

Londonderry School District



Grants/Gifts Handbook

The text in this handbook has been adapted from the
Grand Rapids Public Schools (MI) GRANTS HANDBOOK

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So you want a grant?

What is a grant? What is a gift?

A grant is an amount of money given by a government source or a foundation for a specific purpose. It is time limited, usually one to three years. Grants can be for as little as \$50 and soar into the millions of dollars. Gifts come from corporations and individuals. They often have the same restrictions as grants, but the application process may be simpler.

For the purpose of this document, grants and gifts are the same.

When receiving a grant, the recipient agrees to specific guidelines. These often include:

- *Using money only in the manner specified in the grant*
- *Submitting to audits of the grant*
- *Providing specific reports to the funder at specified times during the grant*
- *Providing a final report to the funder*

How does the district decide whether to apply for a grant?

There are several factors used to determine whether to apply for a grant. These factors are used to determine how much assistance the Office of the Assistant Superintendent can provide to help the proposal. These factors include:

- *The relationship of the grant to the district's strategic goals*
- *The number of grants awarded by this program*
- *The amount of the grants*
- *The quality of the proposed program*

Who gives grants?

There are several funding sources. All have different requirements and different areas of interest. Generally grants come from these sources:

- *Foundations*
- *Government (Federal or State)*

Who gives gifts?

Gifts generally come from two sources. They are:

- *Corporations*
- *Individuals*

What do funders fund?

Funders are giving away their money to a cause they believe in and to an organization they believe will make good use of that money. Some things to consider if you are looking for a grant or gift are:

- *Each funder will have different areas of interest*
- *Each funder will have a different way they wish to be approached. Some wish a full proposal, some only a letter of interest. The office of the Assistant Superintendent will help you determine the best approach.*

Funders usually look for proposals which:

- *Have measurable goals and objectives*
- *Change how students learn or teachers teach*
- *Change how services are provided to students*
- *Make positive changes in student learning and/ or behaviors*
- *Are planned and implemented in collaboration with other community agencies*
- *Are cost effective*
- *Have some contributions from the school, the district, or a cooperating funder*
- *Can be replicated by another school*
- *Have a good chance of continuation after grant funds are expended*

Funders usually do not fund:

- *Trips or one time events*
- *Individuals to attend conferences*
- *Emergency requests for program continuation*
- *Something they have funded before*
- *Something that should be part of the normal operating budget, i.e. textbook purchase*
- *Capital improvements, i.e. buildings or renovations*

What does one need to do to apply for a grant?

Prior to application

1. *Create and maintain a credibility file*

A credibility file contains information about your school and/or program. It helps the grant maker understand you as a credible risk. It should contain the following items:

- *Test results from your school or program*
- *Evaluation reports from your school or program*
- *Newspaper articles about your school or program*
- *Reports from other grants you have successfully administered*
- *Support letters*
- *One page resumes of current or potential program leaders*

All the material you save will not be sent in with your request. Some important documents may be placed in the attachments, but most will be used for background material. Collection of this material on a regular basis will help facilitate proposal writing.

2. *Create a research file*

Place any research material or articles you find about similar programs. Use this file for demographic data. Place any local or national information about the need for the program in this file. You will be asked at some time to state the need for your program.

3. *Create a program plan*

The heart of a grant is a program plan. You must have an outline of your proposed program. How will it meet the need you identified? You will be asked at some point in the process to create a task list and timeline. You will be asked to assign each task to a specific person or department.

At the time you write the proposal

1. CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT TO RECEIVE APPROVAL TO SEEK FUNDING.
2. Adhere to deadlines! Most grants have deadlines. **No grant submitted after the deadline – for whatever reason – will be considered.**

3. Follow all directions. Even if they seem odd, follow the directions that the funder gives. These may include such things as:
 - *Format of the grant including type size and margins*
 - *Page limitations*
 - *An outline to follow*
4. All requests for funds should be signed by the Superintendent or his designee. The Office of the Assistant Superintendent will facilitate getting grant documents signed by the appropriate official.

