Grant Writing Dictionary

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

**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).

**Applicant:** The agency, entity, or organization requesting a grant.

**Application:** A written request or proposal to receive grant.

**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.

**Award:** A funding agency's acceptance of an application or proposal, which results in a sum of money allocated to the awardee over a specified period of time to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the grant application.

**Budget:** The financial plan for carrying out the proposed project or program.

**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. Department of Education grants begin with 84.

**Capital Outlay:** Grant funds used to purchase buildings, construction, or equipment.

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

**Challenge Grant:** A grant that requires raising additional funds from other sources.

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

**Community Foundation:** An organization that makes grants for charitable purposes in a specific community or region.

**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.

Cover Letter: A brief, one-page letter to introduce the applicant and summarize the attached proposal.

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.

ED: The U.S. Department of Education.

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 over the Internet.

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

Employee Matching Grant: A contribution by an employee that is matched by a similar contribution from his or her employer.

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.

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, artifacts such as student projects and sample lesson plans.

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.

Family Foundation: An independent private foundation whose funds are derived from members of a single family. Family members often serve as officers or board members of the foundation and have a significant role in grant making decisions.

Federal Register: The federal government’s official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and grant application announcements.
**Federated Giving Program:** Joint fundraising efforts usually administered by a nonprofit "umbrella" organization, such as United Way that distributes the contributed funds to several nonprofit agencies.

**Form 990:** Foundations must file this Internal Revenue Service form which provides information about their finances, board members, and grants.

**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.

**Foundation:** A private organization established as a nonprofit corporation or charitable trust, with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated nonprofit organizations for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes.

**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. An Invitational Priority encourages but does not require applicants to respond and does not offer competitive or absolute preference over other applicants.

**General (Operating) Support:** A grant made to further the general purpose or work of an organization, rather than for a specific purpose or project; also called an unrestricted grant or basic support.

**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.

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.

LOI — Letter of Inquiry — Letter of Intent — Intent to Apply: A brief letter outlining an organization’s activities and its request for funding sent to a funding source to determine whether it would be appropriate to submit a full grant proposal. Some foundations prefer this as the initial contact; some federal and state grants require or request a letter or form to be submitted indicating intent to apply for the grant.

Matching: 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.

Mission Statement: Declares "why" an organization exists, and is the foundation upon which a long-range strategic plan (the blueprint for carrying out the organization's "business") can be developed.

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.

Needs Assessment: Documentation of why the grant is needed.

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

Performance Report: A report of the specific activities the grant recipient has performed during the budget or 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, use of tables, charts, or graphics: page size, fonts, 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.
Research-Based — Scientifically Research-Based — Scientifically-Based Research: Projects based on technology, instructional strategies, or curriculum that are proven through carefully monitored experimental or quasi-experimental studies and demonstrated to have improved student achievement and/or teacher performance.

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.

Seed Money: A grant used to start a new project or organization. Seed money may cover salaries and other start-up expenses.

Start and End Date: The first and last days of any funded project.

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 the availability of other resources necessary 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.

Vision: Vision is the preferred future, (e.g. every student will be college and career ready, our district will be the public school employer of choice in the state, etc.). A vision is an ambitious statement encompassing the direction the applicant wants to take and the desired end result once it gets there. Vision differs from mission in that a mission is more focused on the applicant’s purpose and function.