

In Search of Technology Treasures: An Online Grant-Writing Seminar

Welcome to adventure! CASTLE Technology Consultants believes that the strongest way to express our commitment to education is to provide you with the resources you need to realize your technology goals. While we have framed this online seminar in a whimsical pirate theme, we realize that funding your technology initiative is serious business. No dream, no matter how worthwhile or ambitious, will become reality without the dollars and cents necessary to get the right equipment and staff development put into place.

This online grant-writing seminar will give you a “map” of how to seek out those who can provide the “treasure” necessary to fund your technology initiative. You’ll learn to navigate the sometimes-rough seas of proposal development so that your technology plan will be realized as the classrooms of tomorrow. If you have any questions about this site or any of the resources presented here, please feel free to contact us at joan@castletechnology.com.

Get Ready!

Writing a grant is like following a map to a pirate’s treasure; the way may seem treacherous, but if you know what you’re doing, the rewards can be great!

Although tales of pirates and treasure hunts portray a fantasy world, our schools must operate in the real world. Yet schools and districts are often asked to perform operations that would only work in tales like Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*. Where else could technology programs materialize without financial support?

In reality, budget shortfalls have forced schools to travel many different routes in search of funding. By being part of this online seminar, you are starting a treasure hunt of your own. This journey is one of empowerment, and the route will take you toward developing proposals and creating fundable programs to address existing needs.

Since you’re visiting our education site, you are probably a technology-using educator interested in expanding the technology opportunities for the students you serve. Perhaps you’ve got a great idea to enhance teaching and learning in your school, but you don’t have the budget to cover software, teacher training, hardware, and Internet connectivity.

Where can you realistically look for funding? How do you apply? What are the key areas to target?

A wide range of grant resources is available to help underwrite your school's or district's needs. As an enterprising educator, all you need to do is roll up your sleeves, begin the search, and settle in for a long—but rewarding—journey.

Our comprehensive online grant-writing seminar includes:

- Eight steps to preparing a successful grant proposal
 - Correlation to school improvement plan
 - Implementation activities
 - Funding resources
 - Model proposals
- Ready to write
 - Effective communication tips
 - Suggestions for developing a grant proposal
 - Establishing deadlines
 - Essential elements of a grant proposal
 - Title page
 - Program title
 - Abstract or summary
 - Abstract or summary checklist/rating form
 - Introduction
 - Introduction checklist/rating form
 - Problem statement/evidence of need
 - Problem statement/evidence of need checklist/rating form
 - Program objectives
 - Program objectives checklist/rating form
 - Methods/activities
 - Methods/activities checklist/rating form
 - Management plan
 - Management plan checklist/rating form
 - Evaluation
 - Evaluation checklist/rating form
 - Sample proposal evaluation
 - Continuation plan
 - Continuation plan checklist/rating form
 - Budget
 - Budget checklist/rating form
 - Appendix
 - Proposal review, signature, and mailing
- Set sail in search of treasure

Now. . .GET SET!

Creating a grant proposal may seem like an intimidating process, but by following a few careful steps you, too, can be on the road to finding treasure...

Eight Steps to Preparing a Successful Grant Proposal

1. Identify an educational problem, and show how you will solve it.
2. Review your school improvement plan or district technology plan.
3. Assemble a grant team.
4. Know the kind of grant you seek.
5. Find funders who share your vision.
6. Check online resources for grant-writing information, and read a few successful proposals.
7. Read the application requirements carefully.
8. Gather all information necessary to address each component of the proposal.

1. Identify an educational problem, and show how you will solve it.

Remember, a grant provides support for a creative solution to an existing problem, with measurable improvement as a goal.

A widespread misconception among teachers is that grants provide funds for the equipment and teaching tools they need. In reality, funders support *solutions*, not products. For example, a teacher requested funds for implementation of wireless networking throughout her school. To her, the “problem” was the lack of online access at the school, and the “solution” was to get the necessary equipment through a grant. But the funding agencies looked at the teacher’s request and asked, “What will online access do for your students? How do you plan to use these technologies in direct, measurable ways to increase student performance?” Without a concrete, measurable goal, technology in education serves no purpose. The goal of your technology purchase comes first, *then* a justification of which technology solution will help you achieve that goal.

