This booklet provides information for principals, school leaders, partners, and administrators on the basics of grant writing including locating funding, developing a successful proposal and effective grant implementation.
MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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- For Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504): Jeff Moller, 504/ADA Coordinator for Students, MPS Department of Special Services, 5225 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53208. (414) 475-8617 TTD: (414) 475-8139
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INTRODUCTION

Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Grant Development & Planning staff members provide assistance to secure grants. Grants department staff members ensure that grant programs align to district needs and priorities and will provide results. The purpose of this booklet is to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to develop a fundable grant proposal. Topics covered include developing project ideas, locating funding sources, the components of a grant proposal, and grant implementation.

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DISTRICT SUPPORT

Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Grant Development & Planning staff members assist school-based teams with successfully securing external funding. Grant development staff members ensure that grant programs align to the district strategic plan. To fulfill this work, grant development staff, under the leadership of the superintendent and chief innovation and information officer, will:

- participate on district grant development teams and ensure appropriate district staff are involved;
- provide timelines, templates and feedback for draft proposals;
- provide professional development on grant writing;
- monitor the status of proposals and report grant awards to administration including the Milwaukee Board of School Directors;
- research and disseminate grant opportunities; and,
- complete administrative tasks necessary for grant submission.

The district maintains eight strategic objectives, linked together to create a cohesive and interdependent strategic plan. These objectives are reinforced by the district’s budget process, and together ensure that key programs and projects are aligned, prioritized and funded in service of students.
EIGHT BIG IDEAS

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Close the Gap – MPS is a national symbol of excellence for educating all students, providing a rigorous academic program that ensures equitable opportunities for all children to reach their full potential.

Educate the Whole Child – MPS provides a nurturing, consistent and validating experience for every child so that both educational and social-emotional needs are met.

Redefine the MPS Experience – Every MPS school provides a robust extracurricular experience that engages and inspires every child.

Rethink High Schools – Every MPS student graduates on time with a personalized pathway to success in college, career and life.

STUDENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Re-envision Partnerships – MPS cultivates and maintains mutually beneficial partnerships and collective impact efforts to maximize resources that promote greater student outcomes.

Strengthen Communications Systems and Outreach Strategies – The community is engaged in, understands and supports the work of MPS and families choose our district as a trusted and valued education provider.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

Develop our Workforce – As an organization respected for supporting diverse, healthy, highly skilled and engaged employees, MPS is an employer of choice.

Improve Organizational Processes – MPS is a leader in using best practices, systems and processes equitably and efficiently to align and maximize resources in support of our strategic objectives.
Welcome to the world of grant writing. The first step in developing a fundable grant proposal is developing a project idea.

The project idea should align to, and further, the funder’s vision and mission, and a School Improvement Plan or the district’s goals and priorities.

Grant proposals in an educational setting should focus on improving student learning. Grant developers often come up with an idea for a grant proposal by examining school or district data and/or having conversations with key stakeholders, including parents. Potential applicants should consider the needs of the school and district when developing an idea for a grant proposal.

Applicants may use a variety of tactics to strengthen proposals. To make a proposal stronger, it may help to select or develop a project idea for which you can provide evidence that the strategies you have selected are effective, research-based, and that will have a positive impact. If you develop a grant proposal with an academic focus, it may help you to cite educational research conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner, within a similar context for your project, to strengthen the proposal.

Applicants should understand and follow mandatory MPS protocol when they are applying for grants. The Milwaukee Public Schools Protocols for Securing Grants document defines clearly the district’s grant writing processes and procedures. Review these materials before beginning the Grant Development & Planning process.

Individuals or teams interested in submitting a grant proposal through Milwaukee Public Schools must provide the Division of Grant Development & Planning with an approved grant intent form.
Contact Grant Development & Planning before contacting potential funders. The division may know of someone who already has a relationship with a potential funder, and who can serve as a resource for you as you move forward with your grant. Division staff may also be aware of other MPS staff applying for the same grant, as the district avoids internal competition for grants, and many funders do not accept competing proposals from the same organization. The purpose of coordinating grant applications is so that the district maximizes its chances of receiving funding for a grant.

Once you worked with Grant Development & Planning, have identified possible funding agencies, and have received approval on the grant intent form, you may wish to contact the appropriate agency program directors by phone, or email, to make sure that your proposed project meets the funding criteria. Do not hesitate to call or email the funder if you have questions about the Request for Proposal (RFP). That call will get your questions answered and build a personal connection with the granting agency.

