

GRANT WRITING GUIDE

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GRANT WRITING GUIDE

This Guide is designed to help you step through the process of researching and applying for grants. There are no sure-fire tactics when it comes to grant-seeking. However, this handy guide contains information and tips that may improve your chances of success.

WHO ARE THE GRANT-MAKERS?

- Commonwealth Government
- State and Territory governments
- Local government
- Corporations and businesses
- Philanthropic Trusts
- Private, Family, Corporate or Community Foundations
- Donors
- Bequests

Every grant-maker has their own mission. Your challenge is to understand and explain how you can help them deliver on that mission.

It's usually a good idea to seek income from a variety of sources, rather than relying on a single grant-maker.

Things to check with each prospective grant-maker:

- Their eligibility requirements
- The Issues and causes they are most interested in funding
- Who and what they have funded in the past and why
- Their preferred processes, including deadlines.

Take action:

1. Research grant-makers who may be interested in what you have to offer.
2. Short-list those whose eligibility requirements you meet.
3. Familiarise yourself with their assessment criteria.
4. Note their processes, application requirements and deadlines.

BEFORE YOU START:

things to know and do

- What is your story? (More on this later.)
- What is your contribution? This may be in-kind or financial. You must be able to clearly articulate what you bring to the table.
- Do you have the time to research, write, connect, submit and, if successful, to complete acquittal reports?
- Do you have the required skills (eg writer, relationship-builder/manager, researcher)? If not, where can you tap into those skills?
- Is your project/event ready to begin or do you need to do more planning?

LEGAL/TAX REQUIREMENTS

- Many grant-makers can only fund organisations that the Australian Tax Office (ATO) has endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).
- Some can only fund organisations registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) with ATO endorsement for tax concessions.
- Find out more about tax and legal requirements that may apply at ato.gov.au/nonprofit



CREATING YOUR SUBMISSION

Your funding application should include a few essential ingredients.

- Clear statements about the need or problem you are addressing.
- The outcomes or impact you expect.
- How you can help the grant-maker achieve their goals.
- A detailed budget explaining exactly how you will spend the funds and where other funding or resources have been or are being sought.
- The specific 'ask' – exactly what amount of funding are you seeking?
- Details of any other support already pledged.
- Details of the contribution (in-kind and/or financial) that your organisation is able to make.
- Risk analysis. What could go wrong and what will you do if things go wrong?
- A clear description of how you plan to evaluate the success of your project.
- A brief description of your organisation, including its vision, mission, history, track record, etc.
- A list of key people who will be involved and their respective skills and roles. Grant-makers will want to know you have capacity to deliver.
- Any supporting documents, including referees, as required by your individual grant-maker. It's important to request letters of support early. Try to make it as easy as possible for them with a template or previous examples. Remember not to leave this step until the last minute!



TELLING YOUR STORY

Stories are how we create human connections. Successful grant-seekers are adept at telling their story quickly and succinctly. Remember, grant-makers receive many proposals and will not have time to read lengthy applications. (Note also that word limits often apply.)

The skill is to convey the “why” and the passion behind your project in as few words as possible.

Take action:

Craft your story using the following formula.

Problem + solution = transformation

1. Identify the issue or problem you are seeking to address.
2. Clearly explain your proposed solution.
3. Clearly explain the transformation (impact/outcome) you expect.

OTHER GRANT-WRITING TIPS

- Use Plain English – no jargon or acronyms; short, clear sentences; more verbs, fewer adjectives.
- Keep it short and concise.
- Tailor EVERY application to address the specific needs of individual grant-makers.
- Focus more on solutions than on problems.
- Ensure everything is proofread, checking for typos, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. These can sometimes be deal-breakers!
- Pay close attention to details. Some grant-makers will specify things such as word limits, page margins, typeface, etc.
- Only attach items requested in the guidelines.
- Keep your own website up to date. This can be a great place to provide more detailed information to which you can refer your grant-maker.

NOTES:

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BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between you and your funding partners is important. Like all relationships, it requires attention and nurturing. Applying for a grant is not begging. Nor should it be viewed as a one-off donation. It's a two-way partnership to achieve outcomes that matter to both parties.

Take action:

Appoint a person to 'manage' the relationship with your grant-maker/s. This person's role may be to:

- Make initial contact with the grant-maker
- Provide progress updates to the grant-maker
- Respond to requests for more information
- Invite the grant-maker to milestone events and host them
- Promote, acknowledge and publicly thank the granter
- Provide content for the granter's social media, website, annual reports, etc.
- Continue to build the relationship beyond funding rounds. Invite them to special events, send them a copy of your newsletter, keep them updated about changes in your organisation.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT SUCCESSFUL

Grant-making is highly competitive and you won't always be successful. Here are some of the more common reasons for missing out:

- Not adhering to application guidelines
- Poor program design or lack of project management planning
- Inadequate administration systems
- Poor relationship with the granter
- Unclear 'ask'
- The organisation cannot demonstrate capability or sustainability.

Take action:

1. Ask for feedback. How could you improve next time?
2. Regroup and debrief as a team. Where are the gaps you need to plug?
3. Consider alternative funding avenues:
 - a. Community fundraising
 - b. Corporate partnerships
 - c. Sponsorship
 - d. Crowd funding.

WHEN YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL

Congratulations! Time to pause and celebrate before you get to work.

Take action:

1. Acknowledge your confirmation letter and thank your new funding partner.
2. Check timelines and milestones and add them to your project plan.
3. Check acquittal requirements. When and how does your granter expect you to report your progress?
4. Offer to provide content for their social media, website, annual report, etc.
5. Celebrate with your team!
6. In accepting funding support, you have made a promise to deliver. So it's now time to get to work!

GRANT-SEEKING CHECKLIST

- Have you researched and made a shortlist of all potential grant-makers?
- Have you made a list of their eligibility requirements?
- Have you checked that they are interested in the causes/issues you are seeking to address?
- Are you eligible for funding with those grant-makers?
- Do you need/have Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status? This is only available to eligible not-for-profit organisations.
- Do you need/have registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC)?
- Have you checked whether there are any other tax or legal obligations?
- Have you made initial contact with your prospective funding partners to discuss your submission?
- Have you contacted appropriate individuals or organisations to request letters of support (if required)?
- Have you clearly spelt out your organisation's in-kind and/or financial contribution?
- Have you written a clear statement that explains the need or problem you are addressing?
- Have you clearly listed the outcomes/ impact you expect?
- Do you know exactly what you are asking for?
- Have you listed the resources you currently have? This might include pledges from other supporters or your own in-kind or financial resources.
- Have you conducted a risk analysis for your project?
- Do you have a clear project plan?
- Does your project plan describe how you will evaluate the success of your project?
- Have you created a brief description of your project based on your understanding of the problem, the proposed solution and the likely outcome (transformation)?
- Have you created a brief description of your organisation, including its vision, mission, history and track record?
- Have you listed your key people, their respective skills and the roles they will take?
- Have you appointed a 'relationship manager' to nurture the relationship with your funding partner/s?
- Have you proofread your submission?
- Are you able to check off on all of their submission requirements (eg word count, deadlines, etc.)?
- Have you submitted on time?