OTHER PEOPLE’S MONEY

A Quick Reference Guide to External Funding and Grant Development

Prepared for UWA Faculty and Staff
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INTRODUCTION

The tagline for the University of West Alabama, “Go West”, exemplifies the visionary philosophy of the college. Our vision is to provide the highest quality of educational experience for our students through a holistic learning environment that integrates knowledge with individualized growth. The University strives to create an environment that enhances the important qualities that enable students to develop independent thinking and inventive idea formulation. Importance is placed on providing opportunities within the curricula for the development of enhanced skills in critical thinking, communication, leadership, and technology. UWA has a strong commitment to serve the educational needs of students of all ages. Inclusive in meeting the needs of the students is an obligation to improve the community through economic development, research, and historic preservation. The faculty and administration face the challenge of creating programs and experiences that make a difference in the success of every student and improve the Black Belt Region. This vision mandates a strong funding base that is complex given the level of state and local funding. External funding including grants, donations, sponsors, alumnae, and corporate partners becomes essential in maintaining the level of excellence vital to UWA. Funding programs of quality and excellence becomes the responsibility of faculty and staff. It takes the entire University to establish a village of learning.

This quick reference guide is designed to provide basic information about grant writing and grant development. It is not intended to answer all questions on the subject of developing and writing grants but rather to take the mystery out of grants and hope that it might even encourage someone to give the process a try.

Basically, the University of West Alabama is a state support institution with funding for the basic program provided through state funding. In order to excel in developing exemplary programs, external funding including grant writing is essential. This can be accomplished by the faculty and staff by identifying potential federal, state and private funding sources and developing grant proposals that support the school’s mission and goals. The university is in the process of establishing a Sponsored
Programs Office to assist faculty in this endeavor in order to improve academic programs, develop new and innovative programs, and fund significant research projects.

**WHAT'S THIS GRANT “STUFF” ALL ABOUT?**

The University of West Alabama provides outstanding educational opportunities for traditional and non-traditional college students. External funding drives a wide range of academic and community outreach programs. A majority are programs funded because members of our faculty and administration had the vision and foresight to think beyond the standard mode. To date, UWA faculty have developed and secured grants from sources like National Science Foundation, National Endowment of Arts, Department of Education, Alabama Power, Appalachian Regional Commission, Bellsouth, State of Alabama and numerous other sources. External grant programs enable the university to reach out to students needing our services while giving faculty the tools they need to do a better job.

These include both public and private sources of funds. Public funding sources include federal, state, and local governmental agencies. Private funding is received from individuals, foundations and corporations. Giving is often in the form of scholarships or donations of equipment and other resources.

This short reference guide is intended to provide you with basic information on procuring public and private funds by developing proposals. It is also intended to familiarize you with the Grant Writing process for securing these funds. This guide is a first step toward making an idea become a reality.

**External Funding**

Funding from sources outside the standard state allocations include Federal Agencies such as Department of Education, National Science Foundation, and Health and Human Services. Foundations, community agencies, corporations and donations are also considered external funding. Funds from these sources can be secured in many different ways including
direct appropriations, gifts, application process, and request. The majority of external funds are received through the grant process.

**Grant Proposal Development**

The typical method of securing funds from external sources is to develop a grant proposal. A proposal is an extensive outline of the project that you are planning and validation of the critical need. It is telling the funder the story of a problem and how you are going to solve it with their money.

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**GRANT GLOSSARY  Talkin’ the Talk**

**Abstract**
Summary of project with brief overview of goals, activities and outcomes, usually one to two pages in length.

**Allowable Cost**
A cost for which the institution or agency may be reimbursed under a grant with a government agency.

**Appropriation**
Legislation that establishes a funding activity for a specific activity. Appropriations normally flow through appropriate existing government agencies.

**Block Grants**
The grouping of many categorical grant programs into an overall functional area such as community block grants.

