



Writing successful community grant applications

Turning your vision for a better community into a reality

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

Community grants play a pivotal role in driving positive change in our communities and fostering the growth of impactful initiatives. These grants provide essential financial support to organisations, individuals and projects aimed at addressing community needs. Whether you're part of a non-profit organisation or community group, or you're an individual with a vision, understanding how to navigate the world of grant applications can significantly boost your chances of securing vital resources.

Applying for community grants can seem daunting, especially if you're new to the process. This resource will break down the essential steps, offer practical advice, and share tips and best practices for crafting compelling grant proposals.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Throughout this booklet, you'll discover valuable insights into every aspect of the grant application journey. You'll learn about the different types of community grants, researching opportunities, preparing persuasive proposals, navigating the application process and the value of follow-up after submission to maximise your chances of success.



UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY GRANTS



Community grants are a vital source of funding for projects and initiatives that aim to make positive changes in local communities. These grants can come from various sources, including government agencies, foundations, corporations and non-profit organisations.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

Community grants come in various forms, including project-specific grants, operational grants, capacity-building grants and emergency relief grants. Each type serves a unique purpose, so understanding which one aligns with your project is essential.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Most grant opportunities have specific eligibility criteria that applicants must meet. These criteria can include geographical restrictions, target demographics, project objectives, and budget constraints. It's crucial to carefully review these criteria before applying to ensure your project aligns with the grant's goals.

Tip:

Ask the organisation offering the grant if your application will meet the eligibility criteria. Grantors want to issue their grants and are there to help you put in your best submission, so develop a relationship with them. Early and ongoing communication and feedback will drive success.

RESEARCHING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

One of the first steps in the grant application process is identifying suitable grant opportunities. Effective research can save you time and increase your chances of success.

FINDING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

Grant opportunities can be found through various channels:

- Government websites – federal, state and local government websites often list grant opportunities
- www.communitygrants.gov.au
- www.swan.wa.gov.au/services-and-community/community-grants
- Grant databases – online databases like grants.gov and Foundation Directory Online are valuable resources
- www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants/grant-opportunities
- www.volunteeringwa.org.au/resources/grants
- www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/department-of-communities-grants-programs
- Non-profit organisations – some non-profits offer grants or maintain lists of grant opportunities relevant to their focus areas
- Professional networks – connect with peers, mentors and industry associations to learn about grant opportunities
- Local business and philanthropic donations – identify potential opportunities where goals, mission and aims are synergistic with those of your organisation. Don't always look to the large corporates as they are inundated with requests and can be more focused on maximising profits. Look locally for businesses and individuals who have a vested interest in your project that will be beneficial to all parties.



IDENTIFYING GRANTS THAT ALIGN WITH YOUR PROJECT

It's essential to match your project's goals and objectives with the mission and priorities of the grant-making organisation. Consider the following:

- Does your project address a specific issue or need highlighted by the grantor?
- Is your project aligned with the grantor's values and goals?
- Do you meet the grant's eligibility criteria, including location, target audience and project size?



PREPARING YOUR PROPOSAL

1

Evidence
of needs

3

Accounts, strategic plan,
constitution

2

Objectives and
strategies

4

Demonstrated ability

5

Service
model

WRITING A COMPELLING PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Your project description is the heart of your proposal. It should provide a clear and detailed overview of what your project aims to achieve. It needs to clearly articulate how your project will benefit the community. Use specific examples and statistics to illustrate positive changes it will bring. Share real-life stories or testimonials from community members who will be affected by your project. These human stories can create a powerful emotional connection and bring your proposal to life.

This description should highlight how your project aligns with the mission and priorities of the grant-making organisation. Your project needs to be a good fit for their objectives.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

Covering letter – brief introduction of your organisation, reference to grant you are applying for

Project title – a concise and catchy title that encapsulates your project's essence

Executive summary – a brief summary of your project, including its objectives, target audience and expected outcomes. This should be engaging and persuasive

Problem statement – clearly define the issue or need your project addresses – needs, demonstrated needs and comparative needs. Provide data and evidence that support the need for your project. Use reputable sources to back up your claims. Explain why your project is not only needed but also feasible. Discuss the capacity and resources your organisation has to carry out the project successfully

Project goals and objectives – specify the measurable outcomes you intend to achieve. Make sure they are realistic and attainable. Indicator benchmarks are valuable here. These are measures that help quantify the achievement of a result. Examples include crime rates, membership numbers, school truancy, low birth weight babies, attendances and homelessness figures



Methods and activities – describe how you plan to implement the project. Outline the steps and activities involved

Timeline – provide a timeline indicating key milestones and deadlines

Budget and financial information – include a detailed budget and financial information that supports your funding request.

