

Tonisha Cook, M.Ed.

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Grant Management ▪ Continuous Improvement ▪ Budget Strategy

Analytical, organized, and process-driven leader with 10+ years of experience and a proven track record overseeing federal and state grant programs within the school system. Expertise includes managing multi-million-dollar budgets, ensuring compliance with regulatory guidelines, and implementing strategic initiatives to enhance program effectiveness and support educational objectives. Demonstrated success managing stakeholder engagement, leading performance evaluations, and driving the development of evidence-based strategies for continuous improvement.

Strategic Planning

Stakeholder Engagement

Resource Allocation

Compliance

Student Achievement

Program & Project Management

Academic Investments

Budget & Data Analysis / Reporting

Technical Assistance

Performance Management

Policy Evaluation

Process Design

PROFESSIONAL CAREER HISTORY

Education Equity Unlimited ▪ Nashville, TN ▪ 2024 – Present

Owner & Consultant

- Spearheads federal grant monitoring efforts to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements and maximize fund utilization across multiple government-funded projects
- Delivers expert technical assistance to grantees by guiding them through complex federal reporting processes to improve the accuracy and timeliness of submissions, and enhance their capacity to achieve program goals
- Leads multi-disciplinary project management teams in the successful execution of federal programs; Develops project plans to achieve project milestones and deliver high-impact outcomes within budget and time constraints
- Designs and implements tailored curriculum for staff development programs; Facilitates training to fortify skills and maximize learning outcomes

Metro Nashville Public Schools ▪ Nashville, TN ▪ 2023 – Present

Grants Coordinator

- Influences the strategic direction of grant management, evaluation, and reporting activities by providing expert technical guidance to ensure alignment with organizational goals, compliance with funding requirements, and drive continuous improvement in grant performance and outcomes
- Reviews and approves all spending requisitions for district and school-level grants to ensure compliance with budgetary guidelines, maximize resource allocation, and support the strategic goals of each grant program
- Engages school and district-level stakeholders to build partnerships and secure support for key priorities; Serves as a thought leader by translating data insights to support strategic planning and guide the development of future initiatives
- Manages fiscal budgets and oversees programmatic implementation for federal grants at district and school levels, including 3 district grants and 32 school grants
- Coordinates and allocates ~\$20M in Turnaround School Improvement Grants to drive effective educational outcomes
- Leads and mentors a team of indirect reports to ensure the successful development, completion, and approval of Turnaround School Improvement Plans across 32 schools; Provides coaching to maximize productivity and performance
- Pioneered the development of processes for school improvement grant writing applications, budget revisions, and grant compliance and documentation to ensure consistency in work product and optimize team efficiency

Memphis-Shelby County Schools ▪ Memphis, TN ▪ 2021 – 2023

Manager, Federal Programs Grants

- Served as the primary corporate and community liaison for the establishment and implementation of Title I School Improvement Grants; Oversaw a \$7M budget
- Directed the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in partnership with key entities including English Learners, McKinney-Vento, Early Childhood, and Family and Community Engagement
- Provided strategic vision for Federal Program human resources and operational initiatives; Catalyzed the development of multi-tiered grant proposals and federal regulatory compliance systems that facilitated program execution and adherence to all funding requirements
- Supported the professional development of 3 direct reports by providing coaching and facilitating growth opportunities
- Championed audit readiness initiatives by implementing preparation protocols and conducting internal reviews, resulting in no negative findings

- Managed a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) wrap-around services project for neglected/delinquent facilities and private schools; Achieved 85% utilization of an \$800K budget in the first year that funded schoolwide initiatives, direct and supplemental services, and parent/community programming
- Spearheaded the federal budget development process, including the presentation and strategic allocation of program funding, to optimize resource utilization and support program objectives
- Instituted reporting and program governance by developing technical performance platforms and data reporting efficacy dashboards that enabled real-time monitoring, improved decision-making, and enhanced transparency
- Led the development and optimization of processes and performance evaluation systems to drive operational efficiency while enhancing program effectiveness

Delaware Department of Education ▪ Dover, DE ▪ 2019 – 2021

Education Associate, Title I, Part A

- Managed \$54.5M+ in grant funds including the State’s 44 LEAs Title I, Part A budget for the Delaware Department of Education
- Orchestrated all aspects of Title I programming, including logistics and project management, by coordinating resources, overseeing implementation, and ensuring alignment with program objectives
- Integrated Local Educational Agency (LEA) monitoring protocols, conducted site visits, and implemented compliance controls to ensure secure, consistent programming and facilitate growth opportunities
- Coordinated ongoing implementation, training, and technical assistance for the State’s 44 LEAs in preparation of their Title I funding application and schoolwide plans
- Served as the key decision maker and final authority on the recommendation and approval of LEA funding applications, schoolwide plans, and waivers
- Consulted on the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies, performance metrics, and leadership accountability frameworks; Provided expert guidance on federal auditing protocols and spearheaded initiatives for diversity improvement to drive organizational effectiveness

School District of Palm Beach County, FL ▪ West Palm Beach, FL ▪ 2010 – 2019

Grant Compliance Specialist, Title I

- Spearheaded organizational strategic planning by assessing Title I instructional programming and initiatives, leading to improvements and increased program effectiveness, enhanced alignment with educational goals, and better overall student outcomes
- Systematically implemented federal, state, and local regulatory guideline measures by developing and executing compliance frameworks, conducting regular audits, and integrating best practices to promote operational excellence
- Led the processing, marketing, and auditing of Federal Title I Programs to enhance program visibility, ensure compliance with regulatory standards, and optimize resource allocation to maximize educational impact
- Served as Chair of the Process Improvement Team (PIT); Oversaw daily operations, and supervised professional development initiatives, while also developing evaluation criteria and strategic effectiveness measures to drive continuous quality improvement
- Leveraged knowledge of federal statutes including Title I (Parts A and C), Title II (Non-Public), Title IV No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to increase student achievement metrics
- Innovated hybrid solutions for process improvement measures by integrating key methodologies and technologies to increase performance drivers, streamline operations, and achieve substantial gains in efficiency and effectiveness

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Tennessee State University ▪ Master of Education: Elementary Education ▪ Bachelor of Science: Economics & Sociology

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Secretary & Program Chair ▪ Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

Member ▪ United States Army Reserves

Member ▪ Golden Key International Honor Society

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook), Google Suite