Grant Writing Tips

arts MID NORTH COAST

Top Tips in Writing Grants

TAKE THE TIME
Plan and develop your project first.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK
Read the guidelines!

PICK UP THE PHONE
Ask someone who can help.

STAND OUT
Write that winning application.

Take the time!

DEVELOP YOUR PROJECT

Before embarking on writing that grant application, be sure to know your project's aims, objectives and raison d'etre.

Have you considered all the details involved? It's important to have a clear understanding of the nuts and bolts of your project and how it will be delivered.

Take the time to develop community support and partnerships. This shows your project is significant and has ongoing benefits.

WHAT IS YOUR PROJECT?

Have you got a name that will define your project? What does it involve? e.g. "youth theatre collaboration", "presentation of new works by..".

WHY ARE YOU DOING IT?

What makes your project special and what are you trying to achieve? What new solutions, ideas, networks or collaborations will it contribute?

WHO DOES IT INVOLVE?

Who are the key artists/groups/organisations involved? How are they involved - as creators/participants/audiences? Will you be able to supply letters of support or evidence of consultation?

HOW WILL IT WORK?

What resources will you need? (e.g. venues, materials, equipment). Who will manage the project? What fees will you need to pay? What are the timeframes? How will you evaluate the success of your project?

Do your homework!

READ THE GUIDELINES

Save yourself some pain and read up on eligibility requirements before you apply. Checking out previous grant recipients can help get an idea of the kinds of projects that get funded and for how much.
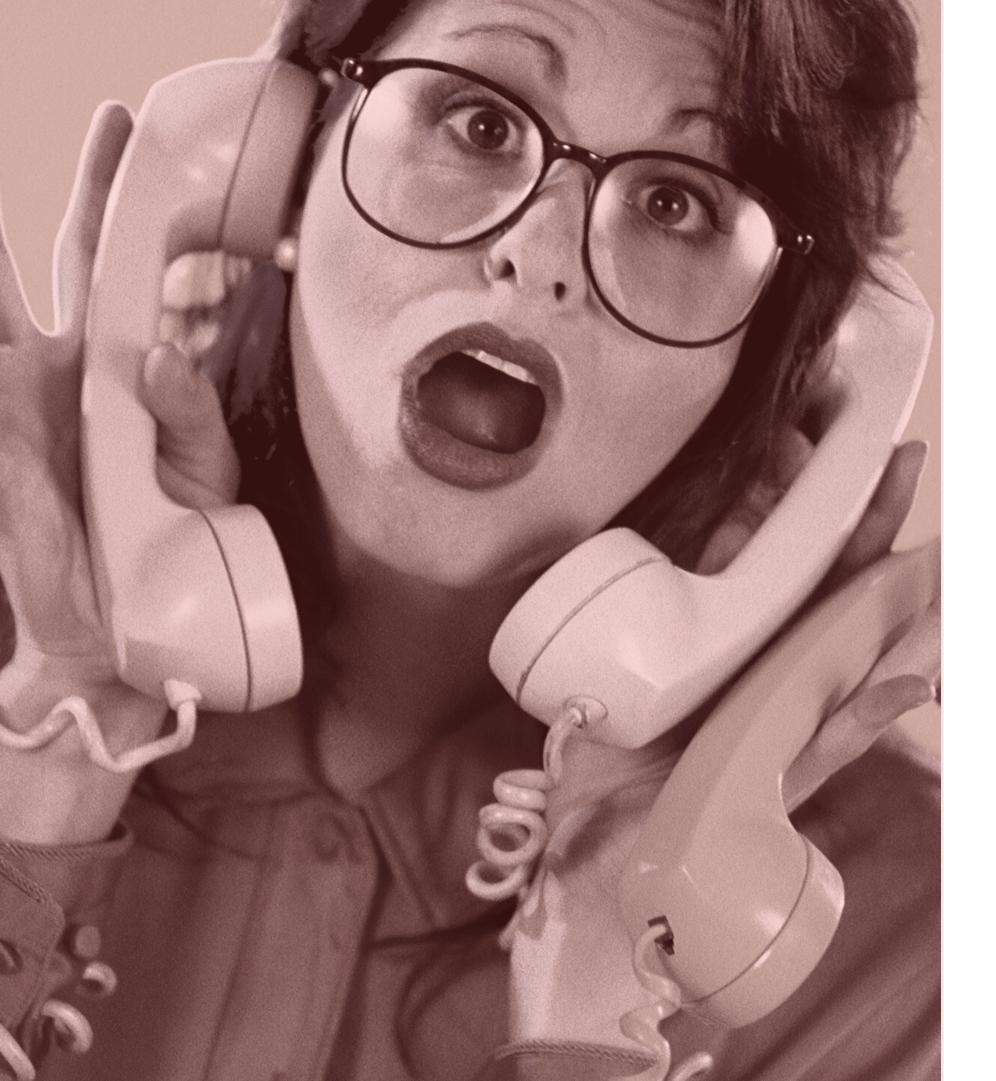
Do you have the right business structure?
While having an ABN and your own public liability insurance, is the minimum, some grants require specific legal status (e.g. not for profits, charity status).

