

Introduction

For some people, writing a grant proposal is a chore or burden. For others, putting ideas down clearly so people can read, understand, and appreciate them is exciting; if the ideas are funded, it may be a near-religious experience that elicits the urge to compete for yet another chance to finance needed activities or projects.

Historical Development

History shows that the Lewis and Clark expedition was funded by the federal government in 1803. However, the actual grant making process dates back to 1842 when the 27th Congress made a grant award of \$30,000 to Professor Samuel F. B. Morse. The funds allowed expense money and personal reimbursement to field test the electromagnetic telegraph system and explore the feasibility of the system for public use. The granting of funds was significant in that it represented the first time Congress fully participated in the grant-making process. Prior to 1942, federal assistance or essentially “funding” took the form of granting property or real estate rather than money. Through the Homestead Act of 1862, the federal government “granted” 160 acres of public land to each settler who declared to build a farm and maintain the granted land for at least five years. This practice of federal assistance led to congressional interest in research as manifested by the enactment of the Morrill Act (1862), Smith-Hughes Act (1917), Bankhead-Jones Act (1935), and the Hatch Act (1939), all of which established land-grant colleges throughout the United States. The Morrill Act provided grants of land for the establishment of land-grant universities in each state that focused on training individuals as professionals to run an industrialized economy. The Hatch Act funds subsidized state agricultural experimental stations. This Act was important in the history of federal assistance because it marked the progression of federal assistance from grants of lands to grants of services, facilities, and other aid.

In 1929, the Stock Market collapse led President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Congress to create and authorize the New Deal, one of the most expansive federal assistance programs in American history. The New Deal was a relief program that provided useful work during the Great Depression, which helped to maintain an individual’s skills and self-respect. It cost more than eleven billion dollars and created eight million jobs.

In the beginning, there *was* federal support for education, but the Northwest Ordinances were not the grantwriter’s dream. The opportunity to develop proposals for the federal government for support of an individual’s or a group’s ideas did not really blossom until the 1950s with the Cooperative Research Act (1956) and the National Defense Education Act (1958). Also during 1958, the Grant Act—known as discretionary authority—extended the authority to make research grants to agencies whose enabling legislation did not contain grant-making authority. President

Lyndon Johnson's Great Society Program used federal assistance in the form of a grant. The 1960s began the grantwriter's utopia with the Civil Rights Act, the Vocational Education Act, the Higher Education Act (HEA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and reauthorizations of these and other acts serving special categories, such as bilingual education or children with disabilities. More recently, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act extended ESEA as a federal leverage for change.

The increase in opportunities to secure external funds brought with it a new grants business—newsletters, seminars, grantwriters, and offices of proposal development. Consulting firms, grants offices, and specialized grantwriters became the supermarkets of the trade, severely challenging individuals and small agencies that were the early “Mom and Pop grocery stores” serving the needs of local areas.

Increased Competition for Grant Monies

Still, new individuals enter the funding arena each year as aspiring proposal writers and project directors; there are seminars or workshops on proposal development and graduate courses in “Grants and Contracts” or “State and Federal Relations” at some universities. In the corporate world, instruction in proposal development and grants management is a multimillion-dollar business. The materials collected, developed, and compiled in this volume are mostly related to grant proposal development for education, but the push for uniformity in grants among the various Federal agencies (begun in 1977 with the uniform requirements) means that the materials have wider application. Some of the ideas and tips—especially in Part II, “Writing Grant Proposals”—may be of general interest and value to any proposal writer; some ideas about “project management” in Part III will benefit anyone operating a project.

Organization of Book

This book is divided into three major *parts* and several additional supporting sections, such as this Introduction, References, and Appendices. Part I, “Exploring in the Grants World,” includes Chapters 1 to 6 and addresses the planning stage and some major “tools of the trade” needed to get started in the grant/project field including using the Internet to access funding resources. Part II, “Writing Grant Proposals,” includes Chapters 7 to 14 and offers important steps in developing a successful grant application. Part III, “Implementing, Operating, and Terminating a Project,” includes Chapters 15 to 18, in which the authors discuss starting and implementing a funded project, closing out a project annually, and the often difficult but realistic element of terminating the project at the end of external support. The Resources includes potentially useful information, lists, and addresses that extend the regular text.

