



Grant writing hacks from a reviewer's perspective

Seeking grants checklist

- Be prepared. Have a project plan in place and your permissions lined up before applying.
- Research grantmaker sites for alignment: Operates in your community or region; supports your cause or issue; giving history; submission schedule, outline for grant narratives, rubric.
- Ask for recommendations on sources. Check online sites like grantwatch.com.

Writing your application

- Convey your enthusiasm. Let your passion show. Describe colorfully how beneficial this project will be.
- Study the rubric – it is the scorecard your reviewers use. Explain your project based on the rubric criteria.
- Make it understandable – define terms. Spell out acronyms. Avoid jargon.
- Be specific about the takeaways, scores, skills and benefits.
- Proofread it. Make sure you wrote what you were thinking.
- **Reviewers are probably NOT educators.** Help them understand how your project ties into curriculum, student learning, district goals.

You only have one opportunity to plead your case. Your application is your voice. Make it the most appealing one among your competitors. Do everything you can to anticipate questions and make it easy for reviewers to say, "yes."

Content advice

- Innovative, unique and creative for enhancing and enriching curriculum, increases chances for funding.
- Make sure objectives are specific and describe an outcome.
- List expected outcomes - bullet point them. Describe who, what, when, where and how peer-to-peer knowledge sharing will be handled, resources shared, or continuation years planned.
- Reach across grade levels and sites, if relevant. Be inclusive. Few will fund all participants and expect teachers in advance to work out coverage.
- Provide Acrobat format flyers, brochures, RQs, cost breakouts. Don't expect copied links to buried information in websites to seek, create a file, and prepare it to send to committee members.

Reviewer considerations

- Rubric is starting point. Did applicant meet the criteria?
- Reviewing and prioritizing starts with the big idea.
 - Targets existing curriculum, addresses a need or a mandate?
 - Impact more than one area of instruction and includes an explanation of how?
 - Has grantmaker recently funded similar projects? To support a variety and expand the reach, reviewers may recommend alternating years or sending different personnel.
- Objectives need to include:
 - How equipment or technology will improve instruction, tie into curriculum, solve a problem, or energize/engage students.
 - Express enthusiasm and make it clear who will champion it.
 - How the results or outcomes will be defined and measured.
 - Describe specific conference focus /takeaways and how to be applied.
- Impact
 - Quantify impact: Number of students, sites, across grade levels, training other teachers.
 - Is the potential impact short- or long-term?
 - Does it cross disciplines or learning styles?

- Meet a need?
 - Does this project or opportunity meet a need?
 - Explain how project will help build leaders, trainers, or teaching team.
 - Can reviewers tell when and how peer-to-peer training or coaching will occur? Is it reasonable to believe it will be effectively shared?

Grant committees have three choices:

1. Approve as requested.
2. Decline to fund a grant
3. Offer reduced funding (discretion).

Expenses

- Does location for conference/training require expensive travel?
- Has the applicant sought other funding sources? Locating multiple sources to defray costs increases score.
- Did the applicant offer options to reduce cost?

Off-rubric influences

- Ask for materials with longer-term impact, long shelf life. If an item could be assumed short-shelf-life or consumable, clarify in description. Better yet, leave it out and seek other sources.
- Don't let one decline bury a great idea. If an explanation is provided, learn from it and apply again.
- Compare your request to grantmaker's budget. Asking for 20-25% or more for one grant is a difficult sell.
- Did the request come in with a need to rush it through review? Some opportunities are last minute. If it appears to be a late due to procrastination, it will work against the applicant.
- Try to find other funding, even if it's not in the bag when you apply. Showing initiative sheds light on desire to champion the project.
- Include all the required files and links. Use Acrobat format. Image files are bad (large, slow to load, print) and hard to email to committee members.

The Bartlesville Public Schools Foundation has information and an online application for Classroom, Professional Growth, Experts in Residence and Northern Oklahoma section of the American Chemical Society grants at

<https://bpsfoundation.org>