

Funding for programs

As outlined in the playbook, the best way to implement sustainable career exploration programs is to create buy-in amongst your community and fully implement these programs into your school culture. However, funding is still important in helping to create new programs or expand on existing ones, to provide resources that make for more robust programs, and helps with maintenance of these programs.

In this section, we will provide you with some tools and resources to understand what makes for a good grant application from a funder perspective and where to find funding for your programs.

Grant Application: How to stand out

Writing a successful grant application starts with a well-thought-out program. Below we will provide some tips for putting together a successful grant application for your career exploration program.

- Finding the right fit grant is an important part of getting your program funded and make sure to follow directions. Understanding what the funder wants and meeting their requirements is important in the grant writing process. If your program does not meet their needs, it will not be funded.
- Provide information on how your program meets the needs of your community. You want to write your proposal with your community in mind. Is this a program that will meet the needs of your students? What is the need for a program like the one you are proposing and how will your community benefit from this?
- When writing your proposal start with a mission statement that tells the funder the purpose of your program. Make sure that you specify what your program entails, what it looks like on the ground with your students and what you hope to change and accomplish with your program. The more details you can provide, the better. You want the funder to have all the information needed to visualize what your program aims to accomplish and how impactful it will be.
- It is important to have background information and data to back up why your program will be successful. The most successful grant applications are those that demonstrate an understanding of the outcomes they would like to see in their students based on existing data and research.
- Create a timeline for your program, this indicates to the funder that you have a plan for implementation. Indicate how your program will be scaled. Will the program be fully implemented right away or is there time needed to scale the program fully?
- Understand and have a plan for how you want to assess your program. Identify what outcomes you want measured and how you hope to measure progress of your program.
- Some questions to ask yourself when thinking of program assessment:
 - Will you be measuring student impact? If so, how?
 - What skills would you like your students to gain from your program?
 - How will you be able to tell that students have gained these skills?
- Your program budget and budget justification should provide information on all program costs, including materials and resources, such as curriculum, and personnel costs if applicable. Be intentional with your spending as funders want a clear picture of how you plan to get the most out of your funding.

- Most importantly, make sure there is buy-in from all those involved in your proposed program. If teachers are a major part of implementation, make sure you include them in drafting the proposal or grant application. There should be support for your program from administrators to teachers, this signals to your funder that this is a program that will be successful because of the investment by all involved.

Funding:

Using existing school funding for career exploration programs

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), signed into law in July 2018 as the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, provides the framework for our nation's career and technical education (CTE) system. For the first time, this legislation now permits Perkins funding to be used on career exploration programming as early as fifth grade. This funding can be leveraged to expand career exploration into the middle school years. To learn more about Perkins V funding visit the [US Dept. of Education site](#)

Resources:

[ACTE funding opportunities](#)

[Perkins Collaborative Resource Network](#)

[American Student Assistance](#)

[Funding for PLTW](#)