



National Association for  
Sport and Physical Education

# **THE PHYSICAL EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING**

## **2nd Edition**

**By Louis E. Bowers, Ph.D.**



# **THE PHYSICAL EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL GRANT WRITING**

**HOW TO FIND FUNDING & PREPARE  
WINNING PROPOSALS, 2ND EDITION**



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National Association for  
Sport and Physical Education

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# Preface

This book is written for K-12 school physical educators, college and/or university physical education and wellness specialists, students and faculty members who want to increase their chances of winning grant funding and administering grant projects successfully. Its content is based on the author's 40 years of experience in writing and reviewing successful grant proposals, as well as in managing more than 50 grants awarded by local service clubs and foundations, national foundations and state and federal government funding agencies. That experience is enhanced further by the author's having developed and taught an online graduate course on grant writing for the past three years using the *Physical Educator's Guide to Successful Grant Writing* as a textbook. This updated edition features the latest information from books and Web sites pertaining to sources of grants and to the art and science of writing winning grant proposals.

Upon first introduction, the world of grant funding can be daunting. Finding the appropriate source of funding, writing a winning grant and administering it within the funding agency's regulations and accountability requirements can be a formidable challenge. Mastering each of the challenges one at a time as it presents itself makes the process easier. Many educators start with a small, locally funded grant and use the experience to gain the knowledge and confidence to prepare proposals for larger grants. Circumstances might require, though, that the first proposal that you write is for a large, nationally funded grant.

This book and its accompanying CD-ROM will provide ideas and guidance in creating the grant application, searching for matching funding for your project, writing the proposal and managing the project once the grant has been awarded. With the massive amount of information available in books and on the Internet regarding sources of funding and writing grants, this book condenses the essence of what physical educators and wellness specialists who are seeking grants need to know about formulating a project, identifying a funding source, writing a successful grant proposal and managing the project. It contains information about productive search engines along with a list of key search words that will enable you to access funding agency Web sites that are appropriate for your project. We've also included a list of agencies that currently are providing funding related to the interest of physical education and wellness specialists.

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This second edition also includes a CD-ROM featuring funding agency contact information, including links to the agencies' Web sites. The types of funding that grant makers support changes over time, so we've also included instruction on how to conduct up-to-date computer searches for new funding sources using general search engines, the accompanying CD and a keyword index. The book does not include for-profit organizations that conduct funding searches for a fee or for-profit grant-writing services. The book's purpose is to provide physical educators with the knowledge and skills needed to identify funding sources and write grant proposals on their own without paying a professional grant writer.

Using this resource in tandem with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education's Grant Opportunities Database (see pp. 157–158), which is updated monthly, will arm you with the information and guidance you need to locate and pursue the most promising grant opportunities for your organization.

The book and the CD also include contact information for sources of local, state and national demographic data, health and education statistics and injury data. That information can be useful in preparing your grant application's introduction, needs statement and evaluation sections of the grant application. Only official Web sites that are updated frequently are included.

The book stresses collaboration with professional colleagues, with other departments and with schools or community agencies in submitting joint grant applications, when appropriate. Chapters are dedicated to the characteristics of successful proposals, and they focus on attention to detail in writing each section of the proposal. A checklist at the end of each chapter can help you conduct a final check of each section of your proposal to ensure that you haven't omitted something important.

The writing in this book is purposely direct, easy to understand and organized systematically to lead readers through the process of searching for funding, writing a grant proposal and managing the awarded project to successful completion.

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# About the Author

Louis E. Bowers, Ph.D., is a distinguished university professor emeritus at the University of South Florida, in Tampa. Dr. Bowers has been a teacher, administrator, professional leader and grant writer and administrator in higher education for 40 years. His teaching, which has included courses in kinesiology, motor development and assessment, as well as adapted physical education, has been recognized with several outstanding-teacher awards.

