

Let's Write Your Grant to Win You \$\$\$!

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The Grant-Writing Experience

Proposal writing is an exciting and rewarding experience, yet can be intimidating to a novice. Few people are professionally trained in grant writing; however, millions of dollars are awarded each year to non-profit organizations that rarely have the luxury of a professional grant writer. With a little determination and a clear vision, teachers can (and do) write successfully funded proposals.

It's best to start small with a manageable project, gain some experience in writing the proposal and managing the project, and then move on to bigger projects with larger budgets. With this in mind, this guide is intended for teachers and other interested individuals who want to learn how to write a proposal.

Grant money is available from a variety of organizations including state and federal government agencies, corporate donators, philanthropic organizations, and other donors. There are funds out there—that's why you hear so much about these opportunities. If you follow the step-by-step process outlined in this guide, you can create a winning proposal with a minimum of stress! Good luck!

Points to Remember

Stay Abreast of Your Field

Read the latest magazines and browse current websites on topics related to your project. Find out what others are doing in your field to find innovative project ideas. Cut out interesting articles and statistical information to save in a file for use in developing your proposal. You are not usually expected to conduct a research experiment in your project—however you are expected to show that you will apply the latest thinking about student learning in a meaningful way. You face competition for grant money so be sure to show you're a leader in your respective area.

Don't Be Modest

In order for others to believe that your idea is worth funding, you must believe this yourself and convey it with enthusiasm.

Do Your Homework

Research your audience. Find out what types of programs they've funded in the past to see if your project fits within their mission and funding priorities. A great place to look is in the organization's annual report to see what grants they've funded in the past. This is often available online or in your local library. Sometimes funders are willing to provide copies of their last year's winning grants which can serve as excellent models for your proposal.

The Grant-Writing Process

So what's involved in writing a grant? The process is fairly straightforward. First and foremost, be sure to inform major stakeholders in the school system about your intent to submit a grant and include them in the process. School systems are bound by significant administrative requirements so it's best to find these out up front. It's likely you'll be praised for seeking grant funds, but learn at the beginning the administrative hoops you'll need to jump through (such as obtaining necessary signatures, etc.). This will greatly simplify the process and potential headaches at a tight deadline!

Once you're ready to start the process, the following procedure is most common for educators in the K-12 system.

1. *Generate the initial idea.*
2. *Find out internal administrative requirements.*

Discuss with your principal to find out the necessary administrative details of submitting a grant through your school system.

 - *Find out the budget requirements of your school for grants. Are there any specific details that must be included in your budget?*
 - *Discuss with relevant teacher associations to find out if there are any contractual issues that must be addressed.*
3. *Present your ideas to the school community.*

Teacher meetings, PTA meetings, etc. are a great place to garner support for your project and possibly find ways to make it better.
4. *Research potential funders.*
 - *Compile a list of potential funders by researching on the Internet and looking in directories at your local library.*
 - *Revise your list by further investigating your potential funders and eliminating unlikely ones. Check out their annual reports to see what kinds of projects they've funded in the past to see if your project idea and budget are a good fit.*
 - *Refine your potential funding list for this project and file away those you won't be pursuing this time. You may want to use them again later for another project idea.*

5. *Request grant writing guidelines or request for proposals (RFPs) from potential funders.*

Most grant-giving organizations have specific guidelines for submitting a proposal. Request a copy of their guidelines by phone or see if it is available online. Are other teachers in your school or district applying for the same funds? Sometimes only one proposal is permitted per school system, so it may be best to coordinate efforts. Find out requirements for submission, paying special attention to:

- *Deadlines for submissions*
- *Number of copies requested*
- *Formatting requirements (number of pages, font size, page numbering, appendices, etc.)*

6. *Find out whether your potential funder accepts phone calls. If so, make a telephone call to your potential sponsor to discuss your project idea.*

Often times a funder will lend helpful advice about their grant-giving priorities. Also, they may remember your project idea at funding time which may give your project brownie points. Ask for copies of previously funded proposals, as some organizations will provide these to applicants. Use successfully funded proposals as a template to follow as you write your proposal.

7. *Draft your proposal.*
(See the steps outlined later in this guide.)

8. *Have someone unfamiliar with your project review your proposal.*

Ask your reviewer to look at the logic of your arguments and your grammar and word choices. See if he or she can explain your project's significance, problem, and how funding for your project will benefit your students. If this isn't clear at this stage, you need to revise to make the project's goals and outcomes explicit. A potential funder will be even less familiar with your project than your reviewer at this phase.

9. *Revise your proposal.*
After a few days of not working on your proposal, revisit it and revise as necessary. Incorporate necessary changes based on your reviewer's comments.

10. *Complete necessary paperwork by the potential funder.*

11. *Complete the necessary paperwork by your school system and obtain the necessary signatures.*

12. *Submit your final grant application!*

13. *Send copies of the grant application to your principal and other relevant stakeholders.*

Writing Tips

A winning proposal must be clearly written and convey the project's key points in an easy-to-grasp manner. Reviewers read many proposals and yours must stand out from the rest by being clearly formatted, easy to follow, and convey an exciting project. Keep these key points in mind:

Language Style

- *Be concise and to the point. Use simple sentence construction.*
- *Write in active voice. Communicate energy and enthusiasm for your project.*
- *Make your proposal exciting to read. It may be useful to tell a story with examples. Illuminate a vision so that a funder can share it with you but balance creative writing with specific details and realistic expectations.*
- *Write in a positive tone: We will....*
- *Don't use jargon.*
- *Define all acronyms.*

Formatting

- *Most importantly, follow your funder's guidelines: margins, spacing, type size, paper size, proposal length, inclusion/exclusion of appendices, etc. It may be useful to use the same headings as the evaluative criteria outlined in the guidelines for your proposal's sections.*
- *Address all criterions in the guidelines. Don't skip any. If one is not relevant, explain why.*
- *Number all pages, including appendices.*
- *Highlight key elements with bullets, italics, headings, subheadings, boldface type, colors, charts, etc.*
- *Type neatly and make the proposal look professional. Be sure to proofread for good grammar, correct spelling, and typos.*
- *Provide plenty of white space in your layout. Don't cram information to fit page requirement limitations or use a small font as this makes reading difficult.*