**Budget**
The exact details of how the money requested will be spent. Usually a budget form is supplied and a budget narrative is required.

**Budget Cycle**
The annual fiscal year that indicates when funding sources will call for proposals and make their grants available.
**Budget Narrative**
A detailed description of how funds are to be spent. Usually this accompanies a budget form.

**Categorical Aid**
Federal or state funds specified for specialized areas.

**Consortium**
A group of organizations sharing in the finances and/or administration of a single grant.

**Consultant**
A person with expertise external to the organization that is brought in to lend insight into the solution of problems or supply technical assistance.

**Criteria**
The specific parts of a grant application outlined in the announcement (RFP) that are used to score the final grant proposal. Each criterion has a point count.

**Demonstration Grant**
Projects of limited duration that seek to test the feasibility of an idea, approach, or program.

**Disadvantaged**
Individuals who because of economic or academic deficiencies are unable to adequately compete within the context of an educational institution.

**Disabled**
Individuals who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech or language impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired persons, or persons with specific learning disabilities and who, because of their disabling condition, cannot succeed in the regular educational program without special assistance.

**Direct Costs**
Expenses that can be itemized by categories having descriptive terms for utilization of funds, i.e., salaries and wages.
**Federal Register**
A daily publication of the federal government that contains proposed and final guidelines, administrative regulations, deadlines, and application packages as provided by federal agencies. Now available on internet.

**Formula Grants**
Funds distributed by the federal government (usually to and through state agencies) for use in specified projects. The funds are awarded on the basis of demographic and economic data for which a formula has been computed.

**Fringe Benefits**
Benefits such as life and health insurance, retirement, unemployment compensation and workmen’s compensation that are paid in addition to salary. Benefits packages can change yearly. These normally total 28%.

**Full Time Equivalent**
(FTE) The amount of time spent or required in a less than full time activity divided by the amount of time normally spent or required in a corresponding full time activity during the regular school term.

**Funding Source**
The agency, department or foundation that has an interest in your idea. It could be Federal, State or Private.

**Grant**
The written proposal and application for funding usually written in response to a RFP.

**Grants.gov**
The internet website used by all Federal agencies for announcements, modifications, and submission of grant applications.

**Indirect Cost**
Those costs which cannot be identified specifically with a particular program, project or activity which are necessary to the operation or agency; for example, library resources, building maintenance, and general administration. Indirect cost rates are negotiated with federal agencies;
however, limits are usually placed on the percentage that can be claimed in any project. (Presently 21.3% for on-campus).

**Matching Funds**
Cash or “in-kind” support contributed by the grantee to fulfill project objectives.

**Measurable Objectives**
Goals stated in such a quantifiable manner that the achievement or non-achievement of the outcome can be measured with a relative degree of precision by objective measurement and observation (also call criterion-based objectives).

**Narrative**
The major body of the grant that specifically addresses the criteria.

**Need**
Grant Applications require that the basis or reason for a program be validated and documented.

**Needs Assessment**
A continuous, formal process for identifying in what areas and by how much the present system is short of an ideal state.

**Partner/Collaborator**
Person, agency or area that will work with you on a project. (A financial commitment is required.)

**Preliminary Application**
A prospectus following a prescribed format developed by an agency to screen potential proposals and select applicants to prepare final proposals. (Usually it’s reasonably short.)

**Provisions/Assurances**
Documents accompanying an application which include stipulations and requirements from the funding and required guarantees by the applicant to conform to federal and state rules regarding activities such as lobbying, human subjects research and subcontracting. Provisions and assurances
become, by reference, part of the official contract for a project. Forms are normally provided to sign.

**Program Investigator (PI)**
The local person charged with managing the grant process. This person insures that all monies are spent correctly and the objectives of a project are met and is also responsible for reporting to the funder in a timely fashion.

**Project Program Officer**
The federal or state agency representative who has the task of monitoring the project, providing technical assistance to the project, and insuring that the objectives are carried out within the framework of the regulations.