Funding Questions: What Are the Federal Levels of Support for Education?

The grantwriter needs to know about the funding potential for grant support. According to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the federal government provides support for education well beyond programs funded through the U.S. Department of Education. Federal support for education, excluding estimated

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federal tax expenditures, was an estimated over \$130 billion in fiscal year 2008 (FY 08). The president's budget for just the U.S. Department of Education is fifty-six billion dollars. When considering other departments that provides some aspects of educational activities and services (NSF, etc.), the total exceeds \$130 billion per year. Table I.1 shows Department of Education's Discretionary Appropriations over an eight-year span. There is no specific figure available for "earmarks," or funds appropriated for high priority projects of legislators and lobbyists. The earmarked funds are seldom available for competitive grants.

Table I.1 U. S. Department of Education Discretionary Appropriations¹

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Amount</i>
2001	\$42,200,000,000	2005	\$56,600,000,000
2002	\$49,900,000,000	2006	\$56,600,000,000
2003	\$53,100,000,000	2007	\$56,000,000,000
2004	\$55,700,000,000	2008 ²	\$56,000,000,000

¹U.S. Department of Education FY 2008 Report.

²Estimated; final budget not yet adopted by Congress at press time.

As an example, the Federal budget for the U.S. Department of Education is outlined in Table I.2. It lists the 2006 and 2007 appropriations and the president's budget for 2008. At the time that this edition of the book went to press, the president's proposed funding for education in FY08 was \$56.2 billion, with the Senate increasing it to \$62.3 billion and the House increasing it to \$64.1 billion, and it was still in negotiations for a final approved amount.

Table I.2 provides FY06, FY07, and FY08 estimates of discretionary spending by the U.S. Department of Education. So those who are not directly interested in grants in the field of education, may want to explore a more detailed budget of the federal, state, or local area in which you may be interested in seeking grants and contracts.

AAA Phenomenon

With the passage of a law or the start of a new federal initiative, there may be considerable hoopla and hype about the amount of money *authorized*. Don't get excited yet! It is a long way from funds authorized to support something and funds actually *allocated* to do the job. Along the way is the *appropriations* process. Familiarity with the three steps—authorization, appropriation, and allocation, or the AAA phenomenon—is vital to the grantwriter, because those steps give clues to the importance of, political impetus behind, and actual funds available for a project. Perhaps the best way to think of the AAA phenomenon is that *authorization* is the *ceiling*, or the most that a program could receive if it, in fact, *receives any funds*. An *authorization* level is built into each public law (PL), but an authorization does not guarantee that any funds will ever be appropriated or allocated. An authorization is typically set to provide flexibility in case the law is ever "funded."

Table I.2 U.S. Department of Education Budget Breakdown (selected items)¹

<i>U.S. Department of Education Spending (In Millions of Dollars)</i>			
	2006	2007	2008
Title I Grants to LEAs	\$12,712.	\$12,713.	\$13,910.
School Improvement Grants	—	—	\$ 500.
Reading First/Early Reading First	\$ 1,132.	\$ 1,122.	\$ 1,136.
Striving Readers	\$ 30.	\$ 32.	\$ 100.
American Competitiveness Initiative	\$ 32.	\$ 32.	\$ 397.
Teacher Quality State Grants	\$ 2,887.	\$ 2,887.	\$ 2,787.
Teacher Incentive Fund	\$ 99.	\$ 4.	\$ 199.
Safe and Drug-Free Schools Programs	\$ 488.	\$ 524.	\$ 324.
IDEA Part B State Grants	\$10,583.	\$10,492.	\$10,492.
Career and Technical Education State Grants	\$ 1,182.	\$ 1,182.	\$ 600.
Adult Education	\$ 593.	\$ 593.	\$ 573.
TRIO Programs	\$ 828.	\$ 828.	\$ 828.
GEAR UP	\$ 303.	\$ 303.	\$ 303.
Historically Black College and Graduate Institutions	\$ 296.	\$ 296.	\$ 296.

¹Discretionary spending is appropriated by the Congress each year, in contrast with mandatory spending, which is automatic under permanent law.

