

GRANTWRITING TIPS

Plan Ahead

- The best grant applications are for projects that are planned well ahead of the grant deadline with clear timelines, objectives, and outcomes.
- Read through the application and allow time to gather all the materials and get any questions answered.
- Requirements may change from year to year, so always read through the guidelines before submitting a grant request.
- You should also be clear on how you will evaluate the success of your project before it happens; don't let goals and evaluation be an afterthought.

What to Highlight

- The quality of the arts experience.
- How this grant will make a recurring project bigger, better, more accessible, etc.
- Community involvement in the planning process and impact of the project on the community.
- How the grant will be paying for arts-related expenses.
- How you have looked for additional sources of funding – the higher your match, the better.

What to Avoid

- Don't refer to the arts activity as entertainment.
- Don't approach the activity as a fundraiser or talk about proceeds going to another cause.
- Don't ask for more funding for non-arts-related expenses than for arts-related expenses.
- Don't ask for funds to support expenses already incurred.
- Don't inflate your budget; it will be noticed right away.

Common Mistakes

- *Incompleteness.* Make sure all questions are answered fully and all required support materials are attached. Check for these often forgotten items:
 - Resumes – If someone will be paid with grant funds, include a resume or bio.
 - Equipment bids – Two bids are required for each piece of equipment or labor cost over \$500.
 - Specifics for dates, times, locations, etc.
- *Being too wordy or too vague.* All of your answers should be concise, clear, and complete.
- *Assuming that grant review panelists are already familiar with your organization and programs.* Panelists come from all corners of our 18-county region and may not be aware of your organization or what is going on in your community. New panelists may have no knowledge of your recurring project even though you have applied for grants before. Be careful about using acronyms, and be sure to describe any other local organizations or programs that you are working with.
- *Incorrect project start date.* Your project start date should not be the day of your first event. You cannot spend money or advertise before the start date, so make sure there is enough time between your start date and your first event to purchase supplies, advertise, etc. Earliest allowed start dates for each round are listed in the grant guidelines and application.
- *Budget inaccuracies.* Make sure that you have the correct amount of cash match and the correct request amount according to the calculations provided in the budget form. Make sure that when referring to budget amounts in your budget narrative and throughout the application, they match what is listed on your budget form. Check that your projected audience numbers match your ticket sales.
- *Work sample images that are too small or poorly photographed.* Contact our staff if you need assistance with your work samples.