

CAE Healthcare Grant Writing Assistant

An interactive how-to guide to writing and applying for grants for the medical education community

INTRODUCTION

by: Anita G. Hufft PhD, RN, Dean and Professor at Valdosta State University, College of Nursing

GRANT WRITING is not magic. Truly any health care provider knowledgeable about human patient simulators can manage the grant writing process. Information is everywhere; a simple Internet search with key words “grant proposals” or “grant applications” will take you to many fine sources. So, do not be afraid to jump into the grant application process. What follows is **Grant 101: an Introduction to Grant Writing for CAE Healthcare Human Patient Simulation Funding**. Many of the suggestions that follow are compilations of ideas and recommendations from Internet sources, textbooks and my experience with writing grants. The information that follows is truly in the public domain, and so it should be part of your repertoire of skills.

Grants are essentially gifts of funding, external to an organization that is used for a specific purpose. Grants are not expected to be repaid, but most granting sources expect to have some outcome for their gift. Grants are usually awarded on the merit of the grant proposal. Getting grant money is all about knowing what you want and why.

You must be able to answer the questions:

- Why simulation? Why not some other approaches?
- How much will it really cost?
- What outcome will be the result of using simulation?

Grant proposals should reflect the values and goals of a granting organization or individual. You need to take the time to assert that the beliefs and values of your simulation project and your organization are consistent and support those of the organization or individual from whom you expect funding.

Do your homework! **Know the goals of the funding agency.** If the agency is dedicated to improving health care, you must be ready to demonstrate that health care providers using simulation to acquire specific skills or competencies will provide better health care. If the funding agency's purpose is to advance the use of technology in health care, you must relate the use of simulation to the increase in use of other forms of technology to deliver care or to improve outcomes related to the transfer of skills using technology by health care providers who train on simulators.

Get to know your funding agency personnel. Contact technical advisors or grant staff and ask questions. Inform them of your ideas and find out what types of support they might be able to offer you. Ask them for any tips or advice before submitting a proposal. Form a relationship!

Understand the eligibility requirements and other criteria for each grant proposal you submit. Make sure you have the appropriate credentials, affiliation, experience and purpose for the grant for which you apply.

Most granting agencies require specific affiliations and will not make awards to individuals, only to organizations. In addition, pay specific attention to the amount of award that is available, the purposes that the agency allows, the qualifications of the grantee (that's you), the terms of the award, the length of the award, whether you have to have matching funds, and if they allow indirect funding. Indirect funds pay for overhead and it's the "tax" you may be charged by the administration or grant office of your university or agency. Some granting agencies do not pay indirect funds. You must be absolutely accurate, precise and complete in the completion of your proposal. Do not leave anything blank; always insert a N/A if there is requested information that does not pertain to your grant proposal or project.

Before you begin, take time to think about your motivation and mission. You begin by believing that someone wants to give you money – there are two reasons why agencies or individuals give away money – altruism or personal goals. Whatever the reason may be, they still want to give away the money, so why not to you? If your project weren't important and worthwhile, you wouldn't want to be doing it in the first place. Now all you have to do is put your ideas, goals, and passion into words.

You must focus, not on today, but on tomorrow. **You must think about the future of your organization.** Where do you want to be in five or ten years? What will it take to get there? How will you and your organization be making contributions to health care and to the education and training of health care providers? What role will human patient simulation have in this preferred future and what needs do you have to make this future become a reality? Start with the end point in mind and organize your planning around the sequence of events that will lead to that point. Link those events to the use of human patient simulation; organize your activities and resources in a way to support a realistic end result. If your future includes four simulation labs with 20 staff members and 20 simulators running seven days a week, think about the steps you need to go through to get there. What will you be doing in those labs that will result in the preferred future you desire? That is the ultimate outcome of your endeavor, and the grant proposal creates the funding to support this endeavor. Now, what will you need in the next year?

If you need the money now, you have started too late! The grant proposal process can take up to a year for development, approval, submission, review and award. **A realistic timeline is very important** – always assume that the process will take longer than expected, but be prepared to act on any funding you receive immediately.

