

Tips for writing effective grant proposals

Being new to writing grants doesn't have to mean being unsuccessful! Here are a few tips to help with your next grant application:

- **Spell out your need for the grant** - make sure it goes beyond not being able to do it without the \$. Why are you doing the project, what is the community need?
- **Use a storytelling approach** but don't forget to include the who, what, where and when! Put yourself into the assessors' shoes - they read dozens of applications so how are you going to stand out? Keep their attention and ensure your project is easy to understand.
- **Write in short, hard-hitting sentences.** Long-winded sentences almost always lose the reader. In some instances point form is a great way to go. Lose the \$10 words in favour of the short and simple ones. The best grant proposals are easy to read, concise and understandable. Always.
- **Target a specific project with your grant proposal.** If you have a big event or project occurring and are applying for funding for one component of it, make sure to focus your storytelling and need around that one item with a brief overview of the overall project. Assessors need to know exactly what you are wanting to use the grant funding for.
- **Avoid tokenism or cultural appropriation** by ensuring the authenticity, relevance and appropriateness of the cultural resource people involved in your project.

- **Pay close attention to details**, are there specific things the funder asks to be included in the application? Letters of support, multiple signatures, Non-Profit Entity #, budget details (do you have estimates, if needed?).
- **Be sure your budget makes sense.** Believe it or not, quite a few proposals are submitted with math errors, which automatically undermines the organization's credibility. Be sure your math adds up, your budget makes sense and it directly links to what you have said you are doing. If you don't mention hiring an artist who needs to travel, then your budget shouldn't show travel costs.
- **Recruit someone to review your application** and make sure it makes sense. Share the guidelines with the person who is reviewing for you, it will give them a better idea of what is eligible. It might be very clear in your mind what you are asking for, but is it clear to someone who doesn't know what you are doing? It is also a great idea to check grammar, punctuation and ensure you are using terminology and language usage appropriately. Assessors can spend hours reviewing applications, don't make them feel like they put more effort into reading your application than you put into writing it.
- **Don't Procrastinate** - plan in advance and start writing your application as soon as possible. Make sure you know what additional items you need such as letters of support, financial statements, annual reports, or examples of past projects. Grants that have ongoing deadlines will only last as long as the \$ lasts, the sooner you get your application in the better chance you have of being awarded funding.
- **Reach out to the Grant Consultant before you start.** They want to hear from you, assist you and make sure you put your best foot forward. This is part of their job - they are there to help you! Call or email them right now!