



The Other Side of the Table: Grants from a Reviewer Perspective

Rosalie J. Mangino-Crandall
Insight Grants Development, LLC
Grants Consultant, President/CEO



Agenda

- Most Important Thing to Know About Grants...
- Overview of the Review Process
- Notes for Success: Writing to Your Reviewers
- Writing for ED Common Selection Criteria
- Top Tips for Winning Grants
- Where to Find Grants: Resources
- Insight Contact Information

Overview of Insight



About Insight What We Do

- *Proven Grant Professionals!*
 - *Grant research and analysis*
 - *Grant writing*
 - *Grant editing*
 - *Grant publications*
 - *Grant education and seminars*



About Insight Background Experience

- Our executive management team has experience working with the public and private sectors, including but not limited to experience in teaching (K12), after school programs and camps for at-risk youth, and publishing
- One-third of our team members have grant reviewer experience!
 - We've reviewed for at least **14** different grant programs, including at least **10** federal grant programs
 - I have reviewed for 3 US ED programs:
 - ED Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress (PEP)
 - ED Improving Literacy through School Libraries (LSL)
 - ED Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM)



About Insight Our Track Record

- Rosalie Mangino-Crandall's "stats":
 - Has served as the lead writer for 12 and editor for at least 23 winning PEP grants
 - Raised well over \$17 Million through PEP between 2003 and 2009— including \$7.2 Million in 2009 alone
 - Wrote \$18 Million in winning PE, physical activity, nutrition, health and safety grants in 2008 alone—Insight brought in more than \$22 Million in 2008



The Most Important Things to Know About Grants...



THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO KNOW: The Purpose of Grants

- *Grants exist to solve social problems at the state or local level.*
 - For 99 grant applications out of 100, your vision is for you and your team—not the funder. The funder wants to know what the problem is and how you're going to solve it.



More About the Purpose of Grants ...

- After recognizing the general purpose of grants, recognize the specific purpose of the program you're looking to apply to.

Overview of the Review Process



How it Happens

- US ED:
 1. ED Program Manager/Program Team: Determine eligibility
 2. Review Panel: Award points
 3. ED Program Manager/Program Team: Develop the slate
 4. ED Budget Team: Scrutinize budget request and match for potential winners
 5. ED Program Team: May ask follow up questions
 6. ED Program Team: Start making awards, break ties as necessary



Where it Happens

- US ED: Virtually/anywhere
 - Conference calls
 - E-reader system
 - Emails
- US DHHS: Washington, DC or surrounding areas

Who is Involved

- US ED: panel of 3
 - Panel monitor may or may not be involved in calls
- US DHHS: panel of 3 or 4
 - Panel monitor is present

When it Happens

- US ED: over one to three weeks in the months following the competition
 - Rounds
 - Work completed during that period on own time
- US DHHS: over 3 days to 5 days in the months following the competition
 - Work completed during that period during reading time

Life of an ED Reviewer

- Imagine yourself and your own schedule—then add reviewing
- Often working late at night
- Much to read and create written responses for—little time
- Typically reading 10-20 proposals
 - Things start running together!

About the Points...

- Scoring by Selection Criteria
- US ED: allowed to differ by up to 20 points
- US DHHS: usually only allowed to differ by 5 points across the board—sometimes 3 points per section and 12 points across the board
- What happens at the table...
 - ED does not correct or adjust scores
 - DHHS does in some cases

Notes for Success: Writing to Your Reviewers



DON'T...

- *Don't* try to "be creative."
- *Don't* believe that grant writing is about story telling.
- *Don't* write sentences that seem to sound good on the initial read but don't actually mean anything.
- *Don't* make unsupported statements.




DON'T...

- *Don't* be vague.
- *Don't* get "chatty."
- *Don't* feel you can give "too much" information.
- *Don't* use jargon or unexplained field-specific terms!



DO...


- *Do* make it easy for your reviewers to follow and understand your proposal!
- *Do* organize your narrative according to selection criteria!
- *Do* think of grant writing like research or thesis paper writing.
- *Do* support all assertions.
- *Do* write clear, effective sentences that offer detail!
- *Do* draw every conclusion for the reader.



DO...


- Do stay on topic.
- Do assume the reader knows nothing about your organization, your state, and your standards.
- Do remember your reviewers are human—they have opinions, biases, limited patience, and the ability to be frustrated and/or make errors.

