



AITC MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION HINTS

The following handout is a compilation of remarks and comments from previous judges of the AITC Matching Grant program. Their comments and a review of the Grant Selection Criteria (from the application) will assist you in preparing your Matching Grant Application. Good luck!

Grant Selection Criteria

A selection process reviews all funding requests that are properly completed and submitted by the **April 1** deadline. Completed applications **must be typed or computer-generated, using a font size no smaller than 10-point**. The application may be reproduced using word-processing software only if line/page spacing is not altered.

The proposed project **must be targeted to grades K-12** and **should enhance student knowledge of the contribution made by agriculture**. **Projects that use funds toward an ongoing, sustainable education effort will receive preference over those that involve a “one-time” program**. **Proposed projects or events designed to reach large groups of students will be given preference**, as will those that **involve innovative approaches** to promoting agricultural literacy.

Each funding request must include the following:

- Goals and objectives of project – 20%
- Description of proposed project and how it enhances student awareness of agriculture – 40%
- Itemized budget summary – 20%
- Project timetable – 5%
- Methods to be used to measure the success of the project –5%
- Listing of local groups, individuals or other partnering organizations involved in the proposed project – 10%
- Any additional information that will assist the judges in determining the merit of the project
- Signature of applicant (required)

Make sure that your application is **signed by the applicant and the group representative** that is providing the matching funds! Do not just type in the names- a **handwritten signature is required** or the application will be sent back for corrections. This insures that the supporting group has agreed to match funds.

Application Questions

1. Goals and objectives of project (20%)

- Be realistic- would rather see a smaller project well done, then a great big idea that was unable to be carried out.
- Refer to the number of students that aren't from a farm and why this program is so important in helping them understand where their food comes from and about production agriculture.
- With an annual project, what makes it unique each year? Explain what changes will be made on annual projects that will improve the information presented, number of people impacted or how you evaluate the success of the event.
- Describe your goals and be specific with projected numbers and participation.

2. Description of proposed project and how it enhances student awareness of agriculture (40%)

- Develop a simple plan and stick to it. Too many ideas get confusing.
- Be specific, detailed and complete. Don't leave any blank space.
- Give some examples of displays, hands-on activities or other parts of your program. Don't just say "displays and activities will be completed". This allows the committee to see the educational value of the various activities.
- This is **40%** of the application- spend time explaining your project and how it will enhance the student's awareness of agriculture.
- If the project has a resource list, include that in the description of your project.
- Don't assume that committee members know your abbreviations for various groups or supplies.
- Don't forget the 4 W's: who, when, why and where
- Are the logistics explained- how things will be organized, transported, or put together?

3. Itemized Budget Summary (20%) *Include name of organization(s) that will provide primary funds to be matched by this grant.*

- Be specific on your budget. List supplies and prizes. If you provide any other materials, list them as well.
- You may not be able to list every expense, but be as complete as you can. Just saying "prizes" or "supplies" doesn't tell the committee too much about the funds you will need to spend.
- In being aware of the judges comments from past applications, look at your budgeted amount. If the total project cost is \$800, then you would apply for \$400 as the matching group would be providing \$400. If the project costs more than \$1000, you would only apply for matching funds of \$500 and the other groups or your group would pick up the difference.
- Are the funds being used for education or for non-educational items? The committee members have commented on applications that most of the funds went for materials items that students don't get directly (i.e. transportation was mentioned numerous times). If this type of expense is a major cost for your project, explain it and consider ways to bring in additional sponsors to help with transportation or bus costs.

4. Project timetable (5%)

- Provide a concise timetable. It helps the judge know quickly what and when you are going to achieve the goal.
- Demonstrate the ability to complete the project
- Sometimes it's not clear on an application if a project will be an on-going program or just for a specific time period. If it is on-going, refer to how the materials will be kept in inventory, replaced or handled in the future.
- If it isn't obvious, list how long the display, activity or program will last. Examples would include: during school year, duration of county fair, June Dairy Month.

5. Methods to be used to measure the success of the project (5%)

- Pre and Post Evaluation are very desirable if they fit into your proposed activity. Develop a Pre-event quiz that the students take with questions about things that will be covered at the event. Then after the event, have the students take the quiz again. This should help you evaluate how much the students learned.
- Develop some type of feedback or evaluation form for the activity that participants can fill out.
- Develop an evaluation form that the teachers to fill out as well. They can use their educational background to help you evaluate the activity for future years.
- Are there any follow-up activities that could be developed for the activity or project?

6. Local groups, individuals or other partnering organizations involved in the proposed project (10%)

- Piggyback. Find a good event that you can make even better with your project contribution. This could be something like a "project within a project".
- Be specific in how many people are helping and what their role is.
- Collaborating with other groups or organizations is a plus.

7. Other

- Make sure the application is neat and complete. Provide a good basic plan. It does not have to include every single detail. If the project is interesting and well thought out, the assumption is that the project coordinator will be able to hand the little details.
- Typing and clarity are important. Use all the available space to tell the story.
- Expand again on the fact that you have a lot of urban students and the definite need for a program like this. Also expand on the annual program to help the committee know that teachers can build this into their curriculum.
- For-Profit groups, farm tours that charge for tours, or similar activities are not considered for the grants.

The grants are reviewed and given a score. The scores are totaled by the sum-of-the-rank method and funds are allocated accordingly. Review sheets are sent back to all applicants. Final reports are required for projects. Failure to submit a final report may inhibit the group's ability to receive future funding.

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