NISN FACILITIES PROGRAM
Grant Readiness Self-Assessment

Background

This worksheet is part of a learning module for Improving Funding Readiness. This module is designed to help school leaders increase their capacity and preparedness for pursuing grants and other funding opportunities. The concept of funding readiness includes 1) qualities that are desired by funders as indicators of strong organizations that are capable of managing funding and programming well, plus 2) preparedness that supports an organization's ability to select, apply for, and manage awards successfully. Having that fundability and preparedness, in turn, allows schools to be proactive in grant seeking and more selective in pursuing opportunities that best align with and support their priorities.

Instructions

This worksheet is a diagnostic and planning tool. It can also track progress over time if you retake the self-assessment periodically. Directions:

1. Complete the basic information at the top of the worksheet page.
2. For each section, read the questions and write in or select status descriptions for your current situation. Use simple responses like Yes, No, N/A, or Don't Know. If you don't know the answer, track it down and update the status once determined.
1. Once statuses are completed for each item, move to identifying "No" items that you wish to accomplish. Pick items to improve upon over the next 6 or 12 months, indicating selection in the right column labeled "Flag for Follow-Up." Considerations for choosing items may include addressing readiness categories where fewer tasks are accomplished, selecting items you feel are most important for grant seeking, identifying items that are easy to accomplish, and/or prioritizing items that best align with other organization development aims.
2. Use the section following the assessment table to detail plans for accomplishing items, such as deadlines and the person responsible.
3. Integrate actions and deadlines to your regular workflow. This may mean adding alerts to your appointment calendar, including to-dos in regular team meetings, or reviewing this document on a set schedule.

Important Note

Do not think of this as something where you should have a certain number of yeses – you are not being graded! Readiness looks different for schools at different stages of development. Consider this assessment a snapshot of your work that is most useful when referred back to and retaken to document progress.

Grant Readiness Self-Assessment Worksheet

School name: Date completed:

Have you taken this assessment before?   ☐ No   ☐ Yes

Area and Readiness Question	Status	Flag for Follow-Up
School Governance and Establishment		
Have you established a school governance board?		
Does that school governance board meet regularly?		
Do you have an approved charter or school authorization?		
If applicable, are you registered and current with state agencies (e.g., Attorney General financial filings, Secretary of State corporation filings)		
Do you have a procurement/purchasing policy in place?		
Do you have a non-discrimination policy in place?		
Do you have a current, board-approved strategic plan?		
General Community Engagement		
Have you completed a community needs assessment or stakeholder engagement process related to your school?		
If yes, has this community process occurred within the most recent five years?		
Do you have established parent involvement, such as a parent association or advisory committee?		
If yes, are activities or meetings occurring regularly?		
If you have established parent involvement, is parent input influencing school decision-making and planning?		
Do you have a school website?		
On which social media networks does your school post regular updates?	☐ Facebook ☐ Twitter ☐ Instagram ☐ Other(s):	
Financial Readiness		
Do you have a current operating budget that has been approved by your school board (or cognizant official)?		
Do you produce monthly financial accounting that is approved by your board or treasurer?		
Do you have year-end financial statements approved by your board?		
Do you track and reconcile expenses and revenues on a monthly basis?		
Do you track grant income and expenditure separately for each award (via separate accounts or cost center codes)?		

Area and Readiness Question	Status	Flag for Follow-Up
Do you have any significant financial issues (e.g., owe back-taxes, defaulted on financing, ended prior year with a significant deficit, etc.)?		
If you have significant financial issues, have you engaged an accountant or financial advisor to help improve the school's financial condition?		
Do you have annual project budgets for key program areas for which you will be seeking grants?		
Many grants only consider applicants eligible if they have an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit designation. Are either of these true: We have an established fiscal sponsor relationship that can be used for grants. We have created our own 501(c)(3) foundation or fundraising entity for the school.		
Facilities Grant Readiness		
Do you have a facilities team or committee established?		
Do you have a school site/location selected or already in use?		
If no, have you compiled site or facility data to compare possible school sites or specific facility data (square footage, ADA compliance, etc.)?		
If yes, do you have a copy of site usage/control documentation on hand (e.g., a lease agreement, intent to lease agreement, proof of property ownership, title verification)?		
Have you engaged the community in determining facility design or needs (e.g., public meetings, charette process, surveys, focus groups)?		
Have you completed a facilities assessment?		
Do you have a Facilities Master Plan (FMP) in place?		
For grant seeking facilities projects, do you have recent construction estimates for facilities improvement costs?		
If you are planning new school construction, major renovations, or building expansions, what phase are you at?	☐ Not started ☐ Pre-design phase ☐ Concept design ☐ Schematic design ☐ Design development ☐ Construction documents ☐ Bidding ☐ Don't know	
For new site construction or major capital renovations, has your project been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act by the designated State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO)?		

Area and Readiness Question	Status	Flag for Follow-Up
For new site construction or major capital renovations, has your project had an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement completed?		
For any major equipment projects, do you have price estimates (bids or market price research)?		
For program-related facilities projects (e.g., a greenhouse and gardening program), do you have annual program budgets developed?		
General Grant Readiness		
Do you have a current list of board members with contact information and work affiliations?		
Do you have an up-to-date organizational chart of school leadership, teachers, and staff?		
Do you have current resumes for school leaders (updated in the past 12-months)?		
Do you have a system in place to track passwords to online grant systems and key identification numbers?		
Do you have recent general data and statistics for educational outcomes and geography to help make the case for support?		
Do you have a breakdown of all staff and board members by gender, ethnicity, race, disability status?		
Have you identified priority projects for grant seeking?		
Do you have a process to screen/evaluate grant opportunities prior to applying?		
Do you have written policies or processes in place to manage grant awards?		
Do you maintain a grant calendar of submission deadlines for proposals and grant reports?		
For awarded grants, does your staff track and review project progress and expenditures at least quarterly?		
Federal Grant Readiness		
Are you registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) and current on your annual renewal?		
Is your school registered as an organization on grants.gov?		
Are staff members who will be working on federal grants registered with grants.gov as individuals?		

Notes on Current Status and Plans for Readiness Improvement: