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# Writing Successful Grant Applications

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**A Step by Step Guide to Help You  
SECURE GRANT FUNDING**



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# A Step by Step Guide to help you Secure Grant Funding

Schools are operating in an increasingly tough financial environment. They are expected to deliver high quality educational provision in a safe, healthy environment with tightening budgets. This in turn means that additional funding is becoming more and more important. Grant funding is one way to obtain supplementary funding but sometimes the process can seem confusing. So, who provides grants and where do you start?

There are many organisations in the UK which offer grants to schools. Each will have their own aims, criteria, objectives and guidelines which will explain the kinds of projects that they will fund.

This guide aims to clarify the process of selecting and applying for grants to make sure that eligible schools have the best chance of success. The process can seem daunting so we have broken it down into simple sections.



# What Is A Grant?

- ▶ *What is a grant?*
- ▶ *What does a grant enable you to do?*
- ▶ *Pros and cons of grants*

# What is a Grant?

A grant is an amount of money that is awarded for a specific purpose. You are not required to pay a grant back but you are likely to be required to evidence how it has been spent and confirm that it has delivered what you specified when you applied for it.

Grants are available from the government, charities, trusts, foundations and other organisations such as The National Lottery.

The criteria for each grant will be different, some will be specific to education, sports or community initiatives and the amounts will vary. There is often a requirement for you to match the funding that is offered by the grant; so if you can spend £10,000 for example, then they will offer a grant of £10,000.



The Institute of Mathematics has announced that individuals working in secondary schools, Colleges of Further Education (FE) and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) can apply for a grant to help with the costs of running or attending an educational activity relating to mathematics. A budget of £6,000 has been earmarked for this scheme and will be split equally between Schools/Further Education and Higher Education. Grants will be made up to a value of £600.

# What does a Grant enable you to do?

Grants enable you to undertake projects that you otherwise could not afford.

You could use the grant to purchase items, services or resources. These might include:

- ▶ Computer equipment
- ▶ All weather sports pitches
- ▶ Books
- ▶ SEN educational resources
- ▶ Sports equipment and resources
- ▶ Outdoor canopies or shelters
- ▶ Continuing professional development for staff
- ▶ Improving school grounds or facilities
- ▶ School trips and field visits
- ▶ Creating a nature area
- ▶ Setting up and running a breakfast club
- ▶ International school collaboration
- ▶ Installation of a wind turbine
- ▶ Science equipment and projects
- ▶ Travel to specific events or institutions
- ▶ Tree planting

# Pros and Cons of Grants



## Pros

- ▶ Grants do not need to be paid back
- ▶ There are many different grants available
- ▶ Grants can offer large sums of money
- ▶ Grants can sometimes be repeated
- ▶ Grants may be available for your specific kind of activity



## Cons

- ▶ Grants may have strict criteria
- ▶ Grants are all individual so writing tailored applications can be time consuming
- ▶ There may be a matched funding requirement
- ▶ Grants usually only cover projects which are yet to start
- ▶ Grants applications can take months to be reviewed



### **Tip:**

*If you can't find a grant to suit your project, look for a project that suits a grant! You may already have allocated budget for something for which grant funding is available, can you claim this and redirect the allocated budget to your initial idea?*



# Selecting the right grant for your project

- ▶ *Where do I look?*
- ▶ *Does your project meet the grant provider's eligibility criteria?*
- ▶ *Does your project align with the grant provider's guidelines?*

# Where Do I Look?

Enlisting specialist help for identifying, managing and applying for funding isn't normally free but the cost of doing so isn't prohibitive and could be money well invested. Providers like FundEd offer timesaving toolkits and databases with available funding listed by curriculum or interest area. Subscription service funding directories can also be useful as they act as centralised information resources which allow you to search for relevant grants and funding sources. Grants 4 Schools, for instance, provides a regularly updated directory of grants from a variety of sources. This Funding and Grants for Schools guide is updated annually and is a fantastic starting point.

