

TEN TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATIONS

1. Start with Research!

- Read the grant program's website. Find out what they support & what their priorities are.
- Check out past grants that have been approved through this program
- Get a copy of the program's guidelines and the application form. Read all carefully! Highlight critical details. Make a list of information/items you will have to collect.
- Identify their program focus: what key words or phrases in their guide or website cue you to what they're looking for? Be prepared to emphasize this in your application.
- Check with another group funded by this program—what advice can they offer?

2. Build a relationship with the funder & key partners

- Phone the grant coordinator early. Discuss your project; ask if it fits with their mandate
- Ask for their advice, guidance, suggestions for your application.
- Contact your MP, MLA. Talk about your project/grant. Ask for advice & their support.

3. Connect, Connect, Connect!

- Connect with the funder. Connect with your community. Connect with your partners. Build understanding & positive relationships with all the stakeholders.
- Show how your project connects & fits the grant mandate
- Connect the project to identified community needs or local issues
- Connect the project goals with specific, relevant outcomes.

4. Think through & plan the project

- Think through everything required to accomplish this project
- Identify all the components and steps needed to complete this project
- Create a realistic, detailed work plan; set up a sequence & timeline for all tasks

5. Define the results & deliverables

- What will be produced by this project? What end results or outcomes are promised?
- Decide how you will measure the success of this project. What will be used as evidence that this project has accomplished what it promised?
- Identify strategies, milestones, & tools you will use to monitor the project

6. Get real with the budget

- Get accurate estimates; price the project competitively
- Include mandatory employment related costs & staff salaries (at rates consistent with your community)
- Identify matching funds, volunteer & gifts in kind
- Present the budget clearly and concisely. Check everything for accuracy—twice!

7. Involve your community

- Identify your target audience---who is this project directed toward?
- How will you consult with your community, stakeholders & other partners?
- Who will be involved in this project? Who are the partners or collaborative components?
- Volunteers?
- Letters of support?

8. Make it easy for the grant readers

- *First impressions:* create an easy-to-read, professional document. Give the project a catchy, accurate title and provide a good-looking title page. Include a table of contents if the application is lengthy.
- *Write clearly.* Use clear, straightforward, plain language. Avoid fancy, academic, redundant or repetitious language. Go easy on 'buzz' words and don't use large chunks of language from the grant program's guideline or website—they've already heard that! Avoid 'alphabet soup' with acronyms...ASCL or NATD or NEPI...abbreviations that the reader may not be familiar with.
- *Format for clarity & easy reading.* Use headings, bullets, bolding consistently. Leave enough white space so it's not all text & print. Use standard fonts like Times New Roman or Arial. Avoid fancy fonts.

9. Follow ALL the rules!

- *Follow instructions exactly. Pay attention to the details.* Do exactly what's asked for. If they say no more than 5 pages, limit your proposal to 5 pages. If they say 'no staples,' then use a paper clip. If they want original signatures on the application, be sure you provide them. If they want 6 paper copies & 2 digital copies on a disk, send them!
- *Edit!* Read & re-read; get someone else who is detail oriented to proof read. If a specific font or format is required, use it.
- *Provide required supporting documents.* Many grants will ask for annual reports, financial statements, bylaws, etc. If they ask, you provide!

10. Hit the deadline

- Get it there—on time AND complete!
- Keep a complete copy (including appendices!) for your own records.