**Writing for US ED:
Common Selection
Criteria**



**The Program
Guidance**

- Also may be known as:
 - Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Request for Applications (RFA)
 - Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA)
 - Notice of Funding Available (NOFA)
- The “rule book” for the grant program for a specific year



**The Program
Guidance**

- Explains:
 - What the program’s purpose is
 - Who can apply
 - When applications are due
 - What materials should be included in your application
 - What information should be included in your narrative
 - Which expenses are allowable and which are not
 - How to format your narrative
 - How your application will be scored

The Program Guidance

- **Follow any and all directions!**
- **Write your narrative according to the selection criteria—in order, with responses broken out according to sub-criterion**

Bear in Mind...

- Grants are pragmatic—they exist to facilitate *solving problems at the state and local level*.
 - What is the problem?
 - How do you plan to solve it?
 - If possible—how will you work with others to be successful?
 - Why is your proposed solution the *best* solution to this problem?



Abstract

- When to write it... FIRST or LAST?
- Less than one page
- Summarize key narrative points
 - Who, what, where, when, how, and WHY
- Not usually scored, but often posted

Narrative Sections: Need

- Statistical facts about *your local area* that illustrate the current problem
 - Conduct and report the results of needs assessments (Surveys, threat assessments, testing results, etc.)
- **Don't talk about statistics that aren't relevant**
- Discuss standards/mandates/requirements vs. obstacles
- Discuss service or program gaps—relate to standards/mandates if possible and as required
- **Don't get into issues that can't or won't be addressed or resolved by the grant you're writing for**
- Might discuss local and/or state initiatives

Assessing Need

- What kinds of information demonstrate need?
- What tools can you use to generate that information?

Narrative Sections: Significance

- What does your existing program look like?
- How will you build on it?
- What will be the extent of your project's impact?
- What will you accomplish?
 - Discuss goals, objectives, outcomes, and assessment techniques
- How will you build capacity to meet identified student needs now and in the future?
- How do you know your plan will work?

Significance: Key Definitions

- **Goals:** Goals are the general and overarching end(s) you hope to achieve. Goals are long-term focused.
- **Objectives:** Objectives are the more pointed and short-term focused ends you hope to achieve. They are the various "steps" that need to be reached in order to achieve your goals.
- **Inputs:** Inputs are what you are investing into the project in order to reach your ends—usually actions.
- **Outputs:** Outputs are the results of your inputs/actions.
- **Outcomes:** Outcomes are specific achievements your project will result in that will indicate the project's success. Outcomes should always be measurable—that is, they will be numbers or percentages usually indicating an increase or decrease directly related to the problem(s) described in your Need section.
- **Metric/Measurement:** Metrics are the gauges by which you will determine the measure of your outcome(s).








Identifying Outcomes

- Express in quantifiable terms
- Add timeframe this event will occur
- Avoid stating in terms of methods, activities, or processes
- Goals/Objectives that are realistic and achievable

Examples:

75% increase in the number of students actively participating for 30 or more minutes of class time by the end of the first year.

10% decrease in the number of students with BMIs outside the healthy range by the end of the project period.

Goals	Objectives	Indicators	Measurable Outcomes	Assessment Tools	Timeframe
 Student Fitness	 1. Student Activity Levels 2. Fitness Scores	1. HRM results show  time spent: a. active in PE b. in target HRZ 2.  % of students meeting Fitnessgram Standards	1a. Students spend 25%  time active in PE; 1b. Students spend 10%  time in target HRZ 2. 20%  students meeting Fitnessgram Standards	Compare baseline data and data collected at scheduled regular intervals: 1. HRM & TriFit results 2. Fitnessgram results	1a. 2 Months 1b. 6 Months 2. 12 Months

NSIGHT GRANTS DEVELOPMENT **Narrative Sections: Project/Program Design**

- Explain your project... What will you actually do?
- **Appropriate for the target population**
- **Discuss *relevant* research!**
- Explain your project team
- Include a timeline/workplan
- Goals, objectives, outcomes
- Advantages over other options
- **PARTNERSHIPS!**
- Coordinating with other existing local, state, or federal efforts???
- Project sustainability



NSIGHT GRANTS DEVELOPMENT **Narrative Sections: Project Management/Plan for Implementation**

**This could be a separate section, or part of the Program Design section—but DO include this!*

- Workplan/time
- Explanation of leadership/project director
- Explanation of partner roles
- Reporting structure
- Communication plan
- Responsibilities and responsible parties

