

# TOP 10 TIPS FROM T&L'S GRANT GURU

Funding from grants is often at the core of a successful technology plan, but writing proposals requires a bit of magic and a lot of time. Grants can be a good way for educators to collaborate on building strong programs, but some creative thinking is also required. Here are ten hints that can help you rake in the funds.

## TIP #1 FIND A BRIGHTER IDEA

Becoming proactive at identifying needs will serve you well. When a grant Request for Proposal (RFP) becomes available, the grant seeker with good ideas will be ahead of the game. This is really the cornerstone of the grant-writing process. So what is a good idea? How do you go about getting these ideas? Ask your colleagues to identify problem areas that might benefit from a new program or a new way of doing things. The needs you identify may suggest a solution or a set of activities to solve a problem. Some ideas may come from looking at student achievement trends. For example, your fourth grade writing scores may consistently trail fifth grade scores. What are some possible reasons for this?

Ask existing groups what problems they have identified. These include: PTAs, faculty committees, department chairpersons, administrator groups, parent advisory councils, student organizations, and civic organizations.

## TIP #2 PREPARE AN ELEVATOR SPEECH

First you must have a sound idea that makes logical sense. What is the problem that you are trying to solve? What specific activities will kids do? How will you know when you have achieved your goals? Can others replicate what you did? Answer these questions and create your own elevator speech. This sales presentation should take less than a minute, the time it takes to ride an elevator in a tall building from the street to the penthouse.

## TIP #3 GET A SUPPORT GROUP

There is nothing like a support group to make a grant application actually happen. Getting a grant team together early on will help you through the process. With the RFP distributed among team members, highlight the program mandates. Determine from the group what you have in place and what you would like to accomplish. Take a look at the gap. The work of your grant team will be to identify what is now and where you would like to be in the future.

Team writing of the actual narrative is not recommended. A group-written grant tends to have neither a clear focus nor a single voice. The narrative writer should use the support group as a sounding board. Discuss whether or not your proposal makes sense. Is it doable?

## TIP #4 SET YOUR WATCH

A grant proposal takes time to develop and write. Estimate how long you think it will take, and then multiply by five. This is an accurate reflection of how long the process will actually take. Scheduling your own time and that of your support group can keep you on track. It is not uncommon to put in long days throughout the process, so plan for the unexpected. The copy machine will go on the fritz the day you need to make five copies. Your mailing service closes early the day the proposal has to be in the mail. Schedule, plan ahead, and have a back-up plan.

# EDUCATION GRANTS 2009-2010 Deadlines

## JULY 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Include a sustainability plan

Whether it's maintaining and upgrading technology or paying a program teacher's salary, you must have a feasible plan for covering costs once grant funds are gone. Putting it in writing makes it more likely to happen.

## AUGUST 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Update your community needs assessment

Web-based survey tools such as SurveyMonkey facilitate data collection and analysis, particularly from off-campus stakeholders. Set up and administer a new survey to gather current information.

## SEPTEMBER 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Use Web-based applications to promote collaboration while developing your proposal

Invite stakeholders to leave feedback at their convenience by setting up an online group or wiki. If security is a concern, choose a tool that has access controls. Set up and administer a new survey to gather current information.

## OCTOBER 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Establish a site grant-writing committee

Proposal writing often falls to one or two volunteers. This results in staff burnout and less-than-successful program implementation. Increase success and buy-in through shared responsibility.

## NOVEMBER 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Attend a grant-writing class or workshop

There are tricks of the trade that increase your chances of success. An upfront investment in a class or workshop may be repaid many times over when your proposals are consistently funded.

## DECEMBER 2009 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Read sample proposals

Grant-making agencies often provide samples of funded proposals. Ask for examples and read them carefully. Note writing style, formatting, use of graphics, etc. Use this information to polish your proposal.

- 1** Dow Jones Newspaper Fund National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year Program  
[www.newspaperfund.org/uploads/2009TOYform.pdf](http://www.newspaperfund.org/uploads/2009TOYform.pdf)

### ONGOING

Digital Wish  
[www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/grant\\_awards](http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/grant_awards)

NASA NSPIRES  
<http://nspires.nasaprs.com>

Microsoft Unlimited Potential (UP) Grants  
[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

Verizon Foundation Grants  
<http://foundation.verizon.com>

- 1** American Honda Foundation Grant  
<http://corporate.honda.com/america/>
- 3** Toshiba Large Grants  
[www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp](http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp)

### ONGOING

Do Something Grants  
[www.dosomething.org/grants](http://www.dosomething.org/grants)

Intel Community Grants  
[www.intel.com/community/grant.htm](http://www.intel.com/community/grant.htm)

Dollar General Grants  
[www.dollargeneral.com](http://www.dollargeneral.com)  
(click on our community)

DonorsChoose  
[www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)

- 1** Toshiba Small Grants Program (for K-6)  
[www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp](http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp)

