

Step 3 – Application Get Set

Key Principles

‘Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance’

Hints & Tips! Application Get Set Before writing your application take a moment to review the paperwork and make some notes. A little preparation at this stage can go a long way to making the development of your application a lot easier and can help you avoid some mistakes that will cost you time and cause frustration.

Before You Write Anything!

By now you should have a copy of all the applicable materials necessary to write a funding application to your chosen grant funding program(s). This information usually comprises an Application Form and a set of Application Guidelines which will include instructions relevant to the completion of the Application Form. Remember the ‘CRAMNA’ mantra: **Check, Read And Make Notes, Ask.**

Check

Make sure you have all the correct forms and information. Everyone is capable of making mistakes – even the funding agencies – so it is not impossible that you may have been given the wrong forms and information. The most common problem is having older forms and information which relate to the previous round of the program. This can happen when:

- People at the funding agency accidentally send you an older form;
- Material on the website has not been updated and you download an older package;
- You have previously made applications to a program and have copies of prior application forms and guidelines.

Changes can, and often do, occur in the format of a grant funding program (especially for those that operate annually). The forms and guidelines may appear obviously different, or they may appear very similar but have small changes in them which can make large differences in eligibility criteria, assessment criteria and information requirements. Never assume that the information you have is current and correct – always check. It only takes a few moments and can potentially mean the difference between success and failure.

Hints & Tips! Application Get Set Before actually writing your application take a moment to check that you have the right application form and guidelines and that these are the most current versions.

Read And Make Notes

Read all the material sent to you. Read all the guidelines and all the questions on the application form. This will help refresh your memory and allow you to keep in mind key requirements as you complete the application. It will also help you to ensure that you really understand all the requirements of the funding program and the funding application form. It is also very useful to approach this task by ‘reading between the lines’ and trying to get a ‘feel’ for what they are really looking for.

Make a note of any specific instructions about how to complete, present or submit the application. Funding agencies may reject your application outright if it does not meet certain specific criteria. These can include things such as the number of copies to be submitted, the method of submission, the inclusion of attachments, whether certain information should be presented in the body of the application form or as an attachment, whether attachments should be included at all, whether to use different sections of the form for different projects or funding amounts, and word limits for responses to questions.

Most grant funding programs will include information about their objectives and priorities. These are often reflected in the questions in the application form. The assessment of applications will take into account of how your project relates these objectives and priorities. Some funding programs will only fund projects that meet all their priority areas, others will fund or partly fund projects that meet some priority areas. If your project does not meet any priority areas it is unlikely to receive funding. Make a note of key program objectives and priorities.

Make a note of all key points and also make a note of key words or phrases (highlight them in the forms or write them down). A useful practice is to jot notes into a copy of the application form – this makes it easy to refer to it as you actually write the application.

Ask

Hints & Tips! Application Get Set *If in doubt – Ask! If any aspects of the application form or guidelines are unclear, contact the funding agency to seek clarification before you start writing the application.*

If in doubt about any aspects of the application, ask the contact person at the funding agency.... Consider contacting them anyway to confirm things such as:

- Type of projects they are really looking for.
- Whether they think your project completely fits the program (if they do not, then ask them whether they know of any other funding sources that may assist).
- What the selection process is?
- Who is involved in the selection process (think about any potential influencers)?

Also, try finding out if the person you are talking to is a key decision maker or influencer. If so, you could potentially seek to establish a 'connection' with them and garner support for your project. When talking to key decision makers or influencers consider:

- Selling your organisation and the project – e.g. tell them how you have read the guidelines and think your project most worthy; how important your project is and how badly your organisation or your community needs it and so on.
- Establishing rapport – Seek their advice - contact them again with any further questions you may have.
- Enlisting their help - If possible, get them (or other appropriate person in the agency) to review drafts of your application or parts of it. No-one will be more likely to know whether you have a good application than the people in the funding agency! Also, it is hard for them to criticise something they have helped develop – sometimes they can even become your champion.

Congratulations! You're now set to go!

You're ready for Step 4 – Application Go!

FundAssist Quick Guide to Successful Funding Applications - Part 4: Application Go!

FundAssist is a leading consulting firm providing expert funding assistance services to local governments and community groups throughout regional Australia.

We can help you in all aspects of the funding process at whatever stage you need help – whether it is planning your project(s) and your funding strategies, identifying applicable funding programs, developing funding submissions and briefings promoting your project, preparing grant applications, or completing project management and reporting requirements after you have received funding.

Our funding services have assisted many clients with a wide range of projects.

Contact us to find out how we can help you.

info@fundassist.com.au

www.fundassist.com.au