

25 funding tips to save you time, money and stress



Have you ever written a funding application knowing you only have one week to start, and finish it? Did you sweat as you realised your organisation's financial sustainability rested on that one application? Do you know that sinking feeling in your gut when you're told it hasn't been successful? It's time for a new approach starting with the following tips.

Before you get to the application writing stage:

- 1 Understand how much funding you need and why.
- 2 Create partnerships that support collaborative work practice. You might be surprised how many people and organisations want to see you succeed, particularly when you support them in return.
- 3 Ensure your organisation meets all required compliance measures. Check there are no outstanding funding reports, that your books are up to date, your annual reporting is in order and you are compliant in other areas such as work health and safety and staff working conditions.
- 4 Update your business and strategic plan. Remember what your organisation's dream is and check in that you haven't moved away from that.
- 5 Don't think of the application as a stand-alone activity. Each and every application you put in is part of your fundraising campaign.
- 6 Create a fundraising campaign that indicates how much you want, what you will apply for and what other ways you'll raise money and map it out over a whole year.
- 7 Know your clients, sit with them and understand their needs before you go off applying for funding on their behalf.
- 8 Understand what all levels of government are thinking about your target group right now. What policies/strategies align to your project and/or organisation?

Preparing to write the application:

- 9 Get your kit together. You'll need (as a minimum)
 - 3 years' financial records
 - Last years' annual report
 - A list of all board members and their skills
 - Your organisational structure
 - Current resumes of people who will manage and/or deliver the proposed program
 - A list of all project partners (notify them as soon as you can)
 - Your organisational brochure
 - Information about the organisational history
 - A list of other grants you are currently running and recent past grants (your bookkeeper is a good source for this information)
 - Incorporation certificate
 - Other accreditation
 - Insurance certificates of currency
 - Pictures, client testimonials, service partner testimonials
- 10 Find two private working spaces. One where you can think creatively and one where you can think analytically. Use them appropriately.
- 11 Tell people around you that you are in application writing mode. Make sure they know what that means and what support you'll be needing both in your work and private life.
- 12 Line up at least one copy checker – this person will not only check the application is written in a way that is grammatically correct, they will also check facts and data (this may be where your organisational collaboration comes in).



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When you read the application guidelines:

- 13 Look for the deadline and how the application needs to be sent in, make sure you schedule enough time (particularly if it must be posted).
- 14 Eligibility – is your organisation eligible.
- 15 Timeliness – is it the right application for your organisation now? Do you have the capacity and if not is it do-able?
- 16 Understand all of the required criteria and contact the application help line even if you have a very simple question.

When you're writing the application:

- 17 Prepare a brief description of the project and accompany it with a draft letter of support and sent it to all relevant stakeholders.
- 18 Set a celebration event directly after the funding closing time. A way to reward yourself for successful completion of you application.
- 19 Listen, read, scroll: Get your head in current lingo – you'll find this on the radio, in newspapers, online. If people are talking about it find out more. Use buzz words and apply them throughout your application.

- 20 Surround yourself with healthy eating options and schedule time to exercise.
- 21 Use a timer to make yourself move – set rest breaks no longer than an hour apart to make sure you leave your computer and thinking spaces.
- 22 Put a journal and pen beside your bed to record those incredible 4am thoughts.
- 23 Do everything you can to completely immerse yourself in your subject matter. Learn the relevant policies, strategies, case studies, ideas, who is who in popular thinking of the issue.
- 24 Write dot points for each response/criteria. Then go back and fill in each dot point with relevant research and data.
- 25 Check your responses against the required criteria ensuring that you've covered each one in the required context.

Above all make sure you have enough time. Of course funding is acquired at the last moment – but that last moment always comes at someone's personal cost, *probably yours*.

Would you like more tips, templates and assistance to support your work in community?

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