Consider getting to know some of the grantor agency personnel. Ask for suggestions, criticism, and advice about the proposed project. In many cases, the more the funder knows about the proposal, the better chance it has of support and receiving a favorable decision. In some cases, you may send the proposals summary to the funder separately for review and comment.

Grant Development & Planning staff may also have copies of previous grant applications submitted to the funder available for your review. The funder’s website will also often include project summaries of prior grant awardees. Applicants who review projects that received funding will help them to determine if the funding source is appropriate, and if the proposal matches the funder’s mission and goals.

If a particular funder does not work out, the Division of Grant Development & Planning may be able to help identify alternative funding sources.
LOCATING FUNDING

The most challenging part of the grant application process may be locating appropriate funding sources for your project. Some crucial strategies to securing a grant successfully include knowing just where to look for the money, and then communicating a compelling case for your proposed program.

It takes both time and research to identify potential grant funders. With more educators, researchers, nonprofit agencies, and human services organizations competing for grants, applicants must find funders who share their goals and missions.

When searching for funders, keep in mind the following questions. Does the funder award grants:

- **In your subject area?** For example, a funder may have a focus on literacy. If you are seeking a grant in order to support a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program, you should probably look elsewhere for funding.

- **In your geographical area?** Some organizations focus on certain cities or states. Be sure to read the RFP carefully to ensure that it does not include restrictions for applicant locations.

- **For the funding amount that you are requesting?** If you are seeking a grant requesting $5,000 and the funder awards much larger grants typically, or if you are seeking a large grant and the funder awards smaller grants typically, the funder may not be appropriate for your project.

- **For the type of support you seek (e.g. personnel, supplies, building support, etc.)?** Sometimes funders specify how awardees may use the requested funding.

- **To educational institutions?** The RFP will define clearly the eligibility requirements for the grant. If only institutions of higher education, or 501(c)(3) organizations, are eligible MPS may qualify for the grant only if it applies in partnership with another organization that meets the requirements.
TYPES OF GRANTS

Applicants should be aware of the different types of funders and grants. Grants may be either discretionary or follow a formula.

Discretionary, or competitive, grants involve a rigorous review and selection process, and only the best applications receive funding. Formula grant programs are noncompetitive awards based on predetermined criteria.

All grants have eligibility requirements. Potential applicants should understand the requirements, and make sure the school or district meets them, before beginning work on the grant proposal.

Various departments within the federal and state governments, foundations, and corporations award grants. Most funding agencies have missions to fulfill or goals to accomplish, and that is why they offer money to schools. The more the proposed project furthers the funders’ goal, the more likely it is to receive funding.

Applicants will want to find a funding organization with goals that match those of their proposed projects. The funder’s goals are often in the request for proposal (RFP), a document that provides guidelines and instructions for grant applications. A grant seeker must adhere to eligibility requirements, regulations, and policies associated with requests for proposals. Applicants who read RFPs carefully will avoid wasting time applying for funding if the proposal does not align with their objectives. Applicants should also note that funders might reject proposals that fail to include all requested documents, information, or to follow all RFP guidelines closely.

Make sure the granting agency will fund public schools. Some funders give to tax-exempt organizations, and some funders restrict their giving to private nonprofit organizations, or 501(c)(3)-organizations. MPS is a tax-exempt institution under section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. Most granting agencies also consider MPS a local government agency (LEA).

Before applying, read the RFP carefully, or contact the funder about eligibility. If a granting agency will fund only 501(c)(3) organizations, district applicants may be able to submit a proposal in the name of the Milwaukee Public Schools Foundation. Approval by the Foundation’s Executive Director is a requirement.
FUNDING SOURCES

Here are resources available to help you to find funding sources:

**Milwaukee Public Schools Website**

Log in to mConnect and search for “Grant Development.” Click on the link and you will be taken to the Division of Grant Development & Planning homepage.

From here, you will be able to access information on funding sources, templates, and other resources (located in the “Resources” callout menu) that will assist you with the grant seeking, application, and implementation process.

The Division of Grant Development & Planning has created a database of over 200 Grant Opportunities. Sorting features include filters such as category, grant amount, funding type, match requirement, etc. Type “Grant Opportunities” in the search field on mConnect to explore opportunities that align with the needs and objectives of your project or school improvement plan.

District employees may also schedule time with division staff to explore funding opportunities through various online sites.

**Milwaukee Public Schools Grants Listserv**

The Division of Grant Development & Planning offers a listserv to increase awareness of grant opportunities, and to facilitate a grant-writing professional learning community within MPS.

