# LCR3EF GRANT APPLICATIONS
## *TIPS AND FAQs*

## 1. Before You Begin Writing

- Discuss your idea with your administrator and team
- Discuss your idea with any support departments you will need.  Any needed departments MUST approve your grant idea before it is sent to LCR3EF for scoring.
    - **Technology** - NEW or EXISTING - devices, hardware, software, apps, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, electronics (batteries or AC power) PLTW, and/or accessory items used with technology.  Items often overlooked include lab equipment, sound or light hardware, calculators, and other technological items that may not be computers.
    - **Facilities/Maintenance** - grants that include furnishings, shelving, storage, seating, cabinets and/or ANYTHING that modifies the room layout. Anything needing installation. Consider impacts on custodial services and future maintenance.
    - **Transportation** - any need for school buses
- **Symbols Note:** There are three symbols next to the different forms (left side) in the application. You may submit your application when all forms are either green or yellow.
    - Green check mark – that item is complete
    - Yellow exclamation point – there are optional items still missing, they are OPTIONAL (most often attachments)
    - Red exclamation point – a required item is still incomplete.

## 2. LCR3EF Role

- Our #1 factor for scoring is – the quality and clarity of the writing.  Grants sent to LCR3EF for scoring have already been approved by administrators, curriculum, and support departments as ideas that can be implemented and advance district goals.
- Be complete, BUT concise – we read and score 50-75 grants in a month.
- Scoring is blind – no names, no buildings
- LCR3EF can review your grant before you submit – but that person cannot score it.

## 3. Writing Style:  Technical Writing

RECOMMENDED
- Get to your point quickly supported by facts and limit use of emotion and colorful narratives.
- Make sure your grant reflects you – even if you may have borrowed some verbiage from other applicants.
- As you complete a section – re-read the directions and make sure you answered the question.
- Have someone outside the education field review your writing.  Another perspective that isn't too close to your project can help point out insider speak or processes that aren't well explained to someone on the outside, as well as standard checks for grammar, spelling, and calculations.

BEWARE
- Be warned if you use humor in your writing – it often doesn't come across and may seem to disrespect the process.
- Reviewers are well educated volunteers, but not in the professional field of Education – so beware using undefined professional jargon or acronyms that the general public may not understand.
- Fatal Flaw:  It can help with editing and review to draft your writing in a word processor and then copy the final into the form, but BEWARE that if you copy and paste you do so into the correct sections. Again, a final proof-reader can help.
- Don't answer a section by directing reviewers to read another section – each section is scored alone.
- Don't answer a section by largely referring to an attachment.  Only the information written in the form is scored.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Attachments are NOT SCORED, but may clarify the writing with additional information, pictures, or sources.

# 4. Grant Description Section

RECOMMENDED
- Treat this section like an abstract.  You have other sections to get into fine details.
- Within the first sentences, write in <u>general</u> what the grant project is, clearly state the need and what you hope to accomplish, and explain the use of funds. The first few sentences should answer "what" and "why".
- Highlight in <u>general</u> your most important facts or points.

BEWARE
- Don't build up a lot of justification at the beginning and not reveal what your project is, what you are buying, or what you hope to accomplish until the end.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Lack of a clear vision rambles. Struggling logical flow to what you are wanting to do.
- Focusing on one detail of the project, but not reaching a complete big picture overview.

# 5. CSIP/BLIP/WIG Goals

RECOMMENDED
- Give a discussion of how your grant is going to support the goals of your building and the District. Include Both BLIP/WIG and CSIP.
- Reference or paraphrase a goal or objective to save word count if needed. May attach a copy of CSIP/BLIPs/WIGs if needed for reference.
- CSIP is located at:  www.trou.k12.mo.us/Page/7645 ; see administrators for BLIPs or WIGs.

BEWARE
- Don't just list the goals or strategies – explain how your project meets them.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Leaving out either the Building level (BLIP/WIG) or District level (CSIP) of strategies and goals
- Referencing out-of-date versions of the goals to be discussed.

## 6. Timeline

RECOMMENDED
- Should be DETAILED – Walk us through your plan step-by-step. We can only consider what you write for us; we cannot make assumptions.
- Review the question and include every step that applies as well any others.

BEWARE
- Don't neglect all the intermediate steps of your project like installation, planning, assessments, and reports.
- Be careful of calendar years – if you type the wrong one – we can't assume what you meant

COMMON MISTAKES
- The most often missed items are (1) purchasing or ordering and (2) sending back an evaluation report to LCR3EF.
- Your writing for the next school year and it is very easy to get your calendar years mixed up.  Get a proof-reader.

## 7. Research – 500 words

RECOMMENDED
- Very factual, technical writing that presents a discussion of the needs and potential for success of the grant.
- Include solid facts with citations from academic, reliable sources.  A list of references may be attached to save word count. You may, in addition, use first person experiences if you or a colleague has implemented this project or something similar before and have reportable results.

BEWARE
- Don't use research that does not directly apply to the grant or instruction level without explaining the application.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Choose your research carefully so that it best supports the facts you are discussing.
- Cite the research attached in your references within the text.

