



# GUIDE: Preparing Funding Submissions

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# PURPOSE

## **Purpose of this guide**

The purpose of this guide is to support learners to plan, develop and write submissions for funding and advocate for programs.

This guide is not intended to replace internal policies, procedures and guidance or any criteria set out in funding and grant application guides. The tips contained within this guide are to assist with planning and building content for preparing submissions.

## **Units of Competency**

This resource supports learning and completion of assessments for the following units of competency:

- HLTPOP503C Plan a population health project
- CHCAD603B Provide Systems Advocacy Services

## **Acknowledgement**

This resource has been adapted from a range of existing resources of which have been referenced at the end of this guide.

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Writing a funding submission, whether it be to advocate for something or to apply for funding, can be a huge undertaking. In addition to this, accessing funding is a competitive market so preparing a good submission is essential.

A submission is created within a competitive environment in the attempt to win an outcome. Most submissions are written to actively persuade an individual, a team or an organisation to support your position above another.

You may want to put forward a submission for a new service or you may be responding to an advertisement for a grant application. Whatever the focus of the submission might be, there are a number of steps which are application to writing a submission.

Research available opportunities

Determine eligibility

Planning and Preparation

Developing the Submission

Writing and Compiling the Submission

## RESEARCHING AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES AND ELIGIBILITY

The first challenge is trying to identify grants programs and funding opportunities that are right for your organisations and the types of services or programs your organisation provides.

When your organisation is looking for funding opportunities, it is worth taking a wide view of your operations. Thinking broadly about your activities, members and supporters could make you eligible for a range of grants from governments, foundations, philanthropic organisations and council. When researching opportunities, consider the following:

- Visit a range of national, state and local government websites as they generally provide information on the programs they offer. Some agencies produce e-bulletins or newsletters which detail funding opportunities. Ask to be included on their mailing list for all future correspondence.
- Monitor the media as most funding programs are advertised through media channels. State and Federal Members of Parliament often circulate media releases to announce new programs.
- Look at sources of philanthropy, which in some cases is not advertised.

Once you have identified grants that you might qualify for, it is important to pick the one that is right for your organisation and your proposed area of work. There is a big difference between being eligible for a grants program and being competitive and ultimately successful. It is important to have a critical eye when assessing whether or not to proceed with an application. Meeting only one or two of the assessment criteria is rarely good enough. Most funding programs have fact sheets, application forms and guidelines. Use these documents to help you make your selection.



# PLANNING AND PREPARATION

## Gather Information

Planning and preparation is essential for a good submission.

The first step is to ensure that you have done your homework and gathered all the information you need. Once you have done this, you will be able to organise the information in an easily accessible format and use it for various proposals and applications. The types of information you need to gather will depend on the proposed project and the funding application however as a general guide you should consider gathering the following:

### Information About Your Organisation

- Vision, mission and purpose
- What the organisation is doing today
- Where it is going in the future
- Organisation's structure
- Financial processes
- Clients
- Products or services

### Background Submission Information

- Collect background information that will support your application including case studies, research articles, statistics, expert opinions, published articles etc.
- This information will provide you with facts to support your application when you write it.

### Establish the Need for Funding

- For example is to extend a product or service, address an identified gap or meet an emerging need in the community?
- Need or gap assessment results, survey outcomes, community consultations and reports can provide evidence to support your application.
- Consultation with other organisations or groups may also assist in the identification of need or funding e.g. local government, not-for-profit organisations, local business, community groups etc.

### Identify Advocates Who Can Support Your Application

- Advocates are individuals, groups or organisations who can support your organisation and your application.
- Develop a contact of possible advocates and prepare letters or emails inviting their support for your application. Follow-up with a phone call.

### Get To Know The Application Process

- Get to know the application guidelines and the process.
- Be aware of the language used throughout and if you are not sure about something, ring the funding body and ask for clarification.
- Ensure that you keep to deadlines - one minutes late could be too late.

# DEVELOPING THE SUBMISSION

There are usually more applications received than money available so you need to show there is a match between your project and their funding aims. You need to demonstrate how your project has an edge on everyone else. There are a number of elements you need to consider when developing the content for your application.

## Needs Statement

- Demonstrate why the project is important.
- Outline the problem in its current state and how it could be improved.
- The needs statement should be motivating to convince the funding body that the project is important.
- Include a statement on why your organisation has the credentials and is the most appropriate to receive the funding.
- Use the evidence you collected as part of your planning to support this part of the application.

## Aims and Objectives

- Develop clear aims and objectives.
- Aim: general statements of what you want to accomplish. Evaluate the aim - does it reflect what you want to change, and to the right degree?
- Objectives: Steps you need to take to achieve the overall aim.