## Selecting The Right Grant

If you give consideration to the following, it will help you to work out if a specific grant is likely to support your project.

Check criteria and ascertain suitability.

Pick up the phone and talk to them - ask for honest feedback before you apply.

If you need to amend your project to suit their grant, choose another grant provider.



The Tesco Bags of Help Grant website covers all of the key grant information including how does it work, who is eligible to apply, what type of projects will be funded, matched funding requirements and how to submit an application. If you still have questions, talk to the grant providers. Their role is to find and fund suitable applicants so they are usually very helpful!



# Writing a successful grant application

- ▶ *Assign the right person from your organisation*
- ▶ *Define and agree your project internally*
- ▶ *Set Objective, Output, Outcome*

# **Assign the Right Person from Your Organisation**

Designate a responsible person who has the time and resources to deliver the grant application. This person may be required to do research, collate input from other team members, obtain quotes, write the application and adhere to strict application timelines. Do they have capacity to do this effectively?

## **Define and Agree your Project Internally**

As a team you will need to be clear on the objectives and scope of your project, before you will be able to communicate this to the grant provider. Consider the project as a story, make the reason for you doing it come to life and show the difference that it will make to the real lives of pupils, teachers and parents.

## **Set Objective, Output, and Outcome**

Set out your strategy by clarifying the Objective, Output and Outcome.

Use clear, concise language and ensure that financial information is detailed and robust.



# Objective

The issue or problem that you want your project to overcome

- ▶ Choose a self-explanatory title
- ▶ Give it a narrative and human angle

## Why This Is Important, What Is The Need?

Use relevant research to show the need; collate statistics, facts and quotes, e.g.

- ▶ Youth crime figures
- ▶ Community feedback
- ▶ Research papers on the importance of community engagement and provision for young people
- ▶ Comment from Local Councillors / Politicians / Police Chiefs / Headteachers
- ▶ Video testimony from those who will benefit



### **Tip:**

*Many grant providers like to see as many beneficiaries as possible, consider for example if your project may also be able to be used at weekends by a local community group. This means the provider is seen as helping two groups.*



## Output

What the money will be spent on

- ▶ Provide a clear budget breakdown
  - ▶ Clarify what percentage of funding you are applying for and which elements this will deliver
  - ▶ You may be asked who else is funding other elements
- ▶ Provide a timeline of what will be done when and by whom
- ▶ You may be asked to contact suppliers to obtain quotations for the works



## Outcome

The result, impact or benefits of the project (specific, measurable, realistic)

The difference this project will make, for example:

- ▶ Improve community relations
- ▶ Reduce youth crime
- ▶ Increase social and learning opportunities for young people

Show evidence of similar projects and the impact they have had.

Provide case studies of similar initiatives.

# Drill down further

Think through the reasons for your project as this will give you a lot of the information that you may need to include in your application. This is a very useful step -

## **What does the end result look like?**

Define the project -

- ▶ What is the scope of the project?
- ▶ Are there any risks, anything that could impact delivery, e.g. is it seasonal?
- ▶ Do you have contingencies in place to overcome these possibilities?

## **Why are you doing it?**

Identify the need -

- ▶ The objective you have already clarified outlines the need for your project
- ▶ Differentiate between 'want' and 'need'
- ▶ The outcome you have already identified shows why the project is important and deserving of funding
- ▶ Use reports, statistics and other evidence
- ▶ Show why your organisation is best placed to deliver the project and outcomes

## **Who will be involved in delivering it?**

Identify the people -

- ▶ Who is the project for
- ▶ Who is involved in delivering it
- ▶ Core team and responsibilities
- ▶ Staff and volunteers
- ▶ Skills of team
- ▶ Broader team
- ▶ Community ambassadors, local councillors

## **When are you planning to deliver it?**

Define the process -

- ▶ Start and end date
- ▶ Project timeline
- ▶ Third party involvement
- ▶ Scheduling
- ▶ Who will project manage
- ▶ Any seasonal considerations (school holidays)



### **Tip:**

*Remember that part of an application will often ask you to confirm that the project is ready to go ahead - make sure you have all necessary permissions in place. For example a funder can't award money that you don't spend if you fail to obtain planning permission.*

## **Where will you complete the project?**

Clarify location and reach -

- ▶ Exact location of project
- ▶ How broad is the impact expected to be (national, local, regional)
- ▶ Demonstrate knowledge of the local area to justify need
- ▶ Council / committee documents
- ▶ Reports
- ▶ Demographic information
- ▶ Relevant local reports / statistics

## **How will you complete the project?**

*Outline how work will be completed.*

Outline the process -

- ▶ How will it be managed
- ▶ Steering committees, teams, individuals
- ▶ Are any special skills required, third party involvement roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Cost - how will they be managed, by whom, reporting requirements

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has rounded corners and is set against a dark background.



# Submitting your Grant

- ▶ *Checklist*
- ▶ *What things do people often get wrong?*

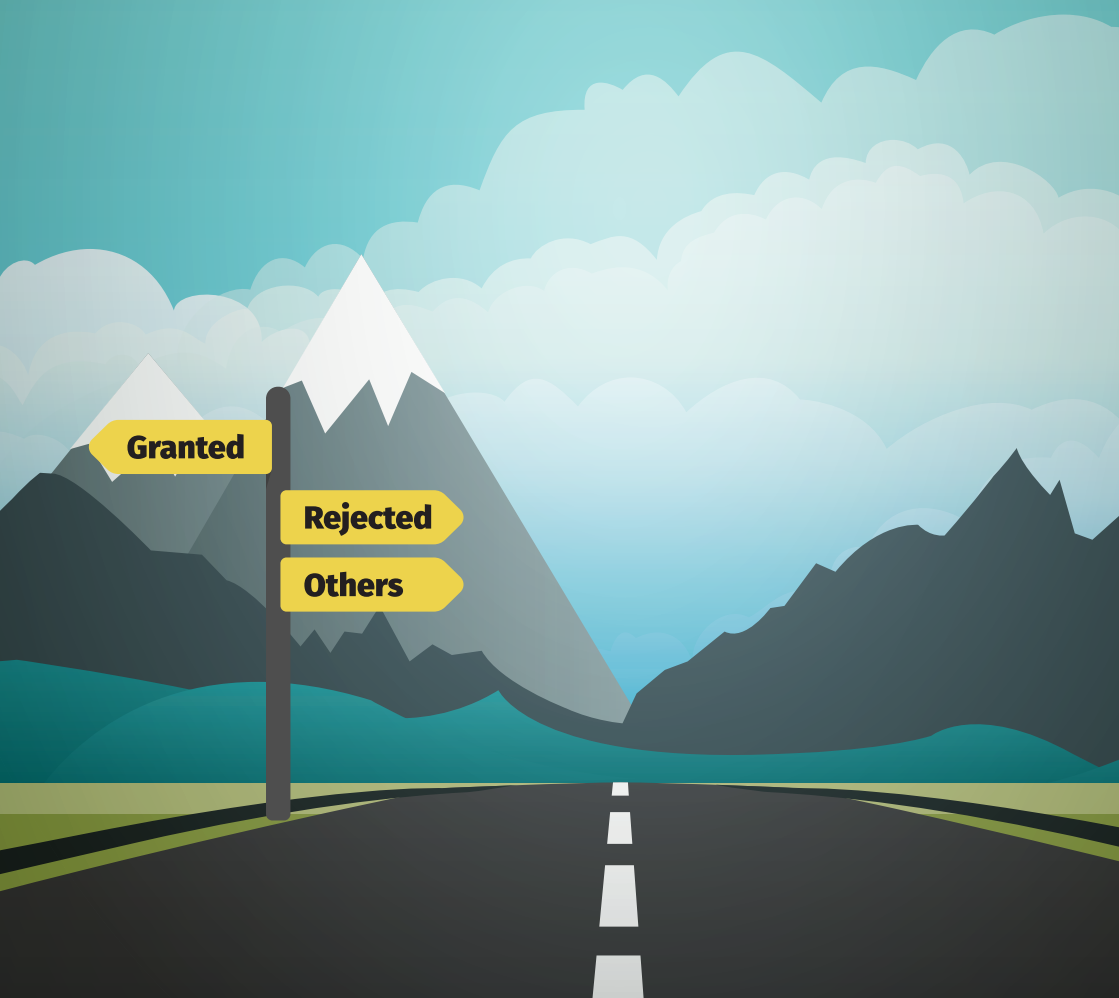
# Checklist

- ☐ Are you certain your project meets the funder's criteria and that you can demonstrate how it supports the type of work they fund? Don't be afraid to ask them directly, they want to help!
- ☐ Do you have all the approvals you need from your leadership team?
- ☐ Are there any barriers still to overcome, such as planning permission?
- ☐ Do you know who will work on the project and does your leadership team understand and accept the nature of the tasks involved and the time commitments required?
- ☐ Have you checked your cost and time estimates with a trusted supplier?
- ☐ If you need to provide quotes, do they support the amounts you are seeking from the funder?
- ☐ Is the amount of money you require within the limits set by the funder?
- ☐ Have you allocated sufficient time for researching and writing the application prior to the funder's deadline?
- ☐ Can you demonstrate what you will achieve and how the funder's money will be utilised towards your goals?
- ☐ Are your objectives clear and have you demonstrated how the groups you are targeting will benefit?
- ☐ Can you demonstrate how your project targets a need or benefits a disadvantaged group?
- ☐ Do you have a robust project plan to show how you will deliver your objectives?
- ☐ Is your budget sensible and transparent? Have you considered all areas of expenditure?
- ☐ Can you demonstrate good financial management and oversight, so that the funder is confident their money will be spent wisely?