For example, how can you improve students’ writing skills? You already know that sharing written work with an audience is a key part of developing good narrative writing technique. Technology can help you reach out and connect to audiences all over the

world. The use of wireless local area networking products supports your goal of improving writing by providing the connection that makes that global interaction possible. Grant funders will see that the purchase of this equipment is a resource connected to the greater mission of improving student writing, not just another item on your shopping list.

To avoid this “shopping list” trap, it is essential to focus on a central idea that addresses a problem at your school first. Here are some examples of that principle in action:

- A proposal identifies poor student achievement as a problem and suggests the use of online assessment as a solution. The need for a T-1 line, additional servers, software, and other products becomes a supporting element to the main idea of implementing online assessment.
- A proposal offers a solution to sporadic and ineffectual technology training for teachers through “just-in-time” training with Web-based tutorials. The purchase of tutorial software, consulting services, and networking products is once again secondary to the idea of improving teacher performance with “just-in-time” teacher training.
- A proposal suggests the use of online tools and services for expansion and enhancement of an outdated library collection. The purchase of new CD-ROM titles and CASTLE’s role in providing network connectivity to those titles is secondary to the overall goal. Enhancing the quality of and accessibility to information for your students is the primary theme of the proposal.
- A proposal identifies a lack of network access for students in temporary classrooms and, therefore, an inability to utilize award-winning online teaching resources enjoyed by their peers. Providing equitable access for all students, rather than the purchase of wireless technologies themselves, forms the core of the proposal.

The challenge is to think in terms of educational goals—to identify problems in areas that could be improved in your educational setting and then propose solutions—rather than in terms of products. That’s when you put your thinking cap on...stretch your imagination, and get creative. Emphasize the idea, and the money to make that idea a reality will follow.

2. Review your school improvement plan or district technology plan.

Demonstrating a focus on an overall goal and alignment with a well thought-out school or district plan will give your proposal more credibility. Making sure your proposal aligns with the goals of your school or district may be the critical factor that wins support for your program. Explain how the technology requested in the grant application correlates to specific instructional needs identified in your school improvement plan.

Correlation to a school improvement plan stresses solutions to existing educational problems, as in the following examples:

Objectives 2 and 3 of the Greynolds Park Elementary School Improvement Plan address improvement of student performance in reading comprehension and writing skills. Objective 1 of the plan addresses increased computer contact hours for staff and students. This grant seeks funds to:

1. Purchase additional multimedia computers for learner-centered classrooms in which selected software titles and Internet access will capture students' imaginations, enhance the active learning process, and have a positive impact on student learning, particularly in the areas of reading comprehension and writing skills.
2. Purchase wireless local area network (WLAN) equipment, including multiple 802.11x-compatible PC cards and wireless access points to create wireless connections to a school server providing online access to the Internet.
3. Purchase a CD-ROM tower to facilitate access to software titles throughout the school.
4. Build a professional staff of knowledgeable technology users through "just in time" training with Web-based tutorials, leading to increased computer contact hours for staff and students.

Since research has shown that the placement of computer clusters in the classroom is an effective means of incorporating technology to have a positive impact on learning, Greynolds Park Elementary will establish computer stations in every kindergarten through fifth grade (K-5) classroom. Each station will contain five computers with a wireless connection via WLAN equipment to the school's local area network. Students will utilize classroom computer clusters and the CD-ROM tower as they participate in various activities that address the goals and strategies detailed in the school improvement plan.

Sample Implementation Activities

- Personal statements in text, video, still photos, music, and art created by students accessing information found on the Internet
- Collaboration and sharing of ideas with students from other schools, cities, and countries via e-mail
- Research conducted by students utilizing online research services, CD-ROMs, and resources on the school network
- Access by limited-English-proficiency (LEP) students to literature through current multimedia technologies, including RealAudio and streaming video
- Computer-generated student portfolios reflecting integrated learning
- Teachers acting as coaches, using self-directed, individually paced, managed instruction focusing on student strengths, deficiencies, and modalities
- Delivery of “just in time” technology training for teachers through Web- based tutorials

3. Assemble a grant team.

You are about to promote a creative solution to an existing problem—to accomplish this task alone is nearly impossible. Work with members of your community, such as teachers, parents, business leaders, politicians, and students, to refine ideas and share resources.

While it is a good idea to brainstorm with others to generate initial ideas for your proposal, the final product should be written in one voice, not a chorus of authors. It is best to have a principal author with several proofreaders.