Dr. Bowers has written 52 successful grant proposals, individually and in collaboration with others, that received a total of \$3,294,900 in funding from the U.S. Office of Education, the Florida Department of Education, national foundations, national corporations and local service clubs. The grants have supported research ranging from the design and evaluation of developmental play centers for preschool children with disabilities, to more recent studies of the caloric expenditure of children on play structures. Other grants received have been for program development in adapted physical education teacher preparation, scholarships for 30 undergraduate students, and graduate assistantships for 152 master's-degree students in their preparation for teaching adapted physical education.

For many years, Dr. Bowers reviewed grants for the U.S. Department of Education, the Florida Department of Education and, more recently, for the Carol M. White Physical Education Program. He has served on the University of South Florida Research Council and has conducted numerous workshops on grant writing. For the past three years, he has taught an online graduate course — Grant Writing for Physical Educators — at the University of South Florida.

Dr. Bowers was an early leader in developing physical education programs for people with disabilities and was instrumental in founding the National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals With Disabilities. He served as president of the organization for two years and received its Distinguished Service Award in 1986 and its Scholarly Contribution Award in 1988.

In 1996, Dr. Bowers was awarded a Distinguished University Professorship at the University of South Florida for outstanding teaching, research and service. He retired in 2000, but, as professor emeritus, continues to teach, conduct research, write and consult with corporations and education agencies.

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# Acknowledgments

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the many individuals who assisted me in my educational and professional growth and accomplishments, especially as it led to the completion of this book.

I recognize and thank my parents, who valued education highly and encouraged and supported me in all of my education-related endeavors. Thank you to all of my teachers and students, who challenged me to learn and think both critically and creatively.

I appreciate that I have learned about physical education and grant writing from many of my colleagues over the years, but I especially want to recognize Dr. Steve Klesius, who co-wrote numerous grant proposals with me over more than 30 years.

And last, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my wife, RoseAnne, and to our wonderful family for their love and constant support.

– *Louis E. Bowers*

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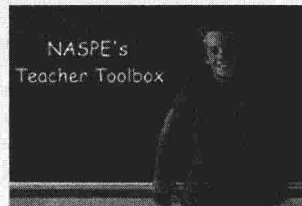
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# 1

## Getting Started With Grants

### ► Understanding the Grant Process

The awarding of grants nationally is a relatively new practice that began with the Cooperative Education Act in 1956 and the National Defense Act of 1958. The practice continued in the 1960s with the Vocational Education Act, the Higher Education Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The amount of funding from both the federal government and private foundations has increased significantly over the past 50 years.

A grant involves funding from an agency that has certain requirements that those receiving funds must meet. Only nonprofit agencies can win most grants, as defined by Section 501(c) of the U.S. Tax Code as being exempt from paying federal income taxes and organized and operated exclusively to serve education, scientific, literary and/or religious endeavors, or for testing for public safety. Grants almost always come in the form of money, but they also can come as equipment, facilities or services.

A grant is neither charity nor an outright gift. Instead, it's the manifestation of a funding agency's desire to see certain goals achieved through an individual or individuals within a nonprofit organization who have the vision, desire and capability to attain those goals.

Before awarding any funds, the funding agency must be convinced that the nonprofit has identified a need, has proposed a project that will attain the agency's goals and is capable of

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carrying out the project. Projects begin with the recognition of a need and a desire to fill that need. The funding agency then must be persuaded to award funding by a written proposal that, on occasion, is accompanied by an oral presentation. Most often, the funding agency doesn't have any foreknowledge about the nonprofit or its accomplishments, personnel, facilities, equipment or plan for meeting the agency's funding priorities. All it has to go on is the information in the proposal about the nonprofit, its needs and its plans. Thousands of agencies provide funding to nonprofit organizations. The challenge is to identify the funder that is most appropriate for your project.

## ► Categories of Funding Sources

1. Funding sources usually fall into one of three categories:
2. Foundations, which may be community, family, corporate or operating.
3. Professional organizations, which may be business, industry or professional-interest groups.
4. Government, which can be local, state or federal.

