K-12 Playbook: Navigating the Grant Writing Process

Gearing up for success

To keep a certain level of innovation in the classroom, teachers and schools often turn to grant sources – especially for new technology. Finding the right source and winning the grant can make your school's language learning dreams come true. But what are these sources and how do you gear up for your grant application?

Use this playbook to help you navigate the grant writing process.

How to get started

The first step is to take a realistic look at the amount of work that will be required to compete for a grant. If it seems like a lot, consider forming a committee to help spread the burden. Ideally, you would like to have at least one person who is an experienced grant writer and, if the project involves technology, a tech-savvy teacher who can provide the geeky details that the grant committee will probably want to see.

Next, find the grants that are available to you. There are plenty of resources online, including our recent funding webinar, *Follow the Money: Uncovering Funds for Your Language Programs.* For large projects, you can even bring in a consultant to help find funding. https://k12hub.rosettastone.com/k12-webinars/follow-the-money-uncovering-funds-for-your-language-program

If you are new to grant writing, consider taking time to review grant writing best practices before you begin your own application. Winning applications are available for review on **ed.gov** for your reference. You may wish to read through some of these to see how successful grant writers describe their project strategies and goals. https://www.ed.gov/

The Foundation Center offers several free resources to help you understand the basics of grant writing, including live trainings at select locations, online tutorials, a webinar, and an audiobook. http://grantspace.org/skills/proposal-writing

Identifying grant sources

- When searching for a private grant, keep in mind that all foundations are different. Application requirements may vary, and funding is typically provided in smaller amounts and awarded to benefit a specific teacher or school initiative.

- Broaden your search and pursue a variety of potential opportunities.

- Ask multiple funders to fund the same project, but be forthcoming and keep them apprised.

- Funders tend to serve a particular geographic area or segment of the education landscape, such as a certain student population or subject area.

- Well-known foundation names also come to mind, such as Gates, MacArthur, Dell, etc.

- There are many local foundations as well, and they are more interested in helping their local schools.

- Corporations also tend to be interested in their local education institutions, since those students are likely to become their future employees.

- Large corporations with a national presence sometimes do good work in education across the country, but it can be tough for an individual school or teacher to attract their attention.

A good place to start is to search in a foundation database. Use the following resources to identify possible grants.

The **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance** lists all federal grants. Use the search feature to identify grants that align with your focus area. https://www.cfda.gov/index?cck=1&au=&ck

Grants.gov also lists available federal grants. You can search for grants by keyword, category, and more. https://www.grants.gov/

The **Foundation Center** provides subscribers with comprehensive information on grant-making foundations. http://foundationcenter.org/

Your state Department of Education website will likely list available state and federal grants.

Rosetta Stone has compiled a list of relevant foundations you can download. http://resources.rosettastone.com/CDN/us/pdfs/private-funding-resource-foundation-list2016.pdf
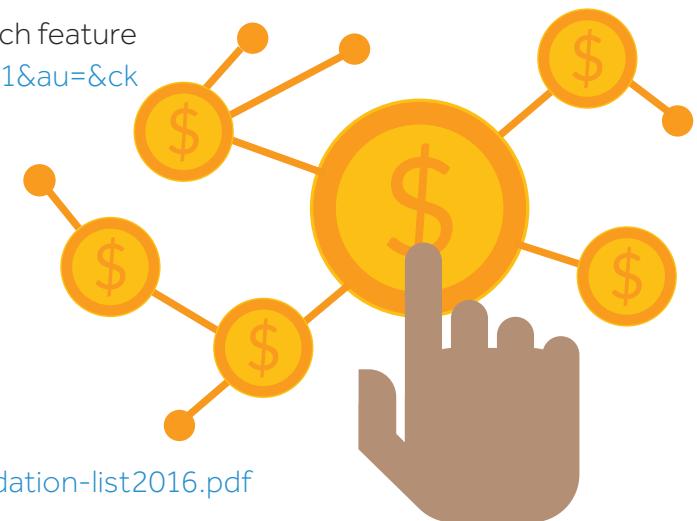
Additional funding sources

Schools and teachers have a variety of other private options to approach for funding, including well-known individual philanthropists who have shown interest in education projects in the past, the alumni of the particular school in question, and the school's own PTA/PTO organization. PTA/PTOs have actually become a de facto funding source for many schools that experience funding shortfalls. Recently, many teachers have turned to online crowdfunding sites to fund specific projects.