Supporting Information

- *Do not assume the reader is familiar with your subject and/or field. Provide relevant background information to make your case. Cite research reports that indicate your project idea builds on effective learning approaches.*
- *Provide evidence that preliminary work is being done and that your organization wants this project to happen. For instance, explain any surveys or meeting that have taken place that indicate the desire for your project.*
- *Do not exaggerate, manipulate statistics, or tell untruths. Always be factual.*
- *Document and support all statistics with references for sources.*
- *Do not include sweeping generalizations.*
- *Don't include needless arguments. For instance, there's no need to convince the foundation of a large telecommunications firm of the need for students to be computer literate.*

Canned Proposals

- *If appropriate, develop a generic proposal that you can submit to multiple funders.*
- *Then tailor the generic proposal to individual funders' guidelines. Tweak it to fit the interests of each specific funder.*

Blueprint for Success

This template includes all of the necessary steps to help you develop and write a successful grant proposal. By completing all of the necessary components of a well-thought out proposal, you'll be ready to add sufficient detail and submit your proposal to grant-giving organizations. We wish you success!

Formatting Your Proposal

The key pieces of a proposal are fairly standard for many grant-giving organizations. This is a great help as once you've got a completed proposal, you can use it as a template in future proposal efforts. A standard grant includes the following components, although any funder may have specific requirements for proposal formats that must be followed. Be sure to research requirements before submitting a proposal or risk having your proposal eliminated from the grant competition and not considered for funding.

The elements of a typical proposal include:

- *Cover letter*
- *Cover page*
- *Table of contents*
- *Executive summary*
- *Statement of need*
- *Project description including its goals, objectives, and planned activities*
- *Evaluation plan*
- *Dissemination methods*
- *Budget*
- *Appendices*
- *Required forms*

Each of these components is outlined on the following pages.

Cover Letter, Cover Page, and Table of Contents

Cover Letter

Include a one page cover letter on your school or school system's letterhead that provides an overview of your project, its anticipated outcomes, and how your project will further the grant maker's mission. Be sure to briefly explain benefits to the project recipients (usually your students).

Cover Letter Template

Date

Name

Title

Organization

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Name:

The (NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL) seeks support of \$XX,XXX from the ABC/XYZ Foundation for project support of (INSERT PROJECT NAME). We believe this project is very much aligned with ABD/XYZ goals in (field of interest, other funded projects or guideline statement).

Our school, established in 19XX, serves the (geographical) community. INSERT INFO ON YOUR SCHOOL. Recently we were honored by (description) for (accomplishment). (Insert one or two other accomplishments of school.)

The enclosed full proposal describes the (need for the project) and the distinctive way our school seeks to fill that need.

Thank you for encouraging us to submit this proposal. I would be pleased to provide other information in writing or in person at your convenience. Please do not contact me at INSERT PHONE NUMBER and/or EMAIL if

you have any questions. I understand that this proposal will be considered on (date) and we will call you a few days later to learn the outcome.

Sincerely,

(sign)

Your Name

Your Title

Your Full Phone Number

Cover Page

The proposal should include a title page that provides contact information for the primary author. Title selection should state a benefit that indicates an active approach to benefiting students. (For example: "Improving Student Achievement through Online Collaborative Learning.")

Table of Contents

Be sure to include a table of contents to facilitate navigation through your proposal. It is also imperative that pages are numbered for paper-based proposals. (As more proposals are submitted via forms on websites, page numbers are obviously irrelevant.)

Executive Summary

A one-page executive summary provides a summary of your entire proposal including the need statement, solution, funding required, and a brief description of your school. It is generally easiest to write the executive summary after you've written the rest of the proposal.

- *The need statement should be a brief statement of the problem your school has recognized and is prepared to address.*
- *The solution should be a short description of the project, including what will take place, how many people will benefit from the program, how and where it will operate, for how long, and who will staff it.*
- *The funding requirement should state the amount of grant money required for the project.*
- *The description of your school should be a brief statement of your school including demographics of the student body, location, and other related information.*

Since the executive summary is the first part of your proposal that reviewers will read, it is likely the most important. Pay special attention to its wording and emphasize main points.

Write Your Executive Summary

Include a need statement, project solution, funding requirement, and description of your school.

Executive Summary Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The executive summary:</i>	Yes	No	Rating (1-5)
1. Briefly and concisely captures the important facts included in the need statement, project description, budget request, and description of school.			
2. Identifies the grant applicant. Names the contact person, address, telephone number, and email address.			
3. Includes at least one sentence on the applicant's qualifications for funding.			
4. Describes the specific educational goal that is a funding priority for the granting agency.			
5. Describes briefly the methods to be used to address an educational goal.			
6. Includes at least one sentence on objectives.			
7. Includes at least one sentence on evaluation.			
8. Includes total cost, funds already obtained, and amount requested in this proposal.			
9. Is brief, at most, one single-spaced page.			
10. Is the best-written piece of the proposal; is clear and interesting.			

Statement of Need

The statement of need should explain to the reviewer why your project is necessary. It shouldn't be so dismal, however, that you leave the reader with no hope that your problem can be solved!

Developing Your Need Statement

Every successful proposal is based on a clearly thought out plan that is explicit about why the project is needed, why it will work, and ways to know it was effective in meeting its goals. It is imperative that you are clear about these pieces of your project or you won't be able to clearly articulate them in a proposal.

To refine your need statement, first state your need, ask why, and then restate your need until you reach your primary need. Your need statement probably should not include a thing. If it does, it probably needs further revision. For example:

<i>State your need:</i>	<i>Students need Internet access.</i>
<i>Ask why and refine:</i>	<i>Students need Internet access because they need to learn how to use the Internet.</i>
<i>Ask why and refine:</i>	<i>Students need to be able to use Internet tools.</i>
<i>Ask why and refine:</i>	<i>Students need to be able to compete and live in the digital era.</i>

A common error is to confuse a solution with a need. For instance, simply saying that students need Internet access does not address the real need of information literacy skills. Internet access is only the tool to gain these skills, not the real need.

Sample Need Statement

High school students need to be able to compete and live in the digital era by gaining information literacy skills.

