

SEVEN DREAMS

FOUNDATION

Progress and Innovation Grants – Information and Application Instructions

Congratulations! You are taking the first step in a very worthwhile process. The Seven Dreams Foundation supports innovation in the learning environment with grants for projects by the staff of Robbinsdale Area Schools and community members who want to try something innovative in the advancement of education. A grant review team will read and evaluate all of the grants. If your grant is selected, you will receive funding for your idea from funds raised through the generous support of our communities. **PLEASE NOTE: All grant recipients are required to complete two written reports regarding the status of their grants. The Foundation will ask for this report midway through the year and at the end of the school year. Further details will be provided. This report will be presented to the board. All new grant recipients or a representative will be required to attend the annual meeting on Wednesday, May 12, 2010, from 4-6 p.m. Details to be announced.**

These instructions have information about the grant program, how to apply for the funds, and instructions for the application itself. All of the grant information is available on our website at: www.sevendreamsfoundation.org.

Is your idea the right fit?

The purpose of the grant program is to:

- Enrich the learning environment by introducing new ideas
- Increase the collaboration of our communities and schools
- Encourage innovative thinking

Any project, which meets the above criteria, is appropriate for the program. Seven Dreams Foundation was organized to help the learners of Robbinsdale Area Schools succeed by funding education initiatives that are innovative or show progress and involve community resources, skills and experiences. The purpose is to make sure all learners succeed.

The program is accountable to our communities who have supported Seven Dreams Foundation through their generous donations. If you have questions about whether or not your idea is the right fit, please call the Seven Dreams Foundation at 763-504-4088.

Who can participate?

Any employee of Robbinsdale Area Schools may be a project leader and submit a grant. Non-employees may be involved in a grant, but it must be submitted by an employee. The grant must be co-signed by a supervisor and/or principal of the employee.

How big are the grants?

Seven Dreams Foundation is accepting grant applications for projects between \$500 and \$3,000. As the Foundation grows, the dollars available will grow and so will the size of the grants. For projects over \$3,000, please contact the Seven Dreams Foundation directly, and we will work with you in searching for private funding.

What can the grant dollars be used for?

Grants can request funding for any cost associated with the project. Money can be used to reimburse the district for substitutes if necessary. Funds can be used for purchasing equipment if the equipment purchased is part of a new and/or creative approach to instruction. Capital items become the property of the Robbinsdale Area School District.

What are the evaluation criteria?

Grants will be reviewed with the following criteria:

Need – specific and identifiable, must be tied to learner achievement

Innovation and creativity – the concept can be new to your class, your grade, your school, the district or a brand new idea

Replicability – the impact of the grant should be able to be reproduced in other learning environments

Team involvement (including community resources) – projects should involve more than one educator. A higher point value will be assigned to projects incorporating community resources.

Dissemination and pre-determined project evaluation criteria – the project should have clearly stated goals and how those goals will be measured.

What is the grant process?

The first thing is to develop an idea. Next, prepare a grant application. Grant writing is not hard, and there are tips and other supports available to help you out. Be aware of the deadlines, they will be strictly enforced with no exceptions! You can even submit a draft for a preliminary review (allow sufficient time to turn it around before the deadline).

The grants will be reviewed against the above criteria. All grants will be prepared to remove any references to location, author or site – (called a blind read). Reviewers will read all grants and rank them based on those criteria. Seven Dreams Foundation is a community foundation, and higher point values will be assigned to those projects that incorporate community resources or groups. A grant selection committee, comprised of parents, teachers, administrators and other staff, and community members will meet and review all grants. Those with the highest rankings will be selected for funding. If your grant is not selected that does not mean it is not a good idea. There are limited dollars available to fund an unlimited supply of ideas.

The excitement begins if your grant is selected. We have fun awarding the grants and handing out the checks to you. At any time during the project if problems or changes come up, the Seven Dreams Foundation staff will work with you as long as the initial idea stays the same. A report is due at the end of the project.

When is the grant due?

Grants are due by Friday, February 12, 2010 at 12:00 noon at the Winnetka Learning Center receptionist desk. Phone 763-504-4088. There are no exceptions to the due date.

Who do I contact if I have a question?

Feel free to contact the Seven Dreams Foundation office at 763-504-4088.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Our goal is to make this an easy and streamlined process for both the writer and the reader. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call us. It is very important that the directions are followed. It is easier for our readers to evaluate all grants if the format is the same for each of them. We have tried to set up the grant to make it easy to write and put your project together.

The entire grant application should consist of:

Cover Sheet – one page, to be used by Seven Dreams Foundation office only

Grant Summary Page – one page, summarizes the grant, offers specific information on impact and cost

Grant Description – no more than three pages, describes the entire project

Budget – one page, identifies the costs of the grant and other funders

Budget Description – one page, explains and justifies the budget items

Appendices – if needed.

COVER SHEET

This information will be used by the Seven Dreams Foundation office to track and process the grant. The review team will not see this information. This is also the form that requires principal/supervisor sign off.

Project Title: Pick a short title for your grant. This title will be used when referring to the grant. It should describe the project. (The Seven Dreams Foundation reserves the right to change project titles.)

Project Leader Name, Title, Phone Number and E-mail: This is the person that will be responsible for the overall implementation of the grant. This must be an employee of Robbinsdale Area School District, but it does not need to be the grant writer.

Other Team Members: Include all those that are instrumental in the implementation of the grant and others associated with the grant.

Sites: Include all of the sites where the project will take place.

