Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

EMPOWERING ARTISTS,
INVESTED IN COMMUNITY

# FUNDRAISING FUNDAMENTALS
*Grantwriting Basics for Artists*

## GRANTWRITING IN SIX 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**
   • Note application deadlines as well as notification timetables. It can take funders months to make a decision about a proposal after it is submitted.
   • Keep in mind that many funders do not consider supporting activities retroactively.
   • 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.

2. **Do Your Research**
   • Read the funder's website and grant guidelines thoroughly.
   • Note the name of the grant program you are considering, not just who the funder is. Many funders offer more than one program.
   • Call to clarify requirements or raise 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 to manage volume and create consistency in format so that content can be the focus.
   - Don't submit boilerplate text – be prepared to tailor each proposal to the funder's requirements and interests.
   - Be descriptive: use plain language & be concrete.
   - Write for both arts and non-arts readers.
   - Don't expect 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 whether to support 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 artistry or ideas.

5. **Step Back and Ask for Outside Perspectives**
   - Ask a friend to read your proposal and give you feedback.
   - Compare written narratives with budgets and supporting material to make sure the content in each component supports the other components.
   - Proofread all written documents carefully.

6. **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.