What is a generally accepted outline for a grant?

A generic grant outline is included at the end of this handbook. The Grantsmanship Center provides a generally accepted generic outline for grants.

What if a program is funded?

If a project is funded, there are steps to take before implementation can begin.

- *The Business Office will set up the account numbers with the designated control officer. **Money cannot be expended until this is done.***
- *You will be informed by the funder of all reports and evaluations and when they are due. **It is your responsibility to follow through.***

What if a program is not funded?

Several options remain if a program is not funded at first. Among them are:

- *Continued search for other funders*
- *Scaled back design and/or budget*
- *Re-work program design*
- *Find community partners as co-applicants*

Some programs will be more difficult to fund than others. For some the cost of seeking additional funds versus the likelihood of funding will require that the request be dropped.

What are important considerations when writing a grant?

When writing grants, three important considerations are budget, personnel, and evaluation. Unless these are figured correctly, proper implementation of grants is difficult or impossible. If you are writing your own grant, please take a moment to review this page. Time spent now will save problems in the future.

Budget

All grant budgets must be reviewed by the Office of the Assistant Superintendent before the grant is submitted. This will insure that all costs are included and figured accurately. Failure to follow this step can mean that the grant can not be implemented as written.

We prefer that all grants and accompanying budgets be submitted to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for review. The District Office will submit the grant budget to the Business Office. If major changes need to be made in budgets, the grant writer will be contacted.

Personnel

The school district has policies and regulations it must follow when adding personnel. **These also govern persons hired under a grant.** Rules govern the following areas:

- *Salary for the position and placement on the salary scale*
- *Posting of positions (All positions must be posted)*
- *Hiring practices*
- *Performance reviews*
- *Notification of termination due to the grant cycle*

To insure these guidelines are followed grant writers must submit a job description for any new position requested under a grant to the Office of Human Resources. Human Resources will complete a job analysis and determine the salary range for the position. This is the amount that must be included in the budget. Once the grant is received, the grant coordinator must contact the Human Resources Office regarding posting and hiring. **Posting and hiring must be done through Human Resources. They may not be done independently.**

Evaluation

Funders want some evidence that the money they spend is making a positive difference for the intended target audience. Part of the rating for every grant requested is its evaluation. A poorly written or missing evaluation design greatly diminishes the chances

of receiving a grant. Evaluations must be received by building principals/Assistant Superintendent/ Directors prior to submission deadline.

All grant budgets may have an amount added for evaluation.

It is the responsibility of the grant writer/coordinator to contact the building principals/Assistant Superintendent/ Directors after the grant is received to schedule and help implement the evaluation process.

Local funding sources

All local funding sources must adhere to the Grants Handbook (i.e. PTA, Friends of Music, Booster Organizations)

What are myths surrounding grants?

There are several myths surrounding the role of grants and gifts. These myths deal with the availability of funds and how they are secured. The following were compiled by Dr. Dan Ballast, former Director of Grants for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. They are included to help program and site directors understand the role of grants and gifts.

1. Grant funds can “rescue” programs slated for elimination or reduction.
2. There are viable funding sources for every proposal or idea.
3. Documentation of a desperate need for money is the most important ingredient in a competitive proposal.
4. The district will continue to be in a position to give assurances that it will continue the funded programs after the grant ends.
5. The district’s needs fit the agendas for many funders.
6. It is possible to train through a workshop persons who will be themselves immediately able to write a competitive grant.
7. Funders fund ideas first; persons and programs second.

Tips on developing a letter of inquiry

Some foundations and corporations do not accept full grant proposals unless they have approved the concept and are interested in further information. In these cases they often call for a pre-proposal or letter of inquiry. A letter of inquiry should be considered as a mini-proposal. You need to catch the attention of the program officer in a very condensed form.

