



Grants & Grant Writing for the Outdoor Classroom

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<http://www.alabamawildlife.org/classrooms/>



Overview of Workshop

Purpose of webinar:

- Steps for successful grant writing
- Grant opportunities
- Application process
- Questions and answers

Step One: Identify & Communicate the Need

- Establish a clear vision of what is needed
 - Assessing the Need
<http://www.alabamawildlife.org/outdoor-classroom-planning-materials/>
 - Define the Need
 - Develop a convincing Need Statement

Step Two: Success takes a Team Effort

- Develop a successful grant writing team
 - Identify one person to serve as coordinator
 - Select members from different backgrounds
 - Remove roadblocks to success by getting administrative and board support
 - Reward and recognize success



Step Three: Identifying Funding Sources



- Private sources-corporate funders and foundations
- Government sources-federal, state, local
- AWF Grant Links
<http://www.alabamawildlife.org/outdoor-classroom-grants/>
- Internet search
- Other


Private Sources

- Donate via Corporate Giving Programs and Company Sponsored Foundations (General Electric, Alabama Power, Walmart, Lowe's, Home Depot and many others)
- Donate cash, products, and/or manpower (Walmart, Lowe's, Home Depot and others)
- Corporations are usually interested in
 - creating public awareness
 - promoting their products
 - assisting employees (and their families)
 - training the future workforce


Step Four: Understanding the Application Process

- Read the RFP (Request for Proposal) carefully for details.
- Know the Scoring Criteria
- Understand How They want the Application Completed

** Use the AWF Grant Guidelines as an example.*




http://www.alabamawildlife.org/uploadedFiles/File/AWF_OC_Grant_Guidelines_Application_201516_PDF.pdf



Review Scoring Criteria

- Use scoring criteria as a guideline when writing grant (It is not always known.)
- Match effort to grant components and percent of possible score
- Be sure to use exact headings as listed in scoring criteria



Preparing an Application

- Use correct forms
- Cover sheet
- Budget form
- Program Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Program Narrative
- Budget Narrative
- Compliance Forms, Assurances and Certifications
- Appendices

Other Possible Grants

- Alabama Power Foundation – Stewards to Students and Good Roots Grants
<http://powerofgood.com/>
- Legacy Environmental Partners -
<http://legacyenvd.org/legacy-grants/>
Available summer 2015 & due by Sept. 25.
- Alabama Association of RC&D Councils
<http://www.aarcd.net/>

Step Five: Developing the Project

- What is the “NEED”?
- What are your assumptions?
- What are the objectives and intended outcomes?
- What activities will help reach those outcomes?
- What are your objectives and outputs?
- What resources are needed to accomplish this project?

There are some Learning Station Project Plans available at
<http://www.alabamawildlife.org/outdoor-classroom-learning-stations/>



- Considering your approach—research what is already out there.
- Develop a project model by creating a list of all potential program components then considering the who, what, why, when, where, how, and other relevant questions.
- Create an outline of project components in chronological order.
- Continue to review and evaluate program/project.

Writing a Successful Program Narrative

- Write as though telling readers/reviewers a story—compel them to continue reading
- Seven secrets:
 - 1) Begin with goals (The purpose is...)
 - 2) Provide a program overview (create visual image of what you'll do)
 - 3) Include an advisory committee
 - 4) Describe target population
 - 5) Cite the literature/research if possible
 - 6) Ensure activities relate to project and needs.
 - 7) Justify the chosen strategies (offer rationale)

Step Six: Defining Your Goals & Objectives

- Program Goals
 - clarify your mission
 - identify what you plan to accomplish
 - proposals should identify 1-4 program goals
 - help to meet a learning outcome/need

Example: To provide our students with a hands-on, inquiry-based outdoor laboratory where they will be able to study plant growth over a period of time and in a natural setting.

Program Objectives

- State specific things you want accomplished
- Define minimum measures of success
- Reflect major program components

- Hint—Always under-promise and over-deliver!

Two Types of Objectives

- Process Objectives:
 - measure accomplishments (things you count)
 - are considered short-term
 - are more common in smaller projects
- Outcome Objectives:
 - reflect qualitative changes
 - considered long-term objectives
 - harder to measure and define
 - address changes in behavior, attitude, actions

Step Seven: Designing the Evaluation

- Two Purposes of Program Evaluation:
 - 1) Did we succeed?
 - Provides both grantee and funding source with measures of success
 - 2) How are we doing? What needs to be fixed?



