Great Grants

A simple guide to strong applications.

Introduction

Applying for federal funding can be complex, and a strong application increases your chances of success. This resource will help you:

- Develop a clear and compelling application
- Review and refine your draft
- Complete a final checklist before submission

Steps

This resource covers fours steps. Use the accompanying templates for each step to stay organized and submit a well-prepared application.

Application Development

Prepare before you write. A well-structured project strengthens your application.

Budget Basics

Plan out your finances. A clear budget proves that your project is realistic.
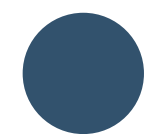
Draft Revision

Ask key revision questions. A strong application is clear, complete, and aligned.

Final Review

Strong, complete applications get funded. Double-check everything before submitting.

Application Development

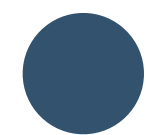## Before you start writing:

- **Read the funding guidelines**
  - What is the funder looking for?
  - What are the key deadlines?

- **Make a clear plan that defines**
  - The problem: What issue are you addressing?
  - The beneficiaries: Who will benefit from your project?
  - Key activities: What will you do to create impact?
  - Expected outcomes: What will change as a result of your project?

Template

Use the Project Planner Template to help you organize your ideas and ensure that your proposal is aligned with the funder's priorities.

Writing Tips

- Use clear, simple language.
- Stick to the facts.

Project Planner Template

Project Name: _____

What problem are you solving?
(Describe in one or two sentences)

Who will benefit?
(Who are your target groups?)

What will you do?
(List key activities)

What impact do you expect?
(List expected outcomes)

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Budget Basics

A clear, well-structured budget shows the funder that your project is realistic and well-planned. Keep in mind:

Relevance

Expenses must be directly related to project activities.

Clarity

Costs should be detailed and justified.

Eligibility

Funding requests must align with the funder's guidelines.

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Template

Use the Project Budget Planner Template to break down costs into categories like salaries, equipment, travel, and administration.

Budget Tips

- List everything you need money for.
- Match your list to the funder's eligible expense guidelines.

Project Budget Planner Template

Expense Category	Amount Requested	Description	Other sources of funding (if any)
Salaries & wages	$		
Equipment & supplies	$		
Travel	$		
Marketing & outreach	$		
Administration	$		
Other	$		
Total:	$		

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Draft Revision

Review and improve your draft to make sure it's strong, complete and well aligned—check these key points before final peer review.

● **Ask yourself**
  - Does the project match the funder's priorities?
  - Is the language simple and direct?
  - Does the budget match the project description?
  - Are all sections complete?
  - Does the application highlight the project's impact?

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Template

Use the <u>Checklist for Clarity and Completeness</u> to review your drafted funding application.

Clarity Tips

- Try reading out loud. If it's hard to say, it's hard to read—simplify.
- Someone unfamiliar with the project should understand it easily.

Checklist for clarity and completeness

Use this checklist to review your funding application before getting peer feedback and finalizing it. This checklist should help you confirm clarity, completeness, and alignment with the call for applications.

1. Project alignment
☐ Does the project align with the funder's priorities?
☐ Is the problem clearly defined?
☐ Are the expected outcomes realistic and measurable?

2. Clarity and readability
☐ Is the language clear and free of sectoral jargon?
☐ Is the proposal concise and to the point?
☐ Are complex ideas explained simply?

3. Budget and resources
☐ Does the budget match the activities described?
☐ Are all costs justified and clearly explained?
☐ Does the financial request align with the funder's guidelines?

4. Completeness of the application
☐ Have all required sections been completed?
☐ Are all required supporting documents included?
☐ Are attachments properly labeled and formatted?

5. Formatting and accuracy
☐ Is the application free of spelling and grammar errors?
☐ Are facts, figures, and dates accurate?
☐ Have all links, references, and citations been checked?

6. Technical review
☐ Have you double-checked the submission method?
☐ Have you double-checked the submission deadline?
☐ Is the contact information correct?

✅**If you checked all the boxes, your application is ready for final peer review!**✅

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Template

Use the Final Peer Review Worksheet to get feedback from someone else on your team and further refine your draft before submitting it.

Review Tips

- A peer review brings a fresh perspective that can catch mistakes and improve clarity.
- Constructive feedback can make your application stronger.

Final peer review worksheet

Project name: _____

Reviewer name: _____

Key questions:

1. Does the project align with the funder's priorities?

   Yes/No

2. Is the language clear and free of jargon?

   Yes/No

3. Are all sections completed?

   Yes/No

4. Is the budget reasonable and justified?

   Yes/No

5. Does the budget cover everything needed to complete the project?

   Yes/No

6. Are the expected outcomes clearly stated?

   Yes/No

Reviewer comments:

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Final Review

Before you submit, go through a final final checklist:

- All required sections are complete.
- Budget details are correct and align with the project description.
- Required supporting documents are included.
- Someone else has reviewed the application.
- Contact information is correct for both you and the funder.
- The submission deadline has not passed.

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Template

Use the _Final application review checklist_ to double-check everything one last time before submitting your application.

Final Tips

- Avoid last-minute issues by submitting ahead of the deadline.
- Keep a final version for reference in future applications.
- Check for confirmation of receipt.

Final application review checklist

Yes/No Submission Checklist

☐ Project aligns with the funder's priorities and the call for applications.

☐ All sections are complete.

☐ Budget numbers match the project description.

☐ Required supporting documents are attached.

☐ Proposal has been reviewed by someone else.

☐ Contact information is correct.

☐ The submission is before the deadline.

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