



## Grant Application Writing Tips and Tricks

Grants are provided by government (local, state and national), charitable trusts, and by community organisations (eg Lotteries, Rotary, etc). Each grant has a specific purpose, objective and target group.

Writing successful grant submissions can require much time and effort, so it is essential to quickly and efficiently determine if a grant will suit your group. Be prepared. Have draft project activity ideas that can quickly be tailored to match available grants.

When applying for funding your first consideration should be;

- Are we applying for funding because we have identified a need and have developed a project concept that will address this need?

Or

- Are we applying for funding for this project because we have found a funding source and don't want to miss out on an opportunity to access money for our community?

If it is the latter you may wish to re-think whether your application is going to be relevant.

Suggestions for quickly scanning grants for suitability include:

### **Look first at the grants factsheets or guidelines**

First identify –

- What the grant is for, ie. their needs.
  - Do they match your needs or can you tailor a project to suit?
  - Does the grant help you achieve your strategic plan?
  - Are the timelines appropriate?
- Look at what they will fund (and won't fund).
  - If they don't fund salaries, do you really want to proceed?
  - If they don't fund administration, travel, etc. do you really want to proceed?
- Remember a small grant (eg. \$5000) may take just as much time to complete as \$50,000 submission.
- Any amount over \$50,000 – \$200,000+ will require much more reporting and governance.

Second, review the criteria

- Do you meet the eligibility criteria? Read carefully and be realistic.
- Can you quickly devise a rough plan/project that would meet all the criteria?
- Do you have the time and resources (besides the money from the grant) to complete the project?
- Do you require committee approval to proceed, or will the project directly contribute towards achievement of the strategic plan?

Review the entire guidelines and submission documents. Make notes, and highlight words and sentences that you may want to include in your submission, as you go. This will assist you later when writing the submission.

- Prepare a rough project plan.
  - The more thoroughly you have thought through the project, the easier the submission will be to write (eg. what, how, who, when, costs, etc.)



**Reasons why applications/submissions aren't successful include:**

- Wrong bucket: the project doesn't match the targets of what the funder wants to fund.
- Didn't meet criteria:
  - Some organisations receive up to 30% of applications that do not meet the criteria
  - Didn't answer the question/criteria (even if you think you did);
  - Often too much detail is provided about the how, but not the why – or vice versa;
    - Remember to write your submission using the language, and background information, that the grant details discuss. Avoid industry jargon.
  - Their needs are not achieved by your project, ie. you must tailor your project to what the funder want;
    - This may include expanding the project so what you need becomes a component of a larger project that also provides what they need.
- In-kind support is not acceptable
- Work has already been done i.e. is not new/novel/innovative. Important to do your research first.



## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### **Title**

The title should suggest what the project is about, and be clear.

### **Project summary**

The submission should begin with a brief overview of what the project will do, who the target audience is or who it will benefit, and when (ie. what needs will be satisfied?). It is recommended to complete the summary after completing the majority of the submission.

### **Problems**

What problems will be solved, or benefits or advantages will be achieved through the completion of this project.

### **Objectives**

What does the project hope to achieve? What are the outcomes?

- List the tangible products the project will produce (new technology, new methods, training program, brochure, etc);
- Provide real measures to demonstrate the success of the project;
- Discuss risks, and how the project will reduce them;
- Identify any flow-on effects (ie. additional benefits, advantages).

### **Justification of need**

Why should anybody fund this project? It is essential to demonstrate a real need and to justify that need (ie. to solve problems or create change).

Be careful not to waffle. Quality is better than quantity. Answer all questions directly. Use short sentences and dot points if required.

- Has the project been attempted before, or elsewhere?
  - Why did it succeed, or fail?
  - If the work has been done elsewhere, give reasons why it should be funded in your area.
- What gaps are there in current research/development/extension in this area
- Who will benefit? Demonstrate and illustrate the benefits. Benefit should be greater than just the individual;
- Any statistics or data to validate your claim?
- Are there any long term benefits?
- Include letters of support from supporters and advocates;
- Source referencing: use quotes from other reports to validate that your project matches their needs (especially reports prepared by the grant body/department):
  - Use other reports (eg, government action agendas) providing data or information that aligns with your project (ie. supports the need and demand);
  - Use quotes that support your idea/project but not too many quotes, enough to show you know what they want, and know the literature;
  - Web search the funding body to access jargon, priorities and objectives.



### **Project plan**

- Describe the project activities (project design and plan) in detail, that is, how you propose to implement the project and how it will be coordinated;
- Describe the sequence and flow of the project (any equipment, facilities, etc);
- Present activities that can be accomplished in the time frame;
- Describe the time frame, including activity start dates;
- Who is involved in the project? You may need to attach separate information.
- Is the project well managed? Do you need to provide a track record?

### **Evaluation and measurement**

How will you demonstrate or prove that your project (once completed) has achieved its objectives, and solved the problem or provided great benefits?

- Who will evaluate?
- What criteria or measures did you build into the project?
- Can you budget for an evaluation?

If successful in your grant application, the funding body will be funding your project to see an outcome. Don't forget to document your work throughout the project entirety (photos, media articles etc) as this will help with final reporting.

### **Budget**

How much the project will cost, and the relative value needs to be clearly outlined. Many grants may have specific financial reporting frameworks or structures.

What will the grant fund? Useful budget categories include:

- Staff, including EO salary (as project manager), administration officer, research officer eg. six hours per week x length of project (also include the same amount as 'in-kind');
- Other consultant costs;
- Administration costs (postage, stationary);
- Travel costs:
- Telephone and communications;
- Printing – includes photocopying, agenda/minute production, etc;
- Equipment;
- Marketing and promotion for communicating the results/outcomes of the project (eg printing a brochure/flyer);
- Venue costs (for meetings, include catering costs);
- Insurances;
- Audit costs Don't over estimate the costs. Funding bodies (especially government) require very clear financial reporting as the project may need to be audited.

What in-kind resources can you access? For example, a steering committee of volunteers would include eight people at \$100 per hour for five meetings of three hours is \$9,600 in-kind support.

Other examples of in-kind support include:

- EO costs/wages;
- Administration staff costs;
- Rent support and venue support – if meetings are held in your building you don't have to pay for venues.

Check whether GST is to be included or excluded in the budget.



### **Attachments to submissions**

Letters of Support: the ability to provide letters of support for any project are very well received by grant providers. The more significant the support, or the supporter (eg. industry leader, politician), the better. It demonstrates that you have communicated with the community, sought to research the need; that you have a good idea and others think so too and that you have industry/ community confidence in you (ie. less risk to grant body). Also include organisational brochures and/or marketing material, anything that demonstrates your success with other grants or projects and brief CVs to demonstrate competencies and experience.

### **Submitting the application**

Make sure you submit the application on time. After all the hard work, don't miss out because of a simple matter of timing. Keep a full copy of the submission for your own records.

### **Do's and Don'ts**

- Do learn about the funding body;
- Don't expect to make money;
- Do expect to be very accountable;
- Don't over or under estimate the budget;
- Don't expect emotive writing to help you;
- Don't expect to influence the application process;
- Do tailor your applications to each funding body, and grant;
- Don't include information that is not relevant
- Do present a clear and well written submission;
- Don't expect to be able to do what you want, when you want, there are always very specific time frames and accountability frameworks.

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