



Suggested Guidelines for How to Write Grants

1. Plan your project

- a. What are you doing?
- b. Why?
- c. Who will it affect/impact?
- d. How much will it cost? How much money do you need?
- e. What other sources of support do you have? Ex. Money, time, volunteers, goods, services

2. Research potential funding sources

- a. Private/public
- b. Past giving, you can look at past grants on their 990 form
- c. Guidelines—get the most recent, make sure you fit before you start!

3. Contact the potential funding agency

Printed material (and sometimes websites) from an agency often times describes very broad areas of interest or it, in fact, may be out of date; the agency may have new interests or priorities. Talking with a program representative will help assure you that you have a clear understanding of an agency's current funding priorities. Generally, grantors want to help and don't mind answering a few questions:

- a. How much money will they have for new applications? (This is especially important at the federal level as some agencies may be obligated to spend a significant percentage of their budget to support continuing projects.)
- b. How many new applications do they typically receive and what percentage do they fund? (A 20%-30% funding rate is good; if it's less than 20% you need to consider whether it's worth the investment of your time and effort.)
- c. What are the most common mistakes or flaws in proposals they receive?
- d. What criteria will be used in evaluating your proposal? What is the relative weight given to criteria?
- e. Do they fund individuals? Would they send you a list of previous recipients?
- f. Would they recommend a previously funded proposal for style or format? Could you obtain a copy by sending them a self-addressed stamped envelope?
- g. Who will be evaluating your proposal, i.e., what background will the reviewers have? Would they send you a list of current or previous reviewers? (It is important to know the audience for which you will be writing.)
- h. Are there any areas or topics about which they are particularly interested in receiving proposals?
- i. If you have a copy of last year's application guidelines, ask if they expect to make any significant changes. Can you use last year's information to get started?
- j. Would they be willing to review a draft of your proposal?

Investing the time and making the effort to develop a concept paper, and then following through with an agency contact, can pay huge dividends by allowing you to determine which funding agencies are most likely to be interested in supporting your project.

4. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS and DEADLINES!

- a. Often, artists don't receive grants simply because they didn't follow directions, left items out, or submitted late. Grantors want to know that the artists they fund will be good stewards of the money they give and following directions shows the grantor that the artist is taking the grant, and therefore the project, seriously.