

## Grants and Funding: FAQs

**What types of grants are available to schools?** There are federal grants, state grants, private foundation grants, and corporate grants. The primary source of grant funding for schools is federal funding through a variety of Title I programs.

**What is a competitive grant?** These grants require schools to submit applications or proposals to obtain funding. Grant awards of funds are based on the quality of the grant proposal and the compliance of the proposal with the grant requirements. In a competitive grant the organization or agency often releases a request for proposal (RFP) or a request for applications (RFA). Eligible schools typically have 30 to 90 days to complete an application and submit it for funding. Applications are reviewed by a team of experts and scored. The top scoring applications receive funding.

**What is a competitive subgrant?** Several federal programs direct states to make competitive subgrant opportunities available with the funding coming to the state. States manage the federal money and schools and districts apply to the state through a competitive process to receive funding. Reading First and Comprehensive School Reform are two federal programs that support competitive state subgrant programs.

**What is a non-competitive grant?** Often called "formula" or "entitlement" funding, this money is allocated based on the type of student population. Districts still have to apply for this funding and show the requisite need in order to receive funds. They are notified of their allocations for various programs on an annual basis. Example: Title I-A

**How much money can my school get from a grant?** Grant awards vary according to the particular program and funding agency or organization. Community foundations may provide grants of several hundred dollars while federal grants may be in excess of a million dollars. Grants are not a means to fast money. The time period from application to award can take as much as 9 months. After submitting a grant there is no guarantee that an award will be made. Every grant program has its own unique focus to address a particular need. From year to year funding amounts and program requirements are subject to change.

**How does my school get a grant?** There are four basic steps to obtaining a grant.

1. Grant research: Use this Scholastic Web site and its resources to find grants for which you are eligible.
2. Assemble a project team: Put together a team of teachers and administrators at your school who are willing to do the research, write the grant proposal, and, if funded, lead the project.
3. Develop a plan: Identify your school's need and develop a concrete plan to solve it. Make sure you take the time to think through everything you will need to successfully implement your plan.

4. Write and submit the grant proposal: Carefully follow the grant application guidelines. Write the proposal, prepare the budget, and submit the proposal before the grant deadline.

**How much time does it take to prepare a grant proposal?** The amount of time and work that it takes to prepare a grant application is a direct function of the number of people in your project team. Most grants have 30 to 90 days from the time the application is released until the application is due. For larger, more complex grant proposals, this may not be enough time. Planning well in advance of the application release date can give you a head start and alleviate some of the pressure.

**What are the key components of the grant proposal?** The most important components of the grant proposal are the statement of need, the proposed solution, and the evaluation or assessment plan.

- Statement of need: This is where you lay out the need that your school has for this grant. The need is primarily shown through standardized test scores. Teacher and parent surveys are also important indicators of need.
- Proposed solution: This is where you describe the specific steps that you will take to solve the problem described in your statement of need. The proposed solution usually encompasses changes in classroom instruction, long-term professional development, and some parent or community involvement activities.
- Evaluation plan: This is where you describe the assessment instruments that will be used to measure the progress toward solving the problem that was outlined in the statement of need.

Each of these three components must be carefully aligned together. The proposed solution must directly address and solve the problem as outlined in the statement of need. And, the evaluation plan must measure progress in correcting the problem as outlined in the statement of need.

**Can I use a pre-written grant template?** A pre-written grant template is a complete application that has been written by a company or organization. With a pre-written grant template, all you need to do is fill in your school's name, address, phone number, and sign the document. These pre-written grant templates are rejected in most states and are strongly discouraged in most federal education funding programs. Please note that several states actually do telephone interviews or onsite visits for grant finalists. If they discover that a pre-written grant template was used, the school typically does not receive funding.

**Can I get grant support from organizations or publishers?** Yes, various organizations and publishers, including Scholastic, can provide you with key information on their products and services and you can add this information to your grant application.

**What does it take to win a grant?** Many grant applications are accompanied by scoring criteria or rubrics. Read them carefully, because they will give you specific guidelines for creating a winning proposal. In the absence of a scoring rubric, read through the grant application and make a careful list of all the items you must answer in your proposal. As

you fill out the application, check off each item so that your proposal is in full compliance with the grant requirements.