4. Know the kind of grant you seek.

Almost all grants awarded to school districts are project grants of one type or another. The funds are earmarked for those expenses that can be directly attributed to the performance or conduct of those activities. The following are the most common types of project grants received by schools:

- **Seed grants.** Many funding sources are interested in supporting new, innovative, or experimental approaches to solving problems or meeting needs. These projects must demonstrate the potential for becoming self-supporting, should they prove to be successful as a result of the grant. They are often “pilot” projects or planning grants that can qualify for alternative funds after a year or two of operation.

- **Training/education grants.** Training grants either allow an agency (for example, a school district) with the expertise to conduct training for others in the field or allow an agency's staff to attend training provided by others. Grants for development of (or attendance at) conferences, symposia, or workshops are fairly common applications.
- **Matching grants.** More and more funders are reluctant to be the sole resource for a program. A matching grant is given with the requirement that at least a portion of the total funds required for the program will be contributed by the grantee, either in funds or in-kind contributions, or obtained from an alternative source.
- **Research grants.** For projects such as investigating important societal questions, conducting surveys, and carrying out needs assessments.
- **Capital grants.** For the purchase of equipment, infrastructure, and construction.
- **Challenge grants.** The grantor pledges funds contingent upon the requesting agency's raising a certain amount of matching funds by a certain time.

Before you begin to research funders, it is also important for you to understand the difference between reactive and proactive grants. Proactive grant funders are waiting for you to make the first move, while reactive funders make the first move themselves. Understanding how each operates will make your grant-search process easier.

Reactive grants are sponsored by federal and/or state governments, private and/or public foundations, and corporations. These organizations determine the problems to be addressed and award grants to those with creative solutions.

You react to this opportunity by seeing how well your idea fits in their framework. If it does and you're willing to go head to head with others vying for the same money, go for it. If it doesn't, you must decide how much of your original idea you're willing to compromise in order to fit the grant opportunity.

Most educators are reactive when it comes to seeking grant funds. When a request for proposal (RFP) arrives from a district, state, or federal agency, a frenzy erupts and everyone panics, wondering how to pull it all together under tight personnel and time constraints: The teachers are busy doing what they're supposed to be doing— teaching classes— and a dedicated grant writer is nowhere in sight. Perhaps that's why you've always been hesitant to write a proposal.

There is an easier way. By participating in this online seminar, you will learn how to avoid chasing opportunities on someone else's schedule and instead empower yourself by becoming a proactive grant seeker.

Proactive grants require more work on your part because funders don't generally solicit ideas. They just sit back and wait for good ideas to come to them. There are several

thousand funders (mostly foundations) that release money under such general interests as education, arts, and minority issues.

Unlike reactive grant providers, they do not necessarily have competitions each year. Instead, they make awards to those they have built relationships with or those seeking them out.

If you're an administrator or a teacher looking for money to support your great ideas, sources listed on the CASTLE web site will make your grant search a lot easier and more profitable.

Expedite the Treasure Hunt

Online Funding Resources

Grants from the Net / Indiana University

<http://www.indiana.edu/~srs/fundopp/net.html>

Federal Register Digest Service (FRDS)

<http://www.federalregisterdigest.com/>

National Adjunct Faculty Guild (NAFG)/ Guild Services

<http://www.sai.com/adjunct/nafggrant.html#databases>

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)/ Research Funding Opportunities

<http://www.ncura.edu/fund/default.html>

SRA'S GRANTSweb

<http://sra.rams.com/cws/sra/resource.htm>

U.S. Department of Education/Office of Educational Technology

<http://www.ed.gov/Technology/>

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
<http://www.gsa.gov/fdac/>

Education Week on the Web
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/current/>

GPO Gate/Catalog of Federal Register Assistance
<http://www.gpo.ucop.edu/search/fedfld.html>

Philadelphia Education Fund/WWW Focus on Fundraising
<http://www.philaedfund.org/focusonfunding.html>

Fund\$Raiser Cyberzine
<http://www.fundraiser.com/>

AT&T Foundation
<http://www.att.com/foundation/ed.html>

McREL Funding for Technology
<http://www.mcrel.org/resources/technology/funding.asp>

Galaxy: Professional's Guide to a World of Information
<http://galaxy.einet.net/GJ/grants.html>