**RFP**
Request for Proposal. An announcement by an agency that it is accepting proposals to accomplish specific objectives.

**Unsolicited Proposals**
Agencies may allow institutions to submit proposals which may or may not meet the priorities of those agencies. May be an offer to perform tasks which are not the results of an RFP announced by an agency.

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**GRANT WRITING 101: STEPS IN DEVELOPING GRANT PROPOSAL**

1. Develop your programmatic idea based on critical need and a vision.
2. Locating a funding source.
3. Preliminary permission from department head
4. Completion of Notification Form (P. Pratt)
5. Developing the proposal.
6. Completing budget with assistance from department head and financial affairs.
7. Submitting proposal to department head and provost for final permission, signatures, and letter of transmittal.
8. Submitting the proposal on time.
9. Follow-up of proposal and additional support.
10. Implementing and reporting.
STARTING UP

Where to invest time, energy, and pages

Somewhere in the application package, there is usually a proposal evaluation form that the reviewers will use. Evaluation criteria are also included in the regulations related to the application. Look carefully at the points assigned to each section of the proposal. The point ratio clearly indicates where the funder is placing its emphasis, with two exceptions. The evaluation plan and budget, even if counted for only a few points, can affect the review of the entire proposal. Seasoned readers frequently review these items first. The budget will demonstrate the reasonableness of the request, often considered in terms of the cost per participant. The evaluation plan illustrates the sophistication of the applicant in determining the success of the project’s intended outcomes.

If, for example, the needs statement is worth 30 of a possible 100 points, it is obvious that a well-researched and documented statement of the problem is required. If methods count heavily, the funder is looking for the proven ability of UWA to complete the project successfully. More details in planning and in describing the sequence of the project will be required to be competitive.

Writing Style and Format

It is important to remember that people like you will read the proposal, no matter how detailed and restrictive the application is. As with any good writing, keeping the audience in mind will yield a more focused narrative. In preparation for the task, consider the individuals typically selected to review the applications. The conditions for the review well have an impact. More frequently, applications are being submitted and reviewed on-line, particularly for large programs from larger funding agencies. Adherence to the guidelines and space limitations are critical. In paper-based reviews, readers often face the daunting task of reading multiple proposals in a matter of a few days. In all cases, a memorable proposal that is well conceived, engages and captures the imagination of the reader and is well-written stands a better chance of succeeding.
Write in plain English and in varied, but not complex, sentences. Define meaning for jargon and acronyms and keep explanations brief but complete. Use acronyms judiciously and sparingly and use your college’s name throughout the document instead of an acronym—is less confusing. Use action verbs, active voice, and “telling statistics” that illustrate the point clearly without numbing detail. Try to create a vivid picture in the mind of the reader. Visualizing the project “up and running” as if it existed and were fully implemented helps to provide clarity and strong images that are persuasive.

Never assume proposal readers know anything about UWA. Describe the institution, the service area, the students, programs of study, and services concisely but with sufficient information that the reader has a context for the requested funding. This descriptive information, with appropriate variation, can become a standard insert into many other proposals once it is well-crafted.

Proposal Presentation

Repeating section headings from the application package and following the prescribed order of the proposal in the package are standard procedure. Try not to re-invent the wheel. If the evaluation document for the application being used by the reviewers has language that differs from your section headings, insert the evaluation language from the agency package and set it apart from the narrative with bold face, color or italics. The purpose is simply to make it easier for readers to award full point value to a section of the proposal without having to search the narrative and draw inferences. Pay careful attention to the page numbering requirements specified in the RFP – some agencies specify the format and location on the page.

Tables, Charts and Graphs

Inserting tables, graphs, charts, photographs and other desk-top publishing features into the proposal should be done judiciously and with a combination of aesthetic and informative appeal. Often a well-designed illustration can replace blocks of text, but it must be easily read and quickly understood. While color can be helpful it should be used in moderation. Verify that the agency permits the use of color text and images - some do
not. Frequently, proposals are copied in black and white only. Color does not copy clearly.

**PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

Normally, the components of a grant proposal are based on Grant Guidelines or the RFP. Read the RFP very carefully and outline your proposal based on the review criteria. Generally, you will need the following:

**BASIC PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

Detailed requirements for proposal content will vary from funding source to funding source. In all instances, follow the guidelines provided by the funder. Lengthy applications required for major governmental funding agencies may require many pages in any section. A letter proposal to private foundations or donors will treat these elements less formally, perhaps, and certainly in fewer words, but the content will be similar.

*Introduction/Institutional Background:* This answers “Where.” This section describes the institution in terms of location, demographics, organizational relationships, student date, basic mission, and relationship to the service area. It establishes UWA’s credibility and qualifications... Rarely more than two pages. This section is usually written last focusing on the overall thrust of the proposal. It will form the very first critical impression of the project and the college for the review panel.

*Problem Statement/Needs Assessment:* This answers “Why.” This section identifies the need to be met or the problem to be solved. The need must be documented with hard data linking the problem to national, regional and local information. Information must be specific, not broad general statements such as “teenage crime” or literacy in America.” The problem must be brought home to UWA and its service area, i.e., “Thirty-five percent of area residents are concerned about the availability of youth after school activities according to a survey conducted with 900 households in spring 1999.”

*Objective:* This answers “What will happen.” Objectives identify outcomes and benefits in measurable terms. They often include percentages of gain or reduction over past performance. Statements must be specific in terms of the target audience and the results expected.
**Methods/Procedure:** This answers “How.” This section describes the activities that will directly support and carry out the objectives. It often includes a timeline and frequently can be reported in chart form. Enough detail must be provided to convince the readers that the applicant knows what the project requires and how to accomplish it...

**Time Frame:** This answers “When.” The time frame, if separate from the procedures, usually includes a table or a chart that lists by month, quarter, or benchmarks the tasks to be accomplished. Sometimes the charts include “who” will be doing the task and “what” will be accomplished as well. Time frames must be realistic and correspond to the funding period. Savvy readers are alert to projects that must hire new personnel and that do not allow for the time required for institutional processes for search and hiring to be accomplished.

**Personnel:** This answers “Who.” This section includes job descriptions for each key position where support has been requested or where matching funds have been designated as a portion of salary. It describes the amount of time any position or individual will spend on the project. Sometimes it is helpful to insert an organizational chart of the project. Usually resumes are condensed in the proposal and full resumes included as references in the appendices. Condensed resumes should direct the reader to relevant experience and qualifications of the individual for the proposed project. If a position is to be filled, a job description should be summarized and the complete description included in the appendices.

**Evaluation:** This answers “How well.” The evaluation section presents a plan for determining the success of the project at interim points and at the end. The plan should include both in progress (formative) and final (summative) measures. Measures used may be internal and external, qualitative and quantitative, or a combination of both. It should assess the products of the process and the process itself.

**Budget:** This answers “How much.” In summary and in detail, the budget spells out the costs to be met by the funding source and the methods used to determine the costs in the following categories: personnel, fringe benefits, supplied, travel, equipment, consultants, and other (postage, telephone, printing etc. depending on the agency). Indirect costs that
cannot be tied directly to the grant project (accounting, utilities, etc.) are sometimes allowed. The budget total should be in the range of the average grant award for the competition unless there are unusual circumstances such as large numbers of participants or particularly hard-to-serve clients.

**Other Components:** Abstracts, Letters of Support, Appendices. The abstract is a brief statement of one page or less that recaps the proposal element and summarizes the need and the amount of the request. Letters of support must include any cooperation institution whose contributions are critical to the success of the project. They must be current, on letterhead, and contain precise language detailing agreements reached. These build credibility. Often it can be expedient for you to supply partners with a sample on which they can base their support letter. Appendices are useful for background information or for documents too lengthy to include in the proposal. Applications may limit the number of pages or have requirements for appendices. Like the letter, important data should be quoted in the text and the full document cited.

