**Grant Writing: Proposal Components**

Funding is a crucial component of any successful career exploration program. Many school districts combine public school funding with additional grant funds accrued through grant writing. While many larger districts have district-level grant writers, any educator can develop grant proposals. This document was created for all positions to use, including district leaders, principals, classroom teachers, and counselors. Below are the major components of most grant proposals:

**Components of a Grant Proposal**

**Cover letter**

This is usually the first page on the written grant proposal and should include the name of the grant, the grant applicant’s name and position, and the address of the school or district. In your cover letter, include the amount of funding you are applying for, what the grant would be used for, and how your proposal aligns with the funder’s organization and mission. Additionally, signatures of approval may be required from school and district leadership. When obtaining these signatures, make sure you are clear with leadership about what the funding is for; this is crucial for ensuring there is buy-in during program implementation.

**Introduction**

The introduction (also called an abstract or summary) should summarize the overall proposal, including the school or district’s need for funding, and what programming you would like funded. Focus on what the proposal is about and why it should be funded. Strong proposals highlight the overall impact funding would be for students in this introduction section; it lays the groundwork for a strong case for funding.

**Background/Need**

During this section, provide a clear overview of the school or district. Include important and relevant data, which can include demographic information, an overview of school staff or programming, or information about district graduation rates or registration for programming. In your proposal, clearly explain what the need for the school or district is and use the data to support your writing. Address what problem you are trying to solve with this grant funding. This sets the stage for the next section.

**Program Description**

The program description should serve as a narrative of what the grant is funding, as well as the solution to the need described in the background section. Be specific in what grant funds would be used for and explain how this program supports your school or district.

**Implementation Plan**

This section is often the bulk of the proposal because there are many areas to address. Sometimes funders require some of this section to be split into different sections. The Implementation plan is *how* the programming will run successfully; it should provide a clear picture that you and your team have considered all the facets of programmatic planning. The implementation plan should include:

* Overall Program Design: How will your program be rolled out? Will it begin in one classroom or grade level? This is where you flesh out all the details of the program that the grant will be funding.
* Goals & Objectives: During this section, list goals for both programmatic success and impact. Consider making these SMART goals—goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.
* Timeline: Detail what programming and planning will look like. Some funders provide a template for a rollout timeline, or you can create your own. Think big picture while mapping out your timeline and provide tentative dates for implementation.
* Team Involved: Include who will be involved in the planning and implementation of grant programming. Strong proposals (and career exploration programs) involve a team of educators at the school and district level. Listing positions instead of names can usually suffice if the team has not been created yet.
* Support for Programming: Many proposals require that there be school and district support for the grant program. It can be incredibly difficult to launch a program without the support from administration. Highlighting that your program has support shows the funder that there are less barriers for successful implementation.

**Evaluation & Measurement Plan**

Describe what outcomes you will be measuring as well as target goals for these metrics. Include the evaluation tools you will use to measure outcomes and provide how often these tools will be implemented. Refer to Chapter 4 in the playbook to develop a full evaluation plan.

**Sustainability**

During this section, detail how this program will be sustainable, especially once grant funding has run out. Include components of school buy-in, family engagement, and community support in your sustainability plan; these are all facets of a long-standing, successful career exploration plan. Additionally, include whether your program can be scaled to additional classrooms, grade levels, or schools in the district.

**Budget & Narrative**

Any grant proposal should include a budget that showcases how funds will be used. Be specific by including what amounts of funds would go to field trips, technology, staffing, etc. The narrative is just as important as the budget; it provides context to how this spending aligns with the overall program proposal. You can provide narrative by explaining why funds are devoted to items on your budget. Be sure to not go over what the funder has listed as the maximum grant amount.

**Other Items:**

Additional deliverables may be required for a grant proposal. In order to make sure you have ample time to obtain documents from other departments in your district, make sure you are applying to grants well ahead of the deadline. Additional items that may be requested include:

* Tax information
* Financial documents
* Letters of support