Before writing a letter of inquiry, check with the foundation or corporation to see if they have a required form or outline. Find out how many copies you should send them. Ask if you are allowed attachments and, if so, what attachments they would like to see.

If there are no specific requirements, follow this outline:

- Why you are writing
- Why you are writing to this particular funding source
- The qualification of your organization to do this project
- The need for your project
- What you will do to alleviate that need – project plan
- Why your project is creative, innovative or unique
- What portion of the total cost you expect the funder to provide
- Concluding paragraph

These are the general rules to follow when you are writing a letter of inquiry

- Research the source. Know before you write that you are eligible to apply and that the source funds grants in your geographic and interest area
- Use letterhead
- Be concise and factual
- Be positive; write as if you expect to get the grant
- Keep each of the above points to one paragraph except possibly the project plan. If not specified by the foundation, the total number of pages without attachments should be three or less
- Use at least a 10 point font (12 point is recommended)
- Have others proofread the letter
- Have the letter signed by the highest official you can, i.e. principal, superintendent, etc.
- Be sure to tell the source how to contact you and that you would be glad to answer any questions or provide further information.

What are the basics of proposal writing?

1. Be concise, clear and specific
2. Do not use generalizations or assumptions
 - a. Who says?
 - b. So what?
 - c. Who cares?
3. Proposal should be a well-thought out plan, as well as a request for funding
4. Avoid jargon
5. Minimize use of adjectives
6. Don't self-indict
7. Keep sentences and paragraphs short
8. Be positive
9. Easy to read; user friendly
10. Client-driven – write from the point of view of those who will benefit
11. Demonstrate your credibility
12. Use combination of statistics and quotes/anecdotes
13. Follow instructions

Grantsmanship Center

Generic Grant Outline

This is a generic outline for a proposal. It will help you understand the material you need to collect and the thought you need to put into applying for a grant. This generic outline is not meant to be a model for a full proposal.

Introduction

- Introduce your school or program
- What qualifies you to do this program?
- Who says you are qualified?

Problem or Need

- What need exists in your community?
- Documentation to establish the nature and extent of the problem
 - National figures
 - Local figures
- Why is the problem important?
 - So what?
 - Who says?
 - Who cares?
- What are the causes or reasons for the problem?
 - Important
 - Causes and reasons must match methodology

Objectives

- What are you trying to do?
- Criteria for objectives
 - Measurable
 - Time Limited
 - Realistic
 - Relevant
 - Outcome oriented

Methods

- How will you solve this problem or alleviate this need?
- Criteria
 - Must include a timeline
 - Must include persons or departments responsible
 - Must tell what you will do – specific steps
 - Must tell to whom, where, and when you will offer this service
- How do you know this approach will work?

Evaluation

- How will you know if you were successful?
- Must be linked to objectives – summative evaluation
- Must evaluate the methods – formative evaluation

Budget

- What will you spend the money on?
- Be specific
- Include contributions from host organization
- Include budget narrative

Summary or abstract

- One page only
- Take statements from each section
- Done last but often placed first

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**REQUEST FOR SUPPORT
PRE-PROPOSAL**

All schools, programs, and individuals seeking grants and gifts from any funding source must seek approval from the Office of the Assistant Superintendent.

Completion for this form means that the Office of the Assistant Superintendent will forward any grant and gift information related to this request to the contact person. It does not mean that we will be able to do a full funding search. For some requests, we may encounter no possible funding sources. Please refer to the Grants Handbook for general information on the types of projects funded.

School or Program: _____

Contact name: _____ Contact Number: _____

Project name: _____

Name of grant: _____

Deadline for submission: _____

What do you propose to do?

How does this fit with District Mission, Strategic Plan, professional development and/or District Technology Plan?

Whom have you contacted about funding this project from current district budgets?
What was the response?

How much do you think this will cost? Give an estimate or the major cost items and any ongoing costs.