## Outcomes

- Document how you will determine the outcome of the project.
- Determine performance indicators for your project i.e. how you will measure if you've achieved your objectives and therefore your overall aim.
- You need to determine at what point you can consider the project to be successful.

## Project Outline and Timeline

- This step involves developing a detailed plan. Ensure you clearly articulate your unique methods and project design.
- The project outline should include:
  - A description of program activities.
  - The sequence, flow and relationship of activities.
  - Planned staffing for the activities planned.
  - Start and finish dates for each activity.
  - The number of hours required to complete activities.
  - Personnel and non-personnel resources required.
  - Project milestones

## Project Budget

- The budget should cover all costs associated with people and staff, consultants, equipment, resources, operational costs, training etc.

## Sustainability

- Most funding agencies want the project to live past funding date.
- State how you will ensure the sustainability of the project through

# WRITING AND COMPILING THE SUBMISSION

The easiest way to stand out and compete is with a well written proposal with a clear message, especially since government departments and funding bodies read hundreds of submissions every year.

## Language

The application must be written in business language and not conversational language, so don't get too cute! Write your application as though the person reading it knows nothing about your organisation or your project. Never assume anything about the reader.

## Writing Style and Writing Tips

The writing style you use must reflect what the funding agency wants and what the reviewers will be looking for. When writing your application:

- Be concise and clear – avoid jargon.
- Use short sentences and short paragraphs.
- Avoid overdone formatting and mixing too many font sizes or styles.
- Use bullets.
- Use bold headings.
- Use charts and graphs where appropriate.
- Don't leave anything blank.
- Don't Overwrite. If the application had a word limit ensure you stick to it.
- Make one point in each paragraph. This is the key for readability.
- Write simple, clear sentences. Keep sentences to 20 words or less.
- Use an active rather than a passive voice. For example, write "We will develop a resource", not "A resource will be developed."

If writing is not your forte, seek help!

# WRITING AND COMPILING THE SUBMISSION CONTINUED

## **Use Sections and Information Headings**

It is important to break up the text with sections and information headings. Used well, they create flow and establish the logical arguments you are presenting. A reader should be able to navigate through the document just using the headings and grasp the general project concepts.

In addition to the components outlined on page 7, your submission should also include:

### *A covering letter*

The covering letter should be short (half a page), motivating, say something different, and stress a need or unique application for the funding.

### *A title page*

The title of a project is very important. It is generally the first thing that captures the attention of a reader. It should:

- Be creative but not misleading.
- Be designed to catch the reader's attention without misleading them.
- Describe the project.
- Express the end result of the project not the methods.

### *A summary*

The summary is the most important part of the proposal. It is the part of the proposal that is most frequently read. A summary needs to be succinct and motivating. You will need to write a summary after the full proposal is completed to ensure an adequate summary of concepts are captured. The summary describes:

- The objectives
- The approach
- The evaluation.

It should not be a list but a concise outline of the proposal.

### *Attachments*

Most funding agencies will want to see supporting documentation for your project. Start gathering this additional information as early as possible as it may take some time. Documents that may need to be collected or developed might include:

- Business plans.
- Audited financial statements.
- Letters of support.
- Organisational structure.
- CVs of people who will be employed or involved in the project.
- Detailed technical drawings.
- Gantt charts.
- Evaluation reports.

# WRITING AND COMPILING THE SUBMISSION CONTINUED

## **Break Up the Text with White Space**

Densely packed content is fatiguing to read and it's easy for the reader to lose their place on the page. Break up the text with white space and avoid using small text and no margins. Where appropriate, use lists as a way of summarising points. Tables, graphs, charts and diagrams are attention grabbing and can also summarise information well.

## **Proof Read, Proof Read and Proof Read**

Once you have written your application, allow time for an internal review by collaborators, colleagues, and mentors. Have someone who hasn't been involved in the application process to review the application to ensure:

- it meets the guidelines.
- nothing has been left out.
- there are no typing errors or poor use of grammar.
- page numbering is correct.
- use of clear and consistent headings.
- there are labels on all tables, graphs and images.
- you've made a compelling case for funding.
- your budget has been calculated correctly.

If possible, have both experts in your field and those who are less familiar with your science provide feedback. The application should be easy to understand by all.

Prior to submission, perform a final proofread of the entire grant application.

## **Submit your application on time!**

Make sure you submit your application on time as late applications will not be accepted. Read all the details about lodgement because they do vary. Allow sufficient time for any final edits, signatures, approvals, printing, binding and posting or couriering.

## REFERENCES

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