Include Supporting Information

What is the problem that your project will address? Key elements of your need statement should include who has the need and what need they have. Often it is useful to cite statistics such as declining standardized test scores for students, etc. but be sure to reference the source for your data. Your need statement will serve as the foundation for your entire proposal. It may be useful to include some background information before directly stating your need.

Sample Need Background Information

Upon graduation, today's high school students face a world that requires them to be fluent in the tools of the new Information Age economy. They need to know how to effectively use information and communication technologies such as the Internet in their lives as college students, Information Age workers, and citizens in the digital government environment. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that by 2005, 75 percent of all government transactions with citizens will take place electronically. We must provide our students with the skills to compete and live as active participants in the digital era.

Locating Supporting Statistical Information

Many types of supporting information are useful to include in the need background information section of your proposal. Possible statistics to include are:

Community data:

- *Illiteracy rates*
- *Births to single mothers*
- *Race/ethnicity*
- *Health statistics*
- *Unemployment rates*
- *Incomes*
- *Education levels*
- *Crime statistics*
- *Drug abuse statistics*
- *Others...*

School data:

- *Grade failure rates*
- *Poverty rates (can use Free/Reduced Lunch statistics from GA Dept of Ed School Report Card)*
- *English to Speakers of Other Language statistics*
- *Scores on standardized tests*
- *Drop out rates*

Where can you find supporting information and statistics? A variety of sources offer valuable resources. For example:

- *Georgia Department of Education website (<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>)*
- *Georgia School Report Cards (<http://accountability.doe.k12.ga.us/report2000>)*
- *U.S. Census Bureau website (<http://www.census.gov>)*
- *Community websites such as Chambers of Commerce, tourism boards, county and city websites, etc.*
- *Professional publications*
- *Newspaper articles (great for background information on issues facing schools as well as compiled statistics)*
- *Others...*

Don't forget to include the reference for your supporting information in your proposal, especially for statistics!

Write Your Need Statement

Ask, "What problem is being solved?"

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Statement of Need Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The statement of need:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rating (1-5)</i>
<i>1. Describes the problem or need that relates to the interests and priorities of the funding agency and is also consistent with district and school educational goals and priorities.</i>			
<i>2. Describes a problem or need that exists elsewhere, and the proposed solution could be replicated elsewhere.</i>			
<i>3. Describes a problem or need that is of reasonable dimensions and solvable with a reasonable amount of time and money.</i>			
<i>4. Describes a problem or need that is supported by statistical evidence: test scores, census data, research results, etc. (If any of the evidence is extensive, refer to it in this section, but place the data in the appendix.)</i>			
<i>5. Describes a problem or need that is supported by authorities.</i>			
<i>6. Makes no unsupported assumptions.</i>			
<i>7. Is free of jargon.</i>			
<i>8. Makes a compelling case.</i>			

Project Description

The project description includes the nuts and bolts section of how your project will be implemented and is the substance of your proposal. You should clearly identify the central thought in your proposal so that all of your subsequent points should flow from it easily. It is generally useful to outline what you want to say in the project description section. Outlines usually make writing much easier for you and subsequently make it easier for the reader to follow your logic.

The project description should include sections on your project's goals, objectives, and activities.

Explain the Goals

The goals of your project should be to address your need statement. For instance, the earlier example's needs statement says that high school students need to be able to compete and live in the digital era by gaining information literacy skills. The goals of a proposed project should be to address this need by providing students with information literacy skills.