NSIGHT GRANTS DEVELOPMENT **Narrative Sections: Future Funding/Sustainability**

- What builds your capacity and/or makes your project sustainable?
 - Training
 - Partnerships
 - High-quality equipment with low maintenance costs
- Future Funding is:
 - Not emphasized by most federal programs
 - More important to state and local funders
- When discussing future funding:
 - Demonstrate your plan for ensuring continued program maintenance
 - Add plans to fund future rollout of additional modules
 - Document additional potential funders

 **Narrative Elements:
Evaluation**

- How will you measure your success? What metrics will you use?
- When will you measure your success?
- Who will measure your success?
- Quantitative: numbers
- Qualitative: descriptions
- *When will folks meet to discuss progress/address problems?*
- **Be sure it is clear that you will measure overall success in addition to individual student progress!**

 **Budget**

- *Not graded for most ED grants, but still essential to success and see RFP*
- Estimated Expenses
 - Staff: salary and fringe benefits
 - Consultants
 - Supplies/Equipment
 - Travel
 - Indirect and/or Administrative
 - Include anticipated maintenance and repair costs when allowable
- Matching Requirements
 - % of total
 - **In-kind contributions**

 **Letters of
Commitment—not
Support!**

- Include a letter for each partner
- Ensure roles and responsibilities are defined
- Must be signed and (recently) dated by an authorized official!
- If you do not have any partners, do not include “random” letters of support.

Winning Tips



Winning Tips



1. Make sure your project is an appropriate fit for the grant you plan to apply to *before* you submit an application by learning as much as you can about the program you are considering.
2. Each proposal you submit should be unique: it should respond directly to the specifications of the grant guidelines using information about your local needs and resources. *Be sure to follow any and all directions the funder gives!*
3. Strive to use language any reader—regardless of whether he/she works within your field—can understand. Define any acronyms and/or field-specific terms that are used at least once.
4. **Be clear and detailed!**

Winning Tips



5. Don't bother trying to tell a story or relating your vision—stay focused on the problem and how to solve it!
6. Provide evidence of a *local need* for the project! Use state and national statistics only for comparison purposes.
7. Always discuss relevant local, state, and federal standards and/or mandates in terms of how you are currently *unable* to meet them, why, how your proposed project will change that, and to what degree.
8. Discuss measurable outcomes, in addition to your goals and objectives that are clearly linked to your stated needs and project objectives.

Winning Tips



9. Make sure your partners are active partners, rather than partners in name only. Any letters of support should demonstrate commitment to the project by explaining how the partner will contribute.
10. Have someone who has not worked on your narrative read it over for clarity before you finalize it.
11. Be sure items requested in your budget are discussed in your narrative and are clearly linked to addressing the needs you have discussed and realizing your stated outcomes.

Winning Tips



12. Always include a budget narrative that illustrates how you calculated each number included in your budget.
13. Your application should include only documents specifically requested by the funder. Any additional information will not be read.
14. Get reviewers comments for all proposals you submit and use their feedback in future proposals (www.fcc.gov/foia).
15. Keep the statistics in mind—plan on applying to multiple grant programs.

Where to Find Grants: Online Resources



My Favorites

- Federal Electronic Grants Clearinghouse:
www.grants.gov
- www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html
- www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/grantmain.htm#CON
- www.healthinschools.org/News%20Room/Grant%20Alerts.aspx
- www.grantwrangler.com
- Rural Assistance Center:
www.raonline.org/info_guides/funding
- The Foundation Center: www.fdncenter.org
 - Foundation Directory Online:
fconline.fdncenter.org
 - To sign up for RFP Bulletin:
foundationcenter.org/findfunders/fundingresources/rfp.html then click "Newsletters" in the middle of the page



Federal Resources

- Federal Electronic Grants Clearinghouse:
www.grants.gov
- Federal Register:
www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
www.cfda.gov



Other Valuable Resources

- www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html
- www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/funding/index.htm
- www.aahperd.org/NASPE/template.cfm?template=grant_opp.html
- www.cdc.gov/od/pgo/funding/grantmain.htm#CON
- www.pepgrants.info
- polarusa.com/education/fundinggrants/fundinggrants.asp
- www.grantsalert.com
- www.schoolgrants.org
- grants.nih.gov/grants/
- www.pelinks4u.org
- www.pe4life.org





Our Resources

- Insight's *free grant alerts email list!!!*
 - To join, email your name and contact information to info@insightgrants.com or rmangino@insightgrants.com with "Add me to the alerts list" in the subject line.



Insight Contact Information

Insight Grants Development
***Rosalie J. Mangino-Crandall**
Grants Consultant, President/CEO
rmangino@insightgrants.com
Mobile: 716.474.0981
www.insightgrants.com



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www.insightgrants.com

Thank You!