Evaluation Tips

- All grant proposals need an evaluation component, even if RFP (Request for proposal) does not require one
- Evaluation plans are tied to proposal's objectives, management plan, program activities, and budget
- Objectives should include multiple but achievable ways to assess success
- Use qualitative and quantitative measures

Step Eight: Describing the Management Plan

- Successful Management Plans
 - Describe all grant oversight activities
 - Include planning, implementation, oversight, and follow-up activities
 - Present activities in chronological order
 - Reflect appropriate time allocations
 - Are strengthened by inclusion of time line

Time Lines



- Present specific details about required activities
- Target tasks chronologically by months
- Are connected to the RFP's fiscal year (but make sure you meet deadlines)
- Include both administrative and program activities
- Add a third column to time line labeled "person responsible" and you have a management plan!


Step Nine: Strengthening Your Proposal



- Build in plans to disseminate information about your project—tell others what worked and what did not
- Program Sustainability
 - Plan for continued funding/support
 - Develop a resource development strategy
 - Look for ways to involve other partners for the long-term.

Step Ten: Building the Budget

- Program activities drive the budget
- Cost estimates should be credible and realistic
- Never use the word miscellaneous
- Factors influencing budgets include:
 - projects
 - activities
 - needed resources



Budget Categories

- Direct Costs (personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, other)
- In-Kind or Local Contributions (percentage of staff person's time, volunteer time, use of building, accounting services, etc.)
(Federal Allowable Volunteer Rate: \$22.53)
- Indirect Costs (administrative costs—usually a fixed rate at universities but some grants won't allow)

Budget Appearance

- Presenting the Budget
 - Start budget on new page (Use budget form if provided.)
 - Use aligned columns (table layout)
 - Column headings include Budget Category, Requested Funds, Local Contributions, and Project Total
- Budget Line Entries
 - Name categories-designate main categories with a Roman numeral, all caps, and bold
 - Fully justify text and right-justify dollar figures
 - Budget detail should allow budget to stand alone

Budget Tips

- Use \$ on numbers at top and bottom of each column and page and on the total line, but not in the table
- Round figures to nearest dollar
- Include a 4-5% annual increase for each line item if a multi-year proposal

Step Eleven: Aiming for Perfection

- Writing Styles for Grant writers
 - Write on ninth or tenth grade reading level
 - Use layman's terms, avoid jargon and technical language
 - Avoid using contractions and abbreviations
 - Avoid using slang

Visual Appeal

- Use section headings and subheadings
- Margins should be 1 inch on all sides and allow fingers to hold the document without covering text
- Spacing should be consistent
- Fully justify text—it saves space and looks better
- Use an easy to read font like Times New Roman and 12 point font
- Label each proposal page with an abbreviated title and Page ___ of ___
- Remember—Reviewers read many proposals...Do all you can do to make your proposal stand out in a positive way!


Proofreading

- Proofread for:
 - Content and organization
 - Consistency
 - Alignment with RFP and Completeness- Is anything missing?
 - Clarity, Flow, Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation Errors

Grant Writing Tools

- Use good equipment for producing your proposal (computers, printers, copiers, fax)
- Use thicker paper such as 24-pound bond
- Use brighter white paper (90 to 92 brightness)
- Send all originals of the program narrative and budgets if possible
- Mark one copy original

Step Twelve: Finishing Touches



- You may want to include a Table of Contents even if RFP does not require one (check to see what is allowed)
- Program Summary must be clear, concise, set the stage for the project
- Appendices expand the narrative and provide additional information such as resumes, job descriptions, data collection instruments, letters of commitment and letters of support

E-Grant Applications

- Formatting issues can be a problem
- Create it in a word document and then cut and paste into the correct parts.
- If possible, print out a copy
- Save your work
- Do not wait until the last minute to submit
- Check to see if pre-registration is required
- Pay attention to hours of operation (Eastern vs. Central)

Step Thirteen: What Happens after it is Submitted

- Upon receipt grant applications are
 - Logged in
 - Sorted by competition
 - Subjected to initial exam
 - Cover page filled in and signed?
 - Bound properly?
 - Extra items?
 - Forms complete?
 - Original included?
 - Copies counted?

Responding to Inquiries

- A funding inquiry does not mean the grant has been approved
- Avoid giving quick answers over the phone
- Check with the planning committee and think through a proper response
- Avoid accepting cuts in the budget without trying to defend them
- Avoid arguing with funding officials

Final Tips

- Allow lots of time– it always takes longer than you expect
- Contact anyone who is writing a letter of support early—lack of letters can hold you up
- Double check for consistency and accuracy throughout the entire proposal AND supporting materials
- You may need to add a week to your timeline to get all needed signatures

Questions?

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