

How to write a grant

Toronto Arts Council

Grant writing tips

- Clearly understand the funder's guidelines before you write your proposal. A funder's guidelines will tell you what to include in a grant proposal for its organization.
- Always follow the exact specifications of the funder in their applications and guidelines
- Reflect planning, research and vision throughout the proposal.
- Research funders, including funding purposes and priorities, and applicant eligibility.
- Determine whether the funder's goals and objectives match your grantseeking purposes.
- Target your proposal to funders appropriate to your field and project, but do not limit your funding request to one source.
- Contact the funder before you write your proposal to be sure you clearly understand the funder's guidelines.
- Present your proposal in the appropriate and complete format, and include all required attachments.
- State clearly and concisely your organization's needs and objectives. Write well: use proper grammar and correct spelling. Prepare an interesting and unique proposal.
- Always cover the following important criteria:
 - Project purpose
 - Feasibility
 - Community need
 - Funds needed
 - Applicant accountability and ability to carry out project
- Answer these questions:
 - Who are you?
 - How do you qualify?
 - Who will benefit and how?
 - What specific objectives will you accomplish and how?
- Contact the funder about the status, evaluation and outcome of your proposal, after it is submitted.
- Request feedback about your proposal's strengths and weaknesses.
 - How will you measure the results?
 - How does your funding request comply with the funders objectives?

History of organization/collective

State your mission

- Describe:
 - Activities
 - Artistic quality
 - Repertoire
 - Commissions
 - Role in the choral community
 - Your audience
 - Accomplishments
 - Other details that build credibility for your choir
- How your organization is different from other similar groups.
- Even if you have received grants from the funder before, your introduction should be complete. Funding committee's or jury members change and may not be familiar with your organization.

Project description

Demonstrate:

- How well prepared the organization is in its planning.

Describe the activity in detail:

- Who are the core artists or creative team and other participants. What is their role in the project and their ability to carry out the project.
- The more you know about the project, the better your proposal will look.
- There is something called the "minds eye test" which you may apply to your project description.
- After reading the proposal, could the reader close her eyes and imagine what she would see if she came into the room where your project is taking place?
- Many project descriptions are too vague.

Budget

How much will the project cost.

- Budgets are cost projections
- Good budgets reflect carefully planned projects
- Show expected/direct project expenses & income for the project
- Do **not** include ongoing operating costs. These types of expenses are not eligible

- Think carefully about all the expenses you will have
- Budget forms are provided by TAC and other funders
- Provide supplementary budget information
- Also take time to get accurate estimates.
- If budgets are not accurate it could put your application at the bottom of the pile. If the committee is left with unanswered questions – it weakens the proposal and you will have less of a chance to be successful.
- In-kind donations (goods and services instead of cash).
- Add up all of your expenses carefully – incorrect budgets is one of the most common errors in a grant proposal.
- Indicate a variety sources of revenue
- Show how you calculated the estimated earned income
- Indicate whether revenue is received or pending
- Importance of In-Kind contributions
 - Shows all the ways in which the community is supporting your project
 - Shows the true cost of the project – what you would spend without community support
 - Matching grant – the in-kind income may sometimes be used as part of the match

Organize the grant request :

An exercise in thoughtful persuasion

- Seek advice from Grants Officer
- Submit a realistic request
- Average grants
- Program Budget

Conclusion

- Present your full proposal neatly, professionally and in an organized package.
- Type single-space all proposals.
- Write, organize and present your proposal in the order listed in the application and guidelines
- Only include the information and materials specifically requested by the funder.
- The proposal is judged on content and presentation, not weight.
- Unless required, do not include an index or table of contents, or bind the proposal and be sure to sign it and submit the number of copies request by the grant maker

Toronto Arts Council is run by a volunteer board, volunteer committees and a small complement of professional staff. An advisory panel of distinguished artists and managers further assist with this work.

Toronto Arts Council is an arm's length body that supports the development, accessibility and excellence of the arts in Toronto. It offers grants programs to the city's arts organizations and professional artists.