LEGO® Education's Guide to Writing Grants

Writing Successful Grants

The key to writing a successful grant is to give them exactly what they ask for in the application. Follow the grantor's exact directions when completing the application to ensure you include all the information they want to see. Most grantors will not read your application if it does not follow their format or guidelines. Also, you want to be specific to give them succinct information without using unnecessary jargon.

In this guide, we provide suggestions to completing a grant using common sections that appear in most grant applications. You will need to see how these sections match to the actual grant you are completing and may need additional information. Use the Questions to Consider to help you think about information that may need to be included.

Below are common grant sections that you should consider when preparing to write a grant.

Introduction/Summary:

Here is where you state your case. Grantors should have a solid understanding of your entire proposal if they read nothing else, so you need to grab their attention and provide just enough information to keep them reading.

- Provide a summary of key details, including a statement of the problem.
- Introduce the basics of the project (where, who, why).
- Explain the money needed and how it will be used.
- Explain any acronyms used to avoid confusion.

Questions to consider:

- Did you include a summary of the entire proposal with information from each section?
- Did you provide enough information for the reader to see the whole picture?
- Did you provide information that will get the reader excited about the project?

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Need Statement:

This is your time to get the reader to understand the situation and more about the issues that affect your students. Grantors need to see that there is a reason to fund your project and that the funds will make a difference.

- Detail the reason you need funding and what you are trying to accomplish.
- Provide facts and data to support your case.
- Be persuasive and specific.
- Show that the issue can be resolved with the funding.
- Keep your tone positive and confident.

Questions to consider:

- Do you state your case clearly to make sure the reader can understand your needs?
- Do you provide facts or statistics to support your claims?
- Are your facts and figures accurate?
- Are you providing enough information for the reader to understand the whole picture without seeming desperate or overdoing it?

Project Description:

Here is where you outline the entire project and explain your plans for implementation.

- State your project objectives and goals. Consider formatting them as bullets so they stand out.
- Explain how you will accomplish your project objectives and goals. Be detailed, with an eye on showing alignment between objectives and goals.
- Demonstrate how you will measure success.
- Provide facts such as how many students will be involved, how long the project will last, and what teachers/professionals will be involved.
- If you have a goal of increasing scores, include statistics about current scores and the desired increase.
- Share research that supports your actions and shows that they will be effective (for example, "this is a best teaching practice that has proven effective to raise scores").
- Include a timeline of events. This demonstrates that you have a plan and are ready to implement your project.

Questions to consider:

- Have you included all the details of the program so that the reader can follow exactly what will happen?
- Did you set measurable goals and/or objectives that can be assessed at the end of the project?
- Did you include research to support why the project will be successful?
- Does your timeline of events align to the grant timelines?
- Did you consider your needs for professional development to receive proper training for implementing and using the new program?

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Budget:

The key to this section is clearly explaining how you will spend the money awarded in the grant, so be sure to provide a detailed list. Include explanations as necessary to ensure the grantor understands how every dollar supports the project.

You'll also want to consider the purpose of the grant and how the grantor would like the money spent. Some grantors do not want a large portion of the money spent on staffing but will allow for professional development with existing staff. Others will not allow equipment to be purchased. If you request funds to be spent in a way that the grant does not allow, the reader will discard your application.

Questions to consider:

- Have you carefully reviewed what money can and cannot be used for in the grant?
- Are the categories used in the budget understandable? Will the reader know what the money is allocated to do? Do you need additional descriptions for the headings?
- If you show a need for more money than promised by the grant, do you show where additional funds will come from?

Organizational Information:

It should come as no surprise that grantors want to know the organizations they're funding.

- Detail the organization's purpose and normal function.
- Explain how the new project (that is, the project for what you've asked the grantor to fund) aligns with the organization.
- Identify who is involved with the organization, including anyone who is relevant to the new project.

You don't need to overwhelm grantors with information in this section; just help them understand the organization that is hoping to get their support.

Questions to consider:

- Did you provide a clear understanding of your organization, who is involved, and the purpose?
- Is there a clear alignment to this project and the organization?