## 8. Measurable Objections – no word limit

RECOMMENDED
- Present how you will determine project success.  Include objectives, metrics, methods, benchmarks, and comparisons.
- It is sometimes helpful to present your plans in an outline format rather than in paragraph.
- What you measure to determine success should relate directly to the stated need of the grant.
- We recognize some projects are objective and qualitative. Not all projects can be measured with big data numbers. Consider observations you can make to measure success.  Be creative.
  - What can you document?  Can you create a scoring sheet, rubric, or survey for qualitative factors that you observe?  What about measuring time of student use, or time saved?
- Metrics may mix quantitative and qualitative measures.
- Consider using more than one metric if appropriate to get a big picture of the effect you are having.
- These methods will be carried out and the results included and compared in your final LCR3EF report.

BEWARE
- Using metrics for success that may be influenced by too many outside factors.
  - i.e. – a metric of success that _% of HS students in the class will go on to the next level class may not be a fair metric because limited schedule slots don't always allow students who wish to, to continue.
- Proposing methods/metrics that you may not be in a position to obtain. If it is a unique situation, be sure to explain it.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Using methods that are not strong measures of the metrics you have proposed to use
- Using metrics that aren't strong indicators of the objectives you have stated
- Using measures that will not have appropriate sample size. (i.e. increase in the % of students, but your avg class size is 4).

## 9. Student Impact –

RECOMMENDED
- Show how all the bare facts you provided in research translate to the lives of your students. This can be more descriptive and less technical writing.
- This is the most logical place to present writing intended to invoke emotion than in the technical sections; if you desire to include it.
- Be concise and clear on how a R-III students experience is impacted. Give definable benefits.
- Relate the scale of the impact across a class, team, grade level, building, or multiple buildings as it applies. Discuss the scale and why it's important – more numbers is not always more impactful.

BEWARE
- Don't only restate research or get lost in emotional narratives and never reach your point.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Wasting this area to leave a last impression by just summing up things you already said. This is the last paragraph we will read and the impression we will be left with.

## 10.    Budget –

RECOMMENDED
- List all your items by Priority – and give lots of details. We can only order what is listed. Don't forget things like batteries, cords, installation hardware, etc.
- If your items have codes – add a general description of the item for reviewers (we aren't looking up all the codes!) Although it doesn't add to the score – an attached picture of the items or a list can be helpful in understanding.
- **ALWAYS** – list shipping charges – even if the total is $0.00 – we can't assume you didn't omit it.
- VERIFY – if you quote prices from the internet they are in US DOLLARS from a US provider.
- If requesting Apps – please list the specific website link for reviewers and technology.
- If you take initiative to work out pricing deals or coupons reflected in your pricing – tell us about it, and don't forget to include information on any deadlines or expiration dates.
- If you have secured other funding that will further or complete your project or add accessories – tell us about that in detail. If you have plans for further funding, explain the chances of your receiving those funds.

- Recommended book sellers that are easy to work with and have more efficient shipping methods than Amazon include: Scholastic, Harcourt, Barnes & Noble, and Books-a-Million. Email the foundation any time you would like to ask for recommended providers.

BEWARE
- Coordinate with technology when budgeting for items sold in bundles or with licensing. Pricing and licensing rules for school districts can be different than those for personal use.
- Consider asking facilities department if there are furniture or classroom storage needs. They sometimes have access to other pricing options (and occasionally exactly what you asked for in storage!)

- If you have included a common fee (i.e. building use fee) in several related grants, explain that to us in the pricing considerations so we know only one fee will be needed if all grants are awarded.
  - Sometimes – buildings will commit to cover a single use fee from their own budget – described in the additional funding section – and that frees up the cost for each related grant. Remember – each grant in the same year has to be able to succeed alone.
- Amazon can be a problematic source because of receiving large numbers of items (books) in shipments of a zillion boxes of 2 or 3 at a time. Don't prefill your cart and expect to check out from there, as we will have to create a new one under the LCR3EF non-profit account.

COMMON MISTAKES
- Each grant has to stand independently. You may write multiple grants intending to use them together, but DO NOT design the applications so that they cannot be successful independently. If a single grant does not succeed on its on – it will be considered a non-viable project.

## 11.    Grant Release –

RECOMMENDED
- This is a few sentences that may be published in the newspaper, website and/or social media in the event your grant is awarded.
- Let's get the community excited about the great things you are doing!
- This is NOT seen by a reviewer so feel free to use names, mascots, buildings, or whatever!

## 12.    Approval and Terms –

- The Name and Email on the "Signature Page" box is that of the **ADMINISTRATOR**. This is what sends the request for approval.
- Ownership: Your grant belongs to the district and must stay within R-III. If written as a team, it stays with the team.
- Photo Release: You agree to allow us to use photos or videos for publicity.
- Reports: PLEASE, take seriously the requirement that a grant outcomes report be submitted to LCR3EF by the end of your implementation year. This is how we show donors how their investment was used.

## Print a Copy for your Records.

Applications in the online portal are removed each new grant year.