



Tips for a Successful SOMEF grant application

If you are dreaming of a project that will enhance student learning and enrich student life, you should apply for a SOMEF grant. Although requests for funds always exceed the budget, our ability to provide funding is increasing annually, and we fund more projects each year. The grant application is short and straightforward and not difficult to complete. But there are a number of things you can do to improve your chances of getting the funds you request.

Propose a creative and innovative project. The most successful projects not only fill a need but also enhance the educational experience in an enriching, resourceful, and imaginative way.

Be sure to propose a project that you can complete over the course of this school year. Projects will be funded in December, and must be finished by the end of the year (or over the summer, in the case of certain workshops or administrator summer grants).

The more students who benefit from the project, the better. If the project will be repeated in future years or contains elements that can be shared with other teachers or classes, be sure to mention it.

Complete the entire grant application. Incomplete grants cannot be considered.

Select a straightforward name that directly conveys your project's goals and is easy to associate with the project.

Describe your project clearly and concisely and make your application easy to follow. Summarize the grant's purpose, needs, and relevance clearly and succinctly. Remember that the grants committee has a short time to read nearly a hundred (maybe more!) proposals and will appreciate applications that are neat, clear, thorough, and to the point. Pay special attention to your grant's objective, which is the summary that will be used as reference in all lists of grant applications. Your objective should not exceed two sentences. Most projects can be well described in one sentence.

Make sure the project's objectives and timeline are achievable. If follow-up beyond the grant year is needed (for example, equipment maintenance), explain how it will be handled and funded.

Consider your project's sustainability. Grants with other funding sources and community partners that increase the grant's long-term impact are looked on favorably.

Itemize the budget, breaking it into categories such as: materials and equipment, staff, and transportation. Make sure the numbers add up! Estimated or rounded costs or miscellaneous expenses cannot be considered. Many grants are rejected because their budgets are incomplete, inaccurate, or unrealistic.

It's important to be able to measure the project's results. After the grant term, you'll be required to submit an evaluation.

Apply! It's the only way to receive a grant. Check lists of past grants to get an idea of what projects have been successful. Speak to successful teacher applicants for their advice on applying. Write us at info@somef.org or call grants committee chair Elise Howard at 973-762-5513 if you have questions about the applications process.