8 Grant Writing Tips for Arts & Culture Nonprofits

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Grant writing requires careful planning, attention to detail and resiliency. As the demand for grants continues to grow, sometimes the smallest of details will determine whether you are successful.

We've put together this list of things to keep in mind as you prepare your grant applications:

1. **Determine if you are a good fit.** Most granting organizations will have a list of eligible criteria. Review this list carefully to ensure that you meet the guidelines and criteria because there's no sense in spending time applying for a grant when you don't qualify.
2. **Talk to the granting officer.** In some cases, larger granting offices like state/provincial or federal organizations will have a granting officer that you can talk to about your potential project. Take advantage of this and book time with them or attend any information sessions they might be hosting. The more information you can ascertain, the better your chance of building a stronger case for funding.
3. **Confirm deadline dates and times – including time zones.** Do not fall victim to missing a deadline because you assumed it was midnight instead of 5pm. Ensure you build enough time to complete the grant on time (aim to even submit 24 hours in advance in case there are technical issues).
4. **Build a check list.** Make sure you have time to gather all the supporting documents you need and format them correctly to complete the application. Things like budgets, artist statements and bios, mission/vision statements from your organization, audio and visual clips, photos and information on other partnerships that are in the works. These projects often include input from staff members across an organization, so use a task management solution to ensure you stay on track.
5. **Use your voice.** You want to craft a story behind 'the why' of the project that will compel funders to support you, versus writing a formal essay. Be concise, ensure you are answering the questions clearly and be honest.
6. **Proofread!** Read your application over before you submit and ask someone with an unbiased set of fresh eyes review it as well. Or use my favorite trick – read it backwards!
7. **Success!** Congratulations, you secured the funding. Make sure to thank the granting organization and any specific people right away. Build in any necessary reporting metrics to your project's critical path so you have the information for a final report.
8. **Get feedback.** If your grant wasn't successful, find out why, and thank the granting organization for their time and feedback.

Keep these items in mind as you craft your applications and be persistent. Never be afraid to reapply to an organization simply because you were not selected for a previous application.

Happy writing!