A grant proposal is organized into what are essentially nine components. The best advice for the development of a grant proposal is to **KEEP IT SIMPLE**. Assume that the reader has little time to read the proposal and the reader has no familiarity with what you do. Keep the language explicit and direct. Make sure the writing is clear, precise, accurate, with sufficient breadth and depth and, most of all, logical. The following is a representative list of the nine major components of any grant:

1. A **Summary of the Project** is the first component in the grant, but should be the last thing you write. The summary of the project usually consists of 2 - 4 paragraphs and must make a strong first impression.
2. An **Introduction to the Organization** provides an overview of the structure, mission and major defining characteristics of your organization and your specific unit within that organization. You must be credible in terms of your expertise related to human patient simulation and its applications to health care education and training. This is the section of the grant proposal in which you describe your organization, your unit, and your staff as capable, goal-directed, and successful. After establishing credibility through a description of the organization, end with a simple, direct statement communicating exactly who you are, what you want, how much you want and why.
3. The **Problem Statement** provides a full description of the need to be addressed by the implementation of your human patient simulation project. This section of the grant proposal establishes the need for simulation training through anecdotal and statistical references. Be very precise and reference your statements and facts. Do not make any assumptions about what you think the reader knows. Make sure you are complete and comprehensive in establishing facts and conclusions that support the need for this human patient simulation project.
4. **Project Objectives** are a list of the outcomes you intend to accomplish. They must be related to the goals and mission of your organization and to that of the funding agency. Be realistic. Grant funding agencies are very aware of inflated goals and claims of extraordinary successes. Your credibility will be at risk if you overestimate the extent of the impact your simulation training will have. This is where you have the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise and knowledge of simulation and its potential. Include a description of previous successes with simulation. Describe the project in terms of a cost-benefit analysis, presenting the relative cost of the project against expected outcomes and what the cost of NOT doing the project can be.
5. **Project Methods and Design** define the specific steps you will take to accomplish your goals and objectives. This is the place to create a realistic timeline and present in a "tailored" graphic.
6. **Project Evaluation** is an often overlooked component that can "make or break" a proposal in the eyes of some grantors. The evaluation component links each project objective to the methods by which attainment of the objective will be measured. There are two components to the project evaluation, formative evaluation and summative evaluation. The formative evaluation describes how you met each step of the project, confirming you did what you said you were going to do. The formative evaluation describes who did what, when, and how they did it. The summative evaluation measures the impact of the project on the target population. This usually addresses the specific knowledge, skills and competencies that represent changes in behavior among the health care providers or students who received the human patient simulation training. The evaluation model

should evidence scientific rigor, objectivity, ethical treatment of students, faculty, and/or patients. The Program Evaluation Plan is essential to making any claims that the project has met its goals and objectives, and is the foundation upon which future funding is based.

7. Grants are usually **time-limited funding**. The granting agency wants to believe that their contributions to your organization will make significant contributions now and in the future. It is usually expected that you will **project methods for acquiring resources for sustaining the human patient simulation project into the future**, when the grant funding ends. You need to build a case for organizational contributions, partner contributions and other sources of funding.

8. **The Budget** is often the most challenging part of a grant proposal. It is recommended that you get assistance from someone in your grants office or finance office if you are not experienced in preparing financial spreadsheets. Once you have organized an excel file to reflect all of your categories of expenses, the individual expense items in each category, the number of items needed and the cost, you will have the basic structure by which any changes can be reflected. This is essential as changes in the budget are inevitable and you don't want to be in the position of relying on a calculator every time a change is made. Usual categories of expenses for grant budgets include:

- a. A budget summary of total funding needed in each category and in each quarter
- b. Personnel (wages and benefits)
- c. Non-personnel (supplies and expenses)
- d. Travel
- e. Training
- f. Warranties and maintenance on equipment e.g. Space renovation or rental
- h. Indirect funding (if allowed)

Once you have developed a satisfactory template for the budget you can use it for the next grant, just changing the details to fit the expense categories generated in a new plan. All regular reporting should be generated from this format so there are no inconsistencies in data. Include every possible category of cost up front, even if you do not anticipate using that category at first. You can always delete later. A color printer is often helpful in printing out budgets to clearly delineate the categories and summary sections for the reader. Be honest and realistic in estimating costs; do your homework and try to get accurate figures up front. If you ask for too much money your proposal might be rejected. If you ask for too little, you may receive the money and not be able to do what you said you were going to do. One last recommendation: rename and date all budget file changes!

9. **Appendices** are attachments that amplify, clarify, and reference the content in the actual grant proposal. Usual contents in the appendices include resumes or biographies of the major participants, letters of support, a bibliography of references used to develop problem statement, operational definitions of special terms or vocabulary used in the proposal. Send only those appendices required and accepted by the funding agency. There is usually a very specific request for appendices.

Grant proposals for human patient simulation projects benefit from a **thorough review of the existing literature** on the use and impact of human patient simulation education and training. From these references you can find clear statements of expected outcomes that can be translated to your own project. Talk to other persons who have been successful in accessing funding for human patient simulation projects; they will likely be more than happy to share what they have learned.