Grant Development & Planning sends members of the listserv notice of grant funding opportunities on a regular basis. Subscribers are also encouraged to discuss Grant Development & Planning successes, challenges, questions, and best practices.
There are several components to a grant proposal. Not every proposal will include every part, but learning about them is a good foundation to have before delving into a new application. These components include:

- Executive Summary (The Hook)
- Needs Assessment (The Issue)
- Project Design (The Work)
- Evaluation (The Results)
- Budget (The Money)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the executive summary is typically the first item of a proposal, it is generally the last section written. The executive summary describes the proposal succinctly. Funders often will impose a one-page limit on the executive summary and outline the information that you should include in it.

The executive summary provides readers with an introduction to the organization and a first impression of your project. The executive summary should explain the key elements of your project, summarizing in the future tense the project, its goals and the strategies you will use to achieve those goals.

The challenge of writing an executive summary is making it clear, complete, and brief. A well-written executive summary invites the reader of your grant proposal to read further.

An executive summary should convince the reviewer that your proposed project is important and needed. It should also explain the project’s expected results.

An executive summary helps others to understand your proposal. An executive summary gives the funding agency an idea of the scope of work involved in the proposed project. Funders want to understand clearly how you will use your funds. Grant reviewers can use the executive summary to see at a glance how well your proposal concept fits within the funder’s mission. Some funders use the executive summary to sort the proposals into preliminary “accept” or “reject” piles when making funding decisions.

The executive summary should include some background information. When you draft the executive summary, assume the reader does not know anything about the school/district. Mention the need for the project, its implementation plans, and the timeline. Use statistical data to provide a bullet-point list of reasons the project is relevant to the community, and express the need for it.
An executive summary should describe briefly the major aspects of your proposal, with the exception of the financials. It should include goals and objectives. Funders will want to know the purpose of the project and the activities it entails.

Tips for Writing an Executive Summary:

- Briefly provide background on the lead applicant. Highlight recent successes and/or challenges.
- Include brief research that supports a need for the program/project you are requesting funding for. Make the reader understand the importance of your initiative.
- Revise the executive summary after the grant is complete to ensure all details align with final decisions regarding the program/project.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment is a way to introduce the district and its schools. A needs assessment shows why you need the project; for example, what areas are you trying to address with the funder’s money? What are you trying to improve in the classroom, in your school, or in the district?

The needs assessment generally contains a lot of data. Most funders don’t make their decisions lightly and don’t want to throw their money away. Facts and numbers will strengthen your proposal. Appropriate visuals, such as graphs or charts, can also help you to avoid having too much text in your application, which can tire a reader.

Be careful not to paint too bleak a picture. Your needs assessment is the first piece of a picture you are creating. In the end, you must illustrate to the funder that the data demonstrates a need, or needs, and that the project or program you are proposing will help to meet your need or needs.

Here are some good sources for needs assessment data:

- District and school report cards
- School improvement plans
- Data warehouse
Tailor the data included in your needs assessment to the particular grant for which you are seeking. For example, you should include math and science achievement data if the grant you are seeking funds math and science initiatives. Grant teams seeking funding for schools would do well to consult the appropriate school improvement plans for information that will bolster the needs assessment.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

Project design can include several different aspects of the work that the writer hopes to accomplish.

**LOGIC MODEL**

A logic model is a good way to ensure that goals and objectives, activities, and evaluations align. Sometimes teams develop the logic model as one of the first steps in developing a grant proposal.

A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present the relationships among available resources, planned activities, and desired changes or results. The logic model describes the sequence of activities you have designed to bring about change, and how these activities link to the desired program results. The logic model helps develop a shared understanding of how actions lead to desired outcomes.

**The logic model highlights three important components of the change process.**

1. The problem(s). What is the need for this program?
2. The desired results. What do you hope to accomplish through this program?
3. The strategies for achieving the goal(s). What methods will you employ?

The logic model should demonstrate a tight link between program goals, program services, and plans for measurement. The logic model components
illustrate the connection between your planned work and your intended results.

The planned work section of a logic model includes resources and activities. Resources, otherwise referred to as inputs, are available program assets, such as human resources, financial support, and supplies, among others. The activities section should define what the program does with these inputs, such as what actions you will implement to achieve the desired results.

Describe the program’s desired outputs, outcomes, and impact in the intended results section. The outputs are the expected direct results of the program activities. The outputs define the tangible accomplishments that will result from the activities. Here is an example output statement: “Forty students will participate in a math enrichment program.”

