

# Introduction

It is no surprise that schools are cash strapped. We see it each summer as states and districts get ready for the upcoming year. What programs are being cut this year? How many teachers do we have to lay off? How big will my class size be? States with broken budgets are unable to pay promised dollars to school districts, and with per-pupil spending increasing each year, lawmakers at all levels are having to make tough choices to balance budgets.

Traditional teacher preparation does not prepare teachers for these conditions. In fact, it doesn't even prepare teachers for these conversations. Teachers leave their program ready to get kids to learn, work with parents, and collaborate with a team of like-minded educators. Most teacher-preparation programs do not include coursework in business, budgeting, or education policy. Some in our nation believe that teacher training should not even include training on how to teach . . . that a degree in something combined with a couple of weeks of training on managing a classroom qualifies to teach in the United States' toughest schools.

Educators not equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep their schools fiscally afloat are at a disadvantage. This book is for those teachers who want to take action. As teachers, we cannot wait for others to straighten up our financial house. We must aggressively pursue opportunities for self-growth and learn the very game that poses the greatest threat to education: the game of money. This book is much more than simply a how-to guide for writing and winning grants. It is a survival book for teachers and districts everywhere. This book, and the process it outlines within its pages, is a lifeline to those who seek to bring stability to their classrooms (not to mention supplies, equipment, and opportunities).

We hope you find it useful. We hope you find it insightful. Most of all, we hope you join us in bettering our profession and taking control of our schools once more.

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## How to Use This Book

The pages that follow provide a step-by-step walk-through on writing education grants. The process, strategies, and suggestions offered are best practices assembled by the authors from many practicing educators with a proven success in writing grants. Whether you are writing your first classroom grant for less than \$500 or are part of a seasoned grant-writing team gearing up for a multimillion-dollar grant, this book has something for you.

**Tip 1.** If you have never written a grant before, we suggest reading the book in its entirety *while* writing a grant. UNITE, the nonprofit organization sponsoring this book, offers a classroom grant each year. Sample RFPs (request for proposals) can be found in appendix B. After each chapter, complete the respective portion of the RFP incorporating the techniques discussed. At the end of the book, you will have a complete grant proposal ready to be submitted to UNITE and could potentially win your very first grant!

**Tip 2.** Dig out those old grants and have them handy. Perhaps you have won some and lost some over the years and you are reading this book to hone your skills. Take out your old grants and review them while reading through these chapters. There are many examples taken from winning grants right here in this book. Take a moment to compare the voice, presentation, and format of these winners against your own.

**Tip 3.** Jump around. Although this book can be read as a whole, it can also be used as a reference text. If you are having trouble with budgets or need to get some fresh ideas on incorporating data into your projects, jump to those chapters for a quick refresher.

**Tip 4.** Interact with the book. There are many interactive features within the book that are aimed at improving your skills as a grant writer. Make sure to use them completely. Also, check out the appendixes for resources and examples that can be used in your next proposal.

**Tip 5.** Follow Grant as he ventures through the book with you. Grant will often have useful insights, reminders, tip, and tricks that you may want to note as you work through the pages.

**Tip 6.** Realize the full potential of this book. Although the main focus of this book is writing excellent education grants, there are many other pieces of advice that go well beyond the grant-writing and -winning process and into turning your school into a resource-producing machine. The authors and contributors have a diverse background as educators and nonprofit professionals. By combining their knowledge of and skills in the classroom with the unique expertise of running a nonprofit, they have created a resource that



blends techniques on finding and securing new money while maintaining good relationships with donors.

This book is meant to be used by teachers, administrators, preservice teachers, universities, counselors, and other school personnel. By reading this book, the reader will be equipped with the knowledge on how to write small classroom-based grants as well as large grants that can be used to fund whole programs.

Not a teacher? The advice, strategies, forms, and other tools included in this book can be used by parents, students, administrators, school board members, and anyone else interested in winning education grants.

Many education professionals find themselves limited when writing grants. Most teachers and administrators will apply for grants for technology or equipment because that is usually the first thing to get cut from budgets. We want to encourage you to think beyond the immediate needs of the classroom and consider writing larger grants for your school. Some ideas that you may want to consider while reading this book are as follows:

- Start or support service learning and civic engagement activities.
- Start small learning communities.
- Create after-school opportunities for youth.
- Develop partnerships with local organizations, other schools, universities, or other entities to achieve a project.
- Hire staff to run a special program.

Ideas are endless but by thinking a bit bigger, you may find and realize more opportunities than you had previously thought possible.

Congratulations on taking the next step to reach your professional goals, and good luck!

To download many of the templates and worksheets from this book, go to [www.wiley.com/go/educationgrants](http://www.wiley.com/go/educationgrants)