

7 MYTHS

About Winning Institutional Grants

Institutional grant funding can be an important ingredient in transformative student success efforts. But many colleges and universities miss out on grant opportunities because they don't understand how to take advantage of them. In service to Student Success Collaborative members, EAB has done in-depth research on the drivers of institutional grant success and found seven persistent myths about grants that need to be dispelled.

MYTHS ✘

The availability and frequency of grant opportunities is shrinking.

Competition is too great for available grants—it's not worth the effort to apply.

To win, apply often.

Grant strategy is the responsibility of the proposal writer or project owner.

Grant reviewers tend to favor select institutions.

Institutional need is the greatest factor in the review process.

Funders give only to organizations they know.

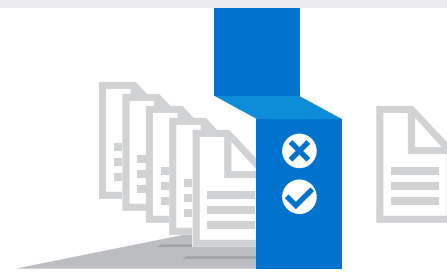
TRUTHS ✔

The availability of grant opportunities is **growing outside of traditionally known and established government sources**, in private, corporate, and regional consortiums and partnerships.

200% increase
in state/private student success grant initiatives from 2016 to 2017

25% increase
in private foundation funding

The level of **competition is smaller than many may think** due to priority mismatches and guideline errors.



On average, only 20% of applications for federal, state, and private grants meet established guidelines and are ultimately reviewed.

To win, **apply what you know** from previously funded requests, current grantees, and grant research. **Follow your mission**, not the money!

1 in 15 chance
when applying blindly



1 in 5 chance
when proposal is aligned with institutional mission and vision of the funder

Grant strategy **must be set at the institutional level** to ensure a college has carefully assessed grant readiness, availability of resources, appropriate data collection efforts, and sustainability.

Potential **Collaborators**
to Assess Readiness

Finance, IE/IR, Enrollment, Student Affairs, Faculty, External Stakeholders
(External stakeholders include community-based organizations, workforce development board, and industry)

Reviewers favor colleges that **clearly show a match** between the stated objectives of the grant program and the institutional proposal.

8 in 10 funders

provide a grant contact and offer informational sessions and/or webinars prior to grant deadlines. Many funders are eager to learn about new and promising programs before the deadline!

Institutional need is one of five factors funders pay particular attention to, in addition to program plan, budget, evaluation, and sustainability plan.

Top Grant Rubric Areas

- #1 What is the problem?
- #2 What is the solution, and are the outcomes realistic?
- #3 Is the team qualified to lead this project?
- #4 How much does it cost?
- #5 Can the work be sustained after the funding is gone?



Funders give to organizations that can **assist in advancing their goals** and help to solve a societal challenge at scale.

Funders

70%
have a systemized review process that is impartial to personal relationships

30%
have a board review process that could be skewed by personal relationships