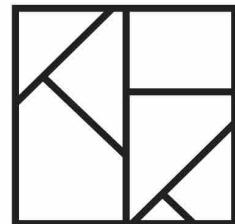

This guide has been produced as part of **Projects For A New Way** supported by **Creative Victoria**.



A U S T R A L I A N F E S T I V A L
A S S O C I A T I O N

Grant Writing Guide

Top Tips

Here are some **top tips** to assist in understanding grant applications, the process and to help you achieve a successful outcome.

1. Get Started Early

You can prepare for a funding application before an announcement of funding is made, or before Guidelines are public. A great grant can take over 45 hours to complete so get started on your research and lining up external stakeholders.

2. Read Carefully

Read the grant criteria and guidelines (when available) very carefully. It seems simple because it is!

3. Look for the "Why"

Understand why the funding is available and what it is trying to achieve. Remember, many government grants are supporting a policy.

In the case of RISE, this will provide competitive seed funding for new and existing productions, festivals, events and artists to support the successful re-opening of Australia's creative and cultural sector. There is a focus on audience type, popularity of previous events/activities, organisational sustainability, regionality and jobs created.

4. Collaborators

Projects that demonstrate collaboration or other stakeholders provide value for money for Government funding.

5. Economic Impact

You know that your business has a positive economic impact. Otherwise you wouldn't be in business. It pays (and you can pay) to have this impact tallied and formalised.

6. Independent Review

Get someone independent to read through (and edit) your application. Grants are always hotly contested, so make sure your application is clear, concise, well-articulated and compelling in its rationale and argument.

7. Be Timely

Submit the application on time. Obvious but often missed.

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Preparation and Research

Pro Tip: Start this now

When writing a grant application, it is important to allow plenty of time for preparation and research. **Most competitive grants close four to six weeks from announcement.** This doesn't leave a lot of time. It is highly recommended you commence writing parts of your application even before a grant opens.

Many grant applications have a number of questions about constitutions, strategic plans, annual reports, and previous grant histories. These questions help the funding organisation ascertain how the organisation operates and will manage the money.

Sometimes considerable research is required to address these aspects of the application, so be sure to collect all the relevant information prior to writing the application and well before the due date.

The process of gathering this information will also assist you in completing other funding applications so it is worth investing in this time. The information you are required to submit may vary from one program to another, however there are some basics that are common to most:-

- a title for your project
- a summary of your project
- a brief description of the organisation applying
- an outline of your project and what you want to do
- a timetable or itinerary for your project
- a description of the outcome your project delivers
- a projected budget which details the expenses, income and in-kind support of the project
- supporting material as relevant to your project, including an artistic example, bios of additional artists, and letters of support from participants, partners or communities

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Organisational Overview

Pro Tip: Start this now

Most applications will generally ask you to provide an overview of your organisation i.e. its background/history, aims and objectives, current or recent projects and its future directions. This information will define 'who you are' and 'what you do' to the panel assessing your application. You may be asked to elaborate on collaborations or partnerships with other organisations or groups within your community or region.

You need to be able to demonstrate, based on your past success, how you will be able to complete the project successfully. In a way, this is like applying for a job. The panel are essentially hiring you, so sell yourself and your business on a proven track record and skills.

The Project

In a simple What, Why, Who, Where, When and How exercise - ask yourself the following questions and make notes against each point:

WHAT is the project? Define your project before you even look at any grant application forms. Outline its aims and objectives and do a step-by-step project plan.

Remember in relation to RISE grants the focus will be on audience type, popularity of previous events, organisational sustainability, regionality and jobs created.

WHY do you want to do this project? What do you want to achieve? What are the proposed outcomes of the project? How is it significant or meaningful to your community? What are the ongoing benefits after the life of the project? e.g. community benefit, tourism development, economic development, employment creation, social or environmental benefit?

WHERE will the project take place – the location/venue?

WHO are you targeting – both in terms of participants and audience? Funding bodies want to see their funds benefit as many different 'audiences' as possible.

WHEN will your project take place and what does the timeline look like from inception to evaluation?

HOW will you manage and carry out the project? Do you have the capacity to deliver the project? How and who will manage the funds? What resources are needed (financial, human, materials)?

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Timeline

Pro Tip: The more complex a project the more detail required.

Make a detailed timeline or project plan and ensure it aligns with the project period relevant to your application. Determine start and completion dates with milestones along the project timeline. Projects that have already commenced or have been completed are ineligible for funding from all grant programs.

