

Hunting and Gathering Community Resources

Step 1 – Your Idea

Step 2 – Your Plan

Your desired resource may come in the shape of people, things, or money – but to acquire them, they all share one commonality: the need to articulate your plan in a specific proposal.

Build the infrastructure using the following components, then adapt it as needed:



- Executive Summary – Say what you mean. Be clear and concise. Avoid industry jargon and over-using imagery.
- Problem Statements/Needs Description – Talk about the problem you are trying to solve with your proposed project. Where is the breakdown? What does it look like? Most importantly, why should people care? What will happen if this problem goes unresolved?
- Desired Outcomes – State clear, specific, measurable objectives.

Non-specific:

Students will improve their test scores on end-of-the year tests.

More specific response:

Participating students in the after school support program will improve their beginning-of-the-year test scores by 10% on end-of-the year state-mandated tests.

- Determining Success – Specifically state how you will know whether the proposal’s objectives have been achieved.

Non-specific:

Students will be tested every ten lessons, and will score at least 80%.

More specific response:

After completing ten lessons, students will take a timed 25-item multiple choice achievement test that has 20 items based on materials covered and 5 items to help identify areas for improvement in the next level of lessons. Successful students will answer 80% of the materials covered items correctly. Items scored incorrect will be “recycled” into the next testing session. Students who score less than 50% on the timed 25-item tests will not be allowed to proceed to the next level of lessons, and they will not be permitted to take the same level test until 5 remedial lessons have been completed.

- Work Flows/Qualifications – Who will be doing what and why are they well-suited for that role?
- Project Timeline – What will be accomplished and in what timeframe(s)? Providing milestones along the way will help determine if the stated objectives have been achieved and help hold you accountable to your investor.

- Itemized Project Budget – Don't forget: the school district is tax-exempt. Be sure to add shipping and handling costs, ensure that your vendor is registered with the district and accepts a purchase order as method of payment.
- Qualifications/Expertise – This refers to the organization or entity that supports you – in this case, Broken Arrow Public Schools.

Established in 1904, Broken Arrow Public Schools is the sixth largest school district in Oklahoma. With a current enrollment of more than 19,000 students, Broken Arrow Public Schools strives to educate, equip and empower a community of learners by providing dynamic learning opportunities, enabling all students to be successful.

For more information about Broken Arrow Public Schools, visit www.baschools.org.

- Conclusions – Don't forget the ASK!
- Appendices – These should be used sparingly, as it is your job to summarize the contents in your proposal
- Cover Letter – Though this will be the first page of your proposal, it is usually the last piece you write, as it needs to be specific to whichever granting entity you are soliciting. No more than a page. Introduce yourself, who you are with, why you are writing, what is enclosed, and how to reach you. And of course, thank them for their time.

Step 3 – Finding and Securing the Resources

Subscribe to list serves and newsletters. School Funding Report is a great, multi-state resource for those seeking funding.

- Visit <http://www.districtadministration.com/subscribe> and create a username and password with your email address. From there, you are able to select which newsletters and email alerts you would like to receive.

Make a list of work industries that might be associated with your project – a.k.a. “Business Categories”.

Connect these business categories with the people you know (your students and colleagues, too, when appropriate).

You've already done the hard part (Step 2), so make the call (either you can make the initial call, or you can ask those individuals who have the connection to introduce you).

Approach them with an incredible opportunity to partner with you and your students on this project and ask for what you need.

Don't be aggressive, but don't be passive-aggressive. If it is revenue you need, ask for the cash to fund the project (be prepared to report that spending to the grantor); if it is materials/consumables, ask for specific items and specific quantities. People like to know, specifically, how they can help.

Whenever you go to events, take a look at the sponsors. Whether it is a company or a foundation, do a little digging – you will likely find that they have the capacity to give.

Go for the grants! The good news is that they follow very similar formats (similar to your Step 2!), and with a little tweaking, you can have a grant request out the door in no time!

- Search for local foundations whose mission aligns with your objectives.
- Observe their parameters – some have word/character limits, etc.