A Grant Seeker's Guide to the Internet: Revised and Revisited
<http://www.mindspring.com/~ajgrant/guide.htm>

Grants for Educators: Grants and Other (People's) Money
<http://quest.arc.nasa.gov/top/grants.html>

Education Resources: Funding and Related Resources
<http://www.mcrel.org/resources/links/funding.asp>

The Foundation Center
<http://fdncenter.org/>

Resource Guide to Federal Funding for Technology in Education
<http://www.ed.gov/Technology/tec-guid.html>

National Science Foundation: Grants and Awards
<http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants.htm>

Technology and Learning Online: Grants and Contests
<http://www.techlearning.com:80/grants.html>

Foundations

The following foundations have supported many educational technology projects:

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
Emphasis: math, educational technology
630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2550
New York, NY 10111-0242
(212) 649-1649
<http://www.sloan.org/>

American Honda Foundation
Emphasis: science educational technology
P.O. Box 2205
Torrance, CA 90509
http://www.cerritos.edu/cerritos/development/funders_honda.html

Arthur Vining Davis Foundation
Emphasis: secondary education
111 Riverside Avenue, Suite 130
Jacksonville, FL 32202-4921
(904) 359-0670
<http://www.jvm.com/davis/>

Carnegie Corporation of New York
Emphasis: science, math, educational technology
437 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
(212) 371-3200
<http://www.carnegie.org/>

The Ford Foundation
Emphasis: educational technology
320 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017
(212) 573-5000
<http://www.fordfound.org/>

5. Find funders who share your vision.

There are so many exciting grant opportunities out there that you may be tempted to go for all of them. But if your school does not set priorities early in the year and stick with them, your search could quickly become haphazard, ill-defined, and disorganized.

Grant money is most frequently awarded to those who have taken the time to establish goals and to find like-minded funders. That is, the school staff agrees upon the idea to

be funded and then seeks out only the most promising sources from among those who share their values.

This approach tells funders you are serious and committed to forming long-term relationships.

6. Check online resources for grant-writing information, and read a few successful proposals.

Generally, there are three sources of funds—federal, state, and foundation—each with its own procedural and formatting requirements and its own method of announcing availability of funds.

1. **Federal grants.** Federal grants are announced in the Federal Register (<http://www.gpo.ucop.edu/search/fedfld.html>), a search page for locating thousands of funding opportunities. Many federal grants require that the grantee provide for non-public-school involvement or participation.
2. **State grants.** State grants are generally announced by the various state agencies through memoranda to school districts and through official publications and electronic bulletin boards. They usually require specific forms and formats, and they may require advisory committee or non-public-school involvement.
3. **Foundation grants.** Foundation grant agencies usually do not issue RFPs, but a number of privately published daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports highlight available funding resources. Start with the publications of the Foundation Center (<http://fdncenter.org/>).

If you can't find a successful proposal online or through your district, contact the funding agencies themselves. Most agencies can provide sample proposals and are willing to assist you.

Sample Grant Proposals

http://users3.ev1.net/~schoolgrants/sample_proposals/proposal_samples2.htm

7. Read the application requirements carefully.

Read the application requirements carefully. It is very important to follow all directions and to provide all necessary information and components. It is a good idea to read the RFP several times and make notes. Do you have the preliminary information: letters of support, financial or student data, examples of prior funded projects, needs assessment data, and so on?

Do you know how many copies of the proposal are needed, when and where to send them, and how they can be delivered? Does your proposal need endorsement by administrators or the district office? Attention to the details will help your potential funder concentrate on your message rather than on filling in the administrative gaps in your proposal package.

8. Gather all information necessary to address each component of the proposal.

Many people have a writing approach that says, “Don’t interrupt the flow.” That means working many days that can run long into the night. Support your writer (or yourself!) by keeping all your supporting materials centralized and available for frequent reference and revision.

GO!

Ready To Write

Effective Communication Tips

Your written proposal is the only representation you will have at the funding agency—your first and only impression needs to be your best. To make that best impression, a proposal must be as near to perfect as possible. Perfect means that the proposal leaves nothing unsaid that needs to be said. It also means being concise and editing out text that does not inform or support your request. Funder guidelines and instructions should be followed to the letter, deadlines met, and the correct number of copies sent to the right person.

