

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Choice Programs

**TIPS ON WRITING BETTER INTERDISTRICT COOPERATIVE GRANTS
(IDCG) PROGRAM PROPOSALS**

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Many great ideas for Interdistrict Cooperative Grants (IDCG) never make it through to fruition because of weak grant applications. As anyone who has ever done it can attest, grant-writing is an art form that requires an ability to convey ideas clearly, careful wording and phrasing and a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of the Request for Proposal (RFP). Below you will find suggestions from experienced grant writers and reviewers. Although there is no guarantee of success, following these guidelines should help you create stronger applications.

I. PLANNING THE APPLICATION:

1. Read over the entire RFP application carefully before you begin writing.
2. Make sure that you have discussed this proposal with all those who will be involved (stakeholders) to ensure support for your project.
3. The IDCG has an established deadline. Do not ask for an extension.
4. The Connecticut State Department of Education is available for limited technical assistance but **DO YOUR HOMEWORK**. Read, research and study.
5. Unless you feel you have a strong application and have taken adequate time to complete the RFP fully, do **NOT** submit your application. Readers become annoyed at what appear to be hastily written, poorly conceived applications. Do not submit multiple weak applications hoping one will be accepted.

II. WRITING THE PROPOSAL:

1. Please answer all the questions and answer fully; use the required forms and format; and get the necessary signatures.
2. More words do not necessarily make a better proposal. Try to be clear and succinct.
3. Try to avoid “edu-speak” or technical jargon unless you clarify what you mean so that that readers will understand. Not everyone knows, for example, what “sheltered English” means.
4. If you use acronyms, spell them out - National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
5. Describe the objectives in measurable terms. Avoid making statements that are unsupported. “Beliefs” are not evidence. Objectives are measurable. Use words that imply change. Try not to overstate your objectives. Better to deliver more than what is expected and projected than to struggle to achieve impossible objectives.
6. Budgets should not include any item that has not been described in the grant proposal; do not leave out any cost that is indicated in the proposal. Budgets are cost projections, but it is best to not estimate costs if possible.

7. Do not submit any extraneous materials that are not specifically requested for the RFP.

III. REVIEWING THE APPLICATION:

1. It is often difficult to edit one's own work. If possible, have someone else read your application looking for things such as lack of clarity, inconsistencies, and ambiguities.
2. Double check to be sure your budget and student numbers add up correctly.
3. Please use Spell Check to avoid typos and grammatical errors.
4. Your proposal should be neat, clean and easy to read.

Notes:

- Many thanks to Kathy Randall of CREC for her contributions to this document.
- Sources used included "Grant Writing Tips" by Anne Raymond and Mark O'Donnell of CREC; Clemow Consulting Group Workshop; *Grassroots Grants*, by Andy Robinson.