**Community foundations** are supported through local donations and address the needs of the community's residents. Community foundations, which are tax-exempt community charities that receive funds from corporations, businesses and even other foundations, are the fastest-growing type of foundation. Their funds are distributed as grants to nonprofit agencies in the community and usually range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for year-long grants. As of this writing, some 680 community foundations operate in the United States. You can access information on many community foundations on the CD that accompanies this book, or by visiting [www.communityfoundations.net](http://www.communityfoundations.net) and highlighting "Find Your Community Foundation."

**Family foundations** are endowed almost entirely from a single source, often an individual or a wealthy family. The 30,000 private family foundations in the United States focus their funding — grants usually in the range of \$5,000 to \$25,000 — on various social, cultural, environmental, health and education endeavors. The number of grants and the amount of funding that foundations are able to award each year is determined largely by the interest earned on their invested endowment. Private foundations designate their funding to be awarded geographically at the local, state or national level.

**Corporate foundations** operate separately from their parent corporations, with their own boards of directors, and provide grants from \$10,000 to \$50,000, typically for projects that lie within the parent corporations' fields of interest. Occasionally, though, they also fund projects outside those interests. A health insurance company, for example, might form a foundation to fund health education, physical fitness or wellness projects, along with other social-needs projects. Outside of their foundations, corporations also provide charitable gifts to nonprofit organizations.

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**Professional organizations** include service clubs, businesses, industries, professional associations and other nonprofits that don't establish foundations. These organizations provide grants that promote the common good and that promote themselves indirectly through the favorable publicity associated with funding a successful grant project. A local Civitan Club, for example, might fund construction of an accessible elementary school playground for children with disabilities. IBM's providing computers for students in a high school personal-fitness program, and the American College of Sports Medicine's funding research in the area of exercise physiology are examples from business and industry.

**Government agencies** — local, state and federal — award funding in the form of grants to nonprofit organizations throughout the United States. Government agencies fund not only research, but also projects that include development of curriculum and programs, preparation of instruction materials, strategies to include students with disabilities in regular classes and the improvement of teacher preparation programs. Types of government agency funding include discretionary grants, formula grants and contracts.

Congress, state governments and county commissions decide what areas of need are most crucial in their respective jurisdictions. They then provide discretionary funding for competitive grant projects designed to improve an identified area of need. For example, Congress passed the Physical Education for Progress Act (PEP) in 2000, to help improve physical activity, nutrition and body composition among U.S. children and youths. The legislation *authorized* the federal government to spend up to \$400 million over five years, but actually appropriated only \$5 million in grants to assist in initiating, expanding and improving physical education programs for students in grades K-12. It's important to note that Congress is not obligated to provide as much funding as the legislation authorizes, and frequently “underfunds” programs such as PEP.

Renamed in 2002 as the Carol M. White Physical Education Program, PEP funding has increased sluggishly over the years and received \$80 million in appropriations for fiscal 2010. As of this writing, the PEP Grant program faces an uncertain future, as the president's budget proposal for fiscal 2011 proposes folding PEP Grants into a proposed Successful, Safe and Healthy Students program. In the program's first year, 20 states would receive funding to conduct school surveys to determine the areas of greatest need, which, presumably, would include physical education. Local education agencies (LEA) within those states then would compete for funding to address those needs.

The federal government also sends “formula” or “flow-through” funding to each state based on a needs formula that accounts for population and/or economic conditions. States, in turn, allocate the funds to each county or LEA based on a state needs formula. It pays to follow formula funding and to know whether your school system, college or university qualifies for such funds. Check with your school system, college or university's grants and research office to determine the status of flow-through funding in your state. Government contracts to evaluate or assist in conducting federal projects are advertised in *Commerce Business Daily*, [www.cbdnet.gpo.gov/](http://www.cbdnet.gpo.gov/).

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## ► Myths About Grants: What's the Truth?

A number of myths and misconceptions surround the preparation of a grant proposal and the benefits of having a grant funded. Lack of experience with grants or, perhaps, some miscommunication gives rise to such myths. Starting below, we try to dispel a number of the most common myths about grant seeking.

### **Myth 1. Grant Funding Isn't Available for Physical Education Projects**

This myth has been fueled by the fact that, until recent years, funding for physical education has been limited. Over the past 20 years, funding for education has increased and so has funding for physical education.

