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RASW - Grant Writing

2017



Grant Writing

A method of matchmaking:

- to connect people who want to support a cause or area of development
- with people who can further those goals by executing a project



Grant Writing

Process broadly covers:

- Idea creation
- Research
- Application
- Project execution
- Accountability / reporting
- Data collection / analysis



Artists (you!)

- Need to decide **if this method is a good fit** for you / your practice
- Before approaching funders, **artists need to reflect** about themselves, their practice and their goals
- This will:
 - help you focus your efforts on the right funders
 - create the foundation for the application process



Funders

Want to **invest** in projects that:

- Support their mandate
- Will be successfully completed

How do they determine this?



Funders

- They primarily determine this **from the material you submit in your application**
- **Research, Draft, Edit**
- An **imperfect process** as it relies heavily on written communication skills, but there is a basic approach that can be learned and improved with practice



Project Idea

Funding is generally project based. A project is:

- a **planned activity** (or group of activities)
- which has a **defined budget**
- undertaken over a **specific time period** (with a start and end date)
- meant to achieve an **intentional purpose/outcome**
- the primary focus must align with the funders mandate



Project Idea

- **What** project activities will happen
- **How** workplan / steps to make it happen
- **Who** is involved or impacted
- **Where** will the project happen
- **When** timeframe for planning, execution, reporting
- **Why** what are the impacts on the artist, art form, audience, community...



Project Idea

- When creating your idea, think about:
 - how you intend to evaluate the success of your project upon completion
 - whether your goals are realistic given the resources (human, time and financial) available
- ***Projects should be realistic and achievable.***



Adjudicators

The application process is very **competitive!**

Adjudicators are human, **make it easy** for them to understand:

- You & what your project is
- Impacts: how the project fulfills the funders mandate
- How you will execute the project successfully



Adjudicators

- If adjudicators have to work hard to extract the information, this can make it harder to get them excited about your project
- If you follow directions and your materials are professional, this will give them more confidence in your ability to be professional in completing the project



Application

- Going through the application process will help you better execute your project, even if you don't get the funding
- Forces you to create a clear plan for success by
 - Identifying a goal
 - Creating a work plan to achieve that goal
 - Creating a budget to track finances

These are essential skills to start thinking about the business side of art and how to make a living



Application

Read through

- Guidelines
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Application Form

Then, if you have further questions,
contact the program officer



Application

You will likely have to do some research to pull together some of the information, for example:

- Where to buy materials and supplies
- Possible venues, capacity, potential audience
- Estimates of expenses (costs / money spent)
- Estimates of revenues (any money coming in as a result of the project activities, for example, performance fees, art sales)
- This may take some research: e-mailing, web search or calling around



Application

- **Complete a draft**, answering all of the questions on the application form
- Follow the **guidelines**
- Keep attachments **brief and focused**
- In general, **point form** or short paragraphs are preferable
- **Draft – Review - Edit**



Application

- Draft the application EARLY, put it aside. Edit with “fresh eyes”!
- Have someone who doesn’t know anything about your project:
 - Check the math / adding on your budget
 - Read through your application
- Do they understand what you are doing and why you are doing it? Can they explain the project back to you? If they are missing key components, the jury may as well...



Portfolio / Examples of work

- The requirement for examples of creative/artistic work differs amongst funding programs.
- Examples assist the adjudication committee who may not be familiar with your work
- Your presentation may also be taken as an indication of your level of professionalism
- Follow the funders specific guidelines re: formatting & method of submission



Budgets

- Generally, funders are supporting projects which are not commercially viable on their own
- **Funders have different criteria regarding eligible expenses**
- **Do not include activities or expenses** within your project or budget that the funder states are ineligible for support.



Budgets

Budget should be reasonable and appropriate to the scale of your project

- Only include revenues and expenses which relate to the **specific project as described in your application.**
- **Estimate/research your project expenses first**
 - this will then give you a sense of the revenues you will need to complete your project.



Budgets

Typical kinds of expenses:

- supplies and materials to be used up during completion of the project;
- wages for artists, performers, writers, designers, technicians or curators; OR
- living expenses for the artist for the project time period while they are creating their body of work
- travel (including accommodation & meals) project management or coordination;
- venue or equipment rental;
- project documentation or promotion



Submitting

- Follow the formatting requirements or attachment limits, generally:

Online

- Specific technical specs, especially for photos
- Size limitations for attachments, format limits for uploads

Paper

- Usually plain white paper, with min. font size and borders
- Word limits or page limits for attachments
- No staples



Submitting

- **Deadlines are imperative**
- For online applications it is very important to start early in case of technical issues
- Most funders will **not** extend the deadlines for any reason



Success!

Your work does not end when you get the grant – it has just started

- Successful applicants must generally:
 - Sign a contract
 - Complete their project as proposed in the original application
 - Refrain from ineligible activities as part of the project
 - Submit reports on time



Success!

- o **If problems arise** when executing the project talk to your funder asap!
- o Most funders will **NOT** grant you any additional funding if final reports have not been filed for your previous project



Or not...

- Application process is competitive – **you can have a great project, do everything technically right and still not get funding**
- Don't take it personally – try not to be too discouraged
- If possible, ask for feedback – and **LISTEN** to it
- **Apply again!** The competition and the jury changes, plus your grant writing skills will improve.