Appropriation of funds to support federal activity is a separate step from passing public laws to put activities “on the books.” An appropriations bill begins in the House of Representatives and after being finally negotiated and passed, provides the maximum that an agency can use to operate the program for which funds were appropriated. *Allocation* of funds is the administrative activity of disbursement of funds for specific purposes of the authorizing legislation. In any given year, the allocation will be less than the appropriation because of “set-asides” such as impoundments or rescissions. The distribution of the allocated funds is the most important step in the whole process for the proposal writer. How many dollars are actually available for the program from which the proposer seeks support; how many projects will be funded, and what will be the expected range of the awards? If this information is not in the *Federal Register* (FR) notice or in the grant application package, a call to the agency to find out is essential. Once assigned to the agency, the appropriated funds

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may have many purposes other than support for your project: those other purposes might include program administration, obligations for multiyear funding, or earmarked funds to support inter- or intra-agency efforts. *If information on the actual availability of funds is not readily available, seek it out.*

Authorization	Appropriation	Allocation
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Federal Budget Time Line and Process

The federal budget time line usually falls into *four major time lines*. But before these four major time lines take place, the federal agencies send initial budget requests to the OMB. OMB reviews, modifies, and sends adjusted requests back to the federal agencies. Agencies make final appeals to OMB, and OMB resolves appeals and assembles the final budget request. The *first major time line* is when the president's budget is released the first Monday in the month of February. Congressional committees prepare budget proposals for the House and Senate Budget Committees and hold hearings. The *next major time line* exists during the months of March and April. The House and Senate work to complete budget resolutions by April 15. The *third critical time line* is in May and June, when the Congressional appropriations committees set amounts for discretionary programs. This step is critical for the proposal writer because the discretionary programs' funding levels are actually set. The *last major phase* of the budget time line is during September and October. This is when the finished work on appropriations is completed by October 1, which is the beginning of the new federal fiscal year. As we have experienced in the past, sometimes this does not get done by October 1. When this happens, Congress passes short-term spending bills to keep the government from shutting down.

The president begins the budget process by telling Congress what the president believes the overall federal fiscal policy should be and laying out what should be spent on education, defense, health, and so forth. The president also recommends tax and entitlement changes. After receiving the president's budget request, Congress holds hearings, and the House Appropriation Subcommittees prepare appropriations bills. The Senate Appropriation Subcommittees revise the House-passed bills.

The next major step is the appropriations phase. After receiving spending limits from the budget resolutions, Congressional committees decide which programs will be funded at what levels. When a House-Senate conference committee is able to reach a compromise, the appropriations bill is voted upon in each chamber, and then goes to the president for signature or veto. If the president does not take any action in ten days, the bill automatically becomes law.

Should You Seek Federal Support?

Certainly, it is an honor and great achievement when an agency evaluates your proposal as worthy of funding, and there are positive benefits to receiving funding support. People usually emphasize the positive. There are, however, some potential negatives that are seldom mentioned. One should try to negate these negatives.

Potential Benefits From External Funding Support

Perhaps the biggest plus in getting a grant is that you now have some resources to meet an important need and to work toward a goal that is of interest to your organization. Funds for your project may support new equipment, books, or other resources and may provide some salaries. The activity may expand your capability, as well as that of your organization and others associated with the project, through training and professional growth. In fact, the project may even create new areas of skill or knowledge (expertise) among personnel. Persons who work assiduously on the project may be able to conduct financed research (or evaluation) that could provide material for a professional paper or published article. “Soft-money” jobs often pay slightly more than regular positions because of the job insecurity. However, while they also have a predetermined length, they may allow you to demonstrate skills that will support your move to a regular position. Having control over funds may provide some autonomy, some opportunity to secure support personnel, and expanded options for professional travel and for making new contacts. Not insignificantly, there are the personal benefits of a challenging task and the recognition that can come from operating a successful project that achieves positive results. Table I.3 summarizes some potential positive outcomes from securing grant support.