The proposal should be interesting, written in a direct clear style, free of jargon and pompous, bureaucratic, or flowery language, structured so that each component leads logically and directly into the next.

Successful proposals are based on concrete well-developed projects, not vague concepts. If your proposal rambles, that may indicate you need to do more development work. Don’t try to cover up a poorly thought-out proposal with verbiage. Remember the reviewers may be lay people unfamiliar with your field of expertise. Keep your language simple, don’t assume knowledge of your field, and leave no room for misunderstanding.

Suggestions for Developing a Grant Proposal

1. Develop the project thoroughly. Work out all the details and outline your thoughts *before* you put your fingers to the keyboard.
2. Do your homework. Research is one of the main components for success in grant acquisition. Back up everything requested in your proposal with precedents, facts, and details. Remember you are *marketing* your project to the potential funder.
3. Be sure of your facts, and be sure your arguments are logically sound.
4. Have a strong first sentence. Catch the reader's attention, and keep it.
5. Write short sentences and paragraphs whenever possible. Vary sentence length within the paragraphs, and use no more than four to six lines per paragraph, if possible.
6. Use bulleted lists. Rather than burying a long list in a sentence, break it out into bulleted items that can be absorbed at a glance.
7. Use a chart or a graphic, rather than words, to communicate complicated data or processes.
8. Use only the space allocated when space is provided for a component or section.
9. Provide a table of contents if the proposal is more than ten pages.
10. Keep the language simple and direct. Avoid using passive verbs, and explain all acronyms and abbreviations.
11. Write in the third person (the student/the district/the school/the staff rather than I or we). Write as if you were addressing your proposal to one person.
12. Have a strong ending.
12. Make sure the proposal has a professional appearance. Use boldface type, subheadings, underlining for logical divisions.
13. Have one or more people outside of the school or district read your proposal to ensure that you are saying what you think you are saying. A sentence may sound perfectly logical to the writer but be unintelligible to the reader!

Simplify to Clarify

Instead of...

in view of
in a number of cases

Write

because
some or several

in the nature of	like or similar to
in view of the fact that	because
in order to	to
in the majority of instances	usually
in all probability	probably
for the purpose of	to
have a preference for	prefer
with the exception of	except
in excess of	more than
in the near future	soon
in addition to	also
at this point in time	now
last but not least	finally
in the event of	if
in the course of	while or during
in the vicinity of	near
it would thus appear	apparently
on a few occasions	occasionally
on the other hand	or
make decisions	decide
take action	act
give assistance to	assist
utilize	use

Establishing Deadlines

Perhaps the hardest part of applying for a grant is finding time for all of the steps that make a difference in the quality of a proposal. Now that you are ready to write, set up a timeline for the process so that you can successfully meet the funding proposal deadline. Take the following into consideration:

- Set your deadline for finishing the draft well before the time you must submit the proposal.
- Allow time for peer review and suggestions for improvement.
- Allow time to make those corrections and improvements.

Essential Elements of a Grant Proposal

The elements you include in the proposal and the format you use to present the information depend upon the forms, instructions, and guidelines you receive as part of the request for proposal (RFP). These vary widely, from highly structured federal forms with full instructions to a few broad guidelines from corporations and some foundations.

Your first priority should be to follow all instructions and guidelines in the RFP. If spaces are provided, limit yourself to that space. It is important to fill in each and every blank on forms that are provided, particularly on applications for federal funds, where missing information can result in disqualification of your grant.

Second, use the reviewer's evaluation or rating form as a guideline. This form usually accompanies the RFP, or it can be requested from the funder. If you use the rating form headings as the major headings in your proposal, you can be sure that the readers will easily find the information they seek.

Whatever format you use, make every effort to incorporate all of the information that would fall under the headings in the rating form somewhere in your proposal.

In the descriptions that follow, a checklist/rating form is provided for each major element. Use the forms as evaluation tools as you and others review the first draft of your proposal.

Title Page

Keep the title page simple, and use the format suggested by the agency. If the title page is a form, be sure to fill in all the blanks. Use "NA" when an item is not applicable.

If you create your own format, be sure to include the following:

- Project title
- Name, title, and address of the agency to which the proposal is to be submitted
- Date submitted
- Name of school
- Address of school
- Telephone number of school
- Project director and/or contact person

Avoid flashy cover sheets or title pages. A one-sentence description of the proposed project along with the information above will convey your message.