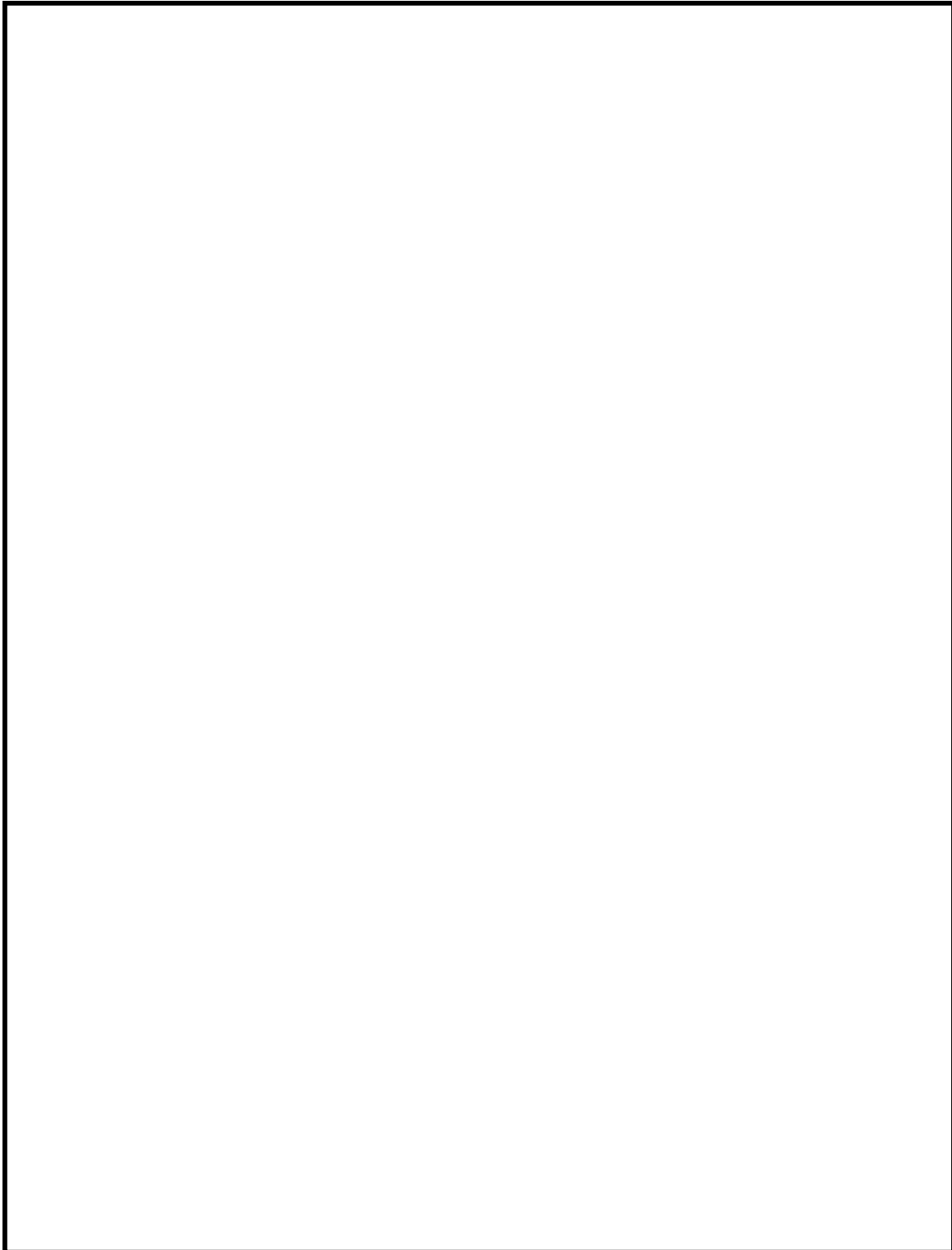
Sample Goal Statement

All 10th grade students will demonstrate information literacy skills by

- Developing Internet search skills*
- Assessing Internet search results*
- Designing information for digital formats*

Write Your "Goal Statement"

Rewrite your need statement as outcome statements.

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Describe the Objectives

Once you've established the goals of your project, the objectives should be ways of meeting them. Objectives generally can be used as headings for your activities section, so that you can show how your activities will fit the objectives, which in turn meet your goals, which then address your need statement.

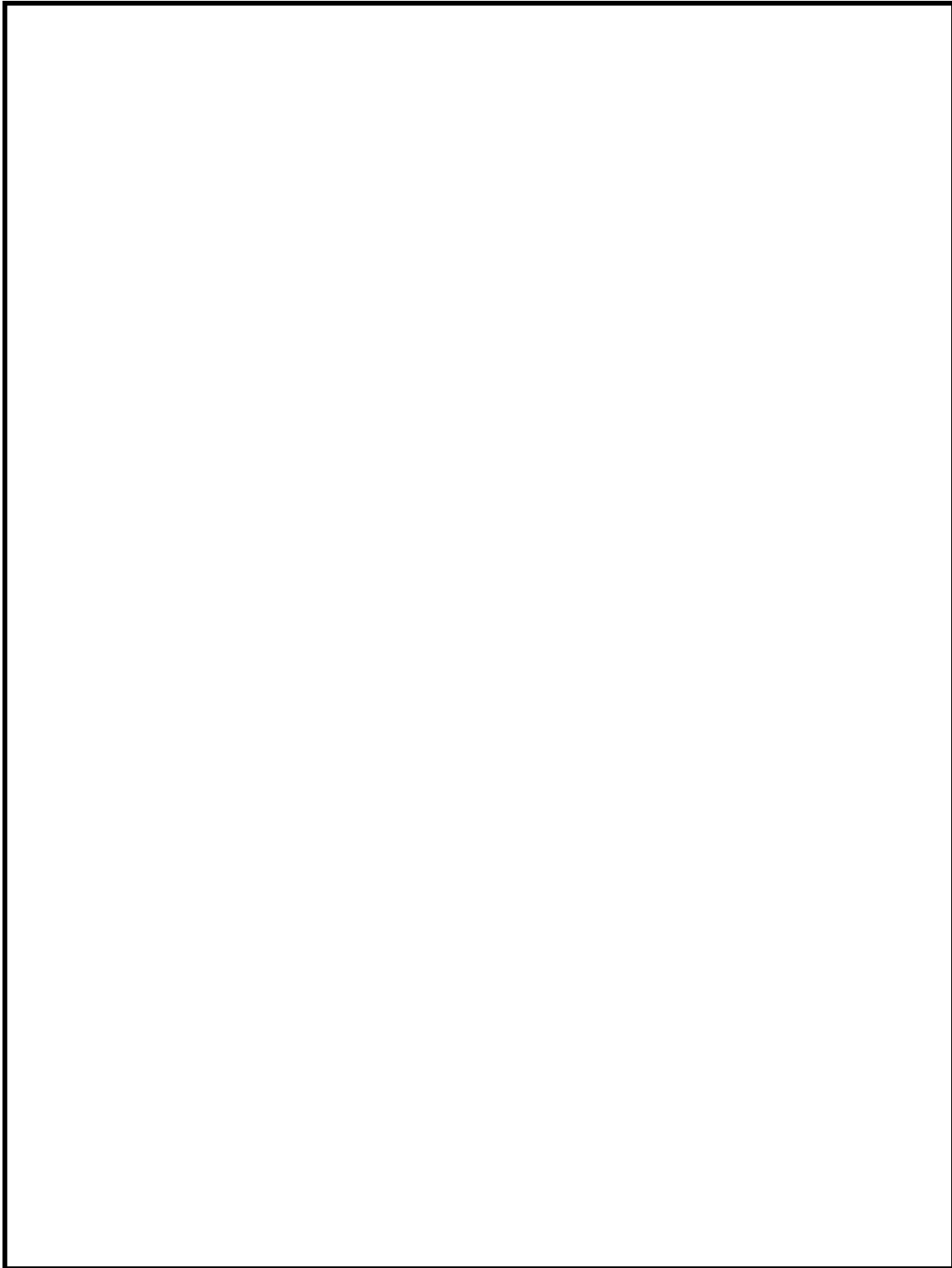
Sample objectives

- *120 10th grade students will learn how to access the Internet and develop search strategies for locating pertinent information*
- *120 10th grade students will learn how to navigate the vast array of websites to find specific information*
- *120 10th grade students will learn how to design a webpage, including incorporating graphics, links, and clickable images.*

Because a critical piece of your proposal is your evaluation, you should plan for the evaluation at an early phase. In defining your objectives, be sure your objectives can be explained in terms of measurable outcomes.

State the Objectives for Each Goal

Each goal becomes an objective.