Potential Negative Aspects From External Funding

What you need to do for the project may run afoul of the usual policies or operations of your organization (e.g., your need to travel extensively or to stay in places not covered by regular travel expense policy). The managerial and legal responsibilities of a project carry high levels of paperwork (red tape) and often unrealistically high expectations for “super success.” As a grant administrator, you will be subjected to site visits, audits, or both, and to an outrageous level of accountability. As the “new kid on the block,” you may get limited or second-class space, equipment, furnishings, and priorities—unless the grant is large enough to support autonomous

Table I.3 Benefits From Securing External Funds

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- Meeting a Need
 - Financial Support for Your Organization
 - Autonomy/Released Time
 - Challenging Opportunities
 - Ability to Secure Support Personnel
 - Financed Research (perhaps for a professional article)
 - New Equipment
 - Recognition/Model Program
 - Salary Increases
 - Expanded Capabilities
 - Create New Areas of Expertise
 - Advanced Training from Experts in New Fields
 - Professional Travel and Presentation(s) at Professional Meetings
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xxviii FINDING FUNDING**Grant Tip**

Don't forget the probable "hassle" in trying to serve both the funding agency and your own organization. Trying to serve two masters is never easy.

action. Project-related uncertainties, often over deadlines and about continued funding, can add stress to the job. There may be no firm intraorganizational support for the project, and if project personnel appear to have extra benefits (real or perceived), personality conflicts may develop (e.g., jealousy over travel). The project may be assigned a subordinate role in the organization, and project activities may suffer if the funding agency has a shift in priorities. Don't forget the probable "hassle" in trying to serve both the funding agency and your own organization. Trying to serve two masters is never easy. Some potential negative aspects of receiving external funding support are listed in Table I.4.

Table I.4 Negative Factors of Securing External Funding Support

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- Managerial/Legal Responsibilities
 - Priority Shift May Cause Disharmony
 - Lack of Strong Internal Support
 - Personalities/Jealousies
 - Subordinate Role of Project in Organization's Total Operations
 - Skewed Priorities at the Institution if Dependent on External Funds
 - Uncertainty for Continuity
 - Stress Increase Due to Ambiguity and the Success Syndrome
 - High Level of Accountability
 - Paperwork/Red Tape
 - Sometimes Impossible Expectations
 - Implementation in a Timely Manner/Time Tensions
 - Limited or Second-Class Space, Materials, Equipment, and Support
 - Dealing with Policies and Purposes of Two Masters: Funding Agency and Your Organization
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Various Roles the Grant Administrator Must Play

The person who writes the grant proposal typically implements and maintains the project throughout its funding cycle. However, some professionals just write proposals. If one of their proposals is funded, they turn it over to someone else to implement and direct. The individual who implements and maintains the grant often has to wear a variety of hats in performing the requirements that are associated with external funding support. Table I.5 lists various roles that grant administrators might take on while operating a funded project.

SUMMARY

In reality, if people never write a formal proposal for a state or federal grant, at some point they will probably develop at least one proposal to do something of professional interest. That document will include many of the elements discussed in this

Table I.5 Major Activities or Roles of a Grant Administrator in Operating a Funded Project

• Administrator/Supervisor	• Evaluator	• Terminator
• Public Relations Activities	• Planner	• Interpreter
• Marketer	• Innovator	• Visionary
• Researcher	• Persuader	• Negotiator
• Fiscal Officer	• Entrepreneur	• Marketer
• Personnel Manager	• Strategist	• Devil's Advocate

handbook: problem definition, analysis of need, goals and objectives, activities, some management details—time lines, personnel, budget, reports—evaluation, and probably dissemination of results.

Prior to the actual writing of the document, there will be a period of exploring the feasibility of what is being proposed: planning, seeking a sponsor (or funding source if appropriate), and strategies to sell the idea or project. If the idea (proposal) is accepted, the project developer will be concerned with implementing the project to do what was proposed. At some point, the project will be closed down and terminated. That is what this volume is all about—exploring, writing, implementing, and terminating your successful idea as a strong proposal and as an operating project.

GRANT TIPS

- Determining the distribution of the allocated funds is the most important step in the whole process for the grantwriter.
- Don't forget the probable "hassle" in trying to serve both the funding agency and your own organization. Trying to serve two masters is never easy.
- Grant administrators assume a multitude of roles—be prepared to wear a variety of "hats" such as negotiator, public relations manager, trainer, and evaluator.