

Grants Development Handbook



Resource Guide for Grant Acquisition *(Includes tips for writing winning applications)*

*Volusia County Schools
Grants Development Department*

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Grants Development Office Mission Statement

The mission of the Grants Development Office is to support district efforts to increase student achievement by arranging additional resources through grant acquisition, program evaluation, compliance monitoring and fiscal oversight.

Guiding Principles:

- *Dedication to increased student achievement*
- *Commitment to finding solutions to problems*
- *Mutual respect and positive relationships with all stakeholders*

What we do:

- Research potential funding sources to ensure adherence with District initiatives
- Provide technical assistance with planning, review of proposals, and budget development to teachers, schools, or departments during the grant preparation process
- Secure all required approvals/signatures for application submissions
- Submit proposals via online applications and/or express shipping to grantor agency
- Develop, review and process DOE budget pages for grant applications
- Create and process necessary budget or program amendments for grants
- Provide budget and program oversight to maintain grant compliance
- Coordinate necessary intermediate and exit grant reports
- Maintain district files for all board approved grant applications
- Provide support on multi-component grants

Questions? Please call the Grants Development Department at: 386-734-7190

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Getting Started

So, you want to write a grant...

There are thousands of grants available for education. This handbook will give you helpful advice to find grants and point you in the right direction of how to proceed to write, submit and win grant funding.

There are step-by-step directions, so you know what is required of you, as well as helpful tips used in writing winning grant proposals. This will increase your chances at successfully winning grant funds for your project.

1. Select a project and a potential funding source. Be very clear on the project goals and objectives and identify the need to be filled. You will need to know what activities are to be carried out, who will be served, who will be responsible for these duties and your estimated budget, as well as the timeline for implementing your project.
2. Carefully review and read over all application criteria and requirements. **Check for any in-kind or matching fund requirements. Look for expectations of sharing or replicating or requirements to continue the program after the funding runs out** – This will require district review to ensure no unexpected expenses will fall onto the District.
3. Contact the Grants Development Department when you find an opportunity you are interested in pursuing. **This is critical to ensure your project is aligned with district initiatives and the Strategic Plan receives the appropriate approvals and is completed and submitted to the required parties.**
4. Obtain the appropriate application materials and speak to your administrator to get his or her approval and determine how to proceed. **All proposals must align with the school improvement plan and comply with all required facility, professional development and/or technology standards.**
5. Familiarize yourself with **required deadlines** for submission and be sure you allow adequate time to prepare the proposal and allow for Board Approval.
6. Begin completing the proposal and gathering required data. **Grant proposals are plans for change, not just a request for money.** Conduct a needs assessment and be sure objectives are measurable and align with the School Improvement Plan.
7. Be patient – you will likely be learning along the way about how various district departments work if you will be impacting them with your proposal.

Writing the Proposal...

Important: Make sure you have read the application and all requirements and discussed the proposal with your supervisor and the Grants Development Department before proceeding.

1. Follow all directions and requirements. Read the fine print and contact the Grants Development Department with any questions for requirements you are unclear on.
2. Articulate a clear need and make sure there are no other funding sources available.
3. Be creative. Awards are frequently given to those who propose a novel idea that has research based strategies involved.
4. Be brief in your wording and **proofread, proofread, proofread**. Double check all figures and calculations for accuracy.
5. Keep accurate records and don't forget to cite sources you have used for quoted information.
6. Be sure the proposal can be implemented in the way outlined in your proposal. Grant funds **must** support the proposed program and be spent on the items specified in the application.

As you prepare your application, be sure you can answer these questions.

Facilities:

- Will there be changes to the use of existing space – non-occupied to occupied, classroom to lab, storage to student occupied?
- Are equipment purchases involved that require assembly, electricity, water, sewer, data connections?
- Are there special needs accessibility requirements?
- Are animals involved?
- Will this require additional buildings?

Learning Technologies:

- Does this grant include software, hardware, web-based technologies, internet access or other technology?
- Will there be a need to relocate existing technology resources?
- Is the technology on the districts approved technology list and/or has the ITS Division approved the technology?

Payroll:

- Will anyone be paid and are the proposed rates in compliance with district approved rates? **All rates must be Board approved before proceeding!**
- Are they exempt or non-exempt staff? Is overtime involved?
- Have you included benefit costs if salaries are involved?