5 Education Crowdsourcing Options:

http://www.educationdive.com/news/short-on-funding-try-these-5-education-crowdfunding-options/167854/

Maximize your chances

For major projects it's often beneficial to break up the spending into chunks.

- Foundations usually don't want to be the sole source of funding, or are only interested in funding certain parts of the project that align with their goals.
- Make sure your project aligns with those goals and their history of giving.

Do as much research as possible.

- Private funders will often provide copies of successful applications from previous grant periods as well as very descriptive explanations of what they're looking for.
- If your project doesn't fit that history, move on to the next potential source.
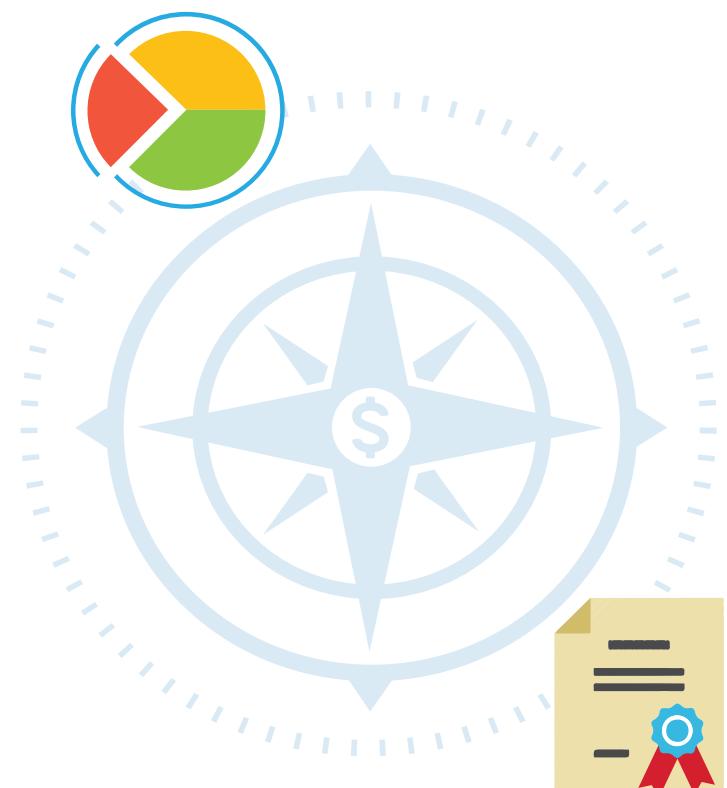
Tips for preparing your grant application

1. Decide if a grant is the best way to fund your program.
   - Before you decide, work with your school and district administrators to determine if there are any existing local, state, or federal funds available.

2. Have a clear plan for your project.

3. Form a program planning committee.
   - Your committee should include a diverse group of stakeholders. You will need administrative support from decision makers, and include parents, community-based organizations, and other educators.

4. Define your project.
   - The project should have defined parameters and concrete goals.
   - Apply for grants with agencies/foundations known to fund projects similar to yours.

5. Identify solutions that meet your needs and will help you achieve your goals.

6. Make sure your goals are measurable and realistic.

7. Include professional development to make sure the project is successful.

8. Fine tune your timeline based on grant-funding cycles.

9. Know in advance how much your project will cost.

10. Build partnerships with community organizations to help achieve your project goals.
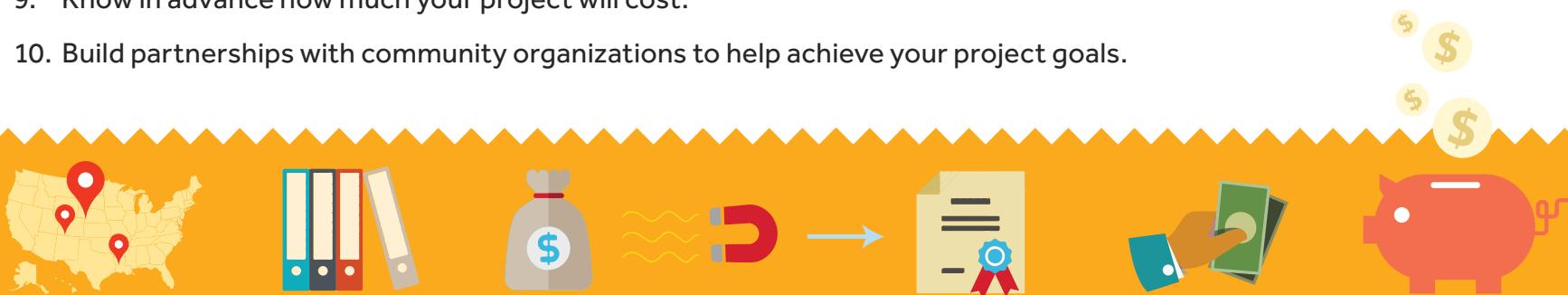
What your grant narrative should include

