



## Finding and Applying for Grants: Things You Need to Know

SC Education and Business Summit  
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Molly M. Spearman – State Superintendent of Education

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### Our Direction Today

- Finding an opportunity
- Basic proposal structure
- Strategies and tips

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### Myth

“There has  
to be  
a grant for that.”

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**Reality**

There is not a grant for every need.

A grant is

- a good tool for pilot/start-up
- not a good tool for operation support or sustaining projects/programs.

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**Truth**

Funding opportunities abound!

But

- researching and finding an opportunity,
- writing a grant proposal, and
- competing for a grant

is hard work!

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**To Compete Successfully**

- Be organized
- Use your time wisely
- Pay attention to details
- “Sweat the small stuff.”

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**Find an opportunity!**

- Must research
- Sign up for newsletters, funding alerts, notifications
- Bookmark online sites with resources (visit often)
- Ask others at meetings, conferences, convenings, etc. how they got funding.

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**Funding Sources**

- Government agencies
- Foundations
- Corporations
- Associations
- Religious organizations
- Small businesses and individuals

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**What to Look for**

- Seek “fit” between what you want to do and what funder supports
- Understand what funder wants
  - Types of projects
  - Geographic area
  - Funding amounts

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### Government

- US Government <http://www.grants.gov>
- SC Department of Education
  - Grant Opportunities  
<http://ed.sc.gov/finance/grants/scde-grant-opportunities/>
  - Join Grant News listserv  
<http://ed.sc.gov/finance/grants/scde-grants-program/>

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### Foundations

- The Foundation Center <http://fdncenter.org> – See Grantspace
- Chronicle of Philanthropy  
<https://philanthropy.com> – sign up for free newsletters
- SC State Library  
<http://www.statelibrary.sc.gov/> – see Grant Research Assistance under “Services”

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### Others

- Local: news articles, county/city councils, community groups (Jaycees, Rotary, Optimists), businesses
- NOZA <https://www.nozasearch.com>
- Grant Station <https://grantstation.com> – sign up for free grant notices
- Blog at eCivis <https://ecivis.com>
- Google searches.

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**When you find a target funder**

- Read everything!
  - Request for Proposals/Notice Inviting Applications
  - Current organization information
  - Annual Report
  - If foundation, PF 990 tax form
- Request copies of successful proposals.

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**Basic Grant Proposal**

- Statement of Need/Problem Statement
- Project Description/Design
- Timeline
- Budget
- Organization Information/Capacity.

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**Statement of Need/Problem Statement**

- What is the problem/issue?
- What facts and evidence support the need?
- Why is your project necessary?

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**Project Description/Design**

Details of how project will be implemented:

- Goals and objectives
- Methods
- Staffing/administration
- Evaluation.

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**Timeline**

Chronological project activities with

- Start dates and end dates (interim benchmarks)
- Staff person(s) responsible
- Connection to project objective(s).

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**Budget**

All items related to activities/operation of the project:

- Salaries and fringe benefits (personnel)
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Other: contracts, telephones, postage, copy costs, etc.

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**Organization Information/Capacity**

Why is your organization the best to carry out the proposed project?

- Mission, vision, values
- Structure, programs, special expertise
- Credentials
- Experience with similar project(s).

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**Myth**

Grants are free money!  
All you have to do is ask.



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**Reality**

There is no such thing as free money.

**All grants come  
with “strings attached.”**

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**“Strings”**

- Performance measures and outcomes (objectives and goals)
- Budgetary requirements
- Reporting requirements
- Terms and Conditions
- Regulations.

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**How do you know?**

What strings will be attached?

What are the requirements?

What information needs to go into the grant application?

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**Funder’s Directions/Instructions**

- Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Notice Inviting Applications (NIA)
- Request for Applications (RFA)
- Application Guidance
- Call for Applications/Proposals
- Guidance for Letter of Inquiry.

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### **Federal Grant Announcements**

- Full description of program
  - Funds available and estimated number of awards
  - Project period that will be approved (multi-year or not)
  - Any program priorities and implementation method
- Federal award information
- Specific eligibility information
- Preparation and submission information (deadlines)
- Review criteria and process
- Award administration information.

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### **Important Details**

- Overview of funding program
- Instructions for what to include in application
- Instructions for submitting application
- Details on the selection criteria and the review process.

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### **Take Stock**

- Does district/organization have capacity to support this grant?
- Does the district/organization have a reliable financial management system?
- Have other grant-funded projects been successful? If not, why?
- What does principal/superintendent/director think?

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### Follow the Instructions

#### Formatting instructions

- Page margins
- Font size (font type)
- Line spacing

#### Content instructions

- Application sections (use headings as outline)
- Selection criteria.

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### Strategies

- Develop a team, set assignments and deadlines
- Write in drafts (draft early, *revise*, do it again)
- Write one section of the application at a time
- Write to reader unfamiliar with your project, area, organization, etc.

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### Tips

- Use the funder’s language, headings, etc.
- Organize narrative sections in order presented in instructions.

If the application instructions

- reference a resource or include a hyperlink, *use it*
- include a checklist, *use it*
- do not include a checklist, *create one*.

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**Tips – Create Tools!**

Develop application-specific tools:

- Checklist(s)
- Logic model
- Budget spreadsheet (use budget categories from funder’s instructions)
- Work Plan.

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**Remember, Good Writing is**

- Organized
- Focused
- Clear and Concise
- Energetic and Vivid
- Correct.

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**Consider the Reader**

Reviewers must summarize and assess.  
Help them!

- Revise paragraphs to enable scanning (i.e., important information at beginning with support following)
- Respond to all items in the application narrative instructions in order.

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**Please Do Not**

- Bury important information at the end of a paragraph
- Use an acronym without first defining it
- Fail to respond to an instruction; if it is not applicable, briefly state why
- Ignore character/page limits or deadlines
- Forget spell check and grammar check.

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**Best Practices**

- Manage time so others can review and give feedback on application before submission
- Write a strong abstract/project summary
- Double and triple check budget numbers
- Begin submitting well ahead of deadline
- Stay positive. (“Yes we can!”)

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**Remember: Murphy’s Law**

Anything that  
can go wrong  
will go wrong.

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### Don't Make the News!



June 9, 2017

#### Clerical Error Eliminates Academic Program from Getting Federal Grant

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### What Happened?

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) –

A clerical error made while submitting an application for federal grant money from the U.S. Department of Education has now blocked the Upward Bound program at West Virginia State University from getting a grant worth more than \$500,000.

Director Barbara Cary says **the budget was off \$104** from the dollar amount given in the application to the amount listed in the detailed narrative that listed how the money would be spent.

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### Questions?



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**SCDE Grants Program**

[Grants@ed.sc.gov](mailto:Grants@ed.sc.gov)

803-734-5810

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<http://ed.sc.gov/finance/grants/>

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