Potential problems with grant proposals for human patient simulation projects include:

- Goals are not written clearly, or not supported with sufficient data
- Unrelated expenses or equipment are incorporated
- The plan has an unrealistic timeline (know what the teaching/learning literature says about the acquisition of knowledge vs. psychomotor skills vs. critical thinking)
- There is a lack of “treatment dosage;” the idea is good, the simulation training is well thought out – but there is not enough of it to make a change
- The writer makes assumptions and the reader cannot follow the logic of the proposal
- There is no cost-benefit analysis
- There is a lack of anticipation of negative impact or outcomes; you need to inform the reader that you know the possibility of what can go wrong or NOT happen
- Lack of or poor evaluation plan
- The instructions for the preparation of the grant proposal were not followed

Recommendations:

- Write clear statements of your expected outcomes
- Have a realistic plan you know you can successfully implement
- Create a detailed, comprehensive budget
- Link your mission and goals to those of the proposed granting agency
- Make sure your writing is clear, concise, and logical

You will be successful if you:

- Think positive
- Have a clear vision and goals
- Do your homework
- Respect your grantor and their values
- Have a strong program evaluation design
- Establish a relationship with your grantor
- Have the support of your institution and communities of interest

GOOD LUCK!

GRANT SOURCES

ALABAMA

The J.L. Bedsole Foundation

<http://www.jlbedsolefoundation.org/default.asp?ID=2>

ARIZONA

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

<http://www.pipertrust.org/>

Arizona Community Foundation

<http://www.azfoundation.org/>

ARKANSAS

Charles A. Frueauff Foundation

<http://www.frueaufffoundation.com/>

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

<http://www.wrfoundation.org/index.php?page=grants>

ALASKA

The Rasmuson Foundation

<http://www.rasmuson.org/>

CALIFORNIA

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

http://www.moore.org/program_areas/education/initiatives/nursing/initiative_nursing.asp

The California Endowment

<http://www.calendow.org/>

California Community Foundation

<http://www.calfund.org/>

COLORADO

The Denver Foundation

<http://www.denverfoundation.org/>

The Colorado Trust

<http://www.coloradotrust.org/>

El Pomar Foundation

<http://www.elpomar.org/>

CONNECTICUT

Aetna Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.aetna.com/foundation/index.htm>

The Educational Foundation of America

<http://www.efaw.org/>

Connecticut Health Foundation

<http://www.cthealth.org/matriarch/>

DC

The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

<http://www.cfncr.org/index.cfm>

DELAWARE

Raskob Foundation

<http://www.rfca.org/>

FLORIDA

The Chatlos Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.chatlos.org/>

GEORGIA

Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.woodruff.org>

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

<http://www.atlcf.org/Index.aspx>

HAWAII

Hawaii Community Foundation

<http://www.hawaiicomunityfoundation.org/index.php?id=127>

ILLINOIS

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

<http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.855229/k.CC2B/Home.htm>

Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation

<http://www.rrmtf.org/>

INDIANA

Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.rmfairbanksfoundation.org/>

KENTUCKY

James Graham Brown Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.jgbf.org/>

The Humana Foundation

<http://www.humanafoundation.org/>

LOUISIANA

Baptist Community Ministries

<http://www.bcm.org/>

MARYLAND

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://www.aecf.org>

MASSACHUSETTS

MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.mchcf.org/>

Fidelity Foundation

<http://www.fidelityfoundation.org/>

The George I. Alden Trust

<http://www.aldentrust.org/>

MICHIGAN

W. K. Kellogg Foundation

<http://www.wkcf.org/Default.aspx?LanguageID=0>

General Motors Foundation

<http://www.gm.com/corporate/responsibility/community/>

MINNESOTA

The Bush Foundation

<http://www.bushfoundation.org/>

MISSOURI

Missouri Foundation for Health

<http://www.mffh.org/>

NEVADA

Nevada Community Foundation

<http://www.nevadacf.org>

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Foundation for Seacoast Health

<http://www.ffsh.org/>

NEW JERSEY

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

<http://www.rwjf.org/>

NEW MEXICO

McCune Charitable Foundation

<http://www.nmmccune.org/>

NEW YORK

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

<http://www.mellon.org/>

The Starr Foundation

<http://www.starrfoundation.org/>

NORTH CAROLINA

The Winston-Salem Foundation

<http://www.wsfoundation.org/>

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

<http://www.kbr.org/>

The Duke Endowment

<http://www.dukeendowment.org/>

NORTH DAKOTA

Dakota Medical Foundation

<http://www.dakmed.org/>

OHIO

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation (GCF)

<http://www.greatercincinnati.org/>

The George Gund Foundation

<http://www.gundfoundation.org/>

OKLAHOMA

The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.mabeefoundation.com/>

Inasmuch Foundation

<http://www.inasmuchfoundation.org/>

OREGON

Meyer Memorial Trust

<http://www.mmt.org/>

The Ford Family Foundation

<http://www.tfff.org/>

PENNSYLVANIA

The Annenberg Foundation

<http://www.annenbergfoundation.org/grants/>

RHODE ISLAND

The Champlin Foundations

<http://foundationcenter.org/grantmaker/champlin/>

SOUTH CAROLINA

Community Foundation of Greater Greenville, Inc.

