

Grant Writing Dictionary

Abstract: A one-page description of your project including the purpose, the number of participants, the amount requested, and how the project is unique.

Accountability: A system of indicators which includes measures of school quality and student success.

Administrative Costs: Grant funds used to administer or oversee the project.

Allowable Costs: Expenditures under a grant that are specifically permitted (or not specifically prohibited).

Appropriation: A sum of money from public funds set aside for a specific purpose.

Assurances: A listing of requirements, found in different state and federal laws, regulations, and executive orders, that applicants agree in writing to observe as a condition of receiving funding.

Budget: The financial plan for carrying out the proposed project or program. The budget should show all costs related to the project, including those funded by sources other than the grant.

Budget Narrative: A written description of the purpose and source of each expense, including (where applicable) the unit cost, number of units, and related computations.

Budget Period: An interval of time into which a project period is divided for budgetary purposes.

CFDA—Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: A publication and database that lists federal funding programs, authorizing agency, fiscal details, regulations, guidelines, eligibility requirements, information contacts, and application and award process. CFDA numbers are used in all references to the grant application.

Certification: A statement, signed by an applicant or grantee as a prerequisite for receiving funds, that it meets or will adhere to certain conditions.

Collaboration or Consortium: A group representing organizations which share common beliefs, goals, and commitment to a particular grant project.

Competitive (Discretionary) Grant: An award made directly to an eligible grantee on the basis of a competitive review process.

Continuation Award: Additional funding awarded for a budget period following the initial grant period.

Contracted Services: Services provided to the grant recipient by an outside consultant or provider.

Deadline Date: The date by which the funder must receive a grant application for it to be considered for funding.

Direct Costs: Items in a grant budget specifically related to the implementation of the project. Examples include personnel costs for employees' time devoted to the performance of grant activities; project equipment, materials and supplies; professional development; and travel expenses incurred to carry out grant-related activities.

EDGAR: The Education Department General Administration Regulations governing the Education Department's grant programs.

e-Application: The Department of Education's electronic application system through which applicants apply for selected grant programs.

Eligible Applicants: An entity who may apply for a grant as specified in the grant guidelines.

Encumbered Expense: Grant funds set aside for project implementation. Recipients must not encumber any expense prior to the start date or after the end date of the funded project.

Entitlement Funds: Funds received on the basis of population characteristics, student achievement levels, etc.

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act, first signed in 1965 to expand the federal role in K–12 education.

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act, signed December 15, 2015, as the re-authorization of ESEA.

Evaluation: Assessment of whether a project achieved the intended outcomes. The evaluation component includes:

- (1) product evaluation— results that can be attributed to the project, as well as the extent to which the project has satisfied its desired objectives; and
- (2) process evaluation— how the project was conducted in terms of consistency with the stated plan of action and the effectiveness of the various activities within the plan.

Evaluation Data: Two types of evaluation data are typically required:

- (1) quantitative— student test scores, numbers of teachers trained, or other objectively measured outcomes; and
- (2) qualitative— information gathered through open-ended questionnaires, observation notes, and artifacts such as student projects and sample lesson plans.

Evidence-Based: A statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes. There are 4 levels of evidence:

- (1) strong evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented experimental study;
- (2) moderate evidence from at least 1 well designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study;
- (3) promising evidence from at least one well designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
- (4) a rationale based on high quality research findings or positive evaluation that the activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

FY—Fiscal Year: A period in which an accounting cycle begins and ends. Federal fiscal years are typically October 1 through September 30. School fiscal years are typically July 1 through June 30.

Federal Register: The federal government’s daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and grant announcements.

Formula Grant: Funds distributed to eligible applicants for which the amount is established by a formula based on certain criteria written into the legislation and program regulations. Formula funds may be directly allocated or awarded through a competitive grant competition.

FRL—Free or Reduced Lunch: Many federal programs use a school’s percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch to determine its eligibility for additional funding. State and federal grants often set the bar at 40% or higher.