**GRANT BUDGET DEVELOPMENT**

The Budget of a grant proposal is very important because it is the part of your proposal that enables the project to operate and come to fruition. It also tells the reader a lot about you and your organization. It demonstrates your understanding of the stated problem what it takes to solve it. It also demonstrates your ability to carry out your plan.

**PLAN, RESEARCH AND BE THOROUGH.**

**DON’T BE AFRAID TO SEEK ASSISTANCE.**

First, think in terms of Budget Categories. *(Normally, there are 8)*

1. Personnel. Check UWA salary schedules.
2. Fringe Benefits. Ask the Advancement Office for specifics.
   *(Usually Fringe Benefits equal 28% of Base Salary.)*
4. Supplies. Again, be realistic and find prices.
5. Travel. Use school/state-approved rates.


7. Other. Be thorough and include extras.

8. Indirect Rate. Presently, this is 21.3%. Indirect costs are important. Do not overlook them!

Budget Narrative

Simply take each budget item and explain (show) how you came to this specific amount MATHEMATICALLY. Check (AND DOUBLE CHECK) for accuracy and be sure the Narrative balanced with all other budget forms. (Be sure to verify fringe benefit and in-direct cost percentages if these are used.)

The Negotiated Budget

It is very rare for a project to receive full funding. Generally, the awarded amount is less than the request. When funds are reduced, there is an immediate impact on the objectives, the personnel, and the outcomes. Preparing revised objectives, timelines, and outcomes for approval by the agency is essential in the early days of the grant. These revisions should be submitted with the revised budget. In the event of an award that is less than the amount requested, contact the Director of Grants for assistance.

Matching Requirements

Ask yourself the following questions

1. What is the match ratio for the grant?
2. Is it feasible and do-able?
3. Is the match cash, in-kind or both.

IMPORTANT NOTE: For any and all matches, MATCH APPROVALS MUST BE OBTAINED FROM Your Department Chairman, University Provost, or President.
COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERS

One of the most important factors in developing a grant proposal is an established broad base of support that includes areas of instruction related to the project and business/community partners. Think Outside Your Specific Area!

- What Industry or Business Partners can you include?
- What non-profit organizations could benefit from the project?
- What educational agencies would strengthen the project?
- What instructors or administrators would add capacity?
- Can you link other projects or student services to your project?

Partner/Collaborators must provide letter of commitment or Memoranda of Understanding. Each must state clearly their role and the dollar value of their partnership. You usually get the proper documentation (and get it in a timely fashion) if you provide partners with sample letters or MOUs you have written for them. Remember, Contributions by partners are part of the required match.

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

DEADLINES MUST BE MET…ALWAYS! NO ALTERNATIVES!

✔ Submit your proposal to your department chair 4 days before the mailing deadline. Include the final routing sheet.
✔ If YOU mail your proposal, submit it on time by Federal Express. Submit your mailing receipt to the department chair person.

Follow-Up and Award

1. Check to be sure your proposal was delivered/or electronically submitted on time. Check you electronic submission immediately, this site is not perfect.
2. Discuss with the grant consultant or department chair a strategy for follow-up including contacts, e-mails, or letters.
3. When the award letter is received notify your department chair and provost.
4. Prepare to negotiate your budget or other revisions that might be required.
5. Prepare to implement your program.
REPORTING

Remember. You must prove success by proper documentation and evaluation. All future funding is based on project successes.

1. Maintain complete records.
2. Document all participation.
4. Develop your evaluation design.
5. Evaluate your project continuously.
6. FILE ALL REPORTS ON A TIMELY BASIS.
7. File a copy of your reports with your Department Chair.