- 6** Walden University Educator for a Day Grants  
[http://www.waldenu.edu/c/Schools/Schools\\_12149.htm](http://www.waldenu.edu/c/Schools/Schools_12149.htm)

- 15** NEA Foundation  
• Student Achievement Grants\*  
• Learning & Leadership Grants  
[www.nfie.org](http://www.nfie.org)

- 17** Lowe's Toolbox for Education\*  
[www.toolboxforeducation.com](http://www.toolboxforeducation.com)

- 1** American Honda Foundation Grant  
<http://corporate.honda.com/america>

- 1** International Reading Association Ronald W. Mitchell Convention Travel Grant  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

- 15** International Reading Association Awards  
• Eleanor M. Johnson Elementary Teacher Award  
• IRA Award for Technology and Reading  
• Nila Banton Smith Award  
[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

- 28** SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Environmental Excellence Awards\*  
[www.seaworld.org](http://www.seaworld.org)

- 30** Vernier/NSTA Technology Awards  
[www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx](http://www.nsta.org/about/awards.aspx)

- 15** Ezra Jack Keats Foundation Mini-Grants  
[www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html](http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html)

- 30** Captain Planet Foundation Grants  
[www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

### ONGOING

Tech Museum Tech Awards  
[www.techawards.org](http://www.techawards.org)

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
[www.dosomething.org/grants](http://www.dosomething.org/grants)

- 1** Association for Library Service to Children's (ALSC) Awards  
• BWI Summer Reading Program Grant  
• Penguin Young Readers Group Award  
• Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Award  
• Bookapalooza Program  
• Distinguished Service Award  
[www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

- 31** Captain Planet Foundation Grants  
[www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

\* 2008 deadline. Please check Web site for 2009 deadline.

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## DELL UNDERSTANDS THE CHALLENGES

Our goal is to help customers leverage available resources by increasing their awareness of existing grant opportunities and associated deadlines, particularly around technology, and help address the pain point of limited budgets.

### The Stimulus Funding Package, Simplified

The economic stimulus package of 2009 is a historic opportunity for educators, healthcare providers, and government agencies to enhance their efforts in making lives better. But understanding what funding is available, how it can be used, and which projects will best serve your community or agency can be daunting. The Economic Stimulus Learning Center aims to demystify the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and provide tools and information to help you make strategic decisions that best serve your community. [www.Dell.com/funding](http://www.Dell.com/funding)

### Join the conversation on www.Edu4U.com

Edu4U is dedicated to people who are seeking to harness the power of technology to enhance teaching and learning for all students. For that reason, Dell has committed itself to revolutionizing educational technology. Within this site, you will find information, resources and fellow travelers to help you achieve your educational goals. [www.Edu4U.com](http://www.Edu4U.com)

"The partnership with Dell has been a wonderful venture. Dell has been willing to help us get to where we want to be. Everyone we work with, from the project manager to systems engineers understands our needs and steps up to help us find solutions."

- Lloyd Brown, Director of Technology, Henrico County Public Schools [www.dell.com/casestudies](http://www.dell.com/casestudies)

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[www.techlearning.com](http://www.techlearning.com)

# TOP 10 TIPS FROM T&L'S GRANT GURU

CONTINUED...

## TIP #5 FILL IN THE HOLES

Take the time to read and re-read the RFP thoroughly. Make several copies and carry one around with you. Highlight action verbs. Follow the guidelines of the RFP, and create a tabbed notebook with a section for each part of the proposal. Most proposals follow a similar format and your tabs will probably look something like this: abstract, introduction, assessment of needs, goals and objectives, activities, key personnel, evaluation, and budget. As you complete a section, place it behind the appropriate tab and fill in the holes. I like to begin with the budget. This forces me to think through all aspects of my project, and it helps to determine if my project will be doable given the available funds.

## TIP #6 JUDGE FOR YOURSELF

Many RFPs include a scoring rubric to guide you in the preparation of your proposal. If one is included, write to the rubric. It's also a good idea to offer your services as a grant reader. This invaluable experience will help you to recognize what grant readers see. You will gain experience in the grant writing process by reading outstanding proposals, and learn even more from reviewing mediocre ones. You will see first-hand how readers scored each component of a proposal and find examples of how different grantseekers tackled the same RFP.

## TIP #7 IF YOU GOT IT, SHARE IT

Grantfundors like to invest their money in projects that take on a life of their own. In planning your proposal, pay particular attention to how you will share your project with others. Will yours be a model visitation site? Will your project produce reports or products that others may want? Will others be able to adopt and adapt your project? Will you create news releases, a project Web site, or have other ways to share what you have accomplished?

## TIP #8 KNOW WHEN TO STOP

Getting started on a proposal is the easy part. Knowing when to stop is less clear. After writing and rewriting, at some point you need to let go and place your energy elsewhere. Go with your gut feeling. You do not need to make every correction that others may suggest. Use suggestions that make sense to you.