Budget:

- Are matching funds required?
- Are additional positions being requested and have they been approved?
- Have you included worker's compensation and indirect costs (if allowable)?

Purchasing:

- Have you consulted the Purchasing Department with your full requirement regarding the solicitation process and spending threshold approval?
- What is the expected budget? ***Expenditure over \$50,000 requires board approval.***
- Are you familiar with the policies and procedures of procurement using the grant funding sources?
- Do you know the deadlines and requirements of fiscal year operations including the expiration of grand funds?
- Are there grand restrictions for contract award and contract administration that you are aware of? If yes, please share this information with the Buyer assigned to the Project.

Finance:

- Will finance be required to submit invoices for reimbursement?
- Are there financial reporting requirements?
- Are there encumbrance/expense deadlines or requirements to return funds?
- Are there conflicts with District expenditure policies/procedures?
- Will the funds go to the District or internal accounts?

ESE:

- Are ESE or 504 Plan students involved?
- Are IDEA Funds required for any part of the implementation?
- Does this require a time commitment from any District Level or Student Services staff?
- Is there any impact to students with disabilities that could create compliance issues?
- Does this address specialized/accessible equipment or materials or specialized transportation?

General:

- Are there professional learning or training requirements? All professional learning must be coordinated with the Professional Learning Department
- Are there room rentals or food purchases involved?
- Are there any partner agencies and what role do they play?
- Is there a need for an Interagency Agreement and can it be completed and approved to meet the required project timelines?

Preparing the Budget...

Grant budget proposals are estimates so you should make the budget as accurate as possible. ***Buying items not included in the proposal is not allowed!*** Be mindful of supplementary expenses that will be generated with the required expenditures – salaries require benefits, hand held learning devices may require batteries, and technology often requires cords, cables, mice, printers, ink and paper. Some materials may require storage bins or accessories to be used to implement the proposal. Some types of programs may require payments to facilitators, consultants and child care providers.

Each grant will have its own budget requirements and usually its own budget forms. All proposals will have budget categories so the following categories are a general guide.

Salaries – All payments, stipends, overtime, etc., that you pay to employees.
(Salary schedules can be found on the Payroll website)

Benefits – All costs associated with paying a wage. These include social security, retirement, life and medical insurance and workers compensation. Some rates do change from year to year, so check with Grants Development for the current rates.

Purchased Services – Includes consultant services (***Non-Employees Only***), maintenance or equipment rental, phone service, postage, printing, etc.

Materials and Supplies – Expendable materials that are consumed, worn out and replaced such as manipulatives or general supplies such as paper and pens.

Equipment – Includes capitalized and non-capitalized (depends on price) equipment purchased to be used for an extended time and to be repaired rather than replaced.

Computer Hardware– Includes computers, monitors, printers, other devices, and other accessories (non-consumable) used with and through the computer (both capitalized and non-capitalized, depending on price).

Web-Based Computer Access – Computer applications that are accessed through a website.

Software – Computer applications which run on devices.

Other Expenses – Indirect Costs are the costs to the district to operate the program. Since these costs are difficult to assign to each program, the district charges many grants a state approved rate. This is generally 3-6% and varies from year to year. The Grants Development Department can advise you if you need to include this in your budget.

Expense Codes – Some application budgets require the use of State cost codes referred to as function and object codes.

*****Please submit all budgets to the Grants Development office for review prior to sending to grantor to ensure they adhere to all District and grantor requirements and all purchases that may be required to operate your program are included.***

Spending the Money...

- You must spend the money on the plan as it is approved and only for things included in the grant. In many cases, food purchases are prohibited and there are often restrictions on capital equipment, computers, etc.
- Keep accurate records of all expenditures and activities funded. **All grants are subject to audit for up to 5 years** and you will be responsible for providing detailed information on how the money was spent and how the expenditures relate to the program components.
- Watch deadlines and be sure to spend the money before the grant ends. **Do not** spend more than the allocated budget. If you don't spend the funds by the deadline, the funds will no longer be available and must be returned. Required reports **must** be submitted on time.
- The District has purchasing rules and guidelines and you must adhere to them.
- All technology purchases must be approved by and submitted through the Information and Technology Services Division.
- Contact Grants Development for spending procedures.
 1. Funds cannot be committed (arrangements made to purchase) prior to the start date of your grant or prior to having an expenditure proposal approved.
 2. There are policies and procedures in place for governing dollar limits on spending and technology purchases.
 3. Be sure to include shipping and handling when calculating how much you are spending.
 4. Consult the hardware catalog prior to all technology purchases.
 5. **Do not** approve payment until merchandise is received. Pre-payment or deposits for any goods or services is not an allowable practice.
 6. Contractual services are handled differently than ordering supplies.
 - Check with the Purchasing department
 - Be sure to allow time for board approval, if required.
 - Some Consultants may require fingerprinting.
 - Employees **cannot** be Consultants.
 - Service providers are required to have a W-9 Form on file.

