

INTRODUCTION TO GRANT WRITING

Grants can be a key step in assisting value added agriculture groups on the road from idea to development to marketing, and finally to business. However, good proposals contain good writing backed up by a process of planning, research and outreach.

ISU Extension has outlined a step-by-step process in the search for grant dollars. However, it takes time and persistence to succeed. After you have written a proposal, it could take as long as a year to hear back if you will receive the requested funds to move forward. Even well written proposals are often rejected at any time for any number of reasons.

The following steps are NOT a strict formula. You must carefully read through the grant application for which you are applying and strictly follow their information and format requirements. However, the following information can usually be adapted to fit the needs of the grant for which you are applying.

For additional information, contact the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC) at www.AgMRC.org, phone toll-free at 866-277-5567 or email us at AgMRC@iastate.edu.

Step 1: Background Information

The first step in writing your proposal is to determine why you need a grant. Don't write a grant unless you have clearly defined why you need the money. Remember grant assistance will not carry a project if it is not based on sound principles. You are doing a great disservice to others by denying them the money if your business idea is not built on sound business and market practices. Secondly, gather information. The information will need to come from three key areas – concept, program and expenses.

Determine who will be responsible for gathering the information and delegate to the appropriate person as necessary. This information gathering makes the actual writing of your proposal much easier when it is time to write..

Concept

What is your idea? How does it fit into the current agriculture structure? What is unique about your idea? What specific problem does this grant address and how does it meet the goals of the funding source? How will it help producers beyond those directly related to the grant project? The need that the proposal is addressing must be documented here. You need to convince your funding source that your need is a compelling one. Collect background data on your organization, statistical information (if any is available) on your idea and your agriculture sector in general.

Program

The following checklist covers the program information you will need:

- The nature of the project
- How it will be conducted
- The timetable for the project
- The anticipated outcomes
- Evaluating the results
- Staffing, volunteer needs

Expenses

You will need to have a broad, preliminary budget to show justification for the grant funds. Make sure your costs are in proportion to the outcomes you anticipate.

Step 2: Typical Components of a Proposal

Be sure to check each grant source carefully for any specific format or content requirements.

Component	Summary Description
Executive Summary	Overall summary of your proposal and your project.
Statement of Need	Why is this project needed? Who will it benefit?
Project Description	Details on the project itself. How will the project be implemented? How will the project be evaluated?
Budget	Broad financial description.
Organization Information	Background of group. Why formed? Group's activities and services.
Conclusion	Summary of main points. Solid closing argument for receiving funding.
Support	Letters of support or stories of clients helped.

Executive Summary

This is the most important part of your document. It is on this page that you provide the reader with an overall summary of your project and convince the reader that your project deserves the funding you are asking for. Be sure to include the following:

- Problem – brief statement about the need for this project.
- Goal - clear and concise statement of the goal(s) of the project
- Solution – a short description of the project including what will take place, how people will benefit from the project, etc.
- Funding Requirements – the request for the grant money, how it will be used and how the project will be funded in the future.
- Organization History – a brief statement of the history of the organization, its purpose, activities and the ability to carry out this project.

Statement of Need

Your statement of need enables your reviewers to learn more about the details of your project and the issues behind it. This section is your opportunity to present your side of the debate.

Line up all your arguments and present your case logically and convincingly for the reader.

Consider the following points:

- Find current facts or statistics to support your argument.
- Give the reader hope. Don't lead your reader to believe that investing in agriculture is a grim prospect, but rather, present how your project will be a viable solution to the problem producers are facing.
- Decide if you want to put your project forward as a model or pilot. This could expand your funding options, but it also leads the funder to believe that you are willing to establish this project in other areas. Models only work for certain value added ag projects.
- Does this problem occur in other areas? What additional opportunities or benefit might occur for others as a result of this proposals success?
- Determine your level of need. You are asking the funding source to believe that your project is needed more than somebody else, or your solution to the problem is better than another person's and therefore, fully fund yours. Is it? Make sure you can support your need.
- Demonstrate that your project addresses the need differently or better than preceding projects. Without being critical of your competition, describe how your project complements and enhances, but does not duplicate, the work of others.
- Be more persuasive and to the point. Avoid circular reasoning – this presents an absence of confidence that your solution will solve the problem. Discuss what this project would mean to your community, your area and agriculture in general.