Funding Priorities: Specific elements that applicants are asked to address or certain conditions that must exist for applicants to be eligible for a certain grant. There are two kinds of priorities for which additional scoring points may be received:

- (1) absolute priorities— applicants must address these in order to be considered for funding; and
- (2) competitive priorities— applicants have the option of choosing whether or not to address these.

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In addition, an invitational priority encourages but does not require applicants to respond and does not offer competitive or absolute preference over other applicants.

Goals and Objectives: Goals are broad and long-term targets (e.g., increasing high school graduation rates); objectives are more short-term (e.g., increasing reading scores by a specific percent within a specified timeframe).

Grant: An award from a funding source which provides financial or other resources in order to implement solutions to pressing needs.

Grant Period: The period of time for which funds have been awarded. Foundations typically award grants for one year. State and federal grants may be awarded for multiple years.

Grantee: An organization that has been awarded a grant.

Grantor: An organization that makes a grant.

Indirect Costs: Costs incurred for an organization's operating expenses (e.g., utility bills, janitorial services, etc.) which cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular grant project.

Indirect Cost Rate: The percentage a grantee uses in computing the dollar amount it charges to the grant to reimburse itself for indirect costs of a grant project.

In-Kind Contribution: A contribution of equipment, supplies, services, personnel, or other tangible resource, as distinguished from a monetary grant. In-kind contributions may be considered as sources of match for some grants.

Intent to Apply: Some federal and state grants require or request a letter or form to be submitted indicating intent to apply for the grant.

LEA—Local Education Agency: A public board of education or other public authority which maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State.

LEARN: Literacy for All, Results for the Nation is a grant program within ESSA to improve student academic achievement in reading and writing.

Letter of Inquiry: Some foundations request a letter outlining the proposed grant request as a first step prior to the submission of a proposal.

Match: The portion of project costs in the form of cash or an in-kind contribution or any combination thereof that is contributed by the grantee or other donor.

NCLB: No Child Left Behind, the 2002 re-authorization of ESEA.

Needs Assessment: Documentation of why the grant is needed.

NOGA—Notice of Grant Award: An official document signed by a program official who is authorized to obligate the agency in financial matters. The NOGA states the amount and the terms and conditions of an award.

Non-Academic Indicator: Along with academic indicators, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes an additional category which allows individual states the flexibility beyond academic mastery. Examples of non-academic indicators include absentee rates, school climate and safety, and student engagement.

Professional Development: Ongoing learning opportunities for teachers and other education personnel through their schools and districts. ESSA defines professional development as activities that are “sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom focused.”

Performance Measure: A characteristic or metric that can be used to assess the performance aspects of a program or project (e.g., dollars expended, students enrolled, grade point average).

Performance Report: A report of the specific activities the grant recipient has performed during the project period.

Project Period: The total amount of time for which a grantor promises to fund a grant and authorizes a grantee to conduct the project. Multi-year award funds are generally obligated for the first 12 months and planned for subsequent budget periods if certain conditions are met.

Proposal: A written application submitted to a grantor requesting to be considered for a grant award.

Proposal Requirements: Guidelines for the contents of the proposal which may include specific scoring criteria, formatting, number of pages, page size, fonts, use of tables, charts, or graphics, and other limitations.

Proposal Summary: A description of the proposed project which appears at the beginning of the proposal in the form of a cover letter or a separate page.

RFA—Request for Application or RFP—Request for Proposal: These terms may be used interchangeably to list project specifications and application procedures for specific grants.

Replicability: The likelihood that the proposed project can be replicated in other schools or districts or on a broader regional or national scope.

SEA—State Education Agency: The state board of education or other agency or office primarily responsible for the supervision of public elementary and secondary schools.

State Point of Contact (SPOC): Some federal grants require that the applicant notify a particular state official or agency of its intent to apply for the grant, including basic information about the proposed project. The grant application announcement may include the list of SPOCs.

Submission Requirements: Instructions for submission of proposals such as number of copies to be submitted, binding, mailing or delivery instructions, package labeling, and due date and time.

Sustainability: A plan for continuation beyond the grant period and/or other resources needed to implement the grant.

Target Populations: Individuals, students, schools, or other recipients who will be the focus and beneficiaries of services provided through a grant project.

USDOE: United States Department of Education