What a Grant Really Takes

Schools need money for things that matter every day. Grants exist for many of them. But winning one takes dozens of hours of skilled work, and the people who know what the school needs are the people with the least time to do it.

1. What schools are looking for money for

Professional learning
So educators stay current on the best ways to support students

Classroom supplies
The basics students use every day

Books
Classroom libraries and reading materials

Coaching
Coaches and coaching materials

Field trips
Buses and transportation

Food for students
Snacks for kids who arrive hungry

$895

Teachers' average out-of-pocket classroom spending, 2024 to 2025. Up 49% since 2015.

82%

Of those teachers bought basic supplies; 66% food for students; 64% books.

Every state

Books are a top-three request on a national classroom crowdfunding site in every state (2026), first in 45.

16+

Teachers many coaches support, against a recommended 10.

2. What it takes to win one

Local or corporate grant: 7 steps

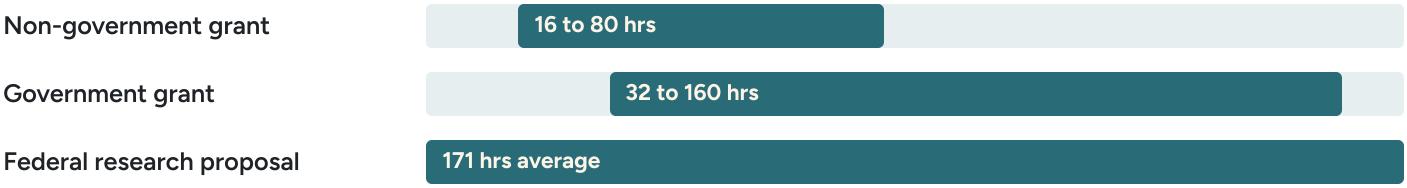
1. Find a grant that fits
2. Gather the facts
3. Write the sections
4. Build the budget
5. Get sign-off
6. Submit and track
7. Report after an award

Federal grant: 10 steps

1. Register in SAM.gov (can take weeks)
2. Set up Grants.gov
3. Read the full notice
4. Write the narrative (up to 30 pages)
5. Abstract and logic model
6. Budget form and narrative
7. Assemble attachments
8. Get sign-off
9. Submit and track
10. Report after an award

Sources: AdoptAClassroom 2025 teacher survey; DonorsChoose, May 2026; Digital Promise and Learning Forward coaching survey, 2020; Grants.gov applicant registration; U.S. Department of Education application instructions. Full links on page 2.

3. How long the writing takes: 16 to 160 hours



A teacher already works about 10 hours a week past contract. At that pace, even a 40-hour application is a month of evenings and weekends, on top of the job.

First two rows converted from survey days and weeks at 8 working hours a day and 40 a week; ranges cover 72% and 66% of writers.

4. Who has the time

49 hrs

A teacher's average work week in 2025, about 10 more than contracted.

1 or 2

Grant staff at 70% of organizations that seek grants. Lack of time or staff is the most named obstacle.

> Rural school districts "often lack the capacity for extensive grant writing campaigns." Larger districts "are hiring grant writers who have the specialized expertise and who have time."

So districts, especially small and rural ones, say they lack the staff time and grant-writing skill to compete. Not everyone agrees on how big the gap is, but almost everyone agrees the hours are scarce.

Where Legwork comes in: we do every step, and the school pays nothing. We find the grant, write it, and file it once the school approves. Funders decide, so we never promise an award. legworkgrants.org · hello@legworkgrants.org

Sources: adoptaclassroom.org (2025 teacher survey) · blog.donorschoose.org (May 2026) · the74million.org (coaching survey, 2020; rural education fund, May 2026, which also quotes a superintendent who says it is rarely about capacity) · grantstation.com (2019 State of Grantseeking) · arxiv.org/abs/1503.04201 (von Hippel and von Hippel, 2015) · grants.gov · rand.org (State of the American Teacher 2025) · newamerica.org (2011). Survey figures describe respondents. Legwork Educator Support NFP. Nothing here is a guarantee of funding.