Project Description

This section of your proposal includes the following five sections – objectives, methods, staffing, evaluation and sustainability. Your objectives, combined with your methods, will dictate your staffing needs and will then become a basis for your evaluation. Sustaining the project will come after its success and its ability to survive without a grant source. Together, the five sections give a solid picture of your entire project.

- Objectives must be tangible, specific, measurable and achievable within your specified time frame. Goals are conceptual and show the big picture – objectives are detailed and measurable.
- Methods describe the specific actions your group will take to achieve the objectives. It might be helpful to divide your methods into how, when and why.
- Staffing needs to be covered as specifically as possible. How many staff, their qualifications, specific assignments, etc. Describe your plans to administer the project, salary and benefits, etc.
- Evaluation should be built into the project and not something done once the project is complete. There are two types of evaluation – one measures the product and one measures the process. Consider both in this section.
- Sustainability is critical to the proposal reader. You need to demonstrate a plan for your value added ag venture that includes how the project will survive long-term and without grant funding. Be specific about current and projected funding streams and the base of financial support for your organization.

Budget

Your budget section is dependent on your project itself. Your proposal may be as simple as a one-page statement of projected expenses, or you may have a complex document of projected support and revenue and various items of expense.

Organization Information

At this point in your proposal, you will want to include a resume for your value added ag institution and/or the staff members involved in the project. It is not necessary to overwhelm the reader with pages of facts – the information can easily be conveyed by a brochure or other prepared statement about your project. Explain why your organization came into existence, your mission, your goals and your organizational structure. Discuss your board of directors, if applicable and your activities.

Conclusion

It is important to leave the reader of your proposal with a good feeling about your project and sum up your need for the funding. Call attention to the future – underline some activities that you plan to begin following the funding award or state how you might continue, or not continue, without the funding support. Make a final appeal for your project. Re-state why your value added ag project is important and what you want to accomplish. Why do you need funding to accomplish your goals?

Support

Attach letters of support or testimonials of need/assistance from affected publics for your business idea.

Helpful Tips for Grant Writing

- Carefully review the grant requirements to ensure you are applying with an appropriate funding source.
- Carefully read and follow all directions and adhere to specific limits on content.
- Develop a plan and timeline for completing the grant application.
- Write clearly and concisely. DO NOT use wordy jargon, abbreviations and acronyms.
- Clearly identify the problem you are addressing.
- Clearly identify the goals and objectives of the proposal for solving the problem.
- Collaborate with other to show support and commitment from other sources to help solve the problem.
- Include appropriate evaluation methods to provide accountability.
- Proof read several times. Have someone unfamiliar with the project read the application for clarity.
- Follow-up. Determine why the application was or was not successful. Identifying the applications strengths and weaknesses will help in your next grant writing effort.

How to Write a KFB Foundation for Agriculture Grant Application

How to Apply

The application deadline for grant requests for programs implemented from January 1 to June 30 (1st Half of the Year) is November 15th of the preceding year. The application deadline for grant requests for programs implemented from July 1 to December 31 (2nd Half of the Year) is May 15th of the current year.

Goals

The Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture was formed in 1998 to help fund programs aimed at strengthening agriculture and the quality of life in Kansas. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded more than \$200,000 to provide funding for programs that:

- 1) **Develop leaders** who understand the importance of agriculture in making sure Kansas' rural communities remain strong and vital.
- 2) **Educate Kansas about agriculture** (especially those who live in our cities and suburbs) about the important role agriculture plays in their daily lives.
- 3) **Provide grants** for programs that promote agriculture education and/or leadership development.
- 4) **Offer scholarships** to full-time students who desire to pursue their career in agriculture (these are not part of the grant process).

What kinds of projects are funded with grants?

