrants.org>

Periodicals

The Grantsmanship Center Magazine

This magazine is not specifically targeted at the educational community, but gives good information on fundraising and resources for non-profits. It is free to members of non-profit organizations and agencies at their office address.

<http://www.tgci.com>

The Grantsmanship Center
1125 W. Sixth Street, 5th floor
PO Box 17220
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 482-9860

Education Grants Alert

This is a newsletter that is published by the Aspen Education Development Group four times a month, and is exclusively about grants for education. A subscription may be requested for on-line or regular newspaper format.

<http://www.aspenpublishers.com>

(800) 234-1660

Education Week Magazine

This newspaper format magazine deals with issues in education. There is a grants section that runs once a month. It announces grants awarded and grants available. 44 issues plus two annual reports.

<http://edweek.org>

(301) 280-3100

Aid for Education Report. This weekly periodical may be received online or in print. It provides important information for educational professionals, including comprehensive information on public and private grants.

<http://www.cd.publications.com/funding/aidforeducation/htm>

(301) 512-2250

Resources: How to Write a Grant

The following web sites and documents were used as sources for the information in this document. Visit these sites for more detailed information on proposal writing for grants.

Sax Arts And Crafts (2007) Grant Writing Tips - <http://www.artsupplies.com/resources/grantWriting.jsp>

Altman Foundation (2003). Proposal Writing Short Course: Part One [Electronic Version]. Retrieved November 11, 2003, from <https://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop1.html>

Altman Foundation (2003). Proposal Writing Short Course: Part Two [Electronic Version]. Retrieved November 4, 2003, from <https://fdncenter.org/learn/shortcourse/prop2.html>

(The Altman Foundation/Foundation Center is a great site for information on proposal writing in general. <http://fdncenter.org/grantmaker/altman>)

Grossman, Ruth (2002). Finding the \$\$ [Electronic Version]. Sunburst Visual Media: Valhalla, N.Y. Retrieved November 14, 2003, from <http://www.sunburstvm.com>--go to Teacher Resources, then Finding the Money.

The National Art Education Foundation (2003). Grant Applications in Art Education [Electronic Version]. Retrieved November 6, 2003, from www.naea-reston.org, clicking on Special Programs, clicking on National Art Education Foundation, and downloading the NAEF Grant Application Booklet (pdf).

OR

The National Art Education Foundation (2003). Grant Applications in Art Education. Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Premier (2003) The Premier Legacy New Teacher Resource Guide [Electronic Version]. Appleton, WI: School Specialty, Inc.. pp.13-14. Retrieved November 8, 2003, from www.schoolspecialty.com/newteacher.jsp (Use NT0307R as response code).

Premier (January 2004) The Premier Funding Directory [Electronic Version]. Bellingham, WA: Premier-A School Specialty Company. <http://www.premier.us/funding> (Available January 2004).

School Grants (2003). Grant Writing Tips [Electronic Version]. Retrieved November 5, 2003, from <http://www.schoolgrants.org/tips.htm>