Outcomes are the expected changes in attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and/or status. For example, answering the question, “How has the proficiency level of these students changed as a result of the activities?” is a verifiable outcome. Logic models can include initial or short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes, or impacts.

The impacts clarify the expected systemic change that will occur due to the program’s activities. When you define impacts, consider the overall goal of the program. In the case of a math grant, for example, the long-term outcome might be an increase of successful completion of rigorous coursework, and increased high school graduation rates. Logic model teams often start with these long-term goals, and then design activities that will help them to reach those goals.
The logic model should demonstrate a strong connection between the program resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. You may want to use “if...then” statements to help you ensure that you align the planned work strategically.

- *If* you have certain resources, *then* you can accomplish the planned activities.
- *If* you accomplish the planned activities, *then* you will deliver the intended services.
- *If* you deliver the intended services, *then* your participants will benefit in certain ways.
- *If* these benefits occur, *then* certain changes may follow.

**WORK PLAN**

Many funders require work plans. The work plan is a tool that brings together all parts of the proposal. Specific work plan requirements may vary, but often they will describe program activities, who is responsible for them, and a timeline of activities’ completion.

Much of the information included in the work plan may be useful in other areas of the grant application. A work plan that brings multiple grant components together may provide a better understanding of the full scope of the proposed project. The work plan is also a tool that supports effective project implementation and monitoring.
**Example Work Plan**

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<th>Intended Outcome</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Evaluation Tool</th>
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<td>Based on Spring 2014 MAP assessment data, intervention students in grades K5-8th are at or well below the 10th percentile in Math and Reading.</td>
<td>There will be a 5% reduction in the achievement gap between African American and White students at all grade levels from Fall MAP on-target percentages to Spring MAP on-target percentages in both reading and mathematics.</td>
<td>85% of Low and High Intervention students will receive high quality interventions for at least 60 minutes per week based on Spring 2015 MAP assessment data.</td>
<td>October 2015—June 2016</td>
<td>Classroom teachers, Building Intervention Teacher</td>
<td>Student intervention summary report</td>
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**EVALUATION**

The evaluation section of the grant proposal describes the types of evaluation tools that provide data for benchmarking progress, determines the need for project modifications, and assesses the project’s impact.

Evaluation is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing data to:
- determine if, and to what extent, project goals were achieved;
- help directors make decisions about project refinement and adjustment; and
- monitor progress and ensure accountability.

Effective project evaluation includes collecting and analyzing data. It also makes it possible to gather and use information to learn about, and improve, the project.

Evaluation is a learning and management tool that is useful throughout the life of the project. Continuous evaluation can support more effective programming and provide opportunities to learn from experiences, document outcomes, and share knowledge about best practices.
Evaluations can occur either internally, using MPS staff and data, or externally, by an outside expert. The evaluator should have experience and understand the program. Regardless of whether district staff or a third-party evaluator performs evaluations, the importance of the evaluation process is to use a sound and balanced approach. Ensure that the evaluation is objective, provides accurate results, and provides the funder with the required information.

Types of Evaluation Data

Grant evaluations can include formative, benchmark and summative measures.

Formative Data is collected throughout the project, and its use is to provide more immediate feedback and make appropriate adjustments. This is a continuing process used to gauge progress during the project.

Benchmark Data is useful in monitoring progress over time by comparing time-specific data points against benchmarks. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, discipline referrals, and progress reports can serve as benchmark data.

Summative Data usually comes at the end of a course or project. It is cumulative and provides a snapshot of the performance level at a particular time. The ACT Aspire is a summative assessment of students’ knowledge. Funders are often interested in summative evaluations to determine overall effectiveness of the project.

Consider the project’s goals and objectives when you prepare the grant application, and determine what type of data to collect and analyze for the evaluation. The evaluation component of the proposal should connect with the project’s objectives and methods. If the objectives and methods are measurable and time-specific, the evaluation will be easier to design.

Evaluators can use either qualitative or quantitative methods to assess the grant project. Qualitative methods describe change, but do not always measure it. Evaluators may conduct interviews or examine case studies for qualitative information. These methods may provide insight into your project, but they do not provide quantitative data. Quantitative methods rely on numerical data that can be analyzed mathematically, such as
numbers served, percentage increase in knowledge, and pre- and post-test scores. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data can create a reliable and valid picture of your results.

The evaluation section of your application helps funders understand what impact you expect the project to have, and how you will assess it. Funders may also use evaluation results to determine whether to invest additional funding into the project in the future.

