



Funding Your Physical Education Program

Guest Blog by Kymm Ballard for Joey Feith: ThePhysicalEducator.com

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I'm always trying to figure out which topics I can blog about that would be most useful to physical educators. I've gone over [curriculum mapping](#), [standards-based instructional design](#), [assessment](#), [game design](#) and even [grading](#). One topic that I knew could really help physical education teachers is funding. So many teachers out there are desperate for funding to help them create the kind of programs that will best serve their students. However, funding is not within my area of expertise. Because of that, I decided to ask my friend [Dr. Kymm Ballard](#) if she would be willing to write a guest post on the topic. Kymm being Kymm, she agreed and I could not be happier with the quality of post she has created for you. Kymm has already poured in a ton of time, experience and expertise into this post, but if you would like to learn even more, check out her blog at www.kymballardconsulting.net and follow her on consulting account on Twitter: [@physedhelp](#). That being said, here is Kymm's blog post on funding your physical education program. ~ Joey Feith <https://thephysicaleducator.com/>

One of the biggest issues I hear across the country is that physical education and health education programs are underfunded. Some schools have budgets and others do not. Some teachers are content and others want to improve their programs. And some have written grants and others have not. This blog is hopefully for all of you! I am here to tell you there is funding out there to improve your health or physical education programs. Knowing where to look and what to do are sometimes out of our "PE" lane. [Kymm Ballard Consulting](#) was created to network and to provide technical assistance in funding to educators. It is how I contribute to the profession through my work and experience with others, just as others share lessons and assessments. In most schools across the United States, school budgets are tight, but I am here to tell you, money is out there! It will take work and determination. Some people may be scared or lack the confidence to write a grant. I hope I can help transition our thinking about grants and provide you with confidence to seek and receive funding to improve your program. If you're reading this, you must have some desire and interest!

Getting Started

When you begin thinking about your programs and whether additional funding will make sense for your program, consider this question: Where is the gap/need, and what can you do to fix it? A needs assessment is critical for evaluating your program and helping establish a need for the funding opportunity. Additionally, it gives you a chance to be sure your program is in order. The first thing I would suggest is to create a [*“Funding File.”*](#) Once you know the gaps in your program, you can keep it on file with other key information until you find the opportunity that can be successful. Consider performing routine evaluations, like modules of the [School Health Index](#), while waiting for a funding opportunity. Once you have this assessment, you can keep it in your folder until you need it. It will be used to help establish the “need” for the project for which you are requesting funding.

Another important thing to do is find out your grant process and a timeline for signatures. Find out if you need a Principal approval or do you need School Board approval to apply for a grant. What is the timeline for signatures changes depending on who needs to approve it? Are there other requirements your school system has in place for applying and accepting grants? There is other information that is important to keep and update such as poverty levels, free and reduced lunch, diversity of students, YRBS data, and socio-economic data.

I would be remiss not to mention ESSA as a means of funding your PE program in the US, even though it is not the focus of this blog. Most public schools receive funds from state and local budgets, but the federal budget can help, particularly in high poverty areas. In the US, this federal funding (from ESSA) is disseminated through the states to local school districts for education purposes in high need areas. For the first time ever, health education and physical education were included in a list of subjects that the funding can be used. While we currently don't have a budget, funding will eventually come. You can check out my blogs on ESSA [here](#). Additionally, if you want to find out more about your state, check out the ESSA state plans [here](#). This site will be updated regularly.

If you want to make a case for tapping into the [state Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), you may want to include data /evidence for how and where you are teaching social/emotional learning and attendance. Additionally, we are seeing the term “[chronic absenteeism](#)” come up as a school measure in most of the ESSA state plans. If you want to learn more about how you can connect to this in health and physical education, you can easily research it or I can be available for presentations and assistance. Regardless, I think this can be critical to tapping into the state /district ESSA funding.

Finally, I would like to highlight three funding opportunities any health or physical educator can focus on to fund your programs.