Grant Ending and Close Out...

- Know your fund balance and be sure all deadlines are complied with. Keep accurate financial records and do not overspend to ensure the minimum amount is returned to the grantor. We do not want to leave any money on the table.
- Be sure all professional development points have been turned in.
- Complete all required ending reports for program outcomes and financial expenditures.
- Be sure all records are complete and accurate. If you have any publicity or marketing items, be sure you have copies in your records. If you provided any training, include evidence of this and copies of materials presented. Many grants require these for audit purposes. (i.e., agenda, sign-in sheets)
- Records must be kept for 5 years.
- Are you receiving continuation of funding? If so, be sure you keep accurate records of each year separately and that you reapply in adequate time so there are no funding gaps. If not, there are rules that must be followed regarding equipment disposal or transfer.
- Be sure all equipment purchased with the grant is properly marked per Volusia County Schools property guidelines. If there are inventoried items, some must stay at the school and some can be transferred with the teacher. Contact Grants Development if you are unsure. Be sure inventory paperwork is on file at the school and the appropriate transfer forms are completed for the receiving school. All items purchased with grant funding become the property of Volusia County Schools.

Grant Evaluation...

Grantees are frequently required to evaluate the projects and programs funded through grants. Formative (process) and summative (outcomes) evaluations may be required. External evaluators sometimes provide the evaluation. Be sure to read all your awarded paperwork very carefully to be familiar with all requirements.

The established benchmarks, such as goals, objectives and activities in the grant are evaluated. Data must be gathered; records must be reviewed – it is crucial that you keep good records of all activities concerned with the grant. Deadlines are critical. Failure to adhere to deadlines can impact future funding opportunities for the whole district.

The matrix below serves as an example of how to document progress and achievements of your program:

Goal	Objective	Outcome Indicators	Data Source
To promote appreciation of and participation in contemporary dance	1. Increase attendance by 10% at the annual performance by a guest touring company	Number of tickets sold; audience head count; marketing materials	Existing records; box office receipts; observation
	2. Maintain the quality of contemporary dance performances and dance internship programs	Testimony of students, staff, and community; evidence of sponsors for internships	Pre and post evaluation of performances; documentation of internships offered and accepted

For assistance, the Grants Development Department is here to help. We want you to get funding for your program or proposal and make it the best it can be.

Frequently Asked Questions...

How much time do I allow to prepare my proposal and apply for my grant?

A minimum of four (4) weeks is recommended. You will need adequate time to gather your information and prepare the proposal, as well as time to get your application to Dr. Fritz and then on the School Board Agenda for approval before the application can be submitted.

May I submit my own proposal?

After your application has been reviewed and Board approved, you may request it be returned to you for submission.

Can I include paying myself in the proposal?

Yes, if you are writing a proposal that includes duties beyond your regular work day and the salaries for this purpose, you can be paid for the duties beyond your regular day. All paid duties and pay rates are board approved and must be in compliance with negotiated salary schedules. ***You cannot include extra payments such as bonuses for writing the proposal. Please contact HR if you are unsure of a stipend beyond contracted time.***

Can I include items such as food, recognition awards, clothing or personal items in my budget proposal?

It may be allowable if it is part of the project or program you are proposing and is included in the approved grant.

Can a vendor assist me in writing my proposal?

You can obtain assistance from virtually any source. ***Proceed carefully*** – District ***personnel are not allowed to accept gifts from outside vendors***, nor can you write a proposal that guarantees a sale for a particular vendor. ***You must always keep in line with ethical and professional conduct at all times.***

Grant Terms You Need to Know...