The evaluation section of a grant application should identify the tools and methods selected to measure the impact of the activity. The application also should identify the specific person, or position, responsible for collecting and compiling data for the evaluation.

Evaluations conducted properly can have an invaluable effect on the services provided to MPS students and families. Use the evaluation for project improvement and disseminate evaluation results.

**Tips for Developing the Evaluation**

- **Engage stakeholders.** You want to ensure that all key stakeholders engage in, and are aware of, the evaluation components from the start of planning and throughout grant implementation. It can be critical to the success of the evaluation to engage stakeholders.

- **Read the RFP.** You will want to read the request for proposal (RFP) carefully, in order to determine if any specific requirements relate to project evaluation. The RFP may indicate whether an external evaluation is a requirement.

- **Develop a plan.** The most important step in conducting an evaluation is developing a plan for it. The amount of time and thought that is put into developing a plan will have an impact the effectiveness of the evaluation.

- **Determine the evaluation methods that will best answer the questions you wish to answer.** Consider what the purpose of the evaluation is. Funders may be interested in data different from the kind that interests program staff. Make sure you are addressing the needs of various audiences when choosing the appropriate evaluation tool.
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The grant RFP almost certainly requires your proposal to include the project’s goals and set measurable objectives. Goals and measurable objectives reflect how you define success and how you will measure it. Proposals that define goals and measurable objectives clearly can help to ensure successful project implementation.

Goals

Goals are broad statements of the desired outcome, or outcomes, of the program, and generally are not measurable. A goal refers to an overall change expected in a group or population because of a program. Goals describe the overriding purpose of a program and are concise, general statements. For example:

Goal: Increase Milwaukee Public Schools students’ proficiency in mathematics.

Measurable Objectives

Measurable objectives, also referred to commonly as metrics or performance measures, should be relevant to the goals. These objectives are the intermediate steps, or milestones, that your program must achieve in order to meet your goal. Funders hold grant recipients accountable for performance, and measurable objectives are the indicators of performance. For example:

Measurable Objective: There will be a 5% reduction in the achievement gap between the actual performance and target performance of students at all grade levels from baseline, as measured by Spring MAP mathematics on-target percentages for each year.
Measurable objectives should be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic,** and **Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.).**

**Specific** - Objectives should say exactly what is to be measured and what the desired results will be. Objectives should be specific and the wording of each should include an action verb.

**Measurable** - Objectives must be measurable. In other words, there must be a way to determine whether they have been accomplished. Also, a baseline, or starting point, is necessary.

**Achievable** - The objective must be achievable (culturally, developmentally, socially, and linguistically) for the targeted population. Objectives should originate from the needs of the target population, and not from a preconceived agenda of the program planners. A solid needs assessment, with consideration of the targeted population, helps to ensure that objectives are appropriate.

**Realistic** - Objectives must be realistic. If objectives are set too high, evaluators may consider a program a failure, even if it improves outcomes, simply because the stated objectives were too ambitious. If objectives are set too low, an unimpressed funder may reject the application. Remember, the basis of objectives is on needs assessment data, and to help determine whether the program’s goals have been achieved.

**Time-bound** - A proposal should be clear about when a program will meet its objectives. For example: “Of the sixth graders with at least 80% program attendance, 80% will increase their school attendance rate by three percentage points from the October 2012 to May 2013.” A proposal that includes target dates helps when planning and evaluating the program.
BUDGET

The budget is often the first part of a proposal that funders look at, as it will give them a clear idea of the specific plans for spending grant funds. The budget should have a clear connection to strategies and activities contained in the work plan.

Base the budget on current fiscal year costs for salaries, travel, and indirect expenses, except when budgeting for multi-year grants, when you will need to calculate for increases.

Create a budget with a spreadsheet program like Excel. Excel will make it easier to organize, change, and calculate your budget.

Your narrative should address all expenses in your budget. A funder should be able to look at the narrative and the budget side by side and figure out how much the activities discussed in the budget narrative will cost. Funders do look at narratives and budgets together to ensure they match and are complete.

The budget you submit is not just numbers. It also details how you calculated those numbers and why your project needs those amounts.
Below is an example from a grant that awarded for funding. This is just a piece of a much larger budget document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supplies will be purchased to support the implementation of the project and will include instructional materials, promotional information, supplies, and resources for school-based team to support full implementation of the initiative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies: $300 * 4 school</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop for the liaisons to ensure effective communication, organization, and efficiency to oversee project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop: 1 laptop @ $500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chromebooks and keyboards for liaisons and each school-based lead (5 total) to ensure effective communication and organization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chromebooks: $400 * 5 people</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyboards: $75 * 5 people</td>
<td>$375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total Supplies</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,075</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Direct Costs**

**Indirect**

The restricted indirect cost rate is 5.75%. The letter confirming the cost rate agreement is dated May 9, 2013 and the rate will be in effect until a new letter is issued. Contracts are not included in the calculation for indirect costs.

Indirect 5.75% | $234

**Total Request**

| Grand Total | $4,309 |

Budgets divide into several categories. Some common ones are “salaries,” “fringe benefits,” “purchased services” (usually contracts), “travel,” “supplies,” and other expenses. Each section will include line items describing the amount needed and how you calculated the amount. You should read the RFP issued by the funder for specific budget requirements.

**OTHER TYPES OF APPLICATIONS**

The funder will specify the application requirements in the request for proposal. A funder may ask applicants to complete the Wisconsin Common Grant Application. A funder may also request a proposal letter instead of a full application, depending on the funder and the amount requested.

**PROPOSAL LETTERS**

Sometimes a letter is an appropriate format for a grant proposal. The letter should be no more than three pages and should:

- provide applicant data, such as school demographics, achievement data, and any other data that is relevant to the goals of the funder;
• describe the need for the project you are proposing;
• request the grant;
• explain what you will do with the requested resources;
• include appropriate budget data; and
• close with a strong concluding statement.

Be sure to attach any additional information required.

**SUBMITTING A GRANT PROPOSAL**

Grants Development will obtain any signatures, such as those of the Superintendent or School Board clerk, required by the funder. A grant proposal is ready to submit *only* after review by Grant Development and a member of the senior administrative team and it has obtained the required signature(s). Grant Development & Planning works with the grant team lead in order to coordinate the actual submission.

Get confirmation that the funder has received the application. If the proposal is submitted via UPS or the USPS, include a cover letter thanking the funder for considering your application. If it is submitted via email, include a similar message in the body of the email. You could also call the funder after you have submitted the proposal to say “Thank you” for considering the application.
IMPLEMENTATION

GRANT AWARD NOTIFICATION

After you receive notification that the grant has or has not received funding, follow up with a “Thank you” letter. You should maintain communication with the funder, whatever the fate of any particular grant application. If you get the funding, share the progress of your project with the funder. If you do not receive funding, maintaining communication can strengthen your chances of receiving funding in the future.

If you are awarded a grant, you must notify Grant Development & Planning with a copy of the award notification that you received from the funder.

PROGRAM AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

If successfully funded, the project lead and overseeing chief are responsible for program and fiscal oversight. Upon grant award, please ensure the appropriate individuals understand their responsibilities in carrying out the grant activities, budget reporting and programmatic reporting.

All grant awards are reported by the Division of Grant Development & Planning to the superintendent’s office as well as the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. IFAS is also used to document grant application and award activity.

DEVELOPMENT TIPS

Develop a team to assist in the grant-writing process. This team should brainstorm project ideas and seek funding sources collaboratively. Members of the team should also share in the tasks needed to complete the grant proposal. One member, for example, can be responsible for gathering data for the needs assessment, and another team member can locate research to support the project. One member of the team should take the lead of the overall application development and do the writing, in order to ensure that the different components connect and are cohesive.
Read the request for proposal, or RFP, very carefully. This document includes application requirements that you must meet when you develop your proposal. Reviewers will reject applications that do not meet all of the requirements. After you review the RFP, create a specification sheet, or “spec sheet,” in order to highlight the basic requirements of the proposal, including submission information (where and when you must submit the proposal), formatting information (margin, line spacing, and font requirements), and the required components. Some RFPs include information on the point values assigned to each of the required application sections. These values are important, and you should include them in the spec sheet. The assigned point values can give you an idea of what sections should be the strongest and longest. Overall, a spec sheet is a great way to review RFP requirements quickly, without you having to wade through the entire document repeatedly.

Create a “backwards calendar” in order to schedule and track grant tasks. Assign meeting dates and due dates for various required tasks and components, including:

- the executive summary;
- required signatures or letters of support;
- proposal drafts;
- the budget;
- supervisor reviews and approvals;
- submission to Grant Development & Planning; and
- submission to the funder.

Be sure to include any vacations or holidays, and schedule in days for unforeseen events. Be sure to schedule regular meetings with key individuals throughout the process to ensure that the grant writing team meets deadlines, and that the development process is proceeding as projected. This backwards calendar will be very helpful in ensuring that you submit your proposal on time.