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Objectives Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The objectives:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rating (1-5)</i>
<i>1. Comprises at least one objective for each goal.</i>			
<i>2. Are concise, specific statements of measurable program outcomes that can be independently verified through a proper evaluation.</i>			
<i>3. Address the products or outcomes that will be realized through program activities.</i>			
<i>4. Address the process through which proposal activities will flow.</i>			
<i>5. Describe the population, and state the number that will benefit.</i>			
<i>6. Are reasonable, able to be measured without intrusive techniques, and are within the school's capabilities.</i>			
<i>7. Is free of jargon.</i>			
<i>8. Are interesting to read.</i>			

List the Activities

The activity section should provide a detailed description of what will occur and when, with activities presented in chronological order. Depending on the format, each activity can be described within a timeline. It is possible that one activity will support more than one objective. Activities should be organized to build on prior skills and knowledge. It may be useful to include a table that provides scheduling information for each activity and to show how the activities build on each other and help meet the project's objectives.

If multiple people or organizations are involved in the project, it may be useful to include a breakdown in this section of who is responsible for each activity. This shows that partnerships are clearly thought out and that each contributor to the project realizes their level of commitment. It is also useful to include stakeholders through an advisory or planning committee for the project. One of your first activities could be to hold a "kick-off" meeting with this committee.

Funders generally look very favorably on partnerships with outside organizations, especially if the outside contributor brings resources and expertise to the table. If partners are involved, include letters of support from each of the organizations that shows their commitment and level of involvement including the value of their contributions, if relevant.

Sample activities

Objective:

120 10th grade students will learn how to access the Internet and develop search strategies for locating pertinent information.

Activities:

February: Students will learn how to log onto the Internet. Students will learn how to navigate across the Internet to access information about their local Congressional representatives.

March: Students will conduct research online about key issues affecting their community and will use the Internet to locate email addresses for their Congressional representatives. Students will draft and email comments on issues facing their community to their Congressional representatives.

List the Activities for Each Objective

Provide activities for each objective. Include a timeline and assignment of responsibility if partners are involved.

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Activities Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The activities:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rating (1-5)</i>
<i>1. Describe the step-by-step sequence of activities conducted to achieve the program objectives.</i>			
<i>2. Is the longest and the most carefully developed section of the proposal.</i>			
<i>3. Presents a reasonable scope of activities that can be conducted within the time and resources of the project.</i>			
<i>4. Flows naturally from statement of need.</i>			
<i>5. Describes the program activities clearly.</i>			
<i>6. Outlines start-up and wind-down activities.</i>			
<i>7. Provides a schedule that includes anticipated dates.</i>			
<i>8. Gives a brief justification for selection of activities, dates, and instructional resources.</i>			
<i>9. Describes who is responsible for each activity.</i>			

Putting the Pieces Together

Your project's statement of need, goals, objectives, and activities should flow naturally from a high-level need statement down to the nitty-gritty on project activities. Each step should follow logically. For example, the example used throughout this guide is shown here:

Need Statement

Ask, "What problem is being solved?"

High school students need to be able to compete and live in the digital era by gaining information literacy skills.

Goal Statement

Rewrite your need statement as outcome statements.

All 10th grade students will demonstrate information literacy skills by

- Developing Internet search skills*
- Assessing Internet search results*
- Designing information for digital formats*

Objectives

Each goal becomes an objective.

- 120 10th grade students will learn how to access the Internet and develop search strategies for locating pertinent information.*
- 120 10th grade students will learn how to navigate the vast array of websites to find specific information.*
- 120 10th grade students will learn how to design a webpage, including incorporating graphics, links, and clickable images.*

Activities

Provide activities for each objective.

(Objective 1: 120 10th grade students will learn how to access the Internet and develop search strategies for locating pertinent information.)

February: Students will learn how to log onto the Internet. Students will learn how to navigate across the Internet to access information about their local Congressional representatives.

March: Students will conduct research online about key issues affecting their community and will use the Internet to locate email addresses for their Congressional representatives. Students will draft and email comments on issues facing their community to their Congressional representatives.

Evaluation

The evaluation should be clearly built into the project around the project's goals and anticipated outcomes. It shows you take your objectives seriously and want to know how well you achieved them. Your evaluation should begin with a statement about who will conduct the evaluation.

There are two modes of evaluation: formative and summative.

Formative

Formative evaluations provide data during the course of the project that can be used to improve the design of the project while it is ongoing. This is the more accepted mode of evaluation. Methods include:

- *Attitude surveys about the project*
- *Real-time feedback data collected from class discussions*
- *Review of audio and video tapes of learning activities*

Sample Formative Evaluation

All students participating in the project will be asked to maintain a Congressional Representation Log that includes notations about their Congressional Representatives and relevant community issues. Each day, teachers will sample 5-10 logs to track the quality of student writing and the quality of the information recorded. This sampling will provide ongoing feedback to the project team that will lead them to make adjustments in the design of the project.

Summative

Summative evaluations measure how well the goals of the project were achieved and is typically administered at the end of the project. Methods include:

- *Standardized tests in subject areas such as math, reading, and writing*
- *Portfolio assessments of student performance*
- *Attainment of benchmarks such as attendance rates*

Sample Summative Evaluation

All students participate in a variety of evaluation activities including: creating portfolios, standard national testing assessments, and authentic presentations. The project will be able to describe how the innovation impacts current information literacy skills where there are no nationally validated measures.

- *All students will develop a Congressional portfolio including information that they have captured on the Internet, CD-ROM, and their own writing. The Portfolio Assessment Tool will be used to describe the quality of their work.*
- *All students will work in teams to design a webpage that will be reviewed by students, parents, and community members.*

Each objective will usually have more than one method of evaluation. A useful graphic to include in your proposal is a table that includes the following three columns for the evaluation:

Sample Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Question

Are students collecting quality information about their Congressional Representatives from the Internet?

Information Needed

Samples of student-collected information via the Internet

Data Collection Methods

Teacher observation

Student Congressional Representative Logs

Free Evaluation Guide for Ed Tech Projects

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdTechGuide/>

The United States Department of Education produced a valuable handbook "An Educator's Guide to Evaluating the Use of Technology in Schools and Classrooms" in 1998 for evaluating the use of technology in education. This is useful as a guide when preparing proposals. Contact their website at <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdTechGuide/> for more information on this guide and to download it for free. You may also contact the department for a paper copy to be mailed to you.