Applicant	School district, agency or organization seeking funds
Audit	Examination of program records, procedures, and/or financial records
Authorized Representative	Either the Superintendent of Schools or the grant recipient
Budget Amendment	Formal request to alter the approved budget that must be Board approved
Budget Period	Period of time when a project is divided for budget and reporting purposes
Cash Match	Cash contributions made to a project by another party at the grantor's request
Competitive	Grant process where applicants must compete for funding
Compliance	Fulfilling all fiscal and program requirements and obeying applicable laws, regulations and guidance
Consortium	Joining together of several agencies or organizations for the purpose of submitting a single project application
Cost Sharing	Requirement that a portion of costs be assumed by grantee
Direct Services to students	Instruction, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, field trips, etc. provided directly to students
Discretionary Grant	Competitive proposals ranked by the funding agency to determine which applicants receive funds
Evaluation	Assessment of project's success at meeting intended outcomes; may include formative and/or summative evaluation
Entitlement	Non-competitive federal funds allocated by formula
Finding	Violation identified in an audit that requires corrective action
Fiscal Year	12-month period for which an organization plans the use of funds (i.e., Federal fiscal year is 10/1 – 9/30; State of Florida operates 7/1 – 6/30)
Formative Evaluation	Conducted during the operation of the project to provide immediate feedback about the status of project activities so that necessary revisions can be made, if necessary
Formula Grants	Non-competitive funds made available based on a formula, also called Entitlement Grants
Fringe Benefits	Amount paid by employer for retirement, health insurance, social security, etc; cost is added to salary to determine budgetary cost
Goal	Target achievement of the project
Grantee	Legal entity to which funds are awarded and is accountable to the funding agency (grantor) for the use of funds provided
Grantor	Entity that awards funds
Green Book	Official Florida DoE handbook containing procedures, definitions and codes related to state and federal funding
Indirect Costs	Incurred in the overall functioning of a project and not readily identified as direct expenses (i.e., utility costs)
In-Kind Contribution	Dollar value of non-cash contributions to a project such as volunteer services or use of facilities
Local Education Agency (LEA)	School district or regional education agency that receives and disburses grant funds
Logic Model	Tool that shows logical relationships between resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of a project

No-Cost Extension	Formal request to the grantor asking to extend the project period for a specified length of time
Non-Regulatory Guidance	Document issued by the Secretary of Education to provide official guidance on how to implement specified federal requirements
Outcome Objective	Verifiable, quantifiable, time-bound expression of a goal-related result; objectives move project toward meeting goals
Program Administrator	Person designated as supervisor of project activities
Program Amendment	Board approved, formal request to modify project activities or expenses
Project Period	Specified dates for project approval, funding and operation
Proposal	Formal written document providing details to grantor on the components and costs of a project in response to a substantiated need or problem
Red Book	Official Florida DoE Handbook containing charts of accounts for budgeting and financial reporting
Request for Application or Proposal (RFA/RFP)	Issued by grantor agency informing potential applicants of types of programs to be funded, amounts available, method of application, approval criteria and constraints on use of funds
Roll-Forward Funds	Unused funds from previous fiscal year that some state and federal grants make available during the following fiscal year
Solicited Proposal	Proposal that has been invited by a sponsoring agency
Summative Evaluation	Reporting or measurement of final program results
Supplant	Illegal practice of using grant funds for certain expenses the district is required to pay for
Supplemental	Activities that enrich, expand, or improve current activities
Target Audience	Specified group that will be served or impacted by the project
Timeline	Management tool that details the schedule of project tasks to be accomplished, by whom and over what period of time

Helpful Links...

Education trends and Information:

E school News - <http://www.eschoolnews.com/>

Education Week - <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>

Google.com/Alerts – To get alerted when news is released

Volunteermatch.org – Matches volunteers with needs

Data and Statistics:

Aecf.org – Data and statistics on children

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) - <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

Florida Department of Education - <http://www.fldoe.org/grants/>

Google Scholar - <http://scholar.google.com/>

Grantcraft.org – Tips on writing grant proposals

Issue Statements - <http://www.ontheissues.org/default.htm>

James Madison Institute - <http://www.jamesmadison.org/>

National Center for Education Statistics - <http://nces.ed.gov/>

Pioneer Institute - <http://www.pioneerinstitute.org/>

Sample Size Calculator - <http://www.independentsector.org/>

SurveyMonkey.com – Free survey builder

US Census Bureau - <http://www.census.gov/>

Value of Volunteer Time - <http://www.tgci.com/>

Volusia County Schools Grants Development Department
TASK CHECKLIST FOR GRANT APPLICANTS

TITLE OF GRANT _____ DATE _____

FUNDING AGENCY _____ AMOUNT _____

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT _____ PHONE _____

CONTACT PERSON _____ EMAIL _____

Here is a checklist of things you will need to do to complete your grant application and get it submitted. As you complete each step, check it off and your application will be ready for the final review before you know it.