Collaborators

Pro Tip: Start this now.

Through the project scoping, you may identify key stakeholders that could collaborate in a joint application. This could be the venue, local radio station, local council, university researcher or any number of other businesses relevant to your project. They may already be planning their own applications for funding so reach out to your network and work on something collaborative. This provides great value for the funding body and can build deeper stakeholder connections.

Supporters

Pro Tip: Start this now.

Individuals, groups or organisations can write letters in support of your project. A support letter should explain how the project or activity will benefit you, other artists or arts professionals, participants or the broader community. This can be a time-consuming task so start now. You can draft template letters of support yourself to get the ball rolling so your supporter need only complete and sign, saving them time.



Economic Impact Studies and Other Supporting Documentation

Pro Tip: Start this now.

Having an independent economic impact study for your festival can be invaluable in applications for new venues, consultation with authorities and grant writing. These reports can showcase the per person spend outside your festival or event as well as important employment and other quantitative data. These reports can take weeks to be delivered, so if you don't already have one – get going! Post event surveys that capture qualitative data around user experience may also be illustrative in your project application. Consider how these may be used to further demonstrate your project capabilities.

Consultation

Where projects are based on community need or cultural development, it is strongly recommended that you discuss ideas and implications of these projects with the people in your community who are likely to be involved. Many grants require demonstration of how your organisation will include the public or community in your project. When planning your project make sure you build in real and meaningful experiences for those participating and track your consultation process.

Teamwork

Pro Tip: If you're successful, turn your submission team into the project team.

A great approach is to create a small focused team to work on the submission. This will break up the admin tasks to work more efficiently and you can lean on those in your business with particular skills. Split tasks and meet often to track application progress and address any roadblocks.

You may wish to consider using existing positions within your organisation:

- Director/GM – partnership recruitment, coordinate letters of support, compile business information
- Event/Site/Production Manager – timeline building, project management
- Marketing – copywriting, ideation
- Accountant/Bookkeeper – financials, budgeting

Independent Reviewer

Pro Tip: This doesn't need to be a professional reviewer, just someone trusted and independent of the project.

It is recommended to get someone independent from your business to read through (and edit) your application. Grants are always hotly contested, so make sure your application is clear, concise, well-articulated and compelling in its rationale and argument. All this backed up by a team of skilled individuals who will give the grant provider confidence that their money will be well spent.

Financials and Budgeting

When preparing a budget for a grant application, always read the guidelines to establish what the particular grant program will allow. Ensure that your budget matches the project described in your application. This is simple, but essential.

Ensure you provide realistic estimates. Do not expect a grant to pay for your entire project. Additional contributions from other sources are generally expected. This can be in-kind support, contributions from your organisation, generated income like ticket sales or fees, other grants or sponsorship and donations.

Ensure your 'income' and 'expenditure' columns add up. Again, obvious but often missed.

Ensure you demonstrate that the funding sought would represent value for money, applicants should describe how the implementation of the proposal will achieve high quality outcomes for all stakeholders in a cost-effective way. You should consider how you can deliver these outcomes over the period being applied for and identify any innovative ways to reduce the costs of service delivery.

Do not request more than the maximum amount available. This may make your application ineligible and will indicate to the panel that you have not read the Guidelines properly.

Ensure you read all the explanatory notes included in the budget section of the application form. These are intended to guide you in completion of the budget and provide examples of the types of income and expenditure items to be included.

Ensure you are realistic about what you ask for – don't underestimate the time and cost of the project. Likewise, don't inflate your costs as assessment committees look carefully at budgetary issues.

Have a financial sustainability plan for the project after the funding has ended.

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Financials and Budgeting (cont.)

Pro Tip: Do a draft budget in excel before you transfer it to the actual application form. Don't include GST.

Fact Sheets

Helpful support links for developing and submitting grant applications:

[Financial information to support a grant application](#)
[Strong evidence](#)
[Confirming your legal entity status](#)
[Business processes](#)
[Strategic planning](#)
[Workforce design](#)

Projects For a New Way

This Guide has been developed as part of **Projects For A New Way**, the COVID-19 music festival industry recovery program being delivered by the **Australia Festival Association** and generously by **Creative Victoria**.

It aims to support the industry to get back on its feet and explore new approaches and considerations in our post COVID-19 world. It is both a chance to gather new ideas and insights and to connect with experts and peers.

Further information is available on the Australian Festival Association website:
australianfestivalassociation.com/projects-for-a-new-way

