

Grant Writing Quick Tips

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Turn Funding Needs into Reality with Grant Dollars

In 2005 over 80,000 foundations gave away \$32.4 billion dollars in grant funding, and the federal government gave away billions more. A grant is a written contract between a donor and recipient to carry out a particular project or service in a specified time frame. Grants are an increasingly popular way for the federal government, business, corporate, and family foundations to solicit request for organizations to apply to receive funding. Grants differ from “gifts” due to the fact that the recipient is required by contract to carry out a certain set of deliverables upon receiving funding from the donor.

Grant writing is the art of constructing a proposal to sell the idea of a specific project. Because of economic down turn and recent budget cuts, Cooperative Extension must rely more on external



funding opportunities to continue to provide quality programming to the residents of Georgia and beyond. Writing grants is an effort that will prove invaluable gains for benefiting programs over time.

Grant Writing Tips:

- Use a thesaurus
- Look for ways to tug on the readers heart strings
- Cite research as evidence for your program need
- Use underlining, italics, and graphs for emphasis
- Use buzzwords for your project area

Parts of a Grant Proposal

Every grant application is different, and funders decide what information they need to know as a part of their grant application. Some basic grant proposal parts are:

Cover Letter— Describes funding requested with dollar amount or service requested in the first paragraph.

Proposal Summary— Less than one page that describes organizational background, program purpose, implementation plan, budget, and impact

of the program.

Mission Statement— A succinct statement made through a collaborative process that reveals the purpose of the program.

Goal Statements— Broad statements of long range purpose that give overall direction.

Objective Statements— Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Specific statements that serve as program benchmarks (cont. pg. 2).

Selling Your Idea

An article by Janet Rasey from Science Direct Magazine said it best, “The ability to market your ideas is the most critical feature of the art of grant writing.” How many of us, while we are writing our grant proposal, really realize that we are acting as a salesman for our cause?

In your life, what motivates you to give money? Does it stem from your personal interest or sense of community duty? According to the National Society of Fund Raising Executives, for many people, giving is a way to establish immortality, gain influence, express emotion, experience joy, or to gain peer approval. As we write our grant application we must continually ask ourselves if our idea is reaching the donor on some type of personal level.

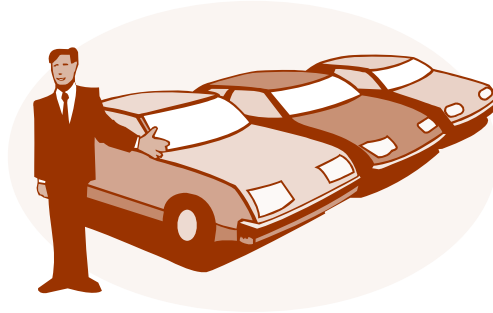
Grant applications are in a sense advertisements that invite the donor to build a relationship with your organization

and participate in funding your program. As the grant proposal is written, ask someone to review it and then answer the ultimate question, “Would you take your own money to fund this idea?”

If the answer is “No,” then it is important to evaluate why not. What are the areas of the proposal that could be more attractive to a donor? Can you add sentences with more descriptive language? Try using personal stories to connect the project with real and personal life situations.

Donors fund people not, products or services. Think about the bigger pic-

ture and how what you need funding for will allow you to more easily reach that goal.



Good salesmen know how to deliver their message. Educators use different methods of instruction to teach to different learning styles. As a grant writer, use formatting, diverse language,

and visual aids to generate buy-in from your customer in your proposal. Write in clear, concise, and compelling sentences to convince the donor YOU will do great things with their money. When the reviewer gets to the end of the proposal yours will end up in the “Yes” stack!

Set Your Application Apart: Create a Project Name

During the submission process, grant reviewers are flooded with applications that may all look the same. Setting your application apart from the rest may seem tricky, but one sure way to catch the readers attention is to create a meaningful project name.

Once this title is created the reviewer will remember your proposal and refer to it

“Your project should have a fun name, a colon, and then an explanation of what your project is all about.”

Jeff Buckley, State 4-H Faculty

by its official catchy project name. It can also be used as a header or footer on your grant application to continually remind the reviewer of what the project is all about.

When creating a project name remember these few items: keep it simple, acronyms work, use the funders lingo, and say what you do. Begin by brainstorming words that you would associate

with your project purpose or outcome. Try to incorporate your target audience or program location into the name if it is appropriate. Then, think about how you can piece those words together to make a descriptive phrase that describes your project.

