

Tips and Tricks for Writing Grant Proposals For the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program

By Judy Bowers, Ed.D.

1. Assemble a writing team including a main grant writer, a grant evaluator and school district and/or site counselors. Be sure to have your evaluator work with you during the writing process so the objectives are measurable and realistic.
2. Read the grant application two times, and highlight the important areas of concerns.
3. Decide on the theme or goal of the grant. Each grant needs to have a hook or goal. Follow the four ideas below in types of projects:
 - a. use a developmental, preventative approach
 - b. expand the inventory of effective counseling programs
 - c. include in-service training
 - d. involve parent and community groups.
4. Decide on specific objectives and goals you plan to address based on school need: improve attendance, decrease drop-out rate/improve graduation rate, decrease discipline referrals. Also, say you need to improve student-to-school-counselor ratios in order to reach goals.
5. Detail your plan to implement some type of research-proven program to address school/district need and meet objectives.
6. Allow enough time to write and rewrite the grant.
7. Plan how you are going to evaluate the effectiveness of your grant. How will you show what difference it made in your school or district?
8. Tell how you are going to disseminate the results. Will you create a product? Web site, brochures, work-books, etc.?
9. Page 18 in the grant application refers to the "Selection Criteria," and there are four points. The best way to prepare to write the grant is to put each of the points on a separate piece of paper and then write your ideas down for each area. Brainstorm possible ideas under each area. When you start writing the grant, you want to focus your thoughts to answer just that statement. A big mistake grant applicants make is saying too much or saying irreverent information.
10. In preparing the application, follow all requirements. Be sure to the page limit, spacing, etc.
11. Questions can be e-mailed to Loretta McDaniels in Washington, D.C., the grant director. In my experience, she will e-mail you back quickly. Her e-mail is on the grant Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/elseccounseling/applicant.html>
12. Use the ASCA National Model as a framework for the program you develop, and always look at improving the student-to-school-counselor ratio.



13. After you have developed the focus of the grant, decide on a name for it. We have used initials to make the name simple. CAPPs, BLT, etc. Build an acronym that reflects your team goals for the new program. Four of the grants the Tucson Unified School District received followed the same grant format. (See below for our worksheets.)
14. Research is important to include. Ask your grant evaluator or a college professor to assist you in this area.
15. Decide who will be responsible for submitting the completed grant, and have that person start working with the writing team. This person should start reading the submission requirements and gather all the required forms together. Then decide if you will submit it electronically or by regular mail. The person responsible for the submission will need to get this part organized.
16. Remember that your superintendent needs to sign the completed form. Allow enough time to secure that signature.
17. When writing about the need for the project, tell a story about your district and why you need the money. Use national statistics to bring your point home. Include why more school counselors would help you meet your goals. Be sure to include the two GPRA measures from page 11 of the grant application.
18. The bottom line is to follow all the application directions, provide only the required information, keep to the page requirement and dream of what changes you could make for students by adding more school counselors.
19. Some districts were not awarded the grant the first year, but they were awarded the grant in the second year. Unfunded applications go on the shelf to be looked at when additional money is appropriated. So even if you don't make it the first time around, you may still have a change.

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Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Program Grant Competition Worksheets

Refer to page 18-20 for more information

1. Need for the Project (25 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

A. The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. (15 points)

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1. Need for the Project (25 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

B. The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be added by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses. (10 points).

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2. Quality of the Project Design (35 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

A. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (15 points).

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2. Quality of the Project Design (35 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

B. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (5 points).

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2. Quality of the Project Design (35 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

C. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date- knowledge from research and effective practice. (10 points).

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2. Quality of the Project Design (35 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

D. The extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target populations. (5 points).

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3. Quality of Project Personnel (20 points)

In determining the quality of personnel for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

A. The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (10 points).

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3. Quality of Project Personnel (20 points)

In determining the quality of personnel for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

B. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (10 points)

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4. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

A. The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, measurable, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (10 points).

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4. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

B. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible. (5 points).

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4. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

C. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points).