Is the grant the right fit for your project?
Read up on the policies, strategies and priorities of the funding body and program. Does your project align and help fulfil their objectives?

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Pick up the phone!

TALK TO SOMEONE WHO CAN HELP

Sometimes all it takes is one phone call with the funding body to help clarify whether your project fits in with the guidelines.

Grants officers are there to help guide you through the process and can also provide some useful tips and advice when lodging your application.

As your Regional Arts Development Organisation, Arts Mid North Coast are also available to talk to you about your ideas and assist with finding the right grant opportunity.

So don't be shy, pick up that phone and ask the questions!

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Ready to write?

MAKE YOUR APPLICATION STAND OUT FROM THE REST

Many grants are now done through online portals such as Smarty Grants. It's a good idea to draft your responses in a Word document first and then paste the final version into the online application form.

And: don't forget to keep saving as you go!

Grant assessors will be reading your submission along with potentially *hundreds* of others. You want to make sure your application is impressive right from the start and convince them it's worth funding.

BE CLEAR AND SUCCINT

Stick to the word limit and use plain English when writing your application. Don't ramble, be overly academic or succumb to too much 'artspeak'. Write clearly and with confidence focusing on the key messages you want to get across.

Be clear about your objectives, outcomes and rationale behind your project. Make sure you back up any claims with evidence (e.g. ABS data, community consultations, news articles, academic reports).

BALANCE THE BUDGET

Firstly, make sure you have read the guidelines and know what you can or can't apply for. Get quotes from artists and suppliers. If you don't know how much things are going to cost, you can use guidelines such as NAVA rates of pay or Fairwork Australia.
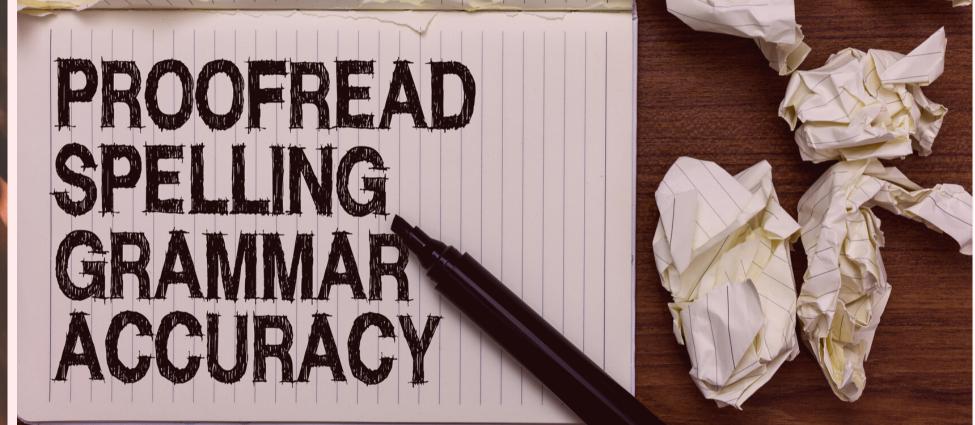
You will need to make sure your expenditure amount matches your income. Your application will fare better if you have other sources of income and not entirely reliant on the one e.g sponsorship, other grants, sales or in-kind donations.

SHOW EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT!

Funding bodies will require you to show evidence that your project is supported by the community. You can do this by providing **Letters of Support** from partner organisations, artists and community members. Any partners contributing financially are required to have confirmation in writing.

You can also reference any community surveys you have done such as community petitions and consultations. There may also be Local Council or State reports that can back you up .

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DOCUMENT YOUR PROJECT

Most, if not, all funding bodies will require you to evaluate and acquit your grant. Evaluation may take the form of:

- Audience / participant feedback surveys or interviews
- Media coverage
- Statement of outcomes against objectives

Make sure you document your project throughout its lifetime as this will be important in your acquittals. This includes taking photos or videos, keeping receipts of expenditure and recording any marketing and media coverage you generate.

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CHECK TWICE. CHECK AGAIN.

Reading something full of typos and bad grammar can be really off-putting and brings the professionalism of your application down. Make sure to use your spellchecker. You may also like to use a free grammar checker like Grammarly.

It's always a good idea to run your application past another set of eyes before you hit that submit button. Although you've read it a thousand times, you can still miss out on tiny errors. This is where your honest (but critical) friend comes in handy. If it makes sense to them, then there's better chance it will make sense to the Grant Assessors too.