## TIP #9 MAKE IT A PRACTICE

How do you become a grantwriter? Most people don't start out to be grantwriters, but opportunities present themselves, and they jump at the chance. There are many books, workshops, and conferences devoted to grantwriting. The winning grant writer will write well, will have a flair for organization, and will draw readers into the writing.

## TIP #10 PARTY AND GIVE THANKS

Celebrate all your hard work and the work of your team. Plan milestone events that mark your progress. Remember to take lots of pictures, tape video interviews, and gather testimonials along the way. Make sure to thank your funders, partners, and participants. Give credit to those who make your project a success. Throughout the grantwriting process, you will need to gain new skills and take on jobs that may be unfamiliar to you. You will soon become a skilled publicist, social director, author, researcher, and tour guide.

# EDUCATION GRANTS 2009-2010 Deadlines

## JANUARY 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Identify site needs to focus grant-seeking efforts

What are your site's challenges and how would additional funding help? Prepare a brief description, including data to support your statements of need. Use this when selecting possible grants.

- 12** National Center for Family Literacy Verizon Tech Savvy Awards [www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org) (click on events)
- 15** Olympus America/Tool Factory Contests
  - Student Photo Contest\*
  - Podcasting Contest\* [www.toolfactory.com/olympus](http://www.toolfactory.com/olympus)
- 19** International Reading Association Teacher as Researcher Grants\* [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
- 28** Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association's ExploraVision competition\*

## FEBRUARY 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Build your budget from zero

Some grant expenditures may be mandated. Beyond that, avoid the temptation to use past practice to build this new budget. In addition, consider how the new program will be sustained beyond the grant period.

- 1** NEA Foundation
  - Student Achievement Grants\*
  - Learning & Leadership Grants [www.nfie.org](http://www.nfie.org)
- 1** Toshiba Large Grants (Grades 7-12) [www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp](http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/home/default.jsp)
- 1** American Honda Foundation Grant <http://corporate.honda.com/america/>
- 2** The American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) 10 award and grant programs\* [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)
- 13** Lowe's Toolbox for Education [www.toolboxforeducation.com](http://www.toolboxforeducation.com)
- 17** Intel Schools of Distinction Awards [www.intel.com/education/schoolsofdistinction](http://www.intel.com/education/schoolsofdistinction)

## MARCH 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Prepare an "elevator pitch"

Grantors target creative ideas built on sound strategies that are easy to understand and can be quickly explained. Summarize your proposal in a couple of sentences — the time it takes to ride a few floors in an elevator.

- 3** National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar & Institute Programs\* [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)
- 13** International Reading Association Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Grant [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
- 16** ISTE Kay L. Bitter Vision Award for Excellence in Technology-Based Pre-K Education\* [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org)
- 30** ISTE Online Learning Awards [www.globalschoolnet.org](http://www.globalschoolnet.org)
- 31** ISTE SIG Media Specialist Technology Innovation Award\* [www.iste.org](http://www.iste.org)
- 31** Captain Planet Foundation [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

## APRIL 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Consider foundation grants

Charitable foundations often earmark resources for local programs, and education is typically a high funding priority. Contact nearby foundations to learn more about the kinds of projects they are funding.

- 24** Lemelson-MIT InvenTeam Grants\* <http://web.mit.edu/inventeams>
- 30** Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org)
- 30** ING Unsung Heroes Awards\* [www.ing.com/us/unsungheroes](http://www.ing.com/us/unsungheroes)

## MAY 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Explore forming a local education foundation (LEF)

An LEF usually works with just one school district, but is an independent entity with its own board of directors, staff and bylaws. Most support small projects such as teacher mini-grants.

- 1** American Honda Foundation Grant <http://corporate.honda.com/america/>
- 15** Olympus America/Tool Factory Contests
  - Student Photo Contest\*
  - Podcasting Contest\* [www.toolfactory.com/olympus](http://www.toolfactory.com/olympus)
- 22** Dollar General Grants
  - Back to School Grants\*
  - Youth Literacy Grants\* [www.dollargeneral.com](http://www.dollargeneral.com)
- 31** Target Local Store Grants [www.target.com](http://www.target.com) (community link)

## JUNE 2010 DEADLINES

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### STRATEGY TIP

#### Use fundraisers for smaller projects

Writing a grant proposal for a small amount of money may be more trouble than it's worth. Look at the application requirements. If the return is too small, investigate possible fundraiser activities instead.

- 1** International Reading Association Travel Grants for Educators [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
- 1** NEA Foundation Grants
  - Learning & Leadership Grants
  - Student Achievement Grants [www.nfie.org](http://www.nfie.org)
- 11** The Lindbergh Foundation Grants [www.lindberghfoundation.org](http://www.lindberghfoundation.org)
- 15** NWA's Sol Hirsch Education Fund Grants [www.nwas.org/grants/solhirsch.php](http://www.nwas.org/grants/solhirsch.php)
- 15** Invent America! Student Contest [www.inventamerica.org](http://www.inventamerica.org)
- 30** Captain Planet Foundation Grants [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

\* 2008 deadline. Please check Web site for 2009 deadline.

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