<http://www.cfgg.com/>

TENNESSEE

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc.

<http://www.assisifoundation.org/>

TEXAS

ExxonMobil Foundation

<http://www.exxonmobil.com/corporate/community.aspx>

The Meadows Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.mfi.org/>

Albert and Bessie Mae Kronkosky Charitable Foundation

<http://www.kronkosky.org/>

UTAH

George S. Eccles and Delores Dore Eccles Foundation

<http://www.gsecclesfoundation.org/>

VIRGINIA

The Norfolk Foundation

<http://www.norfolkfoundation.org/>

WASHINGTON

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/default.htm>

M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust

<http://www.murdock-trust.org/>

WEST VIRGINIA

The Logan Healthcare Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.loganhealthcarefoundation.com/homepage.html>

The Greater Greenbrier Valley Community Foundation

<http://www.gvfoundation.org/>

WISCONSIN

Helen Bader Foundation, Inc.

<http://www.hbf.org/HBFWeb/index.html>

Northwestern Mutual Foundation

http://www.nmfn.com/tn/aboutus--fd_intro

STATE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a list of state government websites where grant information resides. Click on the state name to go to the state government home page.

ALABAMA - <http://www.alabama.gov/portal/index.jsp>
ALASKA - <http://www.state.ak.us/>
ARIZONA - <http://az.gov/>
ARKANSAS - <http://www.state.ar.us/>
CALIFORNIA - <http://ca.gov/>
COLORADO - <http://colorado.gov/>
CONNECTICUT - <http://www.ct.gov/>
DELAWARE - <http://delaware.gov/>
DC - <http://dc.gov/>
FLORIDA - <http://www.myflorida.com/>
GEORGIA - <http://georgia.gov/>
HAWAII - <http://portal.ehawaii.gov/>
IDAHO - <http://idaho.gov/> ILLINOIS - <http://illinois.gov/> INDIANA - <http://in.gov/>
IOWA - <http://www.iowa.gov/state/main/index.html>
KANSAS - <http://www.kansas.gov/>
KENTUCKY - <http://kentucky.gov/>
LOUISIANA - <http://www.louisiana.gov/wps/wcm/connect/Louisiana.gov/Home/>
MAINE - <http://www.maine.gov/>
MARYLAND - <http://www.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
MASSACHUSETTS - <http://www.mass.gov/>
MICHIGAN - <http://michigan.gov/>
MINNESOTA - <http://www.state.mn.us>
MISSISSIPPI - <http://www.ms.gov/home/>
MISSOURI - <http://missouri.gov/>
MONTANA - <http://mt.gov/>
NEBRASKA - <http://nebraska.gov/>
NEVADA - <http://nevada.gov/>
NEW HAMPSHIRE - <http://www.nh.gov/>

NEW JERSEY - <http://www.nj.gov/>
NEW MEXICO - <http://www.newmexico.gov/>
NEW YORK - <http://www.ny.gov/>
NORTH CAROLINA - <http://www.nc.gov/>
NORTH DAKOTA - <http://www.nd.gov/>
OHIO - <http://ohio.gov/>
OKLAHOMA - <http://www.ok.gov>
OREGON - <http://www.oregon.gov/>
PENNSYLVANIA - <http://www.state.pa.us/>
RHODE ISLAND - <http://www.ri.gov/>
SOUTH CAROLINA - <http://www.sc.gov/>
SOUTH DAKOTA - <http://www.state.sd.us/>
TENNESSEE - <http://tennessee.gov/>
TEXAS - <http://www.state.tx.us/>
UTAH - <http://www.utah.gov/>
VERMONT - <http://www.vermont.gov/>
VIRGINIA - <http://www.virginia.gov/cmsportal2/>
WASHINGTON - <http://www.access.wa.gov/>
WEST VIRGINIA - <http://www.wv.gov/>
WISCONSIN - <http://wisconsin.gov/state/>
WYOMING - <http://wyoming.gov/>

FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Grants.gov

www.grants.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

www.usfa.fema.gov/grants

US Department of Health & Human Services

www.hhs.gov

AHRQ - Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality

www.ahrq.gov

(AFG) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program

<http://www.fema.gov/welcome-assistance-firefighters-grant-program>

Department of the Interior

www.doi.gov

Department of Homeland Security

www.dhs.gov/xopnbiz/grants/index.shtm