A 2005 breakdown of funding by foundations shows that 20 percent of all grants were awarded to education projects, 12 percent went to health projects, 4 percent went to youth development projects, 2 percent went to recreation and sport projects, and 1 percent went to nutrition projects. This means that almost 40 percent of foundation funding was available in areas where physical educators and wellness specialists are eligible to receive funding alone or in collaboration with other disciplines or community agencies. (The Foundation Center, [www.fdcenter.org](http://www.fdcenter.org)). Add that to the grant opportunities from local service clubs, corporations, professional associations and athletic teams discussed previously, and the myth begins to disintegrate.

The PEP Grant program also helps dispel the myth that no grant funding is available to physical educators. The funding competition in 2010 resulted in 76 new grants, at a total of \$36.1 million, along with \$43.9 million dispersed to existing multi-year grants. Still, as stated above, PEP's future as a stand-alone program devoted to physical education is in doubt.

PEP funding — however long it lasts — and all the other sources of funding for physical education described in Chapter 2 should put to rest the myth that no grant funding is available to physical educators.

### **Myth 2. Grants Are Like a Sweepstakes: Based on Luck**

If one were to believe this myth, it would be smart to submit as many hastily prepared grant proposals to as many different funding agencies as possible. That would be a waste of valuable time, however. The truth is that government funding agencies and most foundations use at least three knowledgeable, impartial professionals to review grant proposals. Each reviewer is provided with and uses a written set of criteria with an accompanying numerical rating system for reviewing grant proposals independently. Lastly, reviewers usually meet in person or via telephone to discuss and to decide on a composite rating for each proposal. This thorough process, which is monitored by government or foundation grant officers, results in the funding of those proposals with the highest ratings because, in the reviewers' opinions, they most closely meet the stated criteria for the grants competition and offer the greatest probability for success.



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Private foundations have a board made up of distinguished citizens who volunteer their time and services for setting funding priorities and reviewing and rating proposals for funding. Private foundations invest funds in proposals that project the greatest return on their investment.

Government agencies and private foundations don't award funding by lottery or because they "like" particular grant seekers. Rather, winning competitive grants takes establishing a need, proposing a solid plan to remedy or research the problem, a strong evaluation plan and a cost-effective budget, all explained clearly in a well-organized proposal.

Because it takes considerable effort to prepare a winning grant, the wisest strategy is to match the your project's goals with those of one or several funding agencies, then select those one or two agencies that afford the highest probability for funding. Devoting valuable time to preparing an outstanding proposal to an agency with a high probability for funding your project is much more productive than submitting hastily prepared proposals to many agencies that might or might not see your project as a good match.

### **Myth 3. I Can Prepare a Competitive Grant Proposal in One or Two Days**

We can dispel this myth by saying that no high-quality grant proposal can be developed and written in one or two days. Most grant-writing team members have ongoing teaching, program advising or administrative responsibilities during the time the grant proposal needs to be prepared, reducing the time available for each member to work on the proposal and limiting the times that team members can meet.

Even if you've gathered the data to support the proposal's needs statement, you've secured budget figures in advance and you use the fastest, most modern delivery technology, it still takes several weeks to prepare a grant proposal of any consequence. You need to allocate time to request and receive original signed copies of letters of support or letters of cooperation and agreements from colleagues, school administrators or community agencies. Surprisingly, it sometimes takes the most time to gain the approval and signatures of people within your own organization. Sometimes, delivering the proposal to the appropriate administrator personally can speed up the process.

If you have enough advance notice of the submission deadline for the grant, the process should start at least six weeks before the deadline. On the other hand, if all potential grantees are notified that the proposal due date is within two weeks, you must try to prepare the best proposal possible within the time available. In that instance, every competitor for the grant is equally disadvantaged.

Funding agencies tend to make grant announcements at about the same time each year, so mark the calendar and begin to prepare the proposal before the announcement. Some grant-writing teams form a task force and begin gathering data for the needs statement and planning the proposal six months to a year before the proposal is due.