

your students put into practice what they've learned. Secondly, keep your eyes on the big picture. The class's experience will be much better over the long run if the issue they select is broad enough so that many organizations will fall under its rubric, but narrow enough that applying organizations can be compared and contrasted with one another based on similar criteria. Help them with this by strategically combining and dividing different suggestions into more useful categories. As another example, "gun control" might be a bit too narrow, but could be combined with some other suggestions into a broader "anti-violence" theme. Finally, make sure they feel like they've had a chance to exercise their power. They'll be on the lookout to see if the whole thing's a fraud; that you've set them up to think that they're going to have authority, but then you're not going to actually trust them to exercise it.

Note that there's occasionally some resistance to the idea of choosing a theme at all. Some students will invariably feel that their choices are being limited by the imposition of a theme. While these concerns should be validated, it's very important for the manageability of the project that the class choose a theme. Without the direction that a theme affords, it's much more difficult for students to target potential grant applicants. Furthermore, the number of applications can become unwieldy. Finally, it's much more difficult to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of organizations with totally different goals and missions.

To help inform this process, you

may want to print copies of grant guidelines from several local foundations (most foundations place them on-line). This will give students a sense of the kind of framework they should develop,

DESIGNING A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND GRANT APPLICATION

THIS IS AN activity in which student involvement will likely vary based on age and time dedicated to the project. On the one hand, it's important for students to have input into what information organizations should provide in order to request grants. On the other hand, the structure of an RFP and Grant Application is limited by certain generally-accepted protocols. Ultimately, you'll need to make sure your RFP and Application conform to some basic guidelines, but give the students as much opportunity as possible to be part of the process. (You'll find samples from the Temple Isaiah Seventh Grade Fund on *p.88*.)

With younger students, you may spend some time brainstorming ideas for questions that should be included in the Grant Application. Then you can have them combine questions and narrow down the list to certain key themes. With sufficient guidance, students should be able to generate the key questions that will need to be part of your Application.

Older students may want to play a greater role in the development and design

of the RFP and Application. In this case, you can give them an opportunity to explore sample RFPs and Grant Applications online. Through surveying the standard formats these documents take, they should be able to craft a suitable RFP and Application for *Tzedakah in Action*.

Some key elements that your RFP should contain include:

- Amount of maximum grant.
- Stipulation that grants will only be given to 501(c)(3) organizations.
- Issue area (e.g. poverty, homelessness, human rights, etc.).
- Submission deadline.
- Contact information for your foundation.

The Application should definitely request the following information (at least):

- Contact information.
- Description of the organization.
- Description of project, including budget and amount of grant request.
- Verification of 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

FINDING AND WORKING WITH ORGANIZATIONS

IDENTIFYING AND SHEPHERDING POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

ONCE THE CLASS has settled on a theme, the students should take responsibility for identifying potential grant recipients. This is the occasion of the second homework assignment. Immediately after the theme has been selected, students should be given a week or so to identify different organiza-

tions whose work falls within the issue area. Depending on the size of the class, each student should be expected to generate 5-10 organizations.

Assuming a reasonable amount of overlap among student lists, a list of 50-100 organizations is a good goal. You, as teacher, should also feel free to seek out organizations. The more RFP and Application packets you send out, the more proposals you'll receive. You should know that return rates can be as low as 5-10%, so don't get frustrated if you don't get as many proposals as you'd hoped. Also remember that proposals tend to come in at or near the deadline, so be sure to give yourself enough time after the deadline to read through and prepare proposal packets for the Board.

It's a good idea to set aside some time during the first Board Meeting to brainstorm ways for students to find organizations and to clarify what kind of information they should be collecting about them. Clearly, the internet is going to be a primary resource for many students to pursue their research.

During this conversation, it will also be valuable for you to discuss the pros and cons of working with non-local applicants. While casting a wide net may bring in some very interesting proposals, distant organizations are less likely to be able to present directly to the Board and form a close relationship with your community.

As the teacher, you will need to serve as the contact person for grant applicants. In this capacity, you'll need to answer

TEMPLE ISAIAH SEVENTH GRADE FUND 2000-2001

Request for Proposals *[sample page]*

The Temple Isaiah Seventh Grade Fund is seeking proposals for projects that address the purposes described in this RFP.

GOALS: The Seventh Grade Fund is a private foundation created by the Seventh Grade class at Temple Isaiah in November 1998. Each academic year, our Board chooses an issue area upon which to focus our work. This year, our goal is to identify and support organizations that protect animals and the environment, while educating ourselves about the value of directed philanthropy. The primary focus of our giving will be local, but may include national and international projects.

ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA: Eligible organizations must have 501(c)(3) or other acceptable not-for-profit corporate status and must address the goals outlined above. Grant requests will be accepted up to \$5,000.00.

FUNDING DECISIONS: Funding decisions will be made by the Board of Directors of the Seventh Grade Fund. The Board is comprised of all ninety members of the Temple Isaiah's Seventh Grade Class of 2000-2001. Grants will be awarded during the beginning of May 2001.

PRESENTATIONS: Organizations making grant requests are invited and encouraged to make presentations to the Board of Directors at our meetings on Sunday, April 15th, Sunday, April 22nd, and Sunday April 29th, 2001. Please call Aaron Dorfman, Seventh Grade Fund Advisor, at (555) 555-5555, if you are interested in scheduling a presentation.

SUPPORT: The Seventh Grade Fund's grants are supported by donations from Temple Isaiah's Seventh Grade families, modest fundraising efforts, and additional gifts from individual donors.

DEADLINE: Grant proposals are due at Temple Isaiah by 4:00 pm on Monday, March 26th, 2001.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions regarding this RFP or the Grant Proposal Format, please contact Aaron Dorfman, Seventh Grade Fund Advisor, at (555) 555-5555.

TEMPLE ISAIAH SEVENTH GRADE FUND 2000-2001

Grant Application *[sample page]*

Please use the following format to respond to the questions in no more than two typed pages (plus attachments – see below). Please remember that your proposal will be evaluated by seventh graders and should be written for their level of comprehension.

- 1) (a) Name, address, and telephone number of requesting organization.
 (b) Name of contact person.
- 2) Brief description of the organization (e.g. mission, goals, programs, people served, accomplishments).
- 3) Title of project and brief description.
- 4) Complete and detailed project budget and amount of grant request.
- 5) What are the specific activities that this grant will support? Include how the money will be spent, what work will be done, and the way that animals and/or the environment will be helped by this project. Also, please indicate whether this is an existing/ongoing program or a new project/program.
- 6) What specific goals and objectives do you expect to accomplish?
- 7) How do you intend to implement the program and in what projected timetable?
- 8) How does this project address the goals of the Seventh Grade Fund?

Please attach:

- 1) Verification of non-profit status.
- 2) You may attach supporting materials specific to your application.

Please return the application to: Temple Isaiah Seventh Grade Fund, Grant Proposal
 1234 Main Street
 Anywhere, CA 12345