Prepare Your Evaluation Plan

Include a table with three columns: 1) evaluation questions; 2) information needed; and 3) data collection methods.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Info Needed</u>	<u>Method</u>
------------------	--------------------	---------------

Evaluation Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The evaluation plan:</i>	Yes	No	Rating (1-5)
1. Presents a plan for evaluating and modifying methods over the course of the program (formative).			
2. Clearly explains who is responsible for conducting the evaluation.			
3. Evaluation measures clearly correspond with the objectives.			
4. Presents a plan for evaluating how effective the program was in achieving its objectives.			
5. States criteria of success in clear, succinct language.			
6. Describes how the data will be collected from staff and students, e.g., observation, testing, interviews.			
7. Explains in simple, clear language the test instruments, survey forms, and data collection instruments.			
8. Includes a variety of methods for evaluating the project's impacts.			
9. Describes the process of data analysis.			

Dissemination Plan

Most funders want to know how their contribution to your project can be widely publicized so that other school communities can benefit as well. It is important to clearly detail a dissemination plan that will provide for other communities to learn from your project and possibly replicate its successes.

You should clearly indicate a willingness to share your project's information with other organizations. Inexpensive manners to publicize to a wide audience include postings on websites, electronic bulletin boards, listservs, school newsletters, etc. If funds are available (or can be built into your proposal's budget for travel), you may want to consider making presentations at local, regional, or national conferences to reach a targeted audience. If travel is an option, be sure to indicate specific details in your proposal's budget.

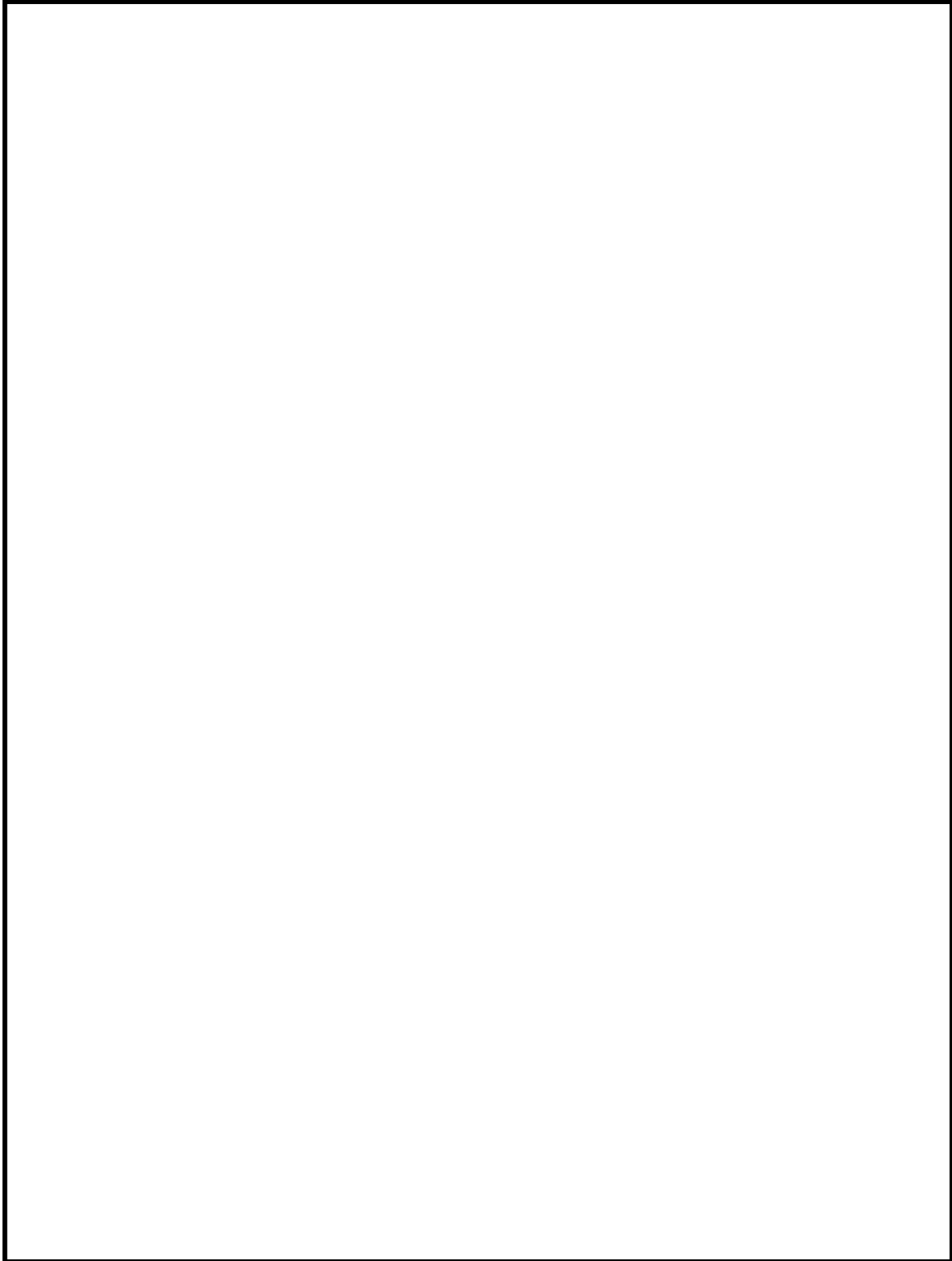
Sample Dissemination Plan

Project efforts, activities, models, findings and accomplishments will be well promoted by using multiple dissemination and outreach facilities:

- Project website: Student-developed websites will be catalogued on a project website linked from the school's home page. The website will be accessible to the school community and larger Internet community.*
- Teacher meetings: The lead teacher for this project will promote the project to other teachers in the school through teacher meetings and offer assistance to other teachers wishing to conduct similar projects.*
- School newsletter: Best samples of student work from the project will be profiled in the school newsletter.*
- PTA meetings: Students will be invited to present their final websites to the Parent-Teacher Association meeting in June.*

Explain Your Dissemination Plan

Show how your project results will be disseminated.

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Budget

The budget section includes the financial description of your project plus any explanatory notes. A good budget should be consistent, clear, cost-effective, and within the budget constraints of your potential funder. In an ideal world, funders would not place budget limits on innovative project ideas. However, this is not the case so the usual approach for many grant writers is to find out how much a potential funder is willing to spend on any one project, and then work within those budget constraints.