Program Title

Keep the title simple, descriptive, and professional. Whenever possible, use five words or less. Stress outcomes, outputs, and benefits, not needs or activities. Samples of good titles include:

- Computers Assisting Students To Learn Everywhere
- Exceptional Learners and Speakers of Other Languages (ELSOL)
- Project TEACH

Abstract or Summary

The abstract may be the most critical part of your proposal. It is written last, but is placed at the beginning of the proposal. Funding agencies often use the abstract or summary as a screening device, reviewing it to see if your outputs and outcomes are consistent with their priorities.

Limit the abstract to one page, but fill up that page with a clear, concise summary of the proposal encapsulating the following:

- Introduction
- Problem statement/evidence of need
- Program objectives
- Methods/activities
- Evaluation
- Budget request

The checklist/rating form that follows will help you develop an effective abstract.

Abstract or Summary Checklist/Rating Form

Check **Yes** or **No**, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1)(2)	Average (3) (4)	Excellent (5)

	Yes	No	Rating 1-5
The abstract:			
1. Briefly and concisely encapsulates the important facts included in the introduction, problem statement/evidence of need, program objectives, methods/activities, evaluation, and budget request.			
2. Identifies the grant applicant. Names the contact person, address, and telephone number.			
3. Includes at least one sentence on the applicant's qualifications for funding.			
4. Describes the specific educational goal that is a funding priority for the granting agency.			

5. Describes briefly the methods to be used to address an educational goal.			
6. Includes at least one sentence on objectives.			
7. Includes at least one sentence on evaluation.			
8. Includes total cost, funds already obtained, and amount requested in this proposal.			
9. Is brief, at most, one single-spaced page.			
10. Is the best written piece of this proposal; is clear and interesting.			

Introduction

The introduction describes the applicant agency (district or school) and its qualifications for funding. Federal and state applications usually do not need an introduction. For these applications, use the cover letter to mention outstanding qualifications and accomplishments, and include basic information in the abstract/summary. The introduction serves two purposes: 1) to build credibility and 2) to motivate the reader to read further.

Your introduction should:

- Clearly establish who is applying for funds.
- Describe the purpose of your organization.
- Describe the organization’s clients or constituents.
- Describe existing programs and activities.
- Give evidence of previous accomplishments.
- Clearly indicate how the proposed program “fits in” with the above.
- Be clear.
- Emphasize that this program is important and will be more effective than present or past programs. For example, you may wish to:
 - Emphasize that the program is aimed at answering a need in education today.
 - Show how the program is an extension of important research or development programs carried out by the grant writer or others.
 - Show how the program will contribute knowledge.

The checklist/rating form that follows will help you develop an effective introduction.

Introduction Checklist/Rating Form

Check **Yes** or **No**, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1) (2) Average (3) (4) Excellent (5)

The introduction:	Yes	No	Rating 1-5
1. Clearly establishes who is applying for funds.			
2. Includes important facts about your school system: size, student population, unique qualities, accomplishments, and honors.			
3. Proceeds from general information about the school system to the specific accomplishments, programs, and activities of your school/district office as they relate to the proposed program.			
4. Offers statistics in support of accomplishments.			
5. Offers quotes/endorsements in support of accomplishments.			
6. Supports qualifications in the area of activity for which funds are sought (e.g., student services, staff training).			
7. Describes applicant's clients or constituents.			
8. Leads logically to the problem statement.			
9. Is as brief as possible.			
10. Is interesting.			

Problem statement/evidence of need

The problem statement/evidence of need describes the human needs you will meet through your program or describes the organizational problems you will solve. Most proposal applications ask the writer to clearly identify the problem or need and to deliver an answer to that problem or need based on experience, ability, and creativity demonstrated throughout the proposal.

Keep the following in mind when you write your problem statement/evidence of need:

- Be reasonably brief, but make a compelling case.
- Make sure the problem or need relates to the interests and priorities of the funding agent and is also consistent with the mission and goals of your school or district.
- Do not focus on global needs. Base your case on the specific needs of the constituents you serve.
 - Ground your needs statement in fact, not opinion. Support your assessments with statistical evidence and/or statements from authorities.

The checklist/rating form that follows will help you develop an effective problem statement/evidence of need.

