

Grant Writing Tips

Beyond the Books Educational Foundation

(Be sure to consult the “Information for All Grant Applications” [page](https://beyondthebooksbn.com/educators/grant-guidelines):
<https://beyondthebooksbn.com/educators/grant-guidelines>)

PREPARING FOR YOUR GRANT

1. You can do it! Yes, you! Even if you have never written a grant before, you should go for it. If you can write from an outline, you can write a grant.
2. Get inspired! Talk with your students and colleagues about innovative ways to teach a topic. They might have ideas that spark a great grant application.
3. Form a group. Find a partner or a small team to commit to the task of submitting a grant. Keeping each other accountable will get you to the submission goal!
4. Get approvals ready. Make sure your principal knows you are writing a grant so it’s on their radar. You will need approval from your principal to submit your grant.
5. Deadlines are deadlines. Grants adhere to very strict timetables and there are no exceptions. This is the case for all grants not just BTBEF. Plan on getting the grant done early so you can get your approvals and submit on time.

WRITING YOUR GRANT

1. Start early! Grants usually take a few drafts.
2. Read the rubric so that you know how the application will be scored.
3. Follow the guidelines. Follow the guidelines. Seriously. Follow the guidelines. Go over the application with a highlighter so you pay attention to all the details. It matters.
4. Avoid identifying your school, school district, or fellow educators; your application will be returned without review if we cannot guarantee a blind review. BTBEF uses a blind review process to ensure fairness in grant-awarding. The BTBEF does not want to know the name of your school or school district or fellow educators, so be careful not to name your program “Raider Readers” or “High 5 for Unit 5”.
5. Use the prompts in the application to help guide you in what important facts to include. Grant writing is similar to a job interview. You have to convey important things in the interview so the interviewer will offer you the job.
6. Keep it simple and concise, less is more. The reviewers don’t need to be dazzled or distracted by buzz words. They need to feel confident that you have designed a smart project that makes a meaningful difference in your classroom, your school, and your district. An innovative idea executed well is a beautiful thing. *(For example, say, Students love volcanoes! instead of saying, In my many years as a natural sciences teacher, I have discovered that the day we talk about volcanoes is always really fun and exciting for my students so I want to do more to make this lesson even more memorable.)*

7. Using jargon, field-specific terms, or acronyms could confuse your reviewer (For example, what's an ISBE Standard?) BTBEF grant reviewers come from a variety of backgrounds and only a few have teaching experience.
8. Show how your project leverages the strength of each partner. $1 + 1 = 3$. Collaboration is best when the partners do more together than they could have done on their own.
9. Be sure to articulate what success means in clear language. Evaluation can be challenging; sometimes we measure things that don't matter and things that matter are hard to measure.
10. Read and reread your proposal to make sure there are no unanswered questions and tie up loose ends. (For example, have you ever left a movie theatre thinking, "But what happened to that one character?" or "How did she get the secret code if she never made it to Amsterdam?")
11. Proofread your proposal; spell check doesn't catch everything. (For example, Ewe don't want to hurt your chances of being funded for careless errors. Some reel words are the wrong words out of context).

BUDGET

1. Money matches mission. Your budget has to mirror your narrative. If you talk about important new equipment in your program description but it's not on your budget, the reviewer will notice that inconsistency. If your budget has a line item for supplies that hasn't been mentioned in the narrative, there is another disconnect.
2. How many widgets do you need? In an environment that is chronically short on funds, sometimes we ask for less than we need or deserve. We think, "If I ask for 10 widgets, I might get 10; but if I ask for 30, I might get 0." If you need 30 widgets to really be successful, don't ask for only 10 widgets. Make the case for why you need 30.
3. Are there other sources to fund your project? Find out from administrators if monies are available within the district or from other groups to support your proposal or idea.

BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR GRANT

1. Ask someone not familiar with your project to review your draft. It is very helpful.
2. Allow yourself time to polish up your ideas and make edits before you submit.
3. Give ample time at the end of the process to get the approval of your principal.