

# Grant Writing Tips

- **Read grant guidelines and application forms carefully!** Pay close attention to eligibility criteria, the types of initiatives that the funder is supporting, and eligible costs. To get a sense of your project's competitiveness for the grant, think critically about how well your project the funder's objectives.
- **Prioritize.** Often the most time-consuming component of a grant application is not the application itself but the required supporting documentation. It's helpful to list out all the requirements of a grant application so that the lengthier tasks can be started as soon as possible.
- **Draft your grant application in MS Word or Pages.** Grant applications vary in format. Some grant programs provide PDF applications, while others require submission of an application through an online portal. By building your grant application in a word processing application, it can be edited and shared with others easily. By saving a copy of your application, you can avoid technical glitches that may arise with saving edits to your application online. You can also re-use your responses in future grant applications. Once you finalize your grant application, you can then copy and paste your responses into the required application format. Be aware though of any character limits when copying and pasting your responses.
- **Tell a compelling story.** Storytelling is an essential component of writing a strong grant application. A compelling story will help your application stand out from other grant submissions and provide a clear reason for the funder to support your project. Just make sure that your responses are clear, succinct, and factual.
- **Validate through research.** Grant programs are usually competitive. A strong case for funding can be built by using research to back-up any claims made in the application. Finding research and evidence that supports the project's goals and outcomes will help validate the importance of the project in the eyes of the funder.
- **Proofread.** Proofreading is especially important in presenting a polished, well-written grant application. Proofreading catches writing, grammar, spelling, and consistency errors and helps you refine and clarify ideas.
- **Reach out to the funder.** Building strong relationships is an important part of grant writing. In some instances, funders may even explicitly request that applicants connect to discuss their project before applying. Developing a relationship with a funder allows you to clarify funding guidelines, confirming eligibility, confirm the average amount of funding approved for projects, generate good will and may make your proposal more memorable. In some cases, a funder may notify you directly about future opportunities that are applicable to your organization. A funder's contact details are usually provided on the grant webpage or in the grant guidelines.
- **Understand the funder's reporting requirements before you apply.** Before you invest time in writing a grant application, read about the funder's reporting requirements to ensure you can meet them.
- **Keep the funder the hero in your application.** If there is an opportunity to share how you're going to acknowledge the funder in your project, include this information in your grant application (where appropriate).

- **Humanize your application.** Make your story about the people who benefit, e.g., instead of ‘pedestrian’, say ‘people walking’; instead of ‘traffic’, say ‘people driving to work’.
- **Consider partnerships.** In some circumstances, establishing partnerships with other organizations to deliver a project or initiative may improve your chances for funding. Partnerships can be advantageous especially if your organization doesn’t meet the applicant eligibility criteria (e.g., funding may only be available to registered charities). The competitiveness of your project may also be improved by providing funders with the opportunity to donate to and support multiple organizations in just one project. Partnerships can also indicate to funders that your project is collaborative and has widespread community support and impact.
- **Take a break from writing.** Go away and come back with a fresh perspective and ideas. This is also a good time to revisit the grant requirements so make sure you didn’t miss anything.
- **Allow enough time...**for reviewing your draft grant application response and gathering mandatory documents, such as letters of support, Council/Band resolutions, business plans and detailed budgets.
- **Sometimes it’s good to be repetitive.** Avoid saying ‘see above’ if you feel like you’ve already answered a question in a previous question. Often funders will score each response separately, so you want to be thorough with your explanations. The best approach is to read the grant guidelines very, very carefully and make sure you address every piece of information that the funder is requesting for each question, even if it feels repetitive.
- **Include a detailed budget.** Even if the funder doesn’t require that you provide a detailed budget, consider including one anyway. This shows the funder that you’re organized and grant ready.
- **Include a contingency with your budget.** Even if you’re not directed by the funder to include a contingency, include one anyway! Top up each of your costs (e.g., 10-20%) to allow for changes to pricing. Sometimes it can take upwards of 12-18 months for a funder to confirm funding and prices can change significantly during that time.
- **Don’t wait until the last minute to start inputting information into an online form.** Sometimes questions differ between the online form and the grant guidelines document. You may also find that some questions are not applicable to your project, and you want to avoid wasting time answering irrelevant questions.
- **Include all referenced documents with your application.** If you reference documents (e.g., community plans, research documents) in your application, include a link to each document or attach it to your application. If you are limited by characters in the response box, use [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) to reduce the size of your link.
- **You’re not always limited to mandatory documents.** Provide as much relevant information, as possible.
- **Submit before the deadline.** Don’t wait until moments before a deadline to submit your application. If possible, submit it at least a day before the deadline. Submitting your application early creates breathing room to handle any issues that may arise.
- **Follow up with the funder.** If you haven’t heard back from the funder about your application, follow-up with them and see if any further information can be provided. This is also a good opportunity to discuss why your application was declined and ask if there will be another intake.