Grants 101 by Jim Egan

Creating a concept for your grant
Grants are sums of money given by an individual or organization to support goals and objectives of the grantor providing the funding. When applying for funding from a granting organization you have to keep in mind what are the goals of the grantor and what benefit can they expect as a result if they fund your project.

You also have to keep in mind, what do you want out of the grant application? You do not want to so cater to a granting organization's goals that your goals go out the window. The key is to find common ground where both the granting organization can expect its goals to be met while you meet your own goals.

There are individual and group grants available.

Individuals usually can apply for grants to pay for travel or education that supports the goals of the grantor. Certain field of study and certain events like scientific conferences and natural disasters have grantors who sponsor travel, food and lodging to encourage participation in these activities

Grants to groups occur for a much larger set of purposes though not all groups are eligible for any particular grant. Some funding sources will only grant funds to local governments, Indian tribes or 501c3 non-profits. To increase your groups success in applying for grants your group should be incorporated. If incorporated as a non-profit it should be registered with the State of Florida. If you are seeking Federal Grants consider getting a Federal designation such as 501c3 status, this allows your group to be tax exempt and allows donations to your group to be tax-deductible and gives grantors a greater sense that you are not just some fly-by-night organization.

Search for Grants:
Once you have a concept of how your grant project can benefit the community you have to search for a granting organization that matches your goals

Google or other search engines are an excellent way to quickly search for some of the grant available. Most Google searches bring up a lot of unrelated topics so you should refine your search until it brings up relevant web-sights.
Example: Search for Florida grants "subject" – "non subject(s)"

The Library also has large books of granting organizations and foundations. Foundations are private groups that provide funding for projects that meet their goals of interest.
Newspaper articles and others in your field can tip you off as to what kind of foundations or government organizations fund grants in your field of interest.
You can think of all the grants available in your field of interest like a pie. Only a slice of that pie may match your specific goals. That slice is made smaller by the fact that some of the funding sources may not fund your type of organization or may not have funding available at this time.
You need to carefully review and research each potential grant for the following:
Look for grants that match both yours and the funding source's goals
Look for the minimum requirements of the grant, do they specify who is eligible? Do they have specific requirements for those seeking funding.

Look for due dates. Look for the total amount of funding available and how many times that amount is received in requests for funding. If 30 or 40 times the available amount is requested every year then your competition for that grant is higher.

Using the telephone
The telephone is a powerful tool to help you if you have a contact number.
To best use this tool call with a specific question about their criteria and how your project might fit. Use the opportunity to explain very briefly the highpoints of your grant for example you might say: My organization would like to do such and such would that meet the criteria for this grant, or has your organization funding similar projects. Listen if what you say is met with enthusiasm or not. If their website does not have specific criteria you might call and ask for more details. You can also call to ask for a copy of a previously approved grant. Use a previously approved grant to give you ideas for how to lay out your own grant.

Create an outline of your grant proposal
If your grant requires a form to be filled out, print out a copy and use that as a basis for organizing your grant. If it does not have a form create an outline that mirrors the criteria that the granting organization will use to evaluate your grant. You do not want to bury your points in a long paragraph. Detailed bullets that specifically answer the criteria are a good way to fill in details of the outline. Keep in mind any page limit specified for a particular section of the grant. Be concise and put the most important items first. Be specific about what your project will accomplish, everyone is turned off by vague snow jobs. Detail the relevant experience of the organization and the individuals within the organization.

Partnerships
Having diverse partnerships is very helpful to a grant application. These partnerships should not just be in name only. Each partner should contribute something meaningful to the overall project. Think big picture, a group that is providing complementary services to the same target audience could make for a good partner. Any experience or funding that they have can compliment your grant. If your organization or individuals are lacking in relevant experience or credentials it becomes more important that you partner with more experienced groups.

Creating a budget for your grant
Try to apply for the typical amount that is funded by the organization, if they do not specify it on their website, try finding out by calling on the phone. Think big when creating the budget, think in terms of all the resources you can provide, value volunteer time and materials and partner's contributions as well. Anything your organization, its volunteers, or partners provide to the project that is not being funded by the grant is considered Match. Match is anything that benefits the goals of the grants that is not being paid for by the grantor. Many grants require a 1 to 1 match which means for every dollar requested there should be a dollar provided by other sources or by volunteer or material contributed. Even providing space for the project could be viewed as a match depending on the grantor's criteria.

Letters of recommendation
As soon as you have the basic grant proposal written you can send copies out to experts in your field for letters of recommendation. Any partners in your grant should also submit letters to document how they will participate in the project.

Show your draft grant to someone who has written a grant for his or her comments

Every Grant is going to have these components:

Project title: What is the name of this specific project. It should be relevant and exciting
Who you are? Who are the individuals and what is the nature and accomplishments of your group? The answers need to be concrete and verifiable. What awards, what specific results, what certifications does your group or the members of your group have?

What is your project about? If you can't describe your project in an exciting way then rethink your project. An overview of all the concrete results that will be accomplished with the funding of your project.

How your project supports the grantor's goals or other established goals in the field?
Who will benefit from your project? This includes how many will benefit.
What makes your project special?

Your Groups qualifications
Partner's qualifications

Deliverables: Exact amount of results that you can achieve if funded. For example how many people benefit, how much of something produced or enhanced, concrete results that occurs as part of the project. Your deliverables can be things, services, general economic benefits, educational results, and behavioral results.

Budget: dollars and cents from every partner including match: Example

	Requested	Your Groups contrib.	Other funding	Partner's contribution
Materials:	$25,000		$50,000	$125,000
Office supplies:	$1,000			
Staff:	$20,000			$100,000
Permitting:				
Transportation:	$500			
Volunteer Labor		1,000 hrs @ $18 18,000		3,000 hrs $62,000

Total Project Cost $401,500
Requested funds $46,500
Match funding $355,000

Letters of support: From relevant groups, elected officials, government organizations.
To get a letter you usually have to provide a basic outline of the proposal you are writing.