Use at least one outside proofreader who was not involved in developing the grant. Provide this reader with a copy of the RFP and your proposal. An outside reader reviewing the proposal will help ensure that that you have communicated the proposal’s contents clearly.
Keep on file all documentation related to mailing and shipping the grant proposal. If you are submitting your proposal via UPS, make sure that you receive a tracking number and verify that the funder received the proposal. If you are hand delivering the proposal, bring a copy of the cover page and have the individual to whom you deliver the proposal sign it and record the date and time. If you are submitting the proposal via email, ask for an email confirming its receipt. Keep this documentation on file in case a question regarding submission comes up. Grant Development & Planning generally seeks and maintains the documentation records for grants it submits.

**WRITING TIPS**

**Be positive!** When you write your proposal, make sure you communicate in a positive way that the funds received from the granting agency will help you to reach your desired goals. When you describe the need for the project, do not portray such dire circumstances that it seems that even the largest amount of money will not fix the problem.

**Write your proposal in the more formal third person.** This means avoiding the use of “I,” “we,” and “you.” Make sure that you use the third-person voice consistently throughout the proposal.

**Limit or eliminate jargon.** Describe your project clearly and concisely. Avoid wordiness. For example, instead of using “utilize” in your proposal, simply use the word “use.”

**Use action verbs.** Avoid passive verbs (verbs in the past tense). This will make your proposal stronger and more positive.

**Use boldface for headers and subheadings.** Headers separate sections of the document and improve the organization of the proposal. Headers or subheadings in boldface stand out to the reader and make sections more recognizable.

**Use visuals such as tables, illustrations, and graphs, if they are allowed, to break up the text.** These visuals can be a good way to communicate an idea or data, and they will break up the monotony of reading for the reviewer. However, remember that visuals should always be clear and strengthen
your points. As you will often have limited space, you will want to focus closely on your proposal’s content.

**Focus on the document’s format.** Make the proposal look appealing by putting it together neatly. It should be easy to read and organized in an eye-pleasing way. A proposal that looks professional has a much higher chance of receiving funding than one that does not.

**Use grammar and spell check.** These functions on your computer may catch errors that you miss. However, do not rely solely on a computer to catch your errors. Review your proposal carefully and ask someone with “fresh eyes” – who has not been involved with developing the document – to do the same. Funders will not look favorably upon a proposal that has spelling and grammar errors.

**Do not wait until the final due date.** Get the proposal submitted early. Most grant proposals are due to Grant Development & Planning at least a week before the submission deadline.

### PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

**The Executive Summary/Introduction Section:**

- States clearly who is applying for the funds
- Describes the applicant and district
- Describes the purpose and goals of the program/project
- Describes the district’s student/staff population
- States what existing efforts relate to the proposed project, including any available results
- Leads to the needs assessment
- Is short and to the point, interesting and free of educational jargon
The Project Design Section:
- Includes logic model
- Describes the sequence of events that will occur under the grant
- Describes the staffing for the activities
- Describes the students/staff involved in the activities

The Evaluation Section:
- Presents the plan for measuring the success of the project
- Includes S.M.A.R.T. objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound)
- Gives a timeline for data collection and interpretation
- Indicates who will carry out the evaluation, and how and why they will fill that role
- States the criteria for success of the project
- Describes the data collection process
- Explains the tests and instruments chosen for the evaluation
- Explains evaluation reporting

The Needs Statement Section:
- Relates district goals directly to the goals of the granting agency
- Is reasonable and realistic
- Reflects the needs of the students/staff, not those of the person or team writing the application
- Doesn't make assumptions
- Makes a compelling argument
- Is short and to the point, interesting and free of educational jargon
The Budget Section:
- Provides details of the funding request and any funding by other entities
- Matches the program objectives and activities with the money to fund them
- Provides details of how line items were calculated and what factors were used to do so
- Lists fringe benefits separate from salaries
- Includes sufficient funding to pay for the tasks described the proposal

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Allowable Activities: a funder-provided list of activities allowed under the grant.

Authorized Signature: the signature of the officer or representative vested (explicitly, implicitly, or through conduct) with the powers to commit the authorizing organization to a binding agreement. For MPS, the superintendent’s signature is the only authorized signature.

Award Letter: the formal notification of a grant award specifying the project period and the funded amount. It may also specify other details or requirements of the grant.

