



Tip of the Month

The Renaissance Learning (RL) Funding Center is proud to present a new feature, “Grant Tip of the Month”. In this series, expert grant tips will be presented to help educators seek out grant funding, tell a compelling story to the funding agency, and successfully write a winning grant application.

Dr. Deborah Porter, a nationally recognized grant writer and consultant will provide useful tips to guide the process of grant development. Learn how your school can use grant funding to provide innovative materials to help teachers and students.

Answer these questions to determine your school’s readiness to seek and secure grant funding. Are you willing to carve out the time to learn the skill of grant seeking and development? Does your school have characteristics that might compel a granting agency to give you money? and, Do your colleagues at the school understand the commitment required to be good stewards of the grant funding?

Grant funding provides a way for teachers and administrators to be innovative and try new ideas to improve teaching and learning. The most successful of these ideas can then be integrated into the daily operations of schools. Grant writing requires strategic planning, knowing what you truly need for your school and your students, and careful management of the funds and the process for changing and improving your school.

*Tip of the month: **Finding the Funding***

- Where do I go to find money for my school?
- We don’t have enough books for our students?
- Teachers are not using the materials we have efficiently and they need more training?
- My principal says we can’t buy the materials we need out of our regular school budget?
- It costs more money to operate the school buses this year so where will I find the money for technology?

These are the questions that teachers and administrators across the country are struggling to answer. Funds are available to help schools that truly need more resources and are willing to comply with the requirements set forth by the funding agency. The key is finding those funds and matching your needs to the right funding source.

The Funding Center utilizes current databases to identify potential funders and provide alerts to RL customers. Here are some strategies for matching your needs to potential funding sources and “finding the funds.”

1. Determine if your school or organization may be eligible for government grants.
 - a. Ask if your school or district currently receives funding from a federal or state grant or has received these funds in the past?
 - b. Sign up for grant alerts from your state department of education website and through the Funding Center.
 - c. Research your state's education website to see if your school is currently listed as a school targeted for funding assistance. Many states provide a list of schools where the results of state assessments show a need for improvement in reading, math or other subjects.
2. If you are eligible for funding through a state competition, contact the state agency person responsible for the grant to learn more and to access all required forms and information.
3. If you are not eligible for government grants then learn more about seeking funding through foundations and corporate giving.
4. Utilize grant alerts from the Funding Center by carefully reviewing the funding source website or publications and determining if your needs match the purpose of the funding.
5. Contact the Funding Specialist and/or the contact person to ask questions and do more research on what is expected in developing a winning grant proposal.

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