One of the hallmarks of excellent grant management is paying as close attention to the financial side of the grant as to the program side. Both aspects of the grant require careful monitoring if the total project is to be successful. Meeting the program objectives and the client needs is only half the job. One of the best checks on the progress of grants is the comparison between the percentages of the time elapsed in the grant period and the percentage of the total budget spent. For example, a grant with 80% of the time elapsed and only 30% of the budget spent is in “deep and serious” trouble. Though there will be exceptions, this generally means that funds will be returned to the agency, expenditures are not being recorded properly, and that the college is spending dollars that should be coming from the grant.

Records for a grant are generally retained from three to five years (depending on the funding source) from the closing date or until a final agency audit is completed. Never discard any records without checking with the Director of Grants and Department Chair.

Caution

Audits can occur at any time. A well-organized and accessible file system provides support for efficient management and also inspires confidence in the proper use of funds when agency officers or auditors appear on the scene.
Close-Out

Formal reports are generally due 90 days after the close of a federal grant. State and local grants vary. All grants require documented evaluation of performance. Increasingly, reports are submitted on-line. In multi-year grants, performance deficits will often reduce the dollars awarded for the next year.

CAUTIONS

Credit the funding agency. On any piece of printed matter, whether news release, brochure, or major product, a credit line should appear listing the agency by its full name. In some cases, the grant or contract contains requirements for wording.

GET PERMISSION. FORGIVENESS IS REALLY EXPENSIVE--PERSONALLY, PROFESSIONALLY AND FINANCIALLY.

If a planned action causes the least hesitation or a question, check.

GRANTWRITING RESOURCES

Basic Grantwriting Books


Grassroots Grants: An Activist’s Guide to Grantseeking (2nd ed.) by Andy Robinson. Jossey Bass/Chardon Press (2004) – As the title suggests, this is oriented for community organizers. However, its straightforward approach explains how the process works, from fundraising planning to talking with foundation staff.

planning tool, this book helps organize your work so you’re ready to write effectively.

_Proposal Planning and Writing_ by Lynn and Jeremy Miner. Greenwood Press (2003) – This how-to book has a detailed section about using the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, the *Federal Register*, and government Web pages. It also includes a good discussion on pre-proposal contacts.

_Demystifying Grant Seeking_ by Larissa and Martin Brown. Jossey Bass (2001) – The Browns don’t rehash the basic grants book. Rather, they tell us what we need to do to seek and manage grants. Intended for the small shop or one-person office, _Demystifying Grant Seeking_ talks about how to set up an office to keep track of deadlines, building and maintaining relationships with funders, and what to do after submitting a proposal.

_The Foundation Center’s Guide to Winning Proposals._ Sarah Collins, Editor. The Foundation Center (2003) – With 40 examples of successful proposals from a variety of organizations, this guide gives readers a good look beyond theory to see what’s actually worked.

_Writing for a Good Cause._ Joseph Barbato and Danielle S. Furlich. Fireside (2000) – Unlike fiction, grantwriting isn’t all about the writing. Nevertheless, good writing is important. These authors give probably the best treatment of how to use language in your proposal, with advice on strategy mixed in.

**Magazines and Newspapers**

Many magazines and newspapers cover the fundraising field. These are the ones I consider the best. However, after I had subscribed to a couple of them, I found that I didn’t take the time to read them regularly, so now I just read them occasionally in the library. They all have good websites where you can review current articles.

“Foundation News & Commentary” at http://www.tgci.com – The Grantsmanship Center publishes this quarterly newspaper and sends it for free to anyone working in a nonprofit. About half of it is devoted to selling their trainings, but it always has three or four excellent articles. You can look at several years’ past articles on their website.

“Grassroots Fundraising Journal” at http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/ At the opposite end of the spectrum from the Chronicle, the Journal says they provide “practical tips and tools to help you raise money for your organization.” An excellent how-to resource for the small agency or beginning fundraiser.