TASK	COMPLETED
1. Identify a need to be filled. Consult your supervisor for feedback.	
2. Identify funding source and read all requirements carefully.	
3. Contact Grants Development for resource materials and compliance issues at Extension 23521.	
4. Form a committee, if necessary, to determine if it can be implemented or is feasible, plan the approach and action timelines. Complete a Logic Model to be sure the plan is logical.	
5. Gather data and statistics, plan the approach, activities, materials, staff, goals and objectives.	
6. If activities included in your plan will impact other district operations contact the impacted departments for approval:	Check indicates approval:
o Facilities	
o Learning Technologies	
o Purchasing	
o ESE	
o Payroll	
o Other financial operations	
*Please contact Grants Development for guidance	
7. Complete the application, proofread carefully, follow all directions and requirements, and adhere to deadlines. Obtain any required school-based signatures. Contact Grants Development for assistance with building your budget.	
8. Be sure there is ample time to submit original application to Grants Development – Deland High – Portable 38 to complete processing and submit to grantor agency, if applicable.	

GENERAL PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Steps	Program Operations Procedures
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1	Program activities must be aligned to your approved application.
2	Program expenditures must be aligned with your approved budget.
3	If there is a change of plans from the DOE approval, contact Grants Development.
4	Grants Development will complete and submit the amendment.
5	Upon approval of amendment, activities may be altered, and revised purchases may be made.

Steps	Expenditure Proposal Procedures
1	The requester will complete an expenditure proposal for each vendor, obtain Administrator signature and submit to Deidra Whittenberger in Federal Programs and Grants Development. Contact the Purchasing Department to obtain a quote from the vendor for your expenditure proposal. The District has several contracts with different approved vendors that could simplify the process.
2	When requisition is approved, Grants department will notify requestor and provide direction to proceed with purchase. Purchase orders are preferable.
3	When using Purchase Orders, Grants will request Purchase Order and submit to vendor, cc'ing requestor.
4	When using credit cards, requestor completes purchase and sends receipts to Grants Development.

Steps	Contracted Services Procedures
1	The requester will submit a expenditure proposal to Deidra Whittenberger in Federal Programs and Grants Development.
2	When requisition is approved, a Contracted Services Agreement and W-9 Form will be provided to the requester by the Grants department.
3	The requester will complete the portions of the Contracted Services Agreement that are in red and send the Contracted Services Agreement and a W-9 Form to the Contractor for signature. Vendor onboarding and vetting process is required, please contact the Purchasing Department for more details.
4	Upon receipt of the signed Contracted Services Agreement and W-9 Form from the contractor, the requester will obtain the appropriate school-based signatures and submit to Grants Development.
5	Note: Cannot be more than \$3,000.00 per day, please do not alter the terms of agreement, contractors cannot hold an active VCS job record, contractors can ONLY perform duties not performed by any VCS employees.

Steps	Credit Card Procedures
1	Cards come with a per single transaction spending limit of \$1,000.00 and a monthly limit of \$3,000.00.

2	Purchasing for guidance and appropriate approval form to request the amount you need increased at pcardservices@volusia.k12.fl.us .
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Steps	Payroll Procedures
1	Time sheets and Invoices are tallied and submitted weekly, compiled with Activity and Attendance Logs, signed by the Administrator/department head, and originals are submitted to Grants Development.

Steps	Transportation Procedures
1	Busses can be requested only if in the approved budget.
2	Busses are requested through the transportation system and a valid program account string must be provided.
3	Contact Deidra Whittenberger in Grants Development to obtain the correct account string each program year.

Steps	PARS Procedures
1	Personnel Activity Reports are required to be completed by anyone working in a Federally Funded Program.
2	PARs must be completed and signed by both the employee and Program Director and retained onsite.

Steps	Technology Procedures
1	Technology must be on the district's approved technology list or approval must be granted by the ITS Division.
2	Technology approval is requested via the VCS Technology Approval Process in the IncidentIQ System.
3	Contact Katie Micallef for assistance with the Technology Approval Process.
4	Contact Deidra Whittenberger in Grants Development to obtain the correct account string each program year.