Problem Statement/Evidence of Need Checklist/Rating Form

Check **Yes** or **No**, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1) (2) Average (3) (4) Excellent (5)

The problem statement/evidence of need	Yes	No	Rating 1-5
1. Describes a problem or need that relates to the interests and priorities of the funding agency and is also consistent with district and school educational goals and priorities.			
2. Describes a problem or need that exists elsewhere, and the proposed solution could be replicated elsewhere.			
3. Describes a problem or need that is of reasonable dimensions and solvable with a reasonable amount of time and money.			
4. Describes a problem or need that is supported by statistical evidence: test scores, census data, research results, etc. (If any of the evidence is extensive, refer to it in this section, but place the data in an appendix.)			
5. Describes a problem or need that is supported by statements from authorities.			
6. Is stated in terms of clients' needs and problems, not the applicant's.			
7. Is developed with input from clients and beneficiaries.			
8. Makes no unsupported assumptions.			
9. Is free of jargon.			
10. Makes a compelling case.			

Program Objectives

The objectives section of the proposal describes the ends the program is to achieve through the activities planned. The objectives are directly related to the statement of needs or problems. Objectives are either “process” or “product.”

Process objectives are the milestones by which progress toward completion of activities is judged. Examples of process objectives are:

- The work plan will be developed by July 1.
- The staff will be hired within one month of funding.

4. Address the process through which proposal activities will flow.			
5. Are not methods. "We will assess" and "We will provide" are methods.			
6. State the time by which objectives will be accomplished.			
7. Describe the population, and state the number that will benefit.			
8. Are reasonable, able to be measured without intrusive techniques, and are within the institution's capabilities.			
9. Are free from professional jargon.			
10. Are interesting to read.			

Methods/Activities

The methods/activities are the means to establishing the ends (objectives) of your program. This section is the full description of your plan of action, describing who does what, and when and where they do it.

As you write the methods/activities component of your proposal:

- Make sure the activities relate to your program objectives.
- Identify the target group.
- Describe the instructional resources to be used.
- Provide a schedule of activities that includes anticipated dates and sites.
- Give a brief justification for selection of activities, sites, dates, and instructional resources.
- Remember! Present a reasonable scope of activities that can be conducted within the time and resources of the project.
- Describe the instructional strategies that will be used.
- List any innovative curriculum materials that will be developed or used throughout the program.
- Focus on staff development procedures, plans for community involvement, and/or parent participation.

Use the following a checklist/rating form to help you develop the methods/activities element of the proposal.

Methods/Activities Checklist/Rating Form

<p>II. Student achievement in reading and mathematics</p>	<p>Did "just in time" teacher training with Web-based tutorials result in the development of unique teaching and learning strategies leading to improved student achievement?</p>	<p>K-5th grade students</p>	<p>student performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online assessment software (student assessment portfolios/SPAS) -Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test -Florida Writing Assessment Test -Portfolios and projects detailing teaching and learning strategies and student projects -Student, parent, and teacher surveys -Teacher journals 	<p>assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ongoing online assessment strategies -Semiannual pre-and post-diagnostic tests -Weekly Test Best -Annual Stanford Achievement Test -Ongoing performance assessment
<p>III. Student achievement in reading and mathematics</p>	<p>Did the use of online tools and services provide expansion of media support resulting in improved student achievement?</p>	<p>K-5th grade students</p>	<p>student performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online assessment software (student assessment portfolios/SPAS) -Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test -Florida Writing Assessment Test -Portfolios detailing teaching and learning strategies and student projects -Student journals -Student, parent, and teacher surveys -Student, parent, and teacher questionnaires 	<p>assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ongoing online assessment strategies -Semiannual pre-and post-diagnostic tests -Weekly Test Best -Annual Stanford Achievement Test -Ongoing performance assessment

Continuation Plan

Will your program be self-sustaining after the grant period? The funder wants to be assured that the program will continue after the grant ends, so include a plan that addresses the future financial status of the program.

Alternative funding sources can include partnerships with local businesses, institutions, and federal or state agencies. The program itself can also generate funds, through membership fees, product sales, and/or donations.

Strive for minimal reliance on future grant support, but if you plan to ask the funder for a renewal, state that and justify the renewal request in this section.

If you are seeking one-time only funding, state that clearly in this section. Relieve the funding source's concern that you will be back for funding again and again! Many funding sources will fund only start-up or one-time-only proposals.