1. [Crowdsourcing](#)

One of the best sites to visit for small amounts of funding is crowdfunding/ crowdsourcing. According to [Philanthropy Outlook](#), charitable giving is looking to increase 3.6% for 2017. It shows about 70.6% of all giving will be by individuals like you and I. Foundations are estimated to provide 15.8%, Estates expected to provide 8.4%, and 5% from Corporations.[1] Philanthropy Outlook states that Individual giving is the number one source of funding. Usually, churches are the top recipient of funds from individual donors, but passionate stories are not far behind. These stories are told through platforms like [Donors Choose](#), [GoFundMe](#), [Fund my PE](#), [Adopt a](#)

[Classroom](#), [EdBacker](#), [Kickstarter](#), [RockerHub](#). While these sites vary, most have a simple way of getting a project off the ground and funded depending on your needs.

2. Fundraising

Fundraising is another way to acquire funding for your projects. Many of you participate in Jump or Hoops for Heart as a fundraiser. Another great fundraising sites have come to light also for schools. Action for Healthy Kids' [SuperFit School Challenge](#) provides technical assistance, tools, and an easy way to provide a healthy way to fundraise for your program. [Active School Fundraising](#) by Safe Routes to School National Partnership is another popular option. Finally, [You Caring](#) is great site for information on fundraising. You usually have to do a lot of promotion around these sites, especially in your city and on social media. If you are interested, there are some [great fundraising ideas](#).

3. Grants

My first advice is to look in your *Funding File* and brainstorm who may join you on your mission. As you begin, try to have these questions answered before looking for funding.

- Why are you looking for funding (creating purpose)?
- What do you want to do and what types of things do you need?
- How are you going to do it?
- Which partners will you need to involve?
- What do you hope to accomplish?
- How will you spend the money?
- How will you show change, progress as part of an evaluation.?

These answers can be kept in your *Funding File* until you are ready to write for a grant or use for another opportunity. This will help you target the right foundations.

No one has to do this alone, and a *grant committee* can help get things done. Collaborating with your Professional Learning Network (PLN) or with other teachers in your school, can create stronger relationships and grants. Additionally, grants usually require a collaboration with other community agencies (in addition to the school). Community outreach and partnership can be with an afterschool program or another area such as recess in school. When pulling your team together, designate individuals to provide specific information, such as school and community data, goals, objectives, and budget. Maybe someone on the team will be a good writer or reviewer, but regardless, I suggest assigning just one person to write the proposal itself. Even if you do not have a team and you write the grant alone, I suggest having an English teacher or someone proofread it for you.

One site I frequent is [Get Ed Funding](#) for articles and resources. You can also find more information and articles on grant writing. It helps to save some of this information in your *Funding File* also.

Now, you are ready to find a grant opportunity. There are four main types of organizations that issue grants: corporations, national foundations, local foundations, and the government (mostly federal but sometimes state). These foundations can be either public or private with a very targeted mission. You will have to read them carefully as you might be required to provide matching funds.

Large grants can be very competitive, but smaller ones are often harder to find. There are some that are known for educational grants such as [Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation](#) which is a community program giving away \$5 million in grants aimed specifically at schools. Some school districts have a Foundation that will fund programs otherwise not funded in your school. The chamber of commerce in your area may be able to identify companies offering education grants. [Teachers Count](#) offers free information on organizations offering grants to schools.

There are also many sites that provide grant information, grant finders, and grant writing tips. I too can assist in finding you grants if and when you are prepared. Finally, Google (and other search engines) can be a very powerful tool. I suggest you search "companies in (insert your state or district) providing grants." Keep that list in your file because many companies and philanthropists prefer to fund programs in their own back yard. It may take some time, but if you take the time to look through those businesses and see if they fund in the areas of health education or physical education (including anti-bullying, social emotional learning, obesity prevention, physical activity, healthy kids, etc.) and time(s) of year they usually open their RFP, it rarely changes from year to year. This valuable information can help you move quickly and plan ahead for your grant.