- ☐ If the grant is on the basis of matched funding, have you demonstrated how you will raise the equivalent amount?
- ☐ Have you demonstrated how you will measure success? What are the outcomes you want to achieve and how will you determine that they have been met?
- ☐ Have you written your application in plain, succinct language without jargon or waffle?

- ☐ Have you answered all the questions on the application form in the way that the funder expects?
- ☐ Have you included all supporting documents?
- ☐ Have you told a great story? Your application will be read by a human being and real-life examples of how the project will benefit actual children can be very persuasive.
- ☐ And finally, has someone else read through the full application before you send it off? Other people can often spot mistakes that you might miss.

## What things do people often get wrong?

Grant providers report that unsuccessful grants are those which lack clarity and include claims which are unsubstantiated. The sections above will help you to communicate clearly the reasons for and desired outcomes of your project. Make sure that you provide evidence for any claims or statistics that you include - these might be government statistics, local council reports or market research.



# Receiving Your Decision

- ▶ *What to do if you are successful*
- ▶ *What to do if you are rejected*

# Receiving your Decision

Once your application has been submitted, everyone will be keen to receive a decision. You can ease this waiting period by letting your team know when this is likely to happen and how you will be informed.

- ▶ The hardest part is waiting for a decision
- ▶ Know how long the grant provider will take to make a decision so you can manage expectations internally within your organisation
- ▶ By being clear, concise, detailed and relevant you have increased your chances of success

## What to do if you are successful?

Celebrate and congratulate those who helped you with the application process! Now you can start planning and begin your journey, well done, it was all worth it!

## What to do if your application is rejected?

Try and get some feedback from the grant provider as to why your application was rejected. This will help you with future applications and it might be that they suggest a small amendment and ask you to resubmit it. Whatever they say, try to remain positive. There will be a suitable grant for you and each application is a step on a learning journey.

Collating all the information above is the difficult part, writing each application will be simpler once this 'thinking' step has been done.

