GRANT MYTHS

1. MILLIONS OF DOLLARS OF GRANT MONEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY PURPOSE JUST FOR THE ASKING.

Despite the hype that you hear and read, most grants are highly competitive and intended for very specific programs. Grant funding is most appropriate for those projects that can be classified as short-term capacity building, addressing one-time needs, or developing and implementing model demonstration projects. Grant funding is generally not appropriate for sustaining projects already underway or for covering costs typically considered to be part of the routine operations of the district.

2. YOU CAN APPLY FOR HUNDREDS OF GRANTS WITH A SINGLE APPLICATION.

Some grant writers submit the same proposal to hundreds of potential funders, a "shotgun" approach which merely wastes everyone's time and money. Almost every funder has specific application guidelines which allow them to quickly detect - and dismiss – mass-produced submissions not specifically tailored to the funder's interests. "Cutting and pasting" is not a successful grant writing approach.

3. GRANTS ARE ALL ABOUT FILLING IN PAPERWORK TO GET MONEY. YOU DECIDE HOW TO SPEND THE MONEY AFTER YOU GET THE GRANT.

It is most useful to think of grant proposals as an outcome of careful program planning and development. A grant proposal is a project implementation roadmap. A funded grant is a contract between you and the funder to carry out the program as you have presented it in the grant. If program changes are necessary, approval from the funder is often required. Follow-up program outcome and budget management reports -- demonstrating that you did what you said you were going to do and spent the money how you said you were going to in the grant -- are required by most funders.