

# ESSER Funds Support Materials

## Introduction

Preparing your application for government grants can be confusing and at times challenging, but successful grant applications can yield precious resources for your school. We've created this guidebook to help you through the process with some generalized tips, as well as some sample language you can use in the various sections of your school's application.

## Getting Started

### Step One: Reach Out to the Coordinator of the LEA

Before jumping in, it's always worthwhile to get on a call to confirm your school is actually eligible for the grant you are applying for. In this call you can also share your ideas and seek assistance in refining your application, and this will help build relationships too. Sometimes school districts offer webinars or seminars to provide guidance for the grant application, so make sure to ask about these.

### Step Two: Follow the Guidelines & Plan the Content

The Technicalities:

- Read the application carefully
- Answer all questions. If you are missing information, think about the people within your organization who may have the information you need. Writing grants is best done as a collaborative effort. Creating a team will allow for more accountability and the contributions of people with different areas of expertise
- Follow guidelines regarding word count, file type, etc.
- Check due dates for each part of the application

The Content:

- An effective grant proposal is driven by a narrative that answers **three critical questions**:
  1. What challenge, need or opportunity is your school looking to address?
  2. How is your proposal the solution to the challenge, need or opportunity?
  3. What will be the outcome or impact of your proposal?

- **Tell your organization's unique story.** Some ideas you might want to consider including:
  - ~ The demographics of your community: Think about the percentage of students receiving free or a reduced-price lunch; the percentage of students receiving special education services; your school's graduation rates; etc
  - ~ Has your community recently suffered through a natural disaster such as a hurricane, flood, tornado or wildfire? If so, you'll want to include this information
  - ~ What are your school's unique strengths? Think about a close collaboration with an area nonprofits, a highly involved parent body, an award-winning teacher or administrator
  - ~ Consider if your school has excelled in addressing other needs in the past and write about how you were successful

### Step Three: Let's Start Writing

Below, we've provided you with some sample language that may help spark your thinking as you write. Use these ideas to develop your narrative as you complete the various portions of your application.

#### The Challenge/Need/Opportunity Section:

*"Students present with a wide array of special needs, including autism, ADHD and sensory processing disorder. These challenges can make it difficult for students to self-regulate, interact with others and focus on learning."*

*"We aim to nurture and develop each child's social-emotional wellbeing, executive functioning and self-regulation. We are seeking resources that will support our teachers and students in achieving that goal."*

*"All children benefit from sensory support throughout the school day to maintain attention and manage behavior."*

#### The Proposal Section:

*"The project will provide teachers with training and tools to address sensory needs throughout the day and reduce behavioral challenges."*

*"This project will provide us with positive behavior support that meets students' needs."*

*"All students can benefit from an array of sensory tools that promote effective sensory processing."*

*"The project will include a custom selection of sensory tools supported by research. These include..."*

**[Copy and paste from below:]**

1. The **Classroom Break Box** is a curated set of sensory tools which includes
  - ~ Seating solutions such as **Gel Cushions** or **Spiky Tactile Cushions**. These provide sensory input, support subtle movement and help improve posture, helping students focus on learning
  - ~ **Space Explorers** are stretchy body socks that support body awareness and gross motor skills while simultaneously providing soothing proprioceptive input
  - ~ **Pet Massagers** and **Pressure Foam Rollers** offer massage-like feedback that can help calm students
  - ~ **Fidgets** provide an outlet for restless energy and support the development of fine motor skills
  - ~ **Putties** provide heavy hand work as either part of a sensory break or in preparation for handwriting tasks
  - ~ **Noise Reduction Headphones** minimize noise and maximize concentration, blocking out extraneous noise while still allowing students to participate in their environment
  - ~ **Weighted Bean Bags** support the development of hand-eye coordination and provide a grounding effect to support calm
  - ~ **Weighted Lap Pads** provide calming weighted pressure, improving students' attention and ability to relax
2. **Sensory Hallway Decals** are a playful way to integrate movement during transitions, providing sensory input and helping students focus on learning. Occupational and physical therapists can use a sensory hallway during therapy to work on specific goals associated with balance, bilateral coordination, crossing midline and gross motor development
3. **Sensory Corridor Wall Panels** and **Sensory Acoustic Tactile Panels** engage many senses and encourage socialization and group play
4. The **Bubble Wall** provides calming visual and auditory sensory input to help kids self-regulate
5. The **Mini Seating Alternative Kit** provides active seating so that students can move around and engage the core to help improve focus. Students can gently bounce on a ball chair, sit in an active learning posture supported by a wedge cushion, or subtly move and release restless energy on an inflatable cushion
6. The **Original Weighted Compression Vest** fits comfortably on students, offering snug compression to help students with sensory challenges cope throughout the day
7. The **Classroom Corner** provides a variety of sensory stimulation to calm and refocus students.

The following sensory tools are in this set:

- ~ The **Gel Tiles** provide an appealing visual experience
- ~ The **SensaSoft™ Compression Canoe** offers soothing compression and supports imaginative play and motor skills planning
- ~ The **Mega Mushy Smushy** is a versatile seating solution with multiple uses
- ~ The **Weighted Disc Blanket** provides proprioceptive input which helps kids calm and focus
- ~ The **SensaSoft™ Squeezeie Seat** supports a wide range of seating positions depending on students' needs and preferences
- ~ A **Jumping Board** is a durable and compact tool for students who need proprioceptive input

\*The project includes professional training for using a multi-tiered system of support to ensure fidelity of implementation. The training will provide teachers and other support staff with both theoretical understanding of the interventions and real life examples of implementation methods.

### The Budget Section:

- ✓ Classroom Break Box (2)
- ✓ Sensory Hallway Decals
- ✓ Sensory Corridor Wall Panels
- ✓ Sensory Acoustic Tactile Panels
- ✓ Bubble Wall
- ✓ Mini Seating Alternative Kit: 2 Therapy Balls, 2 Wedge Cushions, 2 My Magical Cushions
- ✓ Classroom Corner: 4 Gel Tiles, 1 SensaSoft™ Compression Canoe, 1 Weighted Disc Blanket, 1 Mega Mushy Smushy, 1 Jumping Board, 1 SensaSoft™ Squeezeie Seat
- ✓ Original Weighted Compression Vests (2)
- ✓ Online Interactive Training

[Note: Some grants require the full dollar amount be accounted for in the budget. Contact your sales representative or [customercare@funandfunction.com](mailto:customercare@funandfunction.com) to create a custom budget that meets your grant's requirements.]

## The Outcomes/Impact Section:

*“The goals are to benefit the classroom as well as individual students with special needs. The teacher will guide students to use the sensory tools to support the following goals...”*

### [Copy and paste from below:]

- Reduction of challenging behaviors
- Increased learning in the classroom (e.g. time on task, completion of tasks, increased accuracy of student work)
- Increased student participation in learning
- Increased ability of students to interact socially with peers
- Improve focus, calm and self-regulation

*“Sensory-based activity is positively correlated with increases in attention.”*

*“Children with the ability to self-regulate are more successful both in and out of the classroom.”*

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## Conclusion

Preparing a grant application takes time, patience, and collaboration. However, with perseverance, we've seen many organizations and schools receive much-needed funding. We hope this guidebook has been helpful to you. Good luck!

For more information go to [funandfunction.com](https://funandfunction.com).