

# Grant Pre-Research

Things to ask yourself BEFORE starting the grant writing process

## Question 1

What type of funding are you looking for?

### Projects/Programs

Projects and Programs can be a broad category of funding depending on the grantor. Some grantors, on their website or newsletters, explain in detail what constitutes a project worth funding. Others do not, and only offer their org's mission and values. If this is the case, it's up to you as researcher to determine whether your project aligns with the potential grantor's values or not. If you're not entirely confident, shoot them an email! Many grantors (especially local ones) love to answer grant-related questions. Use those resources!

### Campaigns/Fundraising

Many grantors who support educational initiatives do not always fund or donate to fundraisers or campaigns, but some do. If you have an idea (and the support from your administration) to kick-start a fundraiser, chances are there is an organization that would "match" whatever you can fundraise. If your school has a successful history of fundraising for equipment or resources, this might be a good option for you depending on what type of project or resource you would like to bring to your school.

### Capacity-Building

Louise Stoll from the University College London sees "capacity" as a more generic and holistic concept: the power to engage in and sustain continuous learning of teachers and the school itself for the purpose of enhancing student learning, influenced by individual teachers within a school; the school's social and structural learning context; and the external context. A school with internal capacity would be able to take charge of change because it's adaptive. Some grantors prioritize capacity-building in their grants; there are grants that want to solely support the professional development of teachers or the physical construction of a new school building.

### Campaigns/Fundraising

Depending on what you want, scholarships or awards might be worth investigating; many organizations across the country offer annual awards for educators that excel in their field of teaching. Oftentimes this involves nominating others, but sometimes you can self-nominate. Scholarships and awards can be extremely competitive, so a lot of time and effort must be put into the application and review process. For some teachers, this can be a great way to kick-start a larger funding initiative, because grantors love to support teachers and schools who have proven their skills in the past and in the present. In other words, if you've been awarded in the past, the more likely you are to be awarded in the future.

## Question 2

Where will the funding go?

Usually, we don't necessarily care where funding comes from, rather we just want the funding. We'll also cover this in the research side of the grant-writing process, but basically, where the funds come from can affect how you write your proposal, how you apply for the grant, and your chances of success. Depending on your project's focus, the scope of your project, and your own time commitment to the application process, one funder might be preferable to another. Again, we'll go into detail about each of these sectors later, but it's worth pondering whom you would like support from! If your community is relatively active and supportive of your district's schools, it might be a good option to focus your efforts locally. If you have a large-scale project that you would like to implement district-wide, chances are a statewide or national funder would have more funds to support you, rather than a local funder, like your community bank or a mom-and-pop shop. Regardless, you should research all of these options – the more applications you can send out, the more chances you have for funding – and once one grantor commits to supporting you, your chances of being supported by another skyrocket.

## Question 3

Who is applying for funding?

### Individual Teacher/Leader

### School District

### Individual School

### Community Center/ Nonprofit

When it comes to supporting education-based projects, grantors prioritize projects they know can, and want to, be implemented and sustained at a school. It's extremely rare that a grantor would support a project at a school knowing that the district's administration is indifferent about it.

Support and commitment from your administration are crucial to receiving full support for a project. In fact, many foundations expect a district's administration to reach out to them first to share their interest in a particular project before the school (or their partnered foundation) actually applies for funding.

Therefore, before you begin taking time to research funders, it is always important to know whether your administration would back your efforts and your ideas for a project. There have been instances where we have successfully applied for funding, but the project was called off last minute by our contact teachers (even after funds were secured) because their administration was not interested - that was free money that was turned down because of lack of support/interest from the school's leaders. Again, being transparent with your administration about the project (its goals, the need for it, the commitment, and its cost) is paramount to getting their support, and their support is crucial.