Boilerplate: pre-written, “cut and paste” material, such as organization description, dissemination plan, management structure, and/or organizational chart that can be used in a number of grants.

Capital Request: a request to purchase, build or renovate a space or building or to acquire equipment. On the budget form, a capital object is characterized as an item that costs at least $5,000.
**Contract:** a formal agreement to pay a specified amount for work done by an outside provider. Contracts will be in the “contractual” or “purchased services” areas of the budget form.

**Cost Sharing:** a method of "matching money." The grantee agrees to invest "in-kind" or actual dollars into the project (see in-kind and matching funds).

**Fiscal Agent:** the agency responsible for overseeing financial aspects of the project.

**Funder:** individual or organization financing the grant.

**Grant:** an actual award of funds given to an agency.

**Grantee:** the agency or person that is to receive the grant.

**Guidelines:** directions for submitting a grant proposal. The directions may include what information applications must contain, how to prepare them, and how they will be evaluated.

**Indirect Costs:** general administrative/operation services that indirectly support program/project activities.

**In-Kind Support:** a contribution of equipment, materials, time or services that has a monetary value and that will help support the grant program or project.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** a review body that is established to protect the welfare of human subjects recruited to participate in biomedical or behavioral research.

**Letter of Intent:** a letter that the grant seeker sends before writing or submitting a grant proposal. A letter of intent usually outlines the projected plan in order to ensure the proposal will fit within the foundation's guidelines and mission. The Request for Proposals will say if a letter of intent is a requirement.

**Letter of Support:** a letter from a partnering organization or expert that supports the grant proposal. Letters of support often are attached as appendices to the grant proposal.
**Matching Funds**: a monetary contribution, made by an entity or person other than the grant funder, which will support the grant project.

**Narrative**: the main portion of the grant application. The narrative generally includes the introduction, needs statement, project description and evaluation section.

**Program**: an organized set of services designed to achieve specific outcomes for a specified population.

**Program Officer**: the funding agency staff member assigned to monitor the programmatic and fiscal aspects of the project.

**Project**: a planned undertaking or organized set of services designed to achieve specific outcomes.

**Project Director**: the district staff member who will be the project contact and have responsibility for the project’s management and operation.

**Proposal**: a written document describing a projected program or activity and requesting funding for its support.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**: a formal solicitation of proposals for new grant or contract opportunities. The RFP may include an application package/guidelines for submitting a proposal. A panel will review proposals in order to determine those that should receive funding.

**Review Criteria**: The specifications, or rubric, used to score grant proposals. Remember to always "write to the criteria" when developing a grant proposal. Review panel members will ALWAYS consider your application in terms of how well it addresses the specific points or questions in the guidelines.

**Review Panel**: a group of individuals who read grant applications and make funding (or non-funding) recommendations to the funding agency. Review panels typically have three members, each of whom reads multiple different proposals during the review process.

**Submittal Deadline**: the final date for proposal submission to the funding agency or to the post office for mailing (with date established by postmark,
so send your proposal by *certified mail* and get a dated receipt!). If you use FedEx or UPS, get a tracking number and keep a copy of the confirmation of receipt in a file with the copy of the grant.

**ASSISTANCE IN SEEKING AND SECURING GRANTS**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Division of Grant Development & Planning provides the following professional development opportunities:

- Face-to-face Basics of Grant Writing Workshop sessions, which provide introductory information regarding proposal development, budgeting, and locating funding (register through MPS Professional Development Assistant)
- A two-graduate-credit Basics of Grant Writing online course, for more in-depth study of grant writing (register through Viterbo)
- MPS On Demand presentations, which provide viewers with an overview of how to develop the various components of a proposal (viewable through mConnect)

**SEEKING GRANTS**

Please refer to the Division of Grant Development & Planning information on mConnect to sort through a database of over 200 Grant Opportunities. Sorting features include filters such as category, grant amount, funding type, match requirement, etc. Type “Grant Opportunities” in the search field on mConnect to explore opportunities that align with the needs and objectives of your project or school improvement plan.

District employee may also schedule time with division staff to explore funding opportunities through various online sites.
OTHER RESOURCES

The most up-to-date Division of Grant Development & Planning forms can be accessed in the “Important Forms” menu on the right side of the grants page within the Office of Innovation & Information. Please contact a member for the Division of Grant Development & Planning for guidance or support at grants@milwaukee.k12.wi.us or (414) 475-8260.

What Works Clearinghouse is a good resource for researching studies and practices that relate to education.
CONTACT US

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