

# Preparing a Funding Application “Improve Your Chances” 3 Hour Workshop Program



## HINTS FOR WRITING FUNDING/GRANT APPLICATIONS

Here are some helpful hints on the preparation process:

### Before you write your application!

Understand your funding and resourcing environment.

- **Read the guidelines several times;** each time highlight points you need to question.
- **Map out your project proposal;** make sure it brings together the main themes from the guidelines.
- **Check that you are clear about:**
  - your eligibility
  - the aim/objectives of your project
  - the trends in the field of practice
  - the budget (as per guidelines)
  - typical amounts of money allocated
  - the submission deadline for applications and when you will hear about the results
  - details required in the application ie number of pages; words; characters; support material; attachments; number of copies required; how they want it received – online or hard copy etc.
  - the aims of the organisation from which you are seeking support (ie their vision or mission statements or policies; strategic plans etc)

If you are not clear on any of these items seek clarification from the grant making body or project officer.

- **Phone the contact person or project officer to:**
  - Check if your interpretation of the guidelines is correct
  - Ask questions, seek additional clarification where necessary
  - Explain your project proposal to see if it fits within the guidelines
  - Ask permission to call back if you require additional clarification
  - Requirements for letters of support and support documents
  - Thank them for their assistance.

### Writing an Application

The most important thing to remember when you are preparing a funding application is that you are **selling an idea**. You are selling an idea to a particular group of people who have indicated their area of interest within their **funding criteria**. It is essential to find the right funding/sponsorship match for

your proposed project by ensuring it fits the appropriate funding criteria. Government funding policy and criteria are subject to change. It is imperative to check on current policy emphasis and criteria before preparing your application, even if you are familiar with the funding programme.

Make sure you gather all the facts and figures you will need before you start writing so that you can focus on the application itself.

**Remember:** Funding programs are outcome oriented and criteria are designed to produce desirable outcomes.

- Print off a couple of copies of the form – work in draft first.
- Use the application form if required.
- Contact people who will write support letters or testimonials. Given them plenty of time to get back to you before your deadline. In some cases it may be useful to give them dot points about what you want covered in the support material. Check with them how to make it easy for them to supply the material in plenty of time to be included.
- Use clear and simple language – use short sentences, write to the point, include additional information in attachments (if allowed).
- Be as specific as possible with your proposal – describe in detail the project you would like to undertake.
- Your proposal may need to consider the following elements;
  - workable time frames
  - the necessary skills and expertise
  - appropriate resources, venues and facilities
  - management and administration
  - budget and financial accountability
  - processes and responsibilities
- Ensure your application brings together the themes and values described in the guidelines and that you meet all the criteria.
- To be fairly assessed a proposal must be presented in an assessable manner. It is essential that your proposal demonstrates to the funding body;
  - What you want to do (aim)
  - Where you want to go (objectives)
  - What is required to get there (resources)
- Be accurate, double-check and proof your spelling, grammar, budget details.
- Get someone else to read and recheck your budget.
- Leave yourself time to make changes based on the feedback. Plan on at least three drafts with time between.
- Make a checklist of all documents you need to send. These often include:
  - a covering letter with your contact details and a list of attachments
  - a completed application form (usually plus a number of photocopies)
  - a budget in a clear and concise form
  - keep a photocopy of a complete application form & attachments for your files.
  - attachments can be, for example, support letters, photographs, a brochure or leaflet about the organisation or project, annual report, certificate of incorporation etc.
- Get the application into the funding body **before** the closing date/time. It is rare that a funding body will grant you an extension. In some cases you may be able to negotiate to send support material in later.

Good luck!