**I FIGHT TO MAKE IT RIGHT**

**Tips and hints to complete grant applications**

This How-to guide aims to provide you some handy tips to make it easier to apply for grants and increase your chance of success with grant funding.

There are many tips and not all are covered here. Talk to other people and organisations who have been successful with grants, and contact grant makers to find out exactly what they are looking for.

## Key points

### Plan ahead

- Before your application, be grant ready. Have the relevant information about your organisation – e.g. who are you, what do you do, your organisation's legal structure and charitable status, your Australian Business Number (ABN), and whether you pay GST. A handy Grant-ready information template can help you keep this information in one central document.
- Be realistic about the time you need to make an application – ensure you have sufficient time before the deadline to get the information and support that you require.
- Check with others in your organisation about your authority to act. Are you authorised to apply for a grant on behalf of your organisation? Does it need to go to a committee meeting? Does it need to be endorsed? You will need to factor this into your timeframe.
- Think in advance about your organisation's projects or funding needs – make a list, get some quotes, have an idea of what you need. You will then be able to respond to grant applications promptly and find grants that are suitable for your organisation.
- Check the funding conditions. Sometimes you cannot start your project before the funding is approved. The grant maker will also need time to assess the applications before announcing the successful grants. Sometimes there is a further delay before contracts are signed and approved and the funds are transferred to you. Factor this into your thinking about when you can deliver your project, and whether this still meets your needs.

### Go into grant finding with your eyes wide open

- Go in with your eyes open – you need to be able to deliver what you say you can in your application. Understand that awarding of a grant can set up legally-binding responsibilities for your organisation.
- Chasing funding without a clear purpose may create problems. Just because a grant is available, does not mean that it meets your needs, or that the timing is right for you.

- Check and double check the closing date, eligibility criteria and guidelines:
  - Are there upper or lower limits on the amount of funding?
  - Is a co-contribution required – either in-kind or cash?
- If the application must be lodged online, don't leave it until the last minute. If numerous applications are being lodged at the same time, there can be glitches and delays
- Check who has received grants from this organisation or this fund before. Who or what groups? What types of projects were funded? This can help you understand if the funding is the right fit.
- Check the 'tone' of the application – is it friendly or formal? Match your language and 'tone' to the grant guidelines.

## Tailor your grant applications

- Your aim is to make sure that your project lines up directly with the funding eligibility criteria for that particular grant round.
- Don't submit the exact same application for several different grants. Each grant maker is different, and they are looking for different things. You can submit for the same project to several grant makers.
- Online grant applications often have word limits or character limits. You are unable to submit any more words than the space allows. To avoid going over the word limit, write your application in a Word document first, edit to reduce words, then copy and paste into the application.
- Check before you hit the 'submit' button that you have printed the completed document or saved it to your own location.
- Keep your language clear and concise. Have a colleague read through the application to make sure it is easily understood, and check for readability, typos, and spelling errors.
- Answer all of the questions in the application form. You can respond with 'Not Applicable' but double check the question first to find out what they are really asking.

## Record keeping

- Get your systems in order – be able to report what has been done with the funding, and the difference it has made. Keep expenditure records and record the volunteer hours directly associated with the project.
- Be prepared to report on the progress of your project and the details of expenses and labour, including volunteer labour.

## Keep in touch with the grant maker

- Grant makers want projects to be successful. Understand what the grant maker is looking for, and whether your project or idea is a good fit. There will often be a contact or helpline to call. It is better to ask them questions directly than try and guess what they are looking for.
- If you are successful with your grant, understand that you will be required to report back to the grant maker on progress. Take photos, publicise the grant and the

activities, thank the funder, and acknowledge them in your own organisation's reports, website, and in your publicity.

- Let the grant maker know early on if circumstances change. Try to work with them on a solution.
- If your grant application is unsuccessful, follow up with the grant maker and seek some feedback. Find out which organisations and what projects were successful. Ask the grant maker whether it is worth submitting an application for the next round of funding, and when that is likely to occur. Reflect on this with your organisation – what worked, what didn't work, what can you do better next time, and how can you improve. What will you do differently in the future?