KFB Foundation for Agriculture grants will be considered for the following types of programs:

- 1) **Agriculture Educational Programs** for key segments of the urban, suburban and rural population, e.g., children, adults, teachers and retirees to improve their perceptions and increase their understanding of agriculture and its importance in their lives and to our economy.
- 2) **Leadership Development Programs** for key segments of the urban, suburban and rural population, e.g., youth and adults to improve their leadership skills and involvement in leadership to benefit agriculture and rural communities
- 3) **Scholarships** for agriculture education and leadership development programs (excludes student scholarships to an accredited university, college or technical school).

What types of requests are ineligible?

- Administrative, overhead or non-program costs.
- Food and food preparation costs.
- Projects or programs that are deemed to be promotional in nature.
- Projects or programs that will take place prior to approval of a grant.
- Projects or programs that do not advance the KFB Foundation for Agriculture's goals.

How does the grant request process work?

- Submit one grant application per program or activity.
- Submit the grant applications before the specified deadline for each grant period.
- Each grant application is limited to a matching grant award of up to \$300, except as noted below:
 - Presidents Trip to Washington, D.C. \$200 per couple
 - YF&R Conference Attendance \$100 per couple
- Each county Farm Bureau can receive, for all approved grant requests, up to \$1,250 in matching grants. Even though at times the total amount of approved grant requests may exceed \$1,250, only \$1,250 will be awarded. The county Farm Bureau will determine how the \$1,250 will be allocated among their approved programs.

How do I apply?

Complete a grant application or answer the questions on a separate sheet in the order listed.

Grant applications for the 1st Half of the Year are due by **November 15th** of the previous year and can be submitted online or mailed to the name and address shown below. Applicants for 1st Half of the Year grants will be notified by **December 31st**.

Grant applications for the 2nd Half of the Year are due by **May 15th** of the current year and can be submitted online or mailed to the name and address shown below. Applicants for 2nd Half of the Year grants will be notified by **June 30th**.

Grant funds will be distributed upon completion of the granted purpose and a **Grant Activity Report** is returned to the KFB Foundation for Agriculture no later than **December 1st** of the current year.

For additional information:

Please contact John Shostak at 785-587-6608 (phone), shostakj@kfb.org (email), 785-587-6603 (fax), or at the following mailing address:

KFB Foundation for Agriculture, 2627 KFB Plaza, Manhattan, KS 66503

Excellence in Teaching Grant

What is the Excellence in Teaching Grant?

Agriculture is an important part of everyone's life. Clothing, food, fuel, housing, medicine and much more are rooted in agriculture. Agriculture has no subject matter boundaries and can be a part of social studies, language arts, science, math, environmental education, art, music or in a combination of areas that effectively integrate key agricultural principles. The Excellence in Teaching Grant is awarded to exemplary teachers who integrate agriculture into their classroom lessons and curriculum.

Who Is Eligible?

Kansas certified educators of Grades K-6 who are integrating agriculture into their classroom lessons. Preference will be given to teachers who have received a grant from the KFB Foundation for Agriculture within the past two years.

Grant Description

Five grant winners will receive up to \$400 each to be used to purchase supplies related to agricultural lessons or projects including but not limited to: garden equipment, materials for hands-on activities, literature books and lab supplies.

What Are The Criteria For Selection?

The project must be creative and interesting to students and help them become more knowledgeable about the food, fuel and/or fiber system in the agriculture industry. Successful projects will:

- Demonstrate a need for the project within the school
- Highlight creative strategies for integrating information, activities and resources about agriculture into core subject areas including science, social studies, math, and language arts
- Correlate lessons and activities to Learning Standards
- Where possible, use local agriculture-related resources (K-State Extension, County Farm Bureau, Agricultural Cooperatives, etc.)

How Do I Apply?

Complete an entry form and include the information requested on a separate sheet in the order listed in the instructions. Applications can be mailed or submitted via email. All entries must be post marked by **June 30th** for the school semester beginning in the Fall of the current year. All applicants will be notified of the status of their grant application within four weeks of the funding deadlines. One-half of the amount funded will be provided to start the project. The balance of the grant is payable upon submission of receipts and a final project report.

For additional information

Contact John Shostak at 785-587-6608 or shostakj@kfb.org.