- Description of your school

- Statement of need, including project's purpose, goals, and measurable objectives

- Need for funding
  - ✔ How and why the project was conceived
  - ✔ Why should the project be funded

- Planned approach
  - ✔ Explain how project's goals and objectives will be met
  - ✔ What activities will be used
  - ✔ What personnel will be needed
  - ✔ What type of professional development will be needed

- Evaluation process/procedure
  - ✔ How will you measure success

- Implementation activities and coordination
  - ✔ Project timeline
  - ✔ Milestones including start and end dates
  - ✔ Schedule of activities

- Applicant's bio
  - ✔ Credentials - information that demonstrates his or her background and ability to carry out the project successfully
  - ✔ Why the project is important to the applicant
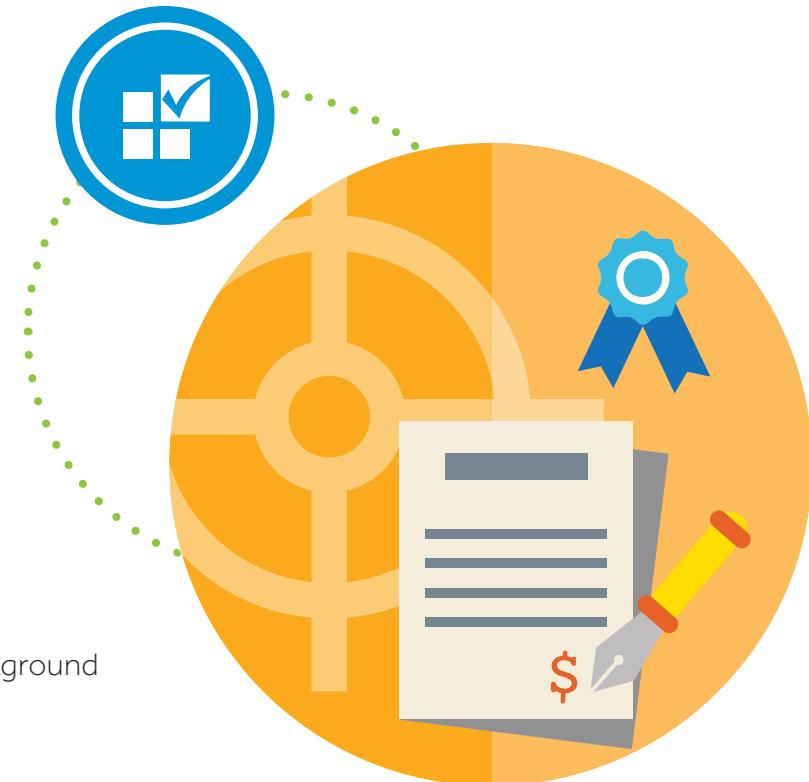
Secure your funding

Providing all students access to language learning presents challenges that can be overcome.

Identifying the resources you need is the first step toward achieving the complete language program success you envision. Use the ideas, links, and tips in this playbook to help develop your grant narrative based on those needs. Cap off your efforts by submitting one or more grant proposals to appropriate public and private funding programs.

Ready to tackle your language-learning grant writing project? Schedule time with an implementation specialist who can provide valuable insight as you seek to win your Rosetta Stone language-learning technology implementation grant.

You can find more resources on grants and funding at:
https://k12hub.rosettastone.com/funding

Learn more about Rosetta Stone® solutions at
https://k12hub.rosettastone.com/

Or contact our Education Team at:
education@rosettastone.com or 1-800-811-2755.

About Rosetta Stone
Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

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