

GRANT WRITING TIPS

- 1. Read guidelines and instructions before beginning!** They are there to help you write a good application. They are not optional so make sure you follow them closely.
- 2. Start preparing your application early!** Give yourself enough time to write a well-thought out narrative and to collect high quality support material. Deadlines do not accept excuses about technical difficulties or traffic. Plan ahead so you can get everything in on time.
- 3. Quality, not quantity!** This is important not only for support materials but also in preparing your answers to the application questions.
- 4. Don't "overwrite" your applications by burying the project details!** Explain the project up front and clearly. Your application narrative is not an art project. What are the funds being used for, when and where will the project take place and who is involved? Don't hide this essential information from reviewers. If a reviewer can't discern who, what and where immediately, your application is in trouble.
- 5. Understand yours goals vs. objectives vs. timeline!** Understand your arts/cultural goals, implementation objectives and the timeline as they relate to your mission and proposal. An arts/cultural goal is a broad statement about what your project intends to accomplish. Goals are a long-term end to which projects and activities are developed. Implementation objectives are the expected achievements that are well-defined, specific, and measurable. They are derived from the goals. A timeline of activities describes in a chronological, detailed and concise way what you will do to achieve each objective.
- 6. Be organized and logical!** Many applications fail to receive a high score because the reviewers cannot follow the thought process of the applicant or because parts of the application do not fit together.
- 7. Respond directly to questions posed in the application!** Follow the format of the application. Do not make the reviewer hunt to find your answers. It is to your benefit for the panelists to easily follow your responses to the questions.
- 8. Consider the review criteria!** Review criteria are detailed in the scoring rubric which is found in the guidelines. Go back to the scoring rubric as you write your answers. The scoring rubric and criteria follow the application section by section.
- 9. Be clear and concise!** Remember that panelists have many applications to review, so be clear and concise. This is related to some of the earlier tips, but it is worth emphasizing. When comparing many applications, panelists will award more points to applicants that have clearly articulated who they are, what they do, and what the money will be used for. Any bit of confusion or small error can decrease your score and potentially put you behind another applicant.
- 10. Avoid Jargon and Acronyms!** Do not assume the panel will be familiar with your art form or field.
- 11. Proofread!** Review your application for typographical and grammatical errors before submitting. Type a draft of your application in MS Word and use spell check. Copy and paste the narrative when you are certain there are no errors. Typos and grammatical errors can cause you to lose points. It reflects poorly on the professionalism of the applicant.
- 12. Use proofreaders who haven't worked on the grant!** Have someone unfamiliar with your project, organization or art form read your application before submitting. If they understand it, it means you are making your case! This is also a great way to catch errors you otherwise might miss in your own proofreading.