Signature Section: We require signatures of the project leader and all major team members to ensure that all have read and understand the requirements of the grant. To keep projects in line with the general direction of the district and to ensure the project team will do the work described in the grant, we also require the grant to be signed off by the project leader's supervisor. In the case of teachers, this will be their principal. The grant will not be accepted without the signature of the project leader, all team members and the project leader's supervisor.

GRANT SUMMARY PAGE

This will be the first page seen by the review team. Please be sure that your grant does not refer to you or the name of your school or program.

Project Title: Use the same title as previously

Project Summary: In 100 words or less summarize your project. Steer clear of education jargon. Assume the review team consists of non-educators. Make your summary crisp, clear and concise – remember it is only 100 words.

Impact Information: This is an important section, so please take some time in calculating the direct impact of your project. Don't include "fringe" impact, but those that will be directly impacted by your project.

Budget: List the total amount of the grant and the total amount you are requesting from the

Seven Dreams Foundation. These numbers may not be the same.

Project Start and End Dates: List the date the project will begin and end. Projects should conclude in one school year unless discussed with the Seven Dreams office.

GRANT DESCRIPTION

This section describes the entire project. You should be clear and concise in your writing. This section can be no longer than three pages size 12 point, single-spaced text. The length of the individual sections can vary depending on your own grant. Long sweeping narrative is not necessary, and space does not permit it. Bulleted lists are fine. The main sections are:

Need: Describe the learner or staff need. Describe why the project is necessary. Explain why the project is important. What issues, concerns or voids will the project address?

Innovation and Creativity: Explain how this project is doing something different. Innovation and creativity do not mean experimentation, but methods that approach teaching differently. It does not have to be a newly created idea, but an approach that is different for you and/or the District.

Replicability: The purpose of the grant program is to fund ideas that may in the long run be implemented into the curriculum. It is funding education research and development. For that to work, the project needs to be able to be replicated if the results support positive achievement. Explain how your project can be replicated.

Team Involvement: Explain how your project will pull in resources from across our varying communities. Communities are not limited to our seven cities, but include a wide variety of groups, individuals, companies and organizations that could have an impact on your project. The team can also be various groups within your building.

Dissemination: How will the results of your project be communicated to others? Funding a project without any way of sharing results does not improve the system.

Evaluation: A pre-determined and well thought out evaluation is required. You must show improved learner achievement, staff training or systemic changes. We will not determine the success or non-success of your project. You show that by setting up specific criteria for evaluation.

BUDGET and BUDGET DESCRIPTION

Prepare an itemization of the costs of the project. We have included a sample format, but feel free to use your own as long as the same information is provided. The budget description describes in narrative the budget. The description also explains why the items are necessary. Some of the items you should include in your budget:

Subs: The cost of hiring substitutes so that staff members can work on the project, attend training sessions, or do whatever else is appropriate for the project. List number of days and number of subs required.

Supplies: Supplies required for the project. These costs are above what would be covered by the school or program's normal budget.

Equipment: This includes large capital purchases. Include additional information about the equipment and vendor. Don't forget to include all costs including delivery and installation.

Travel: Travel may include bussing learners or travel for teachers to attend conferences or training sessions. All travel by staff members must be explained in the justification section of the budget.

Consultants: List the costs associated with any trainers or consultants involved in the project. This would include other professionals brought in for seminars or training.

Curriculum Development: The cost of paying staff to develop curriculum to support the project. Contact the HR department for current rates.

Other: If none of the above categories work, list a cost in this category. Normally, staff salaries are not included in the grant. If your project requires additional staff time for development or implementation, please contact a Seven Dreams Foundation staff member in advance of submitting your grant. The budget also describes additional funding sources that you may have with your grant.

APPENDICES

An appendix is optional and will not be present in most applications. If you include appendices, make the information short and limit it to essential information.

GRANTWRITING TIPS

Keep your grant short and concise. Reviewers look at a lot of applications, and the harder your grant is to read and follow the less time they will spend looking at it.

Have a colleague review it.

Have a non-educator look at it. Does it make sense to him/her? Remember not all members of the review team have an education background.

Keep the tone light. No one wants to review a heavy grant. Keeping things upbeat and positive makes it easier to envision the positive results.

Use a word processor. Hand written grants are harder to read.

Don't leave it for the last minute. Work on your grant and then let it sit for a while. Looking at it after a few days will help clarify information.

NEW FOR 2010! Grant Writing Classes. See next page

Have fun! This should be a positive experience for all involved.



NEW IN 2010
SEVEN DREAMS GRANTWRITING WORKSHOPS!!
COST: FREE!

Workshops are geared for staff and school community representatives working within Robbinsdale Area Schools who:

- Have an idea that might fit within the Seven Dreams grant guidelines but have no idea how to start the grant application;
- Have questions about grant application criteria;
- Would like some support in understanding the Seven Dreams grant application process;
- Are comfortable with writing grants but would like to learn more about the Seven Dreams mini-grant process.

WORKSHOP DATES;

Tuesday, January 5, 2010 **9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

Hope Learning Center Computer Lab

Location: New

Wednesday, January 6, 2010 **4:00 - 5:30 p.m.**

Location: New Hope Learning Center Computer Lab

New Hope Learning Center is located across from Robbinsdale Cooper High School.

Address: 8301 47th Avenue North, New Hope, MN 55428

RSVP your attendance to:

Emilie Branca, Seven Dreams Foundation

Phone: 763-504-4088

Email: [Emilie Branca@rdale.org](mailto:Emilie.Branca@rdale.org)

Please include name of attendee and which date you will be attending.