Writing the Grant

Most grants have similar components even though the length and amount of information may vary. One great example can be found [here](#).

- Contact information: This page is usually a cover and maybe basic contact information.
- Overview or abstract of the project: This is an introduction to the town or school and is usually a general and broad overview. Most commonly, it provides a demographic description and need of the project. This is something you can keep in your grant folder for easy access when writing multiple grants. It doesn't change very often although you will have to pay attention to data updates.
- Needs Assessment: Provide information on how you know this is a gap or need through a needs assessment such as the [School Health Index](#). You will have much of this information in your folder. This establishes your need as a priority for funding.
- Goals and Objectives: This lists the goals of your project and the objectives or steps you will take to make it happen. Sometimes this includes a description of the activities and sometimes it may be separate. Usually, this includes a timeline. If you are not familiar with writing SMART Goals, you may want to review this [handout](#).
- Budget: The budget section is the backbone of the grant proposal. As a grant reviewer, I often turn right to the budget before even reading the proposal to see how the money will be used. Program activities drive the budget. The program narrative should match the budget with no "surprises" in a budget. If your narrative doesn't match the budget, it's not getting funded. If you make a case for your needs, your budget will match your narrative. It is all about alignment and that is why it's considered the backbone. Your budget should match your activities which are aligned with the needs you have portrayed in the overview. If you need "in kind" be sure to list the things like your time, materials, and volunteer services of others. Be very careful to see if you need "matching" funds and if any of the matching can be "in kind." From most of my readings, I believe it is best to build the budget from the bottom-up, not top-down. I believe it's a mistake for grant

writers look at the maximum allowable grant request and start working backward from the maximum amount until they reach zero (top-down). The downside to top down is the ease of adding unnecessary expenses to the grant request just make certain that the maximum amount of funding is requested. For more on building a good budget, start [here](#).

- Evaluation: Funders want to make sure their funds are being used for good. In order to show this, evaluations are necessary. [Here](#) are some tips on how to properly measure the activities proposed in the grant. This evaluation detail may depend on the goal of the grant.

Other Tips

Deadline: It's crucial to send your grant request prior to the deadline (even if you have to send it overnight. Requesting delivery confirmation is always a good idea. Many of the grant providers fund several times per year so if you are pressed for time and miss the first deadline, keep improving it. Send it in prior to the next deadline.

Copies: Check the number of copies required. Some may require several copies. To prove you're sending an original, have your supervisors use blue ink for signatures (copies are usually black from a copy machine).

Appreciation: It is important to acknowledge the organization providing funding through a media release or at least a thank you note. You can also invite the funder to see your program once it is up and running. If appropriate, you could provide a framed note from the students. Many factors determine which grants receive grant funding. Identifying the need, finding the right foundation, and working together as a group makes a great recipe for a successful proposal. Collaboration can be very helpful and maybe give you the winning edge.

Don't be afraid. You will win some and not win some. Step out of your comfort zone of not writing grants. Many times, it is last minute and you don't know the process which becomes overwhelming. Once you prepare with your *Funding File* and do your homework, the grant becomes more possible. Good Luck in your funding journey! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need help.

Dr. Kymm Ballard is an Assistant Professor at Campbell University where she serves as the Health and Physical Education Teacher Education Coordinator. Recently, she created Kymm Ballard Consulting™ to assist in funding and ESSA efforts. Kymm has been successful for helping to initiate and facilitate millions of dollars to schools to address obesity prevention. Her goal is to assist others in the implementation of quality programs and policies in effort to provide sustainable and effective research based physical education/activity to schools and organizations around the country.

You can learn more about Kymm's work by visiting www.kymballardconsulting.net or by following Kymm on Twitter at [@DrKymmBallard](https://twitter.com/DrKymmBallard) (personal account) or [@physedhelp](https://twitter.com/physedhelp) (consulting account).

[1] (<http://philanthropynewsdigest.org/news/charitable-giving-to-grow-3.6-percent-in-2017-study-predicts>)