There are three types of budget information:

Requested Funds

This is the amount of funds you are requesting from your potential funder.

In-Kind Funds

These are funds that the requesting organization will commit to the project. For instance, your school may commit some ongoing expenses such as a percentage of teachers' and staffs' salaries to your project. Or funds can be a one-time expense item such as a computer, phone line, or supplies. As a general rule, it is highly advisable to include some in-kind contributions from your school system.

Matching Funds

Matching funds include monies that other funders have made as an investment in your project. They can include monies from another grant or contributions from a corporation.

Include both a budget table and a budget narrative with your proposal. In the table, present budget in a columnar format that explains whether the funds are requested, provided in-kind, or matching; the quantity of the requested item; the item; the unit price; and cost. Also include a short budget narrative that describe how the expenses support the project. What may seem obvious to you when you read your budget table may not be clear at all to your proposal reviewer. Be sure your budget numbers add up and document local matching money and in-kind contributions in the letters of support included in the appendices.

*Sample Budget Table**PROJECT BUDGET TOTAL: \$18,620**Requested: \$1,250*

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Cost</i>
10	Reference CD	\$45	\$450
10	HTML Software	\$50	\$500
3	Scanner	\$100	\$300

In-Kind: \$14,370

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Cost</i>
3	12% Teachers Time	\$3,790	\$11,370
1	Internet Web Server	\$3,000	\$3,000

Matching: \$3,000

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Unit Price</i>	<i>Cost</i>
3	Internet Training	\$1,000	\$3,000

Sample Budget Narrative

Requested: \$1,250

The requested section of the budget will provide 86 10th grade students with access to reference software and the tools to design webpages. The reference CD and HTML software will be loaded on computers located in each of three classrooms and linked together across the network to the Internet server which will host student webpages.

In-Kind: \$14,370

In-kind funds will provide for curriculum development for the three teachers involved in this project. Additionally, the school is providing an Internet web server for this project.

Matching: \$3,000

Matching funds will be provided by the Georgia State Department of Education to provide advanced Internet training for the teachers in this project to learn how to develop webpages.

Notes to remember about your budget:

- Work with your school's business department to find if you need to include salaries and other related finances such as health benefits and employment insurance.*
- Set up a separate account for your project separate from the school's operating budget. This will help avoid confusion about spending.*
- Do not hesitate to renegotiate your budget with your funder after you receive the grant. Equipment may have become less expensive, or your project may have changed in some other way. Funders are usually understandable about these circumstances and will allow you some flexibility in your project's spending.*

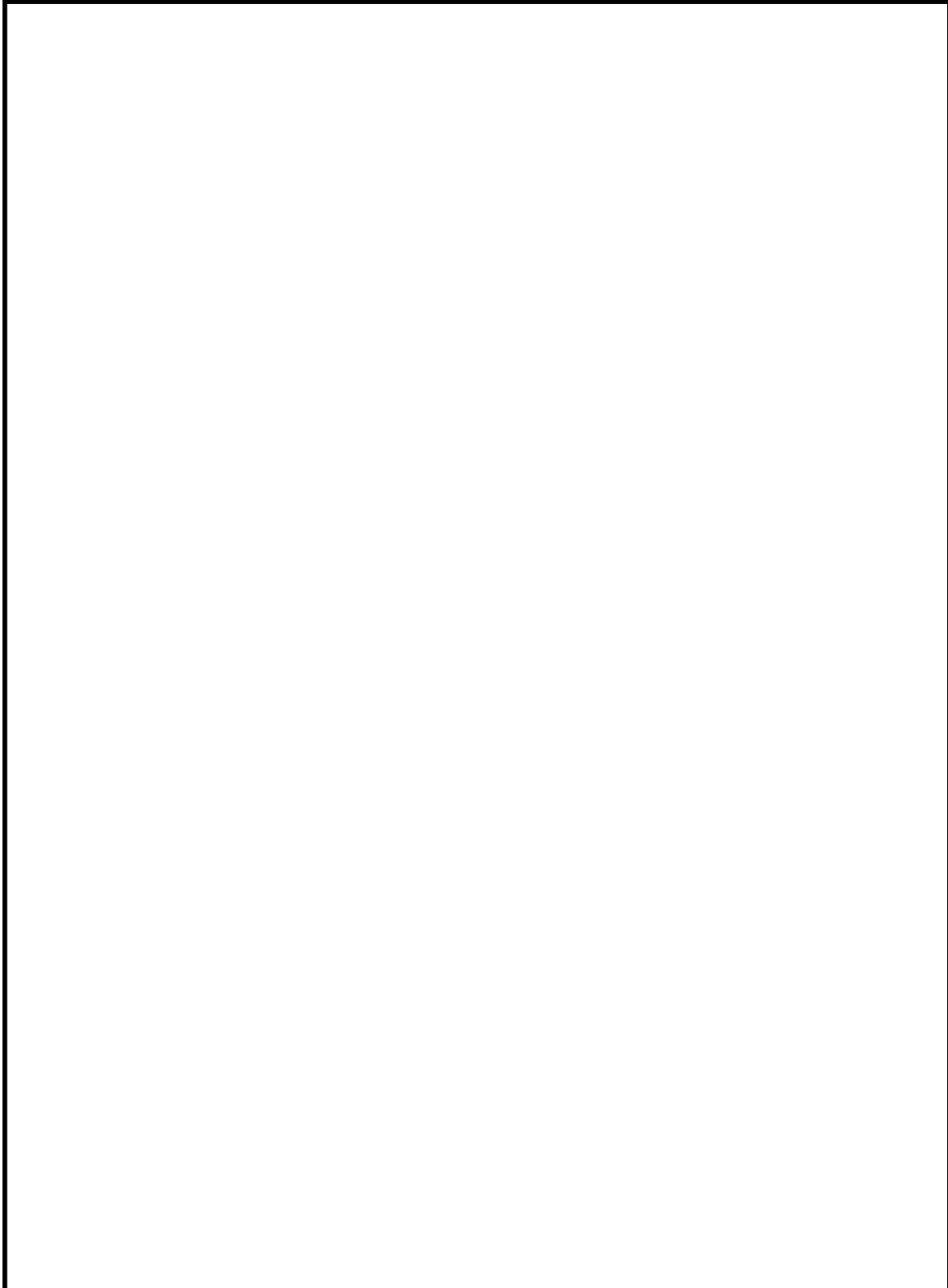
Prepare Your Budget Table

Include a budget table in columnar format for requested, in-kind, and matching funds.

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Prepare Your Budget Narrative

Explain how budget funds will be used.

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Budget Checklist

Check Yes or No, for each checklist item, and indicate a numerical rating for each item in the space provided, using the scale below.

Poor (1-2)

Average (3-4)

Excellent (5)

<i>The budget:</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Rating (1-5)</i>
<i>1. Follows the format suggested by the funding source and includes all items requested by the funding source.</i>			
<i>2. Contains only items directly related to the proposal objectives.</i>			
<i>3. Includes all personnel mentioned in the activities plan.</i>			
<i>4. Contains no unexplained amounts (miscellaneous).</i>			
<i>5. Takes into account inflation and the long proposal submission process.</i>			
<i>6. Includes all in-kind contributions and all items paid for by other sources.</i>			
<i>7. Includes all volunteers.</i>			
<i>8. Includes salaries that are estimated at the midrange for new positions.</i>			
<i>9. Includes costs not prohibited by the funder.</i>			

Appendices

Appendices can be used to include more detailed information about your project such as evaluation instruments, letters of commitment/support from all partners identified in the proposal, and if permitted, up-to-date resumes or biosketches of key personnel. Be sure to clearly label all appendices and reference them in the body of your proposal.

Hint: If letters of support are included, it is often very useful to draft letters for outside organizations.

Sample Letter of Support

October 16, 2000

*100 Black Men of America National Office
141 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30303*

Dear Ms. Bohannon and Mr. Fikes:

The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) is delighted to support the DeKalb County School System's proposal to extend the reach of its PC Academy program. GTRI, as the applied research arm of the Georgia Institute of Technology, plans and conducts focused programs of innovative research and development, education, and economic development. Researchers within GTRI and many Georgia Tech student volunteers have partnered with the DeKalb County School System on numerous previous technology-related projects and have found the DeKalb County School System to be one of the most innovative and forward-thinking public school districts in terms of meaningful technology use for its student body and greater community.

GTRI's mission includes the support of education and economic development initiatives such as DeKalb's PC Academy. The program's clear focus and successful demonstration of bridging the digital divide both in terms of technology access and know-how has generated enthusiasm by research scientists and engineers within GTRI. We are eager to be a part of the collaboration that addresses the digital divide in such an effective manner. The Georgia Tech Research Institute is committed to seeing that this innovative program is a success! To this end

we will be contributing technical assistance, tailored training opportunities, mentors, and intern positions within the Georgia Tech Research Institute during the time period of this grant.

We look forward to hearing that DeKalb's application to extend and expand this innovative program has been awarded one of the "Addressing the Digital Divide" grants! We further believe that this project could serve as a model for other school systems around the country. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at (404) 894-8445 or by email at dara.oneil@gtri.gatech.edu.

Sincerely,

*Dara V. O'Neil
Research Associate*

Pulling It All Together

Proposal Elements

If you've completed each of the previous sections, you now have all of the necessary pieces to construct a full proposal. As a reminder, the elements of a typical proposal include:

- *Cover letter*
- *Cover page*
- *Table of contents*
- *Executive summary*
- *Statement of need*
- *Project description including its goals, objectives, and planned activities*
- *Evaluation plan*
- *Dissemination methods*
- *Budget*
- *Appendices*
- *Required forms*

Template Completion

Add sufficient detail to each of the required sections, pay attention to grant guidelines, and submit! Congratulations!

Once a Funding Announcement is Made

If Funded!

Follow-up is critical to have a true partnership. Most funders want to feel involved in your project. Send a thank-you letter to your funder. Announce your project to others and celebrate a job well done!

But don't stop there... Use your proposal as a reference for future proposals. Learn from your successes. Develop and continue to refine a template from your winning grant proposals.

If Not so Lucky: Be Positive About Rejection

Don't be blue! Even if your proposal is not funded, learn from your experience. Sometimes it takes several attempts at myriad funding organizations until a great project idea receives funding. Ask for your reviewers' comments on your proposal and change your proposal as necessary. You may be able to resubmit it to the same funder, or look for more appropriate sources. It's likely that in the process of writing the grant, you've increased enthusiasm for your project in your local school and community, which may result in funding and support from alternate sources.

Reporting Requirements

Many times, funders will have formal reporting requirements for grant recipients. As can be expected, they would like a record and some form of accountability for their donations to your project. They will usually provide you with a detailed account of their requirements for grant recipients at award time, but if only a generic final report is requested, you should include, at a minimum:

- *Project Summary: Explain your project and what took place with the funder's financial contribution.*
- *Outcomes: Summarize your achievements. Have there been any unanticipated outcomes? What did you learn from this project?*
- *Implementation: Describe the activities that took place. If some proposed activities did not occur, explain why. Did any problems arise? If so, how did you handle them? Describe any new or unanticipated activities that took place and any other pertinent information.*
- *Dissemination: How did you disseminate news about your project to others? Did your project receive interest from your school community or the local press? Do you have photos that you could include of students active in the project? (Funders love photos of their dollars at work! Put that digital camera to work and include digital photos in your final report.)*
- *Future Plans: Has the project become self-sustaining? Explain your future plans for its continuation.*
- *Project Replication: Describe how others can replicate your project in other communities. What lessons did you learn that would be valuable for others implementing your project idea?*

Concluding Remarks

Be sure to read those guidelines carefully! You don't want your hard efforts going to waste because you didn't include the correct numbers of copies or requested a budget outside the funding limitations of your potential sponsor.

Also be sure to include and sign all the necessary paperwork. Because a superintendent's or school board signature may be required, get started early! By working with the support of your principal, he or she may be able to grease the skids for you to gather required signatures.

Good luck on your proposal efforts! Working on a proposal with a colleague may help you get the first one done (which is often the most difficult because of the learning process involved) but once you've got that first one out the door, you can use pieces from it for your next one. It gets easier each time!