For example, if you were writing a grant to fund financial literacy education for 4-Hers on a regional level, the title could be: Project MONEY (Multi-county Outreach Network Educating Youth). Creating project names make a lasting impression on grant reviewers.

Parts of a Grant Proposal, cont.

Problem Statement— A brief paragraph that tugs on the heart strings of the reader and provides research based justification for grant program.

Action Plan— Narrative that explains how the project will be conducted.

Timeline— Provides a clear visual for the donor to see the dates that program objectives will be accomplished.

Evaluation— Methods set into place to measure the outcomes or process of

your grant program.

501(c)3 Status— Documented number given by the IRS that proves your organization is a non-profit.

Budget Narrative— A budget breakdown written in paragraph format that describes in detail the funding request.

In my grant writing experiences, many of these pieces are usually asked for while filling out the “request for proposal” or RFP put out by the potential

donor. These RFP’s require grant writers to tailor each grant application to fit each specific RFP requirements.



When creating a proposal from scratch, begin with these pieces in mind. Even before the perfect RFP is acquired, each of these items can come together to build a better picture of your program plan. Then, you have a recipe for success!

Finding the Right Grant Fit for Your Program



There are so many grants out there to choose from how do you know which one to pursue? Searching for the perfect RFP takes time and energy, but in the end it is well worth it to find a match that best fits your project. Begin by analyzing the RFP and comparing it with your grant project idea.

Here are some of the key things to look for:

- Define your “deal breakers.” What are the parts of your proposal that can not change? Does the RFP allow you to carry out those ideas?
- Is the money worth it? Can you actually do what the RFP is asking with the money they are awarding and your resources? When you get the grant dollars you want to say, “Oh, Yes!” and not “Oh, No.”
- Does the timeframe work? Can you carry out the project in the time allowed by the donor?

- Does the RFP fund your program at the monetary level you need to carry out the project? Do they have a history of giving grants on a much larger or smaller scale than you actually need?
- Do the funding priorities on the RFP really match the type of program you are conducting? If it is a stretch to make it work, then you may want to think twice before applying.

When the RFP from the donor aligns with your specific project goals then you are on the right path to finding a fit for your grant project. The RFP must also closely coincide with the priorities of your grant. Funders can see through obvious miss-matches.

When searching for a grant to fit your needs area, start by looking online at foundation web sites for different organizations and browse RFPs.

Program Buzzwords and Hot Topic Project Ideas:

- Service-Learning
- “Go Green” with Environmental Conservation
- Diverse Program Specialization
- Rural Community Access
- Childhood Obesity and Wellness
- Immigrant Education Programs
- Water Education
- Youth-Led Projects
- Reaching Underserved Audiences
- Alternative Fuel Sources

Program Design and Implementation

When constructing a program for a grant project it is important to take a careful approach to design and implementation. Utilizing a logic model is one of the most effective methods of designing an effective program. Logic models are usually presented on a graph format. They show logical relationships between the resources that are invested, the activities that take place, and the benefits that change as a result.

A simple logic model may begin by showing the relationship in a graph form between inputs, outcomes, and outputs. Inputs are what is invested. Outputs are what is done. Outcomes are what actually happens as a result. The logic model describes the sequence of events that will change over time. It is a systems model that shows the connection of interdependent parts together that make up the whole.

The University of Wisconsin offers a variety of resources that will assist program planners in defining their program through a systematic design process. Their approach was used as a reference for this article. A program logic model tutorial can be found on their web site at: www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/

Request for Proposals: To Write or Not to Write



Request for Proposals (RFP) are the documents put out by organizations requesting for applicants to receive their grant dollars. All RFPs are different based on the requirements of each funding body. Applications can vary in length and the type of questions asked.

Some funders want to know specific details about the grant project, while others just want a general idea of how their dollars will be spent. There are no set guidelines for how funders can set up their grant programs or RFPs. Usually the

federal government has the most lengthy applications and family or private foundations have a more general approach. When applying for a grant take the RFP and compare it to the document you are preparing.

Use their document as a checklist to guide your grant. Make sure that you submit the proposal following all of the guidelines outlined in the RFP for items such as margins, spacing, font size, and number of copies. Grant reviewers will immediately dismiss proposals that do not meet their requirements.

Each RFP is different, just as we are all different.