Partnerships – mention any collaborations or partnerships that enhance the project's impact

Risk mitigation – address potential challenges or risks associated with your project and how you plan to mitigate them

Evaluation plan – explain how you will measure the success of your project. What metrics will you use to assess progress and outcomes? How much did we do, how well did we do it, Is anyone better off?

Sustainability – address how your project will continue to benefit the community beyond the grant period.

Tip:

- Avoid jargon or technical language that may confuse reviewers
- Use storytelling techniques to make your proposal engaging. Paint a vivid picture of what your community will look like after your project is implemented
- Start your proposal with a captivating introduction that hooks the reader and conveys the project's importance
- Obtain letters of support or endorsement from relevant stakeholders or partners.



SETTING CLEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Clear and specific goals and objectives are essential for your project's success and securing grant funding. Remember the following tips:

- Ensure your goals are overarching and reflect the broader impact you aim to achieve
- Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART)
- Link your objectives directly to the problem statement and the methods you'll use to address it.

Tips:

Project objectives example:

Don't write: To improve family life.

Instead write: To increase the incidence of positive parenting practices among young parents (16-20 years old) with children under five years of age.

Project outcomes examples:

Don't write: Clients will learn new ways of parenting.

Instead write: At the end of the workshops, parents will demonstrate three effective strategies for difficult behaviour in children under the age of five.

Project outcomes examples:

Don't write: Increased levels of service.

Instead write: Specific number of hours of counselling achieved.





CREATING A REALISTIC BUDGET

Your budget is a critical component of your grant proposal. It demonstrates that you've thought through the financial aspects of your project. Here's what to consider:

- **Itemised budget** – list all anticipated expenses, including running costs, people, supplies, administration, equipment, facilities and overhead costs
- **Income and funding sources** – clearly indicate the amount you're requesting from the grant, as well as any other sources of income or in-kind contributions
- **Justification** – explain why each budget item is necessary for the project's success. Be transparent and provide realistic cost estimates
- **Budget narrative** – offer a narrative that provides context for the budget, explaining any unusual expenses or budget fluctuations.

Tips

Include volunteer time as a key component in your budget –

www.volunteeringwa.org.au/volunteer-management/tools/volunteer-benefits-calculator

Know your neighbours. Develop partnerships with groups that can contribute additional skills, resources and experience to enhance the project's scope and create a greater impact with the funder's money.

Having a strategic plan shows you are serious about your organisation, forward-looking with planned objectives and proactive in your financial management and goal setting. Include this in your application.

REVIEW AND SUBMISSION

When you have your proposal ready, check adherence to all steps, paying attention to details and requirements.

Complete the application form

Ensure your application is completed accurately and completely. Check that your responses align with the project description and goals you've outlined in your proposal.

Gather supporting documents

Compile all the necessary documents and information required for your application. This may include financial statements, letters of support, resumes of key personnel and any additional materials specified in the guidelines.

Tip – use charts, pictures and diagrams where available and appropriate.

Proofread and edit

Carefully proofread your application to eliminate errors and ensure clarity. Have colleagues or peers review your application to get feedback and catch errors. A well-organized and error-free application demonstrates professionalism and attention to detail. Ensure consistency in tone, style, and formatting throughout your application.

Submit the application

Submit your application well before the deadline to avoid last-minute technical issues.

Follow up

After submitting your application, confirm that your application has been received. Keep a copy of your submission for your records. You may receive requests for additional information or clarifications. Be responsive and cooperative during this stage. If your application is unsuccessful, consider requesting feedback to improve future proposals.

City of **Swan**

2 Midland Square, Midland WA 6056

Ph (08) 9267 9160 Fax (08) 9267 9444

swan@swan.wa.gov.au

www.swan.wa.gov.au

  /cityofswan

0002SVRC – 2024