Future funding information is usually not requested for grants that are awarded on a one-time basis, such as seed grants.

You may need to include one or more of the following in your continuation plan:

When preparing the budget, consider the following:

- Salaries and other stipends paid to program personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Materials required to implement the program
- Preservice/in-service activities
- Outside consultants, if needed
- Program evaluation
- Equipment
- Indirect costs

Here are some tips for creating a good budget:

- Read the funders' directions regarding budgets very carefully! Always follow the format and instructions of the funding agency in presenting your budget, and include all items requested by the funder.
- *All costs must be justifiable and related to the activities to be performed.* Be realistic. Estimate your costs carefully, and take into account inflation, salary and fringe benefit increases, and rising maintenance expenses over time.
- As you develop your budget, assign a cost to everything. Don't make up figures; check actual costs; get bids, if necessary. Be very thorough: Whatever you forget to include in your cost estimate, your organization will have to absorb or simply do without.
- Use computer spreadsheets to help you tally costs.

The following a checklist/rating form can help you develop a budget.

Budget Checklist/Rating Form

Check **Yes** or **No**, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1) (2)	Average (3) (4)	Excellent (5)
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The budget:	Yes	No	Rating 1-5
1. Follows the format suggested by the funding source and includes all items requested by the funding source.			
2. Contains only items directly related to the proposal objectives.			
3. Includes all personnel mentioned in the methods/activities plan.			
4. Is detailed in all aspects.			
5. Contains no unexplained amounts (miscellaneous or contingency funds).			
6. Takes into account inflation and the long proposal submission process.			
7. Includes all in-kind contributions and all items paid for by other sources.			
8. Includes all volunteers.			
9. Includes salaries that are estimated at the midrange for new positions.			
10. Includes costs not prohibited by the funder.			

Appendix/Appendices

Remember to keep the narrative of the proposal simple and succinct. If your proposal has supporting documents, include them as appendices and refer the reader to the appropriate appendix in the narrative.

Appropriate documents for an appendix include:

- Resumes of key personnel
- Endorsement letters
- Commitment letters
- Board members
- Donors
- Supporters
- Other funding sources
- Publicity
- Tables, graphs, charts, and statistics
- Financial statements or annual reports

GO!

Proposal Review, Signatures, and Mailing

You, your peers, and other staff members should conduct the first review and editing sessions. It is also a good idea for one or two people who are not familiar with the proposal to review it.

Consider the following three areas as you evaluate the proposal:

1. General quality of the proposed program

- Is the proposed program needed in the area to be served by the applicant?
 - Are innovative ideas presented that will serve as national or regional models while addressing local needs?
 - Are the size, scope, and duration of the program sufficient to secure productive results?
 - Does the proposal show evidence of research findings, results of similar programs, and/or prevailing opinions of recognized experts?
 - Is the estimated cost reasonable in relation to anticipated results?
2. Specific criteria of the funding source
- Are all requirements of the RFP met and documented?
3. Appearance and technical correctness of the document
- Are all sections and sentences complete and consistent in style and format? Proofread the proposal over and over to catch omissions and inconsistencies.
 - Are spelling, grammar, and logic of content correct?
 - Are the budget numbers correct? Run your numbers, and then run them again; after all, if you cannot add a column of numbers correctly, who is going to trust you with their money?

When all corrections have been made and all materials for the appendices have been collected, it is time to get the required signatures.

Finally, mail the proposal and required copies to meet the funding agency's deadline. In most cases, applications that are postmarked later than the deadline are automatically eliminated from competition.

Set Sail in Search of Treasure

Every day, teachers and administrators are faced with the challenge of discovering new ways to teach our children and enrich their education through technology. The potential rewards - and challenges - in this adventure are as great as those who once sailed unknown seas in search of pirate gold.

As you conquer new frontiers in learning, we hope that this site helps you chart a course toward the funding you need to fulfill your technology plan. Whether you sail to new

possibilities using wireless networking or discover other tools to speed you on your way, we wish you smooth sailing and invite you to return to our site for assistance, insight, and information.

**Permission has been secured from Marcia Landen and Mike McCallister, Ph.D. of Grant Street Consulting (GrantSt@excite.com) to adapt some of their original evaluation template materials and simplify to clarify examples for this work.*