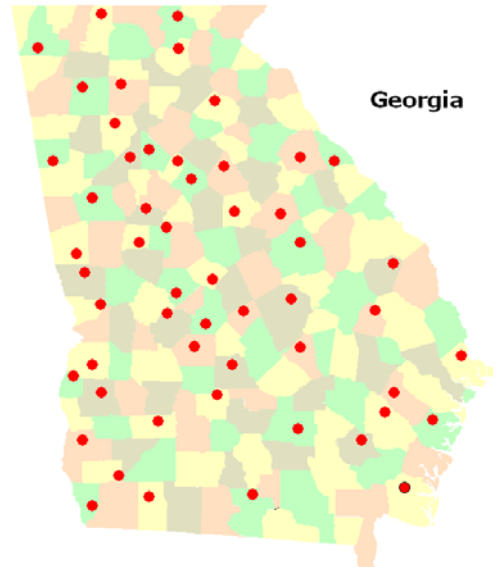
Learning for Life

Lauren Ledbetter, Grants Coordinator
310 Hoke Smith Annex
Athens Georgia 30602
Phone: 706-542-3506
Fax: 706-542-4373
Email: lauren1@uga.edu

THE GEORGIA 4-H FOUNDATION AND UGA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Click "Grants" at:
www.
georgia4hfoundation

The Georgia 4-H Foundation and Cooperative Extension had a very successful year in generating external funding through grant development. This fiscal year in regards to reported grant endeavors, Extension applied for \$1,191,398 in cash and in-kind grant awards. To date, we have received \$812,848 in cash and in-kind grant awards with \$37,000 in various cash awards still outstanding.



Agents trained in grant writing since 2005

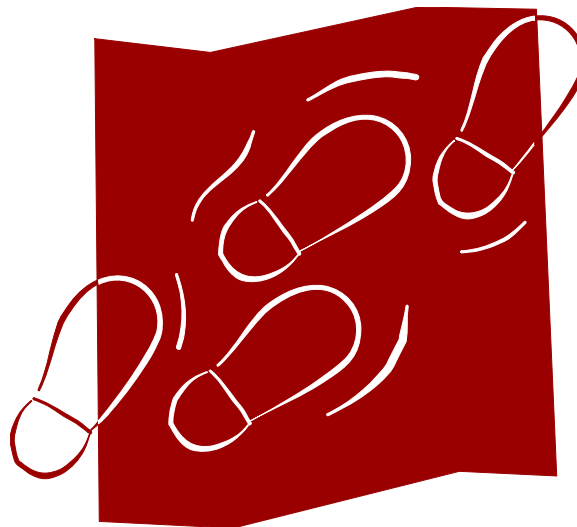
In addition, resources are continually being expanded to steward the application of grant funds through the development of the Grant Writing: The Basics curriculum, the creation of the County External Fund Template (CEFT), and Extension Grants e-news, a quarterly web based newsletter. Extension Agents are introduced to grant concepts online at the 4-H Foundation "Grants page," at 4-H Basics & Fundamentals, and also during Extension Foundations Training.

Where to Search for Grant Funds

Finding grant funds may seem like a mysterious process. Where are these types of opportunities located? The best way to begin your grant funding search is on the internet. In 2008, everything is online. Start by researching different corporations and their funding interest. If the corporation has a public web site, try searching their company name + the word foundation. For example, if I wanted to find out if Wendy's Restaurants have a foundation, Google search "Wendy's Foundation." The first item that should pop up is the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

Then, visit the web site to view available grant opportunities. This is an easy way to search for grant funding from anywhere there is internet access. Searching for grants can be a tedious process, but by setting aside just 15 minutes a day to look for grant opportunities you will start to find RFPs that fit your funding needs. There are several grant list serves that send out RFP information to grant seekers. Several that I really enjoy are the Chronicle of Philanthropy, Grants Funding Alert, and Grants.gov.

Getting plugged in to a grant list is a great way to receive a large amount of information that can be reviewed in a shorter time



frame. Extension Grants e-news is an online resource that compiles grant announcements and Cooperative Extension grant success stories. Extension Grants e-

news is located on The Georgia 4-H Foundation web site under "Grants." The archived stories are also located on this web site.

The University also has grants listed on the Office of the Vice President for Research web page under "Sponsored Programs." Grants on this web site are specific to programming that relates to the UGA and its activities. They also have a list serve group that receives emails frequently concerning new grant opportunities.

Searching for grant funds may also be done in person. Some corporations may not have a web presence but may still award grant dollars. Once you have a preliminary idea of your grant need, program design, program impact, and dollar amount, give the corporation a call to find out more about the opportunity to partner with them.

When making personal phone calls and applying for grant funding, make sure to include your local development officer in the process to comply with UGA regulations.