

APPLYING FOR GRANTS

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Grants are funds given to the District, or a specific school or department, which are intended to be used for a specific purpose. Grants may be given by government agencies, businesses, foundations, educational institutions, or individuals. In order to receive a grant, a grant application or proposal is typically submitted to the grantor, and is subject to an approval process.

Grant funds may usually be used only for the intended purposes stated in the approved grant application, and the grantee usually must first receive approval from the grantor before deviating from the original approved budget. The grantor has the right to hold the grantee accountable for its use of grant funds. The grantor may request documentation to verify compliance with grant requirements. The grantor might also request that any unused funds be returned after the end of the grant period.

Planning for new grants

A "grant officer" should be designated for every grant. The grant officer is a district employee who will be responsible for overseeing the grant from start to finish, and for ensuring proper compliance with grant requirements.

Prior to applying for a grant, the grant officer should:

1. Review the grant proposal/application with (and get approval from) their principal, department head or supervisor,
2. Review the proposed grant budget with a member of the WCSD budgeting department, and
3. Get approval to apply for the grant from the WCSD Business Administrator (Brent Bills) to ensure the business department can support the grant.

The WCSD business department will set up budget accounts for grants, and prepare and submit grant reimbursement requests. The Business Department will generally need to have the following information for new grants:

1. The dollar amount of the grant.
2. The end date of the grant.
3. Whether the grant funding source is state, federal or other.
4. Whether a specific accounting program has been assigned for the grant.
5. Whether the granting agency has approved a specific budget plan.
6. Whether (a) the funds will be received up front, or (b) the District will be required to submit reimbursement requests for costs as they are incurred. *(If the District will be submitting reimbursement requests, is there a standard reimbursement request form the District will need to use? Is there a deadline date for the final reimbursement request to be submitted?)*
7. Whether there are any other restrictions on grant funds, and whether / how an adjustment may be made to the approved grant budget plan during the grant period
8. Contact information for someone at the granting organization who will be able to answer questions about the grant

All LEA written Federal direct grant applications must receive the governor's approval.

An organization or agency which awards grants will generally send some type of official, written notification (a.k.a. "award letter") to the grantee which includes most or all of the above information. Schools and departments are

not allowed to begin spending down funds for grants until the award letter has been received and a copy has been provided to the Business Department. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the WCSD Business Administrator.

In the case of certain ongoing state and federal grants which are received every year, funds may be spent before award letters are received, because the state may not provide the exact amount of the award until several months after the start of the new fiscal year.

The Business Department will also work together with the grant officer to establish a budget which conforms with the Utah State Uniform Chart of Accounts. 100% of grant funds will need to be assigned to one or more of the following account categories:

- Employee salaries (*This category includes payments to district employees for salaries, wages, stipends or additional non-contract hours.*)
- Retirement benefits (*This is calculated as a percentage of all salaries for eligible employees. The retirement rate is 23.7% in fiscal year 2016-17, but the rate changes from year to year*)
- Social Security & FICA (*7.65% of all salaries for all employees*)
- Health Insurance (*This is applicable only if the grant funds will be used to pay part or all of the regular salary of an employee who is eligible for health benefits.*)
- Purchased services (*Payments to businesses, or individuals who are not District employees, for services rendered.*)
- Travel (*Transportation, airfare, meals, lodging, per diem and conference registration fees, and any other costs associated with staff travel.*)
- Supplies (*Items that are typically used or depleted during the normal course of district activities, and which have a low cost per item.*)
- Textbooks & Curriculum
- Software
- Equipment (*Computers, hardware, tools, furniture, and other items which have an expected useful life of multiple years, and do not have a low per-item cost.*)
- Indirect Costs (*Amounts the District is allowed to charge to the grant for administrative and overhead costs.*)

Fiscal agent agreements / "flow-through" grants

"Fiscal agent" arrangements occur when funds are granted to the District, but a substantial portion of the grant funds, or all of the grant funds, ultimately flow through to another entity or organization separate from the District. The following problems may be associated with these types of grants.

- The District may be required to allocate significant time and resources to manage and oversee the grant,
- The benefit the District receives in return may be negligible, or disproportionate to the time and resources devoted to overseeing the grant,
- The District may be exposed to greater financial liabilities, or legal risk, and at the same time the District will have less control over grant funds, and its ability to ensure compliance with grant requirements will be diminished.
- The District may not even be legally allowed to receive and distribute grant funds if the grant does not meet the definition of a "school-sponsored activity" per Utah Administrative Code R277-113.

Fiscal agent grant agreements require the approval of both the Superintendent and the Business Administrator.