Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

Training, Networking, Talks: Arts Advancement Series

Grantwriting Basics for Artists

GRANTWRITING IN FIVE STEPS

When you are considering applying for a particular grant or funding opportunity, where should you start? The following list is meant to help guide you through five important steps in preparing for and applying for, a grant.

1. **Plan Ahead**
   - It can take funders months to make a decision about a proposal after it is submitted.
   - Note recurring deadlines as well as notification dates of grants that may apply to you as an artist.
   - Keep a calendar of dates or a chronological list you can easily refer to so that you won't miss an opportunity.
   - Remember, many funders can't consider supporting activities retroactively.

2. **Do Your Research**
   - Be prepared to read the funder's website and grant guidelines.
   - Remember the name of the grant program you are considering, not just who the funder is.
   - Call to clarify specific questions.

3. **Before You Apply: Look for the Answers to These Important Questions**
   - Are you eligible to apply?
   - Is your project eligible for consideration in terms of goals, timing, and type of activity?
   - What are the funder's priorities?
   - Who have they funded in the past?
   - What is the average grant amount?
   - Which expenses can you use grant funds for?
   - Does this look like a good match?

4. **Keep the Following in Mind as You Write Your Application**
   - Follow the guidelines and requirements: they are there for a reason.
   - Don't submit boilerplate text – be prepared to tailor each proposal to the funder.
   - Be descriptive: use plain language & be concrete.
   - Write for both arts and non-arts readers.
   - Don't expect panelists or reviewers to know you or your work. Provide all of the relevant information they will need to assess your application.
   - Refer to published criteria the funder uses when deciding to fund a project. Are you making a case in relation to these criteria?
   - Ask yourself if you have provided enough information to give the funder confidence that you can successfully carry out your ideas. Funding is often just as much about feasibility as it is about quality.

- Ask a friend to read your proposal and give you feedback.
- Proofread all written documents carefully.

5. Prepare Your Final Package
- Follow all formatting requirements.
- Include all required written documents, work samples and supplemental information.
- Don't overwhelm with too much material. Adhere to page and number limits and be selective.
- Keep a copy of your submission for